

Women's empowerment through improved seaweed farming technology

The story of Sea PoWer in Zanzibar

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Institute of Marine Sciences



Seaweed producers



Tubular nets



To replace pegs and ropes



Challenges to traditional peg and rope seaweed farming in Zanzibar

- Effect of climate change
 - “Ice-ice” disease
 - Low productivity, low prices
- Seaweed breakage
- Appalling working conditions for women





Advantages of deep water tubular nets

- Tubular nets made out of local fishing nets
- Seaweed “planted” in nets = minimal breakage
- In deep water: fewer environmental variations
 - Cottonii grows better
 - Less damage to seagrass beds
 - Fish aggregating device
- Alleviates hardship: women stay fewer hours in seawater, no stings, no cuts, loads in boats

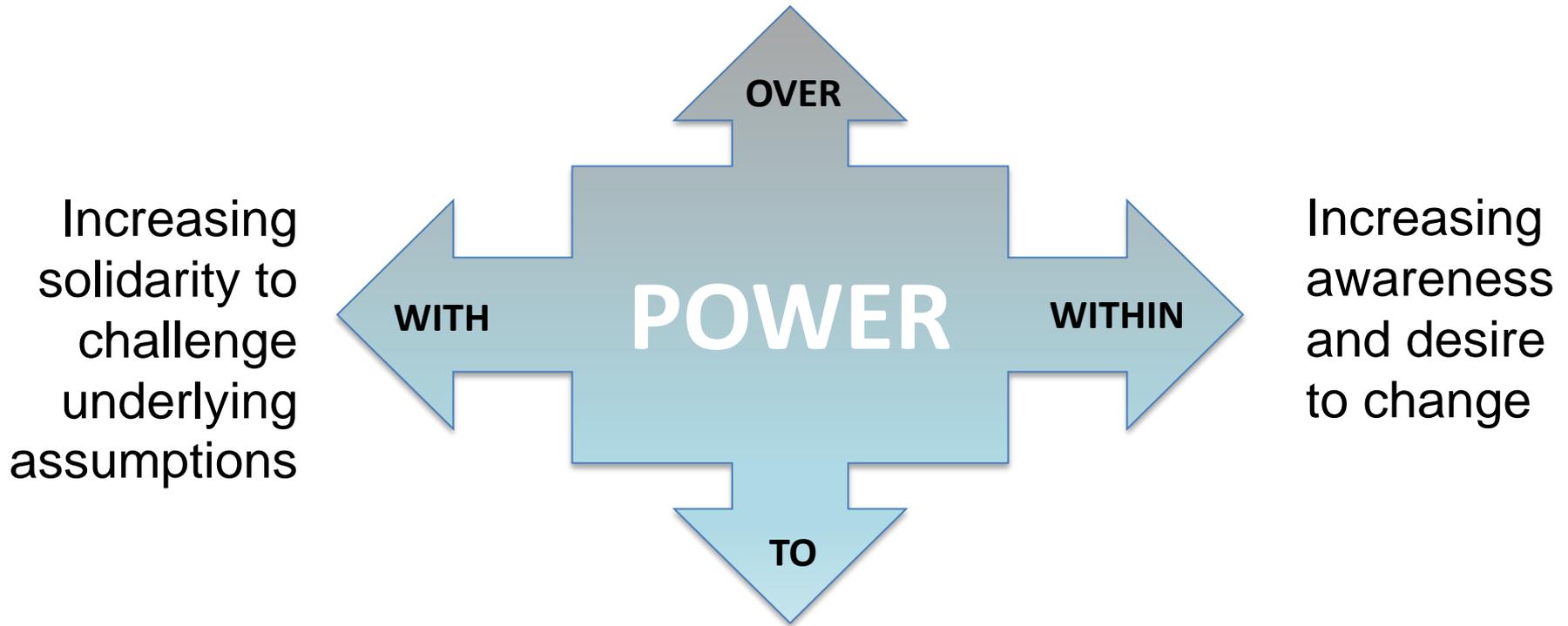
BUT: Gender issues!

- Women do not know how to swim or dive
- Boat handling is traditionally a man's job
- Women's subordinate position in society



Dissecting "Power"

Changing underlying resources and influence to challenge constraints



Increasing individual capacity and opportunities for access

The Sea PoWer approach: **innovation *cum* empowerment**



Building women's capacity

Constructing nets

Safe sea faring skills (next: diving and swimming)

Boat handling skills with men



Building women's capacity

Record keeping of group activities

Monitoring seaweed growth



Building social capital

Working together as a group

Demonstration and learning across women's groups



Harnessing other benefits

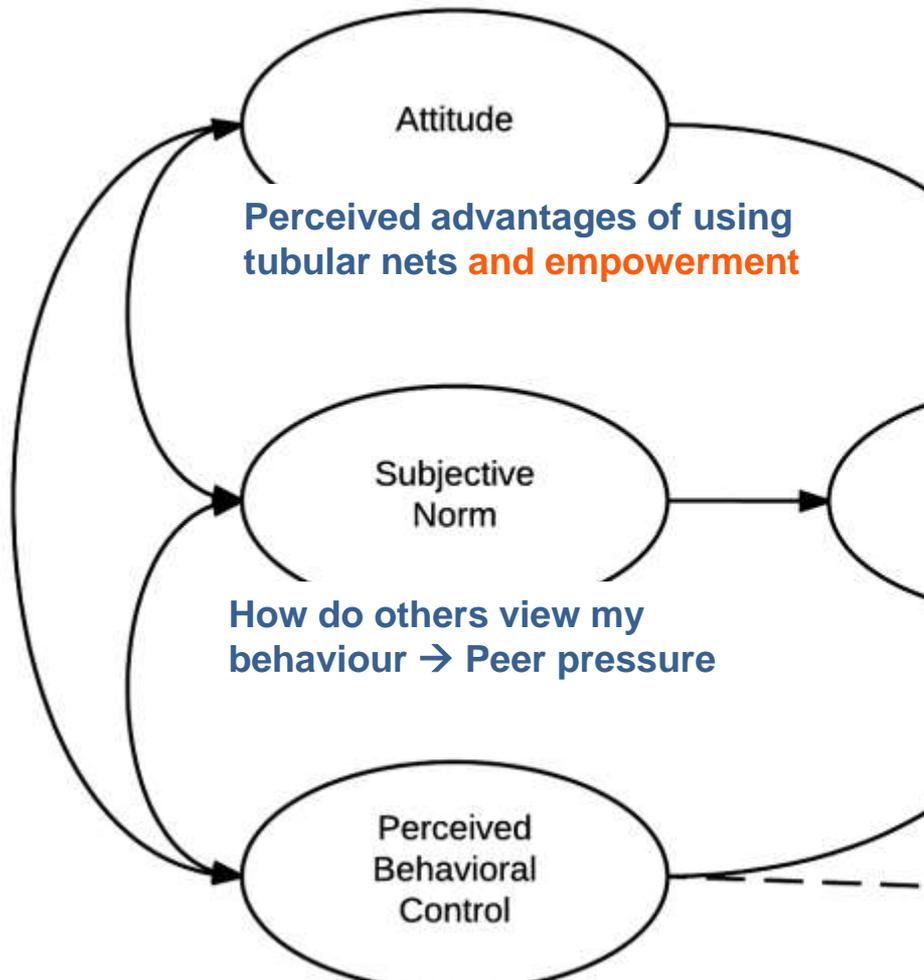
Construction of basket traps to catch fish

Engaging with seaweed buyers and other community buyers

Awareness raising and progressive challenging of gender norms

Benefits and intention to continue

Theory of Planned Behavior extended to include women's empowerment



Perceived advantages of using tubular nets and empowerment

How do others view my behaviour → Peer pressure

Perceived barriers or facilitating factors to use tubular nets and changing the status quo

1. sense of self-worth;
2. right to have and to determine choices;
3. right to opportunities and resources;
4. right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside their home;
5. ability to influence the direction of social change

(after POPIN criteria)

Positive results: **Women now report**

- 91% have better knowledge on how to farm seaweed
- 91% have become a role model for other women
- 87% have built their social capital
- 83% feel stronger and more important as a woman
- 78% have earned more income for themselves and their families
- 70% have increased their self-esteem

Still work to do...

Percentages of women reporting having the SAME of...



Conclusions

- ***Innovation can expand horizons:*** Thanks to a gender-sensitive approach, tubular nets are showing promise for women's empowerment, livelihoods and the environment.

- → **But innovations are not a panacea!**

- **Beware of dangers of gender-insensitive innovation projects in aquaculture (and fisheries)!!**

- **Capacity building and engagement with men and community members must be pursued for greater gender equality**

- **Pay attention to details and monitor women's involvement and control**

The Sea PoWer story carries on...

Get in touch, follow us!

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Thank you for your
attention

Empowerment gradients

Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe 2002)

Five Gradients:

1. Welfare  WHERE THE TRADITIONAL PRODUCERS ARE
2. Access  WHERE THE SEA POWER WOMEN STARTED
3. Conscientisation " collective urge to action to remove the discriminatory practices that impede women's access to resources"
HOW THE SEA POWER INTERVENTION IS CONCEIVED
4. Mobilisation – **WHERE WE ARE AT NOW**
5. Control – **OUR GOAL, BEFORE SCALING OUT**

The Sea PoWer team



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Tubular nets



Innovation showing
promise

Minimise die-offs and breakages ✓

Overcome environmental variations



Built with locally available materials



Long-lasting and resistant to rough
seas ✓

No adverse environmental impacts ✓

Preliminary developments

- Making own nets: short + narrow nets work better
- Productivity: + 40%
- 2nd trial: compares shallower-deeper water
- Wear life jackets in boat.
- Engaging men: relatives
- 1 seaweed buyer engaged.



Get in touch, follow us!

Video: "Making waves: rethinking seaweed farming for women's empowerment"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yfk7MJh5jA4&t=7s>

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