

CHALLENGES OF INCLUDING GENDER DIMENSIONS IN BIOTECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

Hillary Egna*, Lisa Reifke, and Nancy Gitonga

*AquaFish CRSP, 418 Snell Hall, Oregon State University, Corvallis OR 97331 USA.

Hiliary.Egna@oregonstate.edu

Globally, women play an integral role in the aquaculture and fisheries sectors. In small-scale capture fisheries, typical gender roles play out with men owning boats and doing the fishing while women remain in charge of post-harvest activities such as processing and marketing. In aquaculture, women are often found in the most vulnerable positions working as fry catchers, laborers, and as low paid workers at processing plants.

Although women's roles and responsibilities are evolving in some countries, there are still issues and constraints that can limit their participation in project activities such as: time availability and allocation, land ownership and access to water, credit and labor, and access to training and extension services.

The AquaFish CRSP is dedicated to improving gender equality in the aquaculture and fisheries sectors and in the CRSP arena. The intent of the AquaFish CRSP is to create equal opportunities for women and men to participate in the Program's research, training, educational, or other activities. Through this gender equity process we are working towards gender equality at both the individual project level and overall program wide level. Here are some of the specific actions taken by the CRSP: collect and analyze disaggregated data from individual projects to gauge the success of gender inclusiveness; promote the participation of women in formal and informal education and training opportunities provided through the CRSP by setting a 50% benchmark for training women; all core projects have a strategy for integrating and addressing gender (a Gender Strategy); each of the core projects has a gender focused investigation; tailor specific extension and technical services related to sustainable aquaculture and aquatic resource management to women producers. Even with these policies firmly in place and real dedication to the goal of improving gender equality, women still make up less than 50% of short-term trainees. The percentage of women in long-term degree programs, however, approaches the equality target more closely.