

Expanding the horizons

The 7th Global Conference on Gender in Aquaculture & Fisheries (GAF7) showcases progress towards and challenges to gender equality

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The 7th Global Conference on Gender in Aquaculture & Fisheries (GAF7) was hosted by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), in Bangkok, from 18 to 21 October 2018. This was the first stand-alone event of the Gender in Aquaculture & Fisheries Section (GAF Section) of the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS), and saw 149 experts, researchers and practitioners deliberate on 95 research papers and nine special workshops. Participants came from 28 countries representing Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, Australia, South America and the Caribbean.

This was an exciting opportunity to create a platform for sharing the latest research on gender in fisheries and aquaculture, learning new methods and approaches, launching new training products and crafting a vision for the future. GAF7 followed 28 years of women and gender symposia and workshops supported by the AFS and its Indian branch. The event co-organizers included the GAF Section of the AFS, the AIT and the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA). It was sponsored by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, WorldFish, The Crawford Fund, USAID Oceans and Fisheries, Plan International, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, and the Commission on

Gender and Geography, and had 17 partners and supporters from Asia, Australia and beyond.

A warm welcome from Dr Eden Woon, President of AIT, was followed by Dr Darian McBain, Thai Union Global Director for Sustainable Development, delivering the keynote address, stressing the important role of women in the seafood industry. Dr Amornrat Sermwatanakul, Senior Executive Expert in Fisheries Management, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand, was presented with a special plaque recognizing her promotion of gender equality in fisheries and aquaculture.

The GAF7 papers were spread across eight thematic sessions which, with the nine special workshops, were run in four well attended parallel sessions.

The focus was on sharing emerging gender research methods and approaches, including the gender transformative approach; applying feminist intersectionality; innovative technologies that empower and transform; and women's collective action which is attempting to close the gender gap in aquaculture and fisheries.

The eight session themes included gender assessments in fisheries and aquaculture; gender-disaggregated statistics; gender and the seafood

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Participants at the 7th Global Conference on Gender in Aquaculture & Fisheries (GAF7), from 18 to 21 October 2018 at Bangkok, Thailand. Based on requests, discussions were also held with participants wishing to create GAF networks and organizations in their own countries and regions



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industry; gender and fisheries and aquaculture governance; gender and climate change with reference to fisheries and aquaculture; focus on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and other SDGs in fisheries and aquaculture; gender research methods in fisheries and aquaculture; and learning exchanges: experiences and lessons.

The following nine special workshops were also held:

- Photo-voice: Researching gender in aquaculture and fisheries through the camera lens (Janine Pierce, AwF Australia)
- GAF101: Using 'Intersectionality' in Research on Gender and Fisheries and Aquaculture. A GAF 101 Training Session (Marilyn Porter and Holly Hapke)
- Plan International Seas for Change (Sadiah Tahseen and Iris Caluag)
- Furthering/Deepening Feminist Perspectives in Fisheries (Nalini Nayak and Cornelia Quist)
- Exploring Gender Equity and Equality in the SSF Guidelines (Danika Kleiber, Whitney Yadao-Evans, and Cynthia McDougall)
- Role of women fishworker organizations towards implementation and monitoring of small-scale fisheries guidelines: case of African Women Network of Fish Processors and Traders (AWFISHNET) (Editrudith Lukanga and Kafayat Adetoun Fakoya)
- Gender transformative approaches in fisheries and aquaculture: An exploration of strategies and emerging outcomes (Cynthia McDougall)
- Gender Analysis through Micro and Small Aquaculture Operation (MiSAO) Best Aquaculture Practises (M-BAP) (Zumilah Binti Zainalaludin)
- Mainstreaming gender in fisheries education (Mary Barby Badayos-Jover, Arpita Sharma, Kyoko Kusakabe, Salin Krishna and Kumi Soejima)

In their workshop, Nalini Nayak and Cornelia Quist shared the experience of the ICSF's Women in Fisheries programmes spanning the years from 1990 to 2014, and delved into the feminist analytical framework of fisheries as developed in the ICSF in the special workshop on 'Furthering/Deepening Feminist Perspectives in Fisheries' (https://www.icsf.net/images/resources/papers_presentations/ICSF_WIF_Nalini_Nayak_Cornelia_Quist_GAF7.pdf_125.pdf). They discussed concepts of feminist analyses like power relations, patriarchy, and violence on life and livelihood, presenting the same within the spheres of production and reproduction. The interesting discussions that ensued included questions on whether Marxist or feminist theories address

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the challenges of industrial society, neo-liberal production systems, consumerist society, and the need for a feminist political ecology think tank. They also stressed the need to look at the intersectionalities between different types of power relations.

As in previous conferences, outstanding student presenters were awarded prizes. The winners at GAF7 were Angela L. Cruz (presenter), Patrick J. Christie and Alan T. White for the presentation titled 'Addressing gender gaps from a programmatic perspective'; Veena N. (presenter) and Kyoko Kusakabe for their presentation 'Migrant women's strategies to cope with employment practices in Thai food sector: A case study from Rayong and Trat'; Sarah Lawless for her presentation titled 'From resistance to internalisation: The spread of 'gender equality' in small-scale fisheries governance'; and Benedict Mark M. Carmelita (presenter), Alice Joan G. Ferrer, Jinky C. Hopanda, Herminia A. Francisco, and Canesio D. Predo for their presentation 'Gender differences in possession of unused livelihood skills and desire to be involved in livelihood opportunities in coastal households in the Philippines'.

At GAF7, based on requests, discussions were also held with participants wishing to create GAF networks and organizations in their own countries and regions. In particular, colleagues from Bangladesh and those from several African countries sought to find out about the lessons

learned in the 28 years of informal, formal and establishment experience of GAFS.

The GAF Section launched its new policy brief titled 'Fishing for Equality: Why gender matters in aquaculture and fisheries'. The policy brief highlights the key actions that are needed to make real progress toward gender equality. It contains a synthesis of the information on the state and consequences of gender inequality in fisheries and aquaculture and what can be done to address this. The Section advocated the collection of regular and accurate gender-specific catch-to-consumer employment data to track trends and progress; a hundred-fold increase in gender projects, research and educational outreach; support for women's empowerment; and greater collaboration on gender as stated priority in policy, research and programmes.

While discussing gender issues in aquaculture and fisheries, GAF7 didn't forget gender issues in conference participation either. It put theory into practice by offering free childcare services to all participants, which allowed researchers/writers with young children to join in the immense sharing and learning experiences the conference offered. This facility was much appreciated by all delegates, and would be a welcome service at all AFS conferences, regardless of topic.

All the products from GAF7 can be found on the GAF website: <https://www.genderaquafish.org/>; <https://www.genderequality.genderaquafish.org/>