

THE GENDERED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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Social changes which Pacific Island communities are going through have a profound impact on fishing roles, participation and marketing and distribution strategies. Both men and women have defined traditional participation roles which have been perfected through generations of use of fisheries resources. There has been an obvious overlap in these gender roles in the last decade with both genders participating in areas traditionally associated with either men or women. Climate change, although a new concept with projected enormous impact on small island nations and communities in the Pacific, has been customarily addressed through natural resource adaptation strategies. These traditional strategies are an accepted component of fishing and community lifestyle for people and thus have been taught and passed down through oral tradition and informal teaching avenues. The documentation, protection and acknowledgement of traditional technologies used by Pacific island fishers will ensure simple, easily accessible technologies that can be used for climate change responses and adaptation at the communities and village level. Women especially have a wealth of knowledge which is rarely defined, described or acknowledged and a major step in the use of women's knowledge is in engaging women in meaningful discussions and planning on fisheries and climate change initiatives. Modifying and using existing traditional institutions and knowledge and technologies in Pacific island countries should be an initial response to climate change. This paper includes examples and work from 6 countries both in the North and South Pacific and covers high islands, low islands and atoll locations. Thus a wide variety of information and fisheries use and adaptation strategies will be used to support the discussions on impacts of climate change and social change.