

WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE DOESN'T MEAN GENDER EQUALITY IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

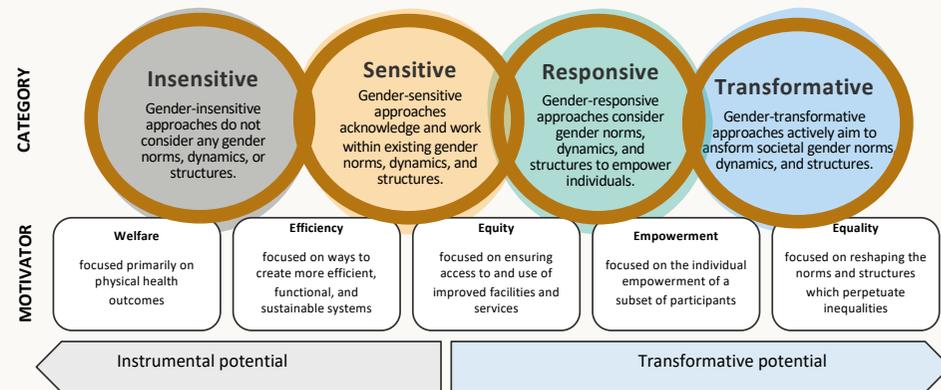
Dr. Victoria Syddall (Ocean Research Consulting Advisory)
and Dr. Meryl Williams



orca consulting
ocean research consulting advisory ltd

REPRESENTATION ≠ TRANSFORMATION

- WCPFC: reports of women in senior posts
- SPC: 50:50 ratio of men and women in science staff



Adapted from MacArthur et al. 2023 Gender equality approaches in water, sanitation, and hygiene programs: Towards gender-transformative practice, *Frontiers in Public Health*

WHAT GETS MEASURED SHAPES REMEDIES

- Headcounts = Quick fixes (education, training, fertility control)
- Example: Women may qualify as captains but vessels lack facilities
- Claudia Goldin's Nobel Prize-winning research shows that women's work is shaped less by ambition than by systemic barriers. Progress depends on changing structures, not just aspirations

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP & POLITICS: WHERE WE STAND (2025)

TOP EXECUTIVE POWER



19 HoS / 22 HoG

Parity 130 years away

CABINETS

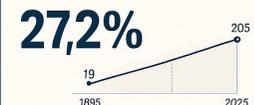


Top portfolios held by women:

- Women & gender equality
- Family & children
- Social inclusion & development
- Social protection & social security
- Culture

2 countries at parity
+ 26 above 40 %

NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS



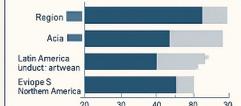
- 6 countries at parity
- 21 countries < 10 %;
- 3 with 0 women

Top portfolios held by women:

- Women & gender equality
- Family & children
- Social inclusion & development
- Social protection & social security
- Culture

Quotas ↑ +7 pp

LOCAL GOVERNMENT



WHAT ACCELERATES PROGRESS?

Quotas ↑ ↑ pp

Sources: UN Women Knowledge Portal (15 Sep 2025); IPU-UN Women Women in Politics 2025; UN Women locaigo) data (Jan 2024)



- Senior women leaders \neq gender advocates
- Some oppose equality; others focus on their own elite struggles
- Organisational culture dominates
→ slow change

GENDER EXPERTS ON THE MARGINS



Often young, junior, low status in technical orgs (Resurreccion & Elmhirst 2020)



Advice rarely reaches decision-makers



Gender advisory structures don't exist → ad hoc influence

LESSONS

01

Gender-responsive
contextualized
MERL

02

Cultivate demand
for gender
research

03

Train and support
new gender
researchers

BETTER GENDER-RESPONSIVE MERL



“WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS DONE”



BEYOND HEADCOUNTS → MEASURE
**VOICE, INFLUENCE, SAFETY,
STRUCTURAL CHANGE**



TRACK REAL EQUITY, NOT JUST
PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN
GOVERNANCE



CLOSING CALL TO ACTION

- Don't be satisfied with the numbers
- Push for formal pathways for gender advice in fisheries governance
- Be researcher-advocates: connect knowledge to policy and implementation