

AQUACULTURE WITHOUT FRONTIERS:

END OF YEAR AND LOOKING FORWARD

GENDER IN NEPAL AQUACULTURE

In 2007, the World Fish Center, the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science and the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) studied an aquaculture production system combined with mixed-crop livestock systems in Nepal and their effects on food access and women's empowerment.

AwF got involved in Nepal with partner AIT from 2008 and used the analysis from the 2007 study. Women who were given the opportunity to own and control a portion of the aquaculture farming system had increased their autonomy and ability to make self-decisions within their households and community. Aquaculture had become the manifestation of women's empowerment in Nepal and it continues to improve female independence.

One Nepalese organisation, the Sustainable Fish Farming Initiative (SFFI), is a female owned social enterprise group addressing food security problems and poverty in rural Nepal. The organization offers resources and education on sustainable aquaculture and works to continue women's empowerment in Nepal by providing access to all the necessary means. Such items as training, micro-credit, distribution and market facilitation, etc. then allow the farmers to harvest their own fish and manage production on their own farms.

SFFI's Founder and Executive Director, Ms. Kanchan Amatya, is a young Nepalese social entrepreneur who also currently serves as the UN Global Champion for Women's Economic Empowerment and the UN Zero Hunger Champion.

In November as part of the celebration of its 10th annual meeting in Boston, the Clinton Foundation



Photo Credits: Samantha Farquha.

(and Bill Clinton himself) honored Kanchan Amatya with the Clinton Global Initiative Presidential Honor Roll Award. What a wonderful recognition to celebrate the dedication and passion of this young lady in front of more than 1,500 delegates from over 90 countries around the world at the meeting. Amatya has also recently been awarded with a "2017 Everyday Young Hero Award" by Youth Service America and was listed on "100 Young Leaders Under 25" by Impact Squared, UK.

Hopefully because of women like Amatya, who grow up in less economically developed countries such as Nepal, things will continue to improve. In her case, she had a dream made of grand economic and social proportions and she continues to work every day to break down barriers for rural women and offer empowerment at every step.

One of AwF's new volunteers, Samantha Farquhar, has also been involved in Nepal. After graduating from the University of North Carolina Wilmington she decided to gain

more experience with sustainable development that coincided with her recent degrees in Marine Biology and International Studies. Working with the Asian Institute of Technology, Samantha was sent to Rampur, Nepal to stay at the Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) and carry out research on a recent aquaculture project that was started to increase household economic and nutrition security, especially among women. The industry is particularly growing in the flat area of Nepal known as the Terai Plain. This area accounts for 84% of the total country's aquaculture production.

Due to global climate change and the current imbalanced social and economic institutions in Nepal, there is a need to implement methods to diversify livelihoods; this holds particularly true for women. Aquaculture is changing the status quo for the better. As a bonus, the aquaculture industry ensures easier and more efficient access to healthy meals for women and their families. After all, challenges of the day are always easier to manage on a full stomach. **END**