

# THE USAID OCEANS AND FISHERIES PARTNERSHIP

## LEARNING SITE: BITUNG, INDONESIA

### OVERVIEW

In early 2017, the USAID Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (USAID Oceans) initiated a gender analysis in the fisheries sector of Bitung, Indonesia. Bitung is the center of the fishing industry in Eastern Indonesia, particularly for tuna and tuna-like species. The study was undertaken by Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science, Sam Ratulangi University (UNSRAT), Manado.

Tuna fishing is predominantly a male-dominated industry. Although women play key roles in post-harvest activities, their contribution to the industry has often been undervalued and unappreciated. Therefore, a gender analysis was conducted to understand the different roles and interactions among male and female actors along the tuna value chain and to identify key issues and constraints to achieve gender equality and women empowerment. The results of this study identified strategic areas of intervention to empower and build the capacity of women along the fisheries value chain.

### FINDINGS

USAID Oceans' Gender Analysis, particularly through the value chain mapping workshop, found that the tuna value chain in Bitung is jointly participated in by women and men. Fishing and fish transportation activities are exclusively carried out by men, whereas most of the fish processing and fish trading activities are carried out by women. The main gender issues in the fisheries sector in Bitung include differences between the sexes in terms of access and control to resources, roles and responsibilities, and knowledge on certain activities.

Through literature reviews, in field data collection, and the value chain mapping workshop, the UNSRAT team established the following findings.

- Men control the access to physical resources (ships, fishing gear and industrial-scale processing units), while women gain access to small-scale processing units and local marketing activities. Access to capital and information resources, especially for small-scale ventures, are most often dominated by women.
- There is close cooperation among family members in carrying out activities in the fisheries sector. If a man as the head of the household works as a fisherman, then his wife plays a role in helping to sell the fish. Conversely, if the wife has a fish processing business, then her husband plays a role to help carry out heavy work, such as transporting fish.
- Both women and men have roles in Bitung's fisheries sector. Men complete heavier physical tasks like fishing and transporting fish, while women are more involved in fish processing and marketing. The participation of women and men in the fisheries value chain is relatively comparable in terms of working hours and income contribution.
- Men were found to be more knowledgeable in fishing activities, while women have more knowledge in fish processing and marketing activities. These gender roles are reinforced in the community through beliefs and perceptions that women are not suitable for fishing activities, either because of physical factors or their responsibility to take care of the house and the children.
- Time spent by women and men in the tuna value chain is relatively equal. Women spend more time than men in fish processing activities, but outdoor activities along the value chain (fish and fish products transport and selling) are relatively comparable between men and women.

**Indonesia still struggles to close the gender equality gap.** The economic and political structures are still dominated by men.

**In the fisheries sector at Bitung, however, the gender equality gap is very low, in terms of participation of women and men in the fisheries value chain, albeit with differentiated gender roles.** Men are more engaged in fishing and fish transportation activities, while women are more engaged in fish processing and marketing.

Overall, women and men in the fisheries sector in Bitung are perceived to have equal legal rights and status, as well as in decision-making roles.

However, some issues also came out which need to be addressed to meet the practical and strategic needs of women.

Despite perceptions of equality in various domains of the gender dimensions framework, a variety of gender specific issues along the tuna value chain in Bitung exist, and may influence the actions of women and men, affecting how they make decisions. These issues are as follows:

1. Cultural norms which applies to small scale fish processors, fish vendors, fishers and workers as to the type of work women and men do in each node of the chain that is often defined according to the physical demand of the task (such as catching, carrying and transporting fish being conducted by men while buying, sorting and eviscerating fish as well as book keeping activities are conducted by women).
2. Limited access to resources such as fishing vessels by women.
3. Limited access to resources such as raw materials due to low bargaining power in determining the price of fish products because of monopsony in small scale women fish processors (*katsuwobusi*).
4. Time constraints for money-making activities for women due to their responsibilities in their households and taking care of children.
5. Lack of access to public transportation for women fish vendors to landing centers / harbors very early in morning that make them vulnerable to harmful condition such as sexual abuse.
6. Poor access to financial sources due to limited or no collateral, and being considered micro or too small-scale business are not interesting enough to financial institutions to provide credit. This lack of financial support has limited the women from upgrading their fisheries businesses, and therefore they have not been able to form sustainable and viable fish trade especially when it comes to the export of fish and other fishery products.
7. Limited access to information, networks, extension and associations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the conducted research, UNSRAT consulted with stakeholders on priority needs and together they developed recommendations to improve gender equity and women empowerment in Bitung tuna fisheries value chain. Some of these are enumerated below:

- Supporting the formation of women fisher and fish processor groups, and developing women-friendly policies and procedures particularly in financing, marketing of products, and business permits issuance to encourage women in fisheries entrepreneurship
- Advocacy for women-friendly and safe workplaces in fisheries, and development of local ordinances to ensure that women and youth involved in fisheries work feel safe in their communities and workplaces
- Capacity building and extension among women stakeholders in fisheries on relevant skills
- Recognition of and provide incentives to fisheries businesses and establishments where gender equality and women empowerment are being upheld.
- Information drive and extension of regulations on gender equality, and women empowerment, fisheries regulations and relevant information
- Provide financial support for start-up businesses by women
- Companies to develop and adopt a gender equality policy to ensure women are not excluded in recruitment, promotion, being part of the board of directors, salary increases, opportunities for capacity building, travel, among others

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed the Gender Dimensions Framework (GDF) developed by Rubin et al. (2009) to understand gender issues and gender differences in roles, constraints and opportunities along the tuna value chain in Bitung. The GDF comprises six dimensions: (i) access and control over key productive assets, (ii) knowledge, beliefs and perceptions, (iii) practices and participation, (iv) time and space, (v) legal rights and status, and (vi) power and decision-making. This framework also facilitates data collection and further implementation of the study.

The UNSRAT team conducted a literature review, preliminary field visits, secondary data collection, and a gendered value chain mapping workshop. Primary data collection was carried via interviews with 244 respondents (127 females, 117 males) — fishers using various types of fishing gears, fish traders, small-scale fish processors and workers of large fish processing plants. Participation was gender-balanced, with 48% of respondents male, 52% female. The survey was conducted from March to May 2017 and covered four sub-districts in Lembeh Island (Papusungan, Batu Lubang, Pasir Panjang, Pintu Kota) and four subdistricts in the mainland of Bitung City (Aertembaga Satu, Girian Atas, Girian Bawah and Sagerat). Results of in-field research were confirmed through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and a local stakeholder validation workshop. Key informant interviews among 25 key informants (13% females, 87% males) were also conducted from the enablers such as local government officers, private sector, civil society organizations and fishing associations. Five focus group discussions were also held among 2 all female, 1 all male and 2 mixed groups to further expand and validate the information obtained from various sources.

Respondents	Study Sites
Fishers (handline)	Kel. Papusungan, Kel. Batu Lubang, Kel. Pasir Panjang, Kel. Pintu Kota (in Lembeh Island) Kel. Aertembaga Satu
Fishers (pole and line, purse seine)	Kel. Aertembaga Satu
Fish traders	Kel. Aertembaga Satu
Small-scale fish processors (traditional smoked skipjack tuna)	Kel. Girian Atas
Small-scale fish processors (katsuobushi, dried shredded tuna, fish ball)	Kel. Papusungan, Kel. Batu Lubang, Kel. Pasir Panjang, Kel. Pintu Kota (in Lembeh Island) Kel. Sagerat
Large-scale fish processors (fresh, frozen, and canned tuna)	Kel. Aertembaga Satu Kel. Girian Bawah

Kel. is an abbreviation of kelurahan, the lowest level of government in urban areas.

**The Oceans and Fisheries Partnership (USAID Oceans)**, a partnership between the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), is working to strengthen regional cooperation to combat IUU fishing, promote sustainable fisheries, and conserve marine biodiversity in the Asia-Pacific region. The backbone of the program is the development and implementation of country-specific, financially sustainable Catch Documentation and Traceability (CDT) system. This CDT system will be integrated with existing government systems, will also incorporate human welfare data elements, and will be demonstrated within an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) framework.

**For More Information**, contact [info@oceans-partnership.org](mailto:info@oceans-partnership.org) or:

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