



BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP IN THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR

Lessons Learnt from the Fish for Food Project Interventions in the Eastern and Luapula Provinces of Zambia.

2019 - 2024

PUBLICATION DETAILS

Background:

The “Fish for Food Security in Zambia Project” (F4F) is implemented by GIZ under the Special Initiative “Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems” (SI AGER) of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and part of the Global Programme “Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture”. It is among seven country packages implementing projects in the field of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture with a focus on artisanal practices. In Zambia, the F4F project is part of the Agriculture and Food Security (Agrifood) cluster, which comprises 11 projects implemented by GIZ, with the vision to shape a future with thriving livelihoods and food and nutrition security in rural Zambia.

Funder: Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)



Objective:

F4F has been working in Luapula, Eastern and Lusaka provinces to:

- Increase sustainable aquaculture production
- Strengthen effective fisheries management for small water bodies
- Establish policy frameworks as well as sustainability

Project Partners: The project partnered with the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MFL)



Design: Agricomm Media & Nzinzi Communications



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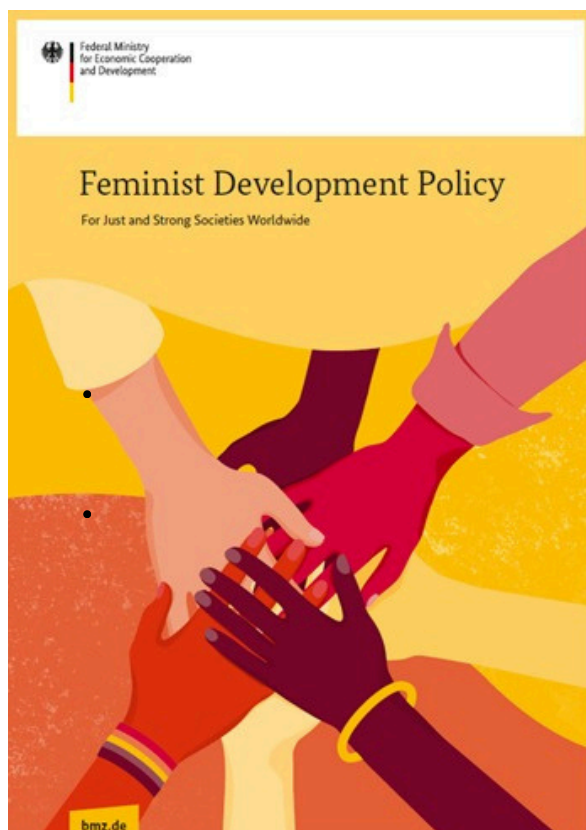
Fish for Food Security in Zambia Project (F4F)

Who are we?

The GIZ "Food for Security in Zambia Project" (F4F) is part of the Special Initiative "Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems" and part of the Global Programme "Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture". It is among 7 country packages implementing in the field of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.



Summary/Preface



In line with the German Feminist Development Policy, which was launched in September 2022, F4F has been ensuring that all actors of the value chain, regardless of their different origin, sex, age and disability are equally included in the project's activities.

This booklet outlines specifically the strategies and actions undertaken by the F4F project to promote gender inclusion during its implementation. It aims to offer insights and recommendations gathered from the project's experiences to facilitate equitable development in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Additionally, it serves as a resource for other similar projects.



Introduction

Background of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector in Zambia.

Fisheries and aquaculture provide employment and livelihood for both men and women. In Zambia, the fisheries subsector is projected to contribute about 0.4% to the agriculture sector (Central Statistics Office, 2014) and that it supports around one million people both directly and indirectly (DOF, 2014).

The consistent growth in fisheries and aquaculture production in recent years has made the sector a more prominent and significant source of employment. The sector directly employed more than 128,000 people as estimated in 2019, with nearly 93,000 engaged in inland fisheries.

Why this booklet?

In spite of the recorded growth in the sector, it is still riddled with structural barriers and cultural beliefs that limit equal gender participation and full development of the sector. Designed for project planners, implementers, and policymakers, this booklet serves as a resource for infusing a gender perspective across all stages of the project cycle. Whether in the planning phase or during implementation, it provides actionable insights to create more equitable and impactful outcomes. As you read this booklet, you will discover lessons learnt from the F4F project in trying to navigate its way towards a more inclusive fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Gender Norms and Gender Transformative Approaches

Gender norms describe how we are expected to behave as a result of the way we or others identify our gender. They often reflect and reinforce unequal gender relations, usually to the disadvantage of women and girls. Gender norms intersect with other norms and inequalities related to age, race and ethnicity, class disability, sexual orientation and religion among other factors. Gender shapes how individuals interact and access opportunities to participate in development initiatives. Understanding these dynamics is imperative to ensuring equitable reach, effectiveness and inclusivity of interventions.



Gender Transformative Continuum

The Gender Transformative Continuum is a framework designed to assess how development initiatives incorporate gender considerations. The spectrum ranges from approaches that perpetuate harmful gender norms to those that acknowledge and address gender differences, and ultimately to those that aim to challenge and reshape the underlying structures and power dynamics that contribute to gender inequality.

Understanding the Gender Transformative Continuum.



Gender Discriminatory

Causes harm and implies risk



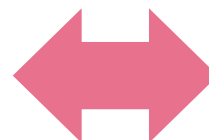
Gender Blind

Ignores and works around existing gender inequalities; possibly perpetuates them



Gender Sensitive

Considers gender inequalities



Gender Responsive

Strengthens gender equality



Gender Transformative

Changes gender norms and power relations

Gender Approaches

The gender continuum offers a broad view of how gender is addressed in a project, while the gender approaches—Exploitative, Accommodative, and Transformative—add clarity and depth to the organization's approach. This combination helps organizations better define their strategies for implementing gender-sensitive initiatives, with the continuum highlighting gender consideration and the approaches focusing on the nature of project interventions.

Exploitative:

Initiatives that exploit existing gender inequalities and reinforce stereotypes in achieving their goals. Instead of addressing gender inequalities, they perpetuate them. For instance, a program that assigns women to cook during meetings while men handle decision-making reinforces traditional gender roles instead of promoting equity.

Accommodative:

Initiatives that recognize and work within existing gender norms and inequalities but stop short in addressing the root causes of inequality or altering power dynamics.

Transformative:

Initiatives that seek to challenge and fundamentally change the underlying social norms, power structures and systemic barriers that perpetuate gender inequality. The aim is to promote equitable relationships and empower all genders by addressing the root causes of disparities.

Quadrant of Change

To drive gender-inclusive and sustainable change in communities, it is essential to address four key dimensions: personal, relational, structural, and cultural. Efforts toward gender equality must engage with these interconnected areas throughout the change process to effectively promote lasting transformation, particularly in rural settings.

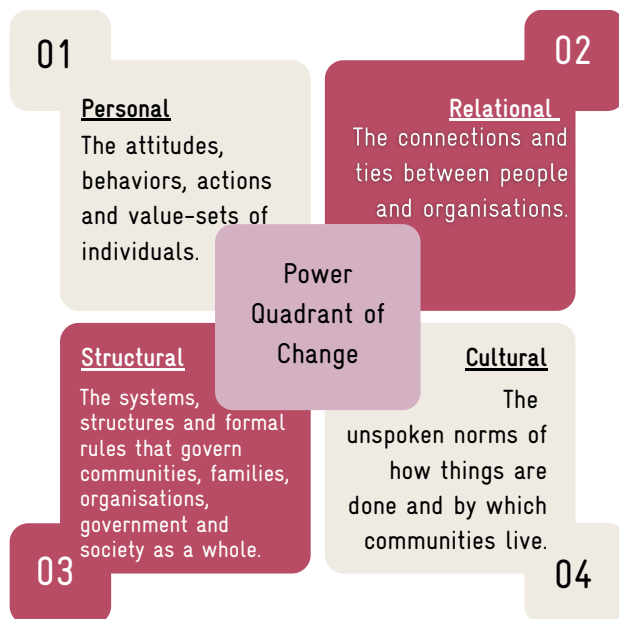


Diagram adapted from "Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring, and Learning Toolkit" by J.P. Lederach, R. Neufeldt and H. Culbertson (2007)

The following guiding questions can help to ensure a holistic approach to foster change and effectively address each dimension.

Personal level: What are the individual needs and concerns that affect the various genders?

Relational level: What are the communication channels that currently exist in the community?

Structural level: What technologies, innovations and tools can be introduced to facilitate structural change that promotes equal access to opportunities and full gender participation? Analyze the existing structures, roles and processes to support the change.

Cultural level: What strategies can be used to promote a culture that supports and sustains positive change?






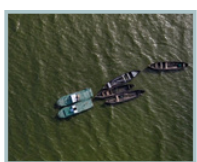

As in many other countries, Zambian rural households are characterized by strong division of tasks between men and women. To get a better understanding of the respective roles of men & women in the value chain, a value chain analysis with a focus on gender roles was conducted in 2022 by the F4F project. This study took place in Eastern and Luapula province and enabled the project to find out/confirm several cultural beliefs, challenges and structural barriers.



CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL BELIEFS

- **Gender Roles in Fishing and Fish Farming:** Men are primarily engaged in fishing and fish farming, while women take on post-harvest roles, such as smoking, salting, and drying fish. Women also dominate fish retailing, marketing, and selling.
- **Income Disparities:** Cultural and societal expectations limit women's time and mobility, as they are often responsible for household duties and face safety concerns when traveling to sell fish. This restricts their income-generating opportunities compared to their male counterparts.
- **Resource Management and Decision-Making:** Men predominantly control resource management, with women underrepresented in decision-making bodies like Dam Management Committees (DMCs), reflecting broader gendered power dynamics in land and resource ownership.
- **Barriers to Fish Farming:** Fish farming is viewed as a male-dominated activity due to the significant financial and physical barriers, such as the cost of pond construction, making it difficult for women to participate fully in this sector.

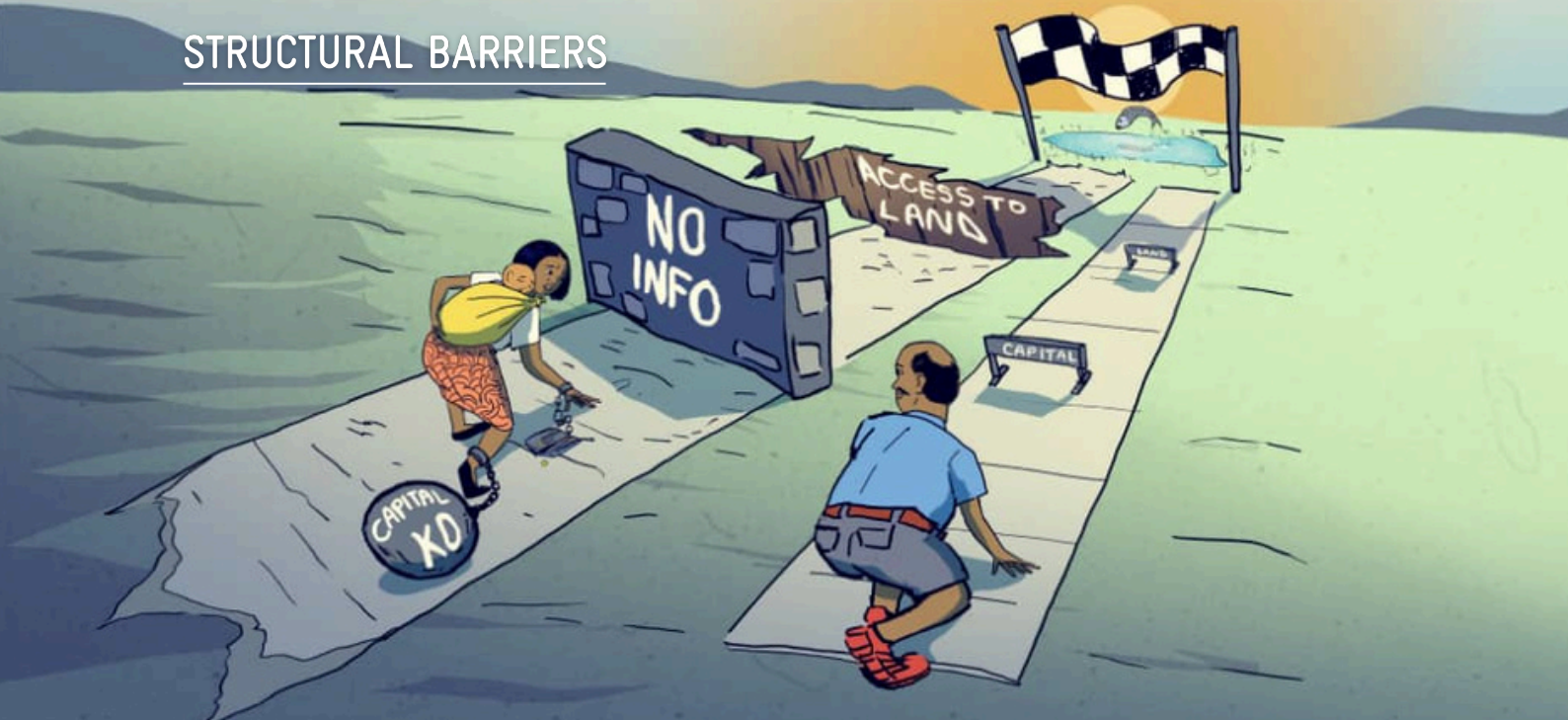
Status Quo: Fish value chain in Luapula and Eastern Province & Women Participation.

Value Chain Category.		% Involvement of women.	Actors
Fishers & Fish Farmers		8.5%	Individual fishers, fish farmers, group of fishers.
↓			
Processor		62.5%	Individuals, fishers and households.
↓			
Trader/ Wholesale		46%	Traders, wholesalers, brokers and commercial agents.
↓			
Transport		4%	Traders and logistic suppliers.
↓			
Retailer/ Wholesale		62.5%	Women vendors, retailers and local fish farmers.

NOTE:

As we can observe, female participation at producer level is minimal with only 8.5 %. However, most of them are present at processing and retailing levels.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS



Ownership of land and other assets: Zambia's land is divided into state land and customary land. Although the constitution guarantees gender equality in land access, this isn't upheld on customary land, covering 94% of Zambia. Here, discrimination against women persists, fueling ongoing cycles of vulnerability and discrimination.

Access to information: Women in rural areas are often facing difficulties to access information about fish farming and fishing. Technical information from trainings is often limited due to meeting logistics and timing, limited awareness of the importance of their participation, and the influence of traditional gender roles stating that aquaculture and fishing are not traditional female activities. Additionally, female-led households often lack assets such as radios through which they could acquire information.

Access to capital and micro-loans: Women-led businesses commonly face limitations in obtaining finance and capital. These challenges stem from lower levels of education and financial literacy, influenced by social and cultural norms, including traditional gender roles prioritizing domestic responsibilities.

LIFTING THESE BARRIERS AT EACH IMPLEMENTATION STAGE.

Some of the Structural barriers are but not limited to:

Monitoring

- Monitoring specifically females' improvement.
- Increase follow up on the households and female farmers
- Give them room to express themselves.

Sensitization

- Shape the message and the format towards a wide public including traditional leaders, women, youth and households.

Planning

Life-Cycle

Advertisement of Success Stories

- Inclusion of female oriented stories.

Training

- Invite more females.
- Adjust the location timing and logistics.
- Include examples targeting females and households.



BEST PRACTICES FOR GENDER INCLUSION IN ALL PROJECT PHRASES

To effectively promote gender inclusion, it is essential to integrate gender supporting activities into projects from the very beginning. Also one has to understand the community dynamics and relationships, whether they are patriarchal or matriarchal.

F4F addressed this by:

- 1. Conducting Baseline Studies:** These studies mapped and analyzed existing community structures and gender dynamics, revealing gaps in gender equality.
- 2. Developing a Gender Strategy:** This strategy serves as a roadmap, guiding the project's activities and initiatives to address gender-related issues.
- 3. Incorporating Gender Considerations in Planning:** By using leading questions during the planning phase, F4F ensured that various gender aspects were considered and addressed.

For a good planning, one should:

- Ensure equal access to services for all stakeholders
- Use gender sensitive language in their communication
- Promote gender aspects in the implementation of the project
- Evaluate and best practices for capacity development for all stakeholders

Results

1. Inform about local beliefs, customs to ensure the intervention is targeted and adequate for the given setting e.g. seating arrangements differ according to the regions.
2. Develop a gender strategy.

Sensitization

To ensure equal access of information to all stakeholders, the project implemented some specific strategies during sensitization campaigns.

- Meetings that were primarily attended by men were systematically reorganized for females exclusively, ensuring that female value chain actors also had access to important information.
- Sensitization efforts were conducted in places frequented predominantly by women, such as markets and pediatric hospital sections
- Strategical design of sensitization communication tools to reach a broad audience. This included utilizing various platforms such as newsletters, radio broadcasts, digital media, and booklets to maximize outreach and impact.





Gender Empowerment Trainings.

For the training topics to be shared smoothly among the stakeholders three methodologies were adopted during trainings.

- The use of games to challenge and overcome gender-related stigma on topics related to fisheries and aquaculture. Games like power walks can demonstrate the gender gaps effectively in a sector.
- The involvement of participants at household level for example in cooking demonstrations and fish farming trainings.
- Encouragement of women to take the lead in planning and implementation of community activities, thus challenging gender norms.

Radio trainings for equal access.

Radio training sessions were conducted for all participants, including value chain actors (such as fish sellers, traders, and marketers) as well as interested farmers, across all intervention districts. By reducing logistical constraints, the project successfully closed the information gap for beneficiaries.

Results

- Through the distribution of solar-powered radios loaded with pre-recorded sessions, more women were able to access the needed information on aquaculture, fisheries entrepreneurship without stopping their lucrative activities. Radio listening groups in the local areas would meet at their convenience and listen and debate on the different subjects.
- Through the same radio listening groups, more male could also access information on nutrition, leading to them being able to appreciate nutrition requirements of the different members in their household.

Ensuring equal representation in local structures.

To ensure equal representation of women in local Dam Management Committees (DMCs), F4F encouraged and supported the restructuring of DMCs to incorporate a minimum of 30% representation of women. Given the multi-purpose use of the dams – for washing, drinking, and home gardening – women's involvement in the DMCs is crucial. Their participation has heightened awareness among female community members and contributed to practical improvements such as the reduction of water pollution from soap.

In addition, women took up roles in fisheries management activities such as tablet-based monitoring and patrols, which gave them more visibility and contradicted the belief that fisheries management can only be done by males.

Results

Some women have taken up executive roles in the DMCs.

Female DMC members lobbied for verbal (free of charge) licenses and permits for women and children who fish using a hook and line, primarily for home consumption.



Logistics were adapted to local needs to ensure equal access to trainings:

- ▶ **Location:** Trainings were held close to communities, such as at pond sites in Luapula Province and dams in Eastern Province, reducing travel time and improving participation.
- ▶ **Timing:** Sessions were scheduled after daily chores, between 10:00 and 15:00, with a lunch break at 13:00.
- ▶ **Lunches:** In areas with limited catering options, local women were recruited to cook, boosting their involvement.
- ▶ **Childcare:** The same women who cooked sometimes provided childcare.
- ▶ **Participation:** Trainings featured group discussions and alternating male and female presenters.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Tailor made follow up to breach the gender gap.

To support the application of training content, F4F conducted quarterly follow-up visits in both small groups and one-on-one sessions. During these visits, farmers received refresher courses and guidance on financial literacy, as well as the importance of involving spouses or children in farm management. To promote sustainability, husbands were particularly encouraged to make joint decisions with their spouses on farm management.

Results

Women's participation in pond management training led to greater involvement in managing family-owned ponds, as indicated by their feedback during monitoring.



Fish for Food Security Project collecting information from the farmers

Success

Changing the narrative in the aquaculture and fisheries sector



- Success stories help to motivate engagement of women in the sector
- Monitoring progress of women owned fish farms
- Highlighting the achievements and contributions of women in the fish value chain
- Actively seeking out and showcasing stories of women who have made significant impacts at both household and community level through fish farming



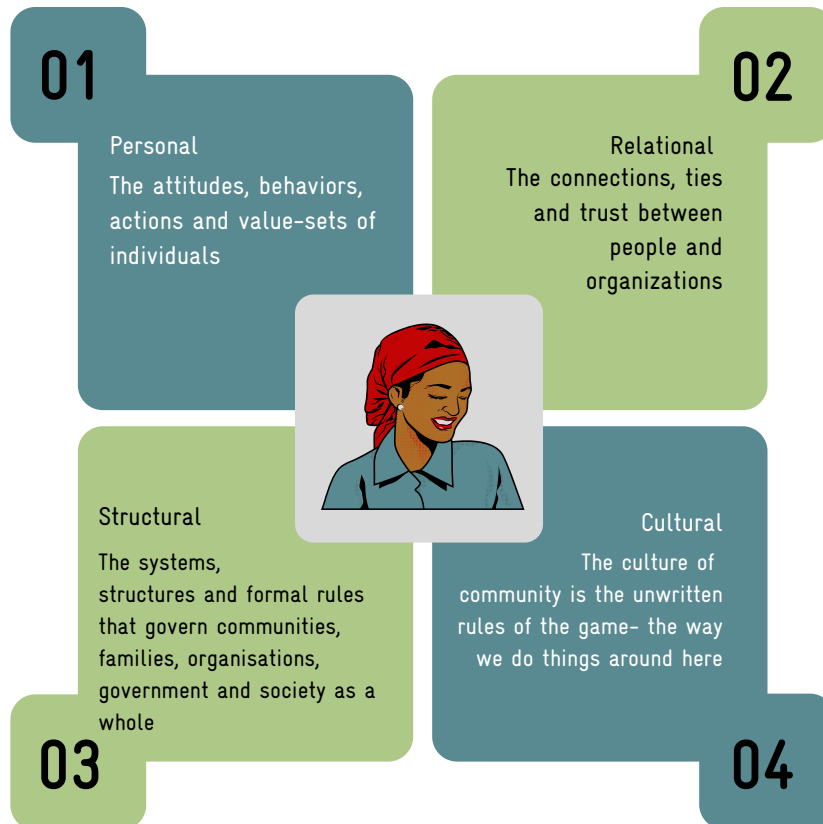
Picture Focus: Mr and Ms . Manta collecting some fish from their pond



Key achievements

Through its activities, F4F achieved successes in following fields:

- ✓ **Personal attitudes:** More women took up fish farming and leadership positions in the DMCs. Men became more involved in the nutrition of their household.
- ✓ **Relational attitudes:** Encouraging collaboration through joint planning and decision-making processes in fish farming activities, fostering a more inclusive and cooperative approach among all participants.
- ✓ **Societal structures:** Women are increasingly integrated into local co-management structures as members and in leadership roles, enabling them to influence and shape community activities actively.
- ✓ **Cultural aspects:** Through its sensitization efforts, the project contributed to challenging myths and shifting beliefs.





References

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