

# WOMEN'S ROLES IN FISHERIES: CHANGES TO IMPROVE THEIR FUTURES

The Pacific Islands  
*The importance of marine resources, and women's roles within the fisheries.*

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Policy Options  
*Policy options that can be implemented to help women's status in fisheries*

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The important role women play within fisheries is illustrated in the Pacific Islands, where marine resources are a vital part of their social and economic development. The coastal and marine ecosystems of the Pacific Islands region are extremely important for sustaining the livelihood of local people by providing food and nutritional security. It is estimated that this region provides about 60% of the global tuna provisions for canning and 30% of the tuna for the Japanese sashimi market. While cultural problems such as subordination in family spheres, poor working conditions and pay in tuna canneries and the threats from foreign fishing vessels endangers women's abilities to contribute to a household income, policy changes could improve the conditions for women in fisheries. Even with the assistance from NGOs to revitalize community based fisheries management systems, women are not included in negotiations. Improving the status of women in the Pacific Island fisheries is crucial to the ongoing venture to increase global awareness of women's roles in the fishing industry. Several policy options that can be implemented to improve the role of women in the fisheries are suggested.



*Throughout the world, women play a crucial role in fisheries; however, this is not widely acknowledged. With the provided policy suggestions implemented, women would be able to have a influential role in the management of fisheries, while contributing to household income.*



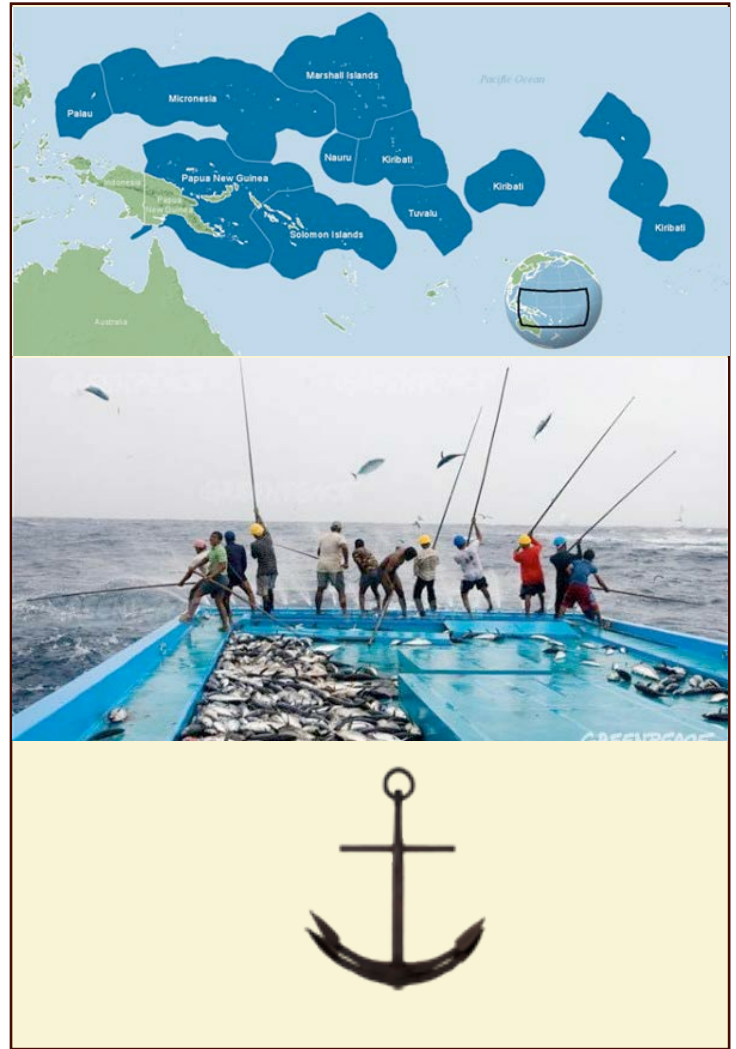
# WOMEN'S ROLES IN FISHERIES

In order to initiate regional change concerning women's positions within fishing communities and tuna fisheries in the Pacific Islands, women must be included in local, regional and national associations. The ultimate goal is to have local female representatives in higher-level decision making bodies within the fishing sector. This will create regional and even international changes that will give women power in determining the type and nature of fishing rights that should be implemented. Potential changes that could achieve this include:

The creation of a Code of Practice: this would include an agreement that all vessel crew and operators must abide by as part of conditions for fishing access agreements. The ability to use ports and fishing areas will be contingent on this. This would regulate the foreign vessel crews that are the cause for the spread of STDs/HIV among local women.

The formulation of workshops on seaweed and pearl farming or coral planting to encourage alternative livelihoods for women. This would provide them with healthier working conditions and a income, without subjugating them to the male-dominated fisheries and unhygienic working conditions.

The creation of positions for women in regional groups, such as the Representation at the Forum Fisheries Committee, the regional decision making body on tuna, will have a greater impact on fisheries policy decisions regarding the role of women in local fisheries.



Sources: Bidesi-Ram, Vina.  
*Development of Marine Resources,  
Fisheries Policies and Women's Rights  
in the Pacific Islands*

In order to change the roles women play in fisheries in the Pacific Islands, the notion that women are not important stakeholders needs to change. By coordinating women's groups, NGOs, and regional fisheries management into partnerships which are focused on a common goal, they will be able to more effectively sway higher-level decision makers. The best option to implement the above mentioned policy selections, is by consulting the regional fisheries management, The Representation at the Forum Fisheries Committee and first establishing local women as representatives. With local women as collective voices, the influence and awareness they can bring to the international community on the role women play in fisheries can be brought to light.