Putting Gender Equality on the Seafood Industry’s Agenda

Results of a Global Survey
July 2018

Authors
Natalia Briceño-Lagos
Marie Christine Monfort
International Organisation for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI)

WSI’s objectives are to highlight women’s contribution to the seafood industry and raise awareness of gender issues in the seafood industry.

About the Authors

Natalia Briceño-Lagos

Natalia Briceno-Lagos is a WSI consultant. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in France. She is part of the Social Inequalities Research Team from the Centre Maurice Halbwachs in Paris. Since 2011, she has been studying the social impacts of the salmon farming industry in the Chiloé Island in Chile. Her dissertation is a monographic research which focuses on how work life and family life gets to be articulated by female and male workers from the salmon processing industry. Her fieldwork interests rely on how the Chilean salmon industry ups and downs display a unique description on the setting operation of economic modernization and fulfil exceptional local conditions to study families and women’s arrangements regarding employment and work changes.

Marie Christine Monfort

Marie Christine (MSc Economics NHH, Norway) is an international seafood market analyst with a lifetime experience in the seafood industry. In the past years she turned her attention to the social dimension of gender relations in her industry. She is the author of FAO report “the role of Women in the seafood industry” (2015). In 2016, she co-founded the International Organisation for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI), open to all those wishing to participate to the social modernisation of the industry through the promotion of gender equality.
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Sponsors support the work of WSI in its effort to raise awareness on gender issues in the seafood industry but they cannot be held responsible for the content of the document.
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Foreword

Quantitative studies tell us that globally women represent 50% of all seafood workers and that female workers are consistently over-represented in low skilled, low paid, low valued positions, remaining mostly absent at the other end of the value chain. Research data also tells us that high-powered positions are to a large extent occupied by men. The gender division of labour in this industry is heavily unbalanced which is a critical problem and an important challenge for the industry.

This problem has gradually grown in visibility in the past two years, although it has not found a way to become a priority on the agenda of fisheries and aquaculture businesses. Based on this observation, the International Organisation for Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI) was founded in 2016 to bring the gender (in)equality discussion to seafood stakeholders.

In the “Gender on the Agenda” survey we ask male and female seafood professionals to express their views and talk about their experience of the situation from a gender point of view, and if and how changes could be driven. If this survey has only one goal, it is to help and support that changes happen.

We recall that some 20 years ago, proven data showed that globally marine resources were in a critical state. Marine scientists and some people in the fishing industry warned fishing communities about this alarming situation; however a majority of stakeholders preferred to close their eyes. Today ignoring environmental sustainability is no longer an option for responsible stakeholders.

As it has happened for environmental issues in the past decade, we believe that alleviating gender inequalities will soon occupy a full chapter in corporate social responsibility reports made by those operating in the seafood business and will have to be taken into account by professional associations. We also believe that it will no longer be ignored.

We express our warmest thanks to all 700 respondents, who took time to reply to the questionnaire enabling us to benefit from their experience through detailed remarks, precise observations and encouraging comments. We hope that this report will help us all to pursue the work needed to make the seafood industry an inclusive equitable place for both genders.

Marie Christine Monfort
WSI Co-founder & president
Summary

During autumn 2017, 700 seafood professionals agreed to share their perception on the situation of women at their workplace and in their industry in general. Their precise answers and enlightening comments were analysed to produce this exploratory survey which fills in some knowledge gaps, feeds the debate and identifies new avenues to address the challenge.

Not gender equitable

One seafood professional in two (56%) admits that this industry is not equally attractive and equitable to both genders. The percentage of women reporting inequality is much higher at 61% compared to 38% among men. Answers range from 50% in the NGO sector to 64% in the fishing industry. Differences by continent are wider, with a 24 point difference between South America (64%) and Scandinavia (40%), the latter being the only region where positive opinions outweigh negative ones.

The survey has evidenced gender-based discrimination at work, unfavourable working conditions, strong prejudices and unequal opportunities for women. These barriers do not operate separately from each other; rather they stimulate each other and form a vicious circle that shapes gender characteristics and interactions among professionals in the seafood industry. Consequently, as a majority of respondents reported: these hurdles make this industry unattractive to women, mainly for those who have the capacity to choose among different professional environments.

Much room for progress…

This 2018 panorama of gender equality in the seafood industry is at the same time gloomy and promising. Responses to the survey confirm what had been evidenced elsewhere: no activity is free from gender discriminations, stereotypes and imbalanced working opportunities. Gender inequality is pervasive and not yet on the agenda of a great majority of seafood leaders, offering per se room for progress.
...and the right context to start it

Gender inequality is an unfair fact. However it won’t be able to resist progressive laws, positive dedicated mainstream programmes in public and private sectors, and an evolution process of seafood leaders’ mind-sets. Under the combined pressure of calls for progress from intergovernmental institutions, justifiable requests from a growing number of women, the pressure of dedicated NGOs, and last but not least the positive influence of gender sensitive and responsible companies, this industry can no longer ignore the issue.

Based on responses to the questionnaire, this study has identified three steps which could work efficiently to break the vicious circle of gender inequality in the seafood industry: raising the consciousness of all stakeholders of what is at stake, engaging men in this progressive conversation, and create opportunities for such dialogue on gender equality among all stakeholders to happen. Readers of this report may consider implementing dedicated actions to tackle the issue in their institution, company or association.

- Since changes will not happen by accident, and as there are no quick fix solutions, **making this issue emerge in order to raise awareness** is an indispensable step in stimulating consciousness of gender issues. This can take multiple forms. And in this respect, the media, event organisers and others influential stakeholders in the business can contribute by doing their bit.

- **As men are in the best position to influence** the business environment it is essential to bring them into the conversation. Interestingly enough, when we talk about this subject to male executives, we note a clear difference in their reaction depending on their personal situation: if they have close female relatives in the industry such as daughters, they are more likely to be open to the discussion. The subject definitely needs to be removed from the personal sphere. Whether they are fathers or not, male leaders need to understand the benefits of changing the paradigm. This challenge should not be viewed as a women’s own issue but as a gender issue where balanced relationships between the two genders in a progressive environment is at play.

- **Inequality is not an irremediable curse**: in order to stimulate changes to happen, dialogues on gender equality in the seafood industry should be stimulated to create consciousness, to bring information, to share good practices and stimulate progressive initiatives. All stakeholders including international organisations, national institutions, private corporates, professional associations, trade unions, NGOs need to be around the table and address the gender equality issue in a pragmatic and constructive way. During these large scale projects, bridges with more advanced industries will be built.
Key concepts

GENDER
This is a relational concept which refers to a social construct base in how women and men relate. Thus gender is expressed in behaviours, roles, social status and rights (legal and real) of women and men as organised and justified by society on the basis of biological differences between the sexes. This social arbitrariness is often unfavourable to women and produces discrimination and inequalities based on gender. It is a tool for analysing the sexual division of society and for identifying the factors that influence, often differently, the conditions of access of women and men to resources (income, employment, public space, governance etc.) in a given context.

PROFESSIONAL GENDER EQUALITY
This concept refers to situations when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities in their workplace environment throughout their professional occupation. Gender equality envisages having rights and responsibilities that do not depend on a person’s sex.

EQUITABLE
A principle that offers the same treatment, the same opportunities and advancement for all people. This operates at eliminating barriers. Tackling equity issues requires awareness of discrimination and understanding of its causes.

DIVERSITY
The concept of diversity in professional environments refers to integration by hiring people in order to avoid a risk of discrimination bias that could be related to origins, sexual or gender orientation, or disability.

GENDER DIVERSITY
It also includes gender diversity in sectors which are dominantly male or female. With equal proportions of men and women the seafood industry may be said to be gender diverse.

INCLUSION
Inclusion is getting diversity to work well together. Inclusion is where individuals having differences such as gender are equally treated. Creating a gender inclusive environment is a sizeable challenge to most seafood companies.
Patriarchy
A social system where men hold power over women. This pervasive organisation of society holds a tacit domination of men in all cultural, social and economic spheres of the society.

Sex
refers to the biological differences between male and female.

Gender Stereotypes
Deeply held beliefs regarding attributes and capacities of men and women, usually accompanied by various preconceived assumptions.

Sustainability
Probably the most cited concept by seafood stakeholders. It has been understood as “environmental sustainability” or what is one of the major goals (SDG 14) set by the United Nations. It calls for careful management of marine resources. Yet sustainable development includes three interconnected domains: environment, economic and social.

The social pillar of sustainability which has received less attention than the environmental and the economic ones includes gender equality and the empowerment of women (SDG 5 for the UN).

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1 On September 25th 2015, countries adopted 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.
1. Women in Seafood: a Major and Intensive Contribution

1.1. A Women Intensive Industry

It is estimated that the fisheries and aquaculture sector provides direct employment and revenue for 200 million people [Worldbank 2012]. When we consider the entire industry and all workers throughout the value chain, global disaggregated figures confirm that one in two seafood workers is female [World Bank, 2012]. Examination of segments in the value chain reveals very diverse situations.

Women accounted for more than 15 percent of all those directly engaged in the fisheries primary sector in 2012 with the percentage exceeding 20 percent in inland water fisheries [FAO 2014]. These figures probably do not include women occupied in gleaning of molluscs, crustaceans, small fish, algae in the intertidal zone, in shallow waters, and on reefs. Despite some marginal initiatives, their number, activity and fishing effort remain largely ignored. Women dominate in the labour intensive processing industry, representing 85% to 90% of the total workforce worldwide [World Bank 2010, FAO 2012]. The rate varies by country, from 56% in Europe [STECF 2012] to 90% in shrimp processing in India [Dhanya 2013].

Women also play a crucial role in aquaculture with some 70% of total labour globally. The rate ranges from 17% in trout and salmon farming in Norway [Statistics Norway 2016], 20% in Europe and in Africa, 30% in salmon farming in Chile, 50% in Zambia, and 72% in Asia [FAO 2014].

In all these segments women are everywhere but “absent from decision making processes” [Monfort, 2015]. Several studies confirm this finding occurring in different cultural areas. Harper qualifies the participation of women at decision-making level in fisheries as “minimal” in four out of the five countries studied (Peru, Mexico, South Africa and Vietnam) [Harper et A. 2017]. Baelde drew the same conclusion for France in 2017 [Baelde 2017]. Describing the situation in aquaculture, Williams and Brugere explain “In medium and industrial scale aquaculture, women are at the lower end of the pay scale or unpaid. As production intensifies, women’s engagement drops. They rarely become managers”. [Williams, Brugere 2017].
1.2. A “Male Dominated Industry”

The seafood industry typified as “male dominated” by its own participants denotes its gender based hierarchical construction with a strong majority of top decision making positions in the hands of men. In other words a male dominated industry means that it is run mostly by men. According to WSI’s calculation based on corporate websites and Bloomberger’s data bank, over half (54%) of the 67 top seafood companies are run exclusively by men, with no woman as director or board member. In the same sample men occupy 90% of all directorships [WSI 2017]. A woman chosen as CEO is a very rare occurrence. In 2015, only one company out of the 100 world’s largest seafood companies was run by a female CEO [WSI 2016].

In international conferences, where seafood professionals are offered opportunities to provide credentials on their expertise, the ratio of males-to-females making presentations is highly unbalanced. Over the past 12 months across the 20 conferences analysed only 20% out of a total of 820 speakers were women [WSI 2018].

When in 2015 Intrafish international seafoodwebzine started putting together a special collection of interviews of women it was clearly to focus the spotlight on unknown qualified professionals at management level. Similarly in late 2017 thefishsite.com started interviewing women in aquaculture. In both cases women were asked these questions: Have you faced any particular challenges as a woman in aquaculture? [Thefishsite.com 2018] or If there was one thing you could change to make the industry a better place for women workers what would it be? What was the dumbest advice a man in the seafood industry had ever given you? [Intrafish 2015]. It is of interest to note that a man has never been asked how is it for a man to work in the seafood business environment. These initiatives prompted by two specialist media organisations implicitly corroborate that not only have women remained invisible but that they endure different situations compared to men. Globally, when FAO, a specialised agency of the United Nations put out a call to “Enhance woman’s role and benefit sharing throughout the aquaculture value chain” [FAO 2018] the organisation explicitly confirms that the reality of distribution of benefits is gender unequal.

Clearly, men and women occupy distinct roles all along the seafood value chain, and are offered different opportunities. Regardless of location or level of industry development or country the distribution of roles, power and profit between the two sexes is dramatically uneven.
1.3. Does the Seafood Industry have a Gender?

CEO, fishermen and board members are all males but there are exceptions. Employees in processing plants, for example shrimp peelers, are female in the vast majority. Why is it that positions at the top of the hierarchy in all segments (fishing, fish farming, fisheries management, research, NGOs) are greatly occupied by men? Does it mean that these jobs require “natural” capacities that the other sex does not have or is it the result of a social construct intertwined in cultural contexts?

The seafood industry characterised by a high number of women, shows a strong gendered vertical division of labour where a majority of women occupy low revenue jobs and where top jobs are occupied by men. The WSI survey is meant to question seafood professionals about how they perceive this pattern, which happens to be universal.
2. Putting Gender on the Agenda of Seafood Industry

2.1. The Survey

Why the survey?

Anthropological and sociological studies worldwide provide evidence of the complexity of gender relationships within seafood related industries, the very multifaceted distribution of roles, power, access to resources and profits between men and women. Existing monographs describing the entire seafood value chain have shed light on sex-related imbalances, discrimination and inequalities. Regrettably this academic corpus of knowledge is still rarely disseminated among policy makers and even less to business leaders. This prompted FAO to commission a study on “the role of women in the seafood industry” to be shared with business stakeholders.

One of the main results of this study was that globally quantitative and qualitative data on women’s participation is sparse, that the understanding of distribution roles by sex is incomplete and that the quality of data is not linked to the level of economic development. “Developing countries such as Senegal and India offer good records because these nations have received the attention of gender sensitive aid development agencies. In contrast, the participation of women in the industry is still poorly documented and researched in most developed countries” [Monfort 2015].

To pursue this dynamic further, the survey “Gender on the Agenda in the seafood industry” was designed by WSI to question both men and women professional participants from small to large scale businesses globally and to collect their perceptions on gender (in)equality, on the gender relations in the industry, on their understandings of specific barriers that women may face and the positive initiatives that have been or could be developed to foster gender equality.

We hope that this exploratory survey will contribute to the filling in of some knowledge gaps, that it will stimulate the debate and open up routes for further investigations.
The method

The survey was created during the Iceland Fisheries Exhibition in September 2017, where 30 face-to-face responses were collected thanks to Carmen González García, Sofía Lorenzo and Mariana Toussaint from the University of Vigo, Spain. What was intended to be a pedagogical tool of limited scope received a very good response from early respondents and was turned into a global survey. Following this rich but still exploratory experience and in order to continue exploring this question, WSI launched an online survey which stayed open from October to December 2017. The questionnaire was therefore translated into Spanish and French and posted on the internet. It was circulated via the WSI network with the support of international webzines: Undercurrent news, Intrafish, Aqua Chile, World Fishing, Seafood Source, Industrias Pesqueras, FIS, Alaska Fish Radio, The Fish Site, Skipsrevyen and Kyst.no.

All respondents were reassured that their participation would be anonymous.

As the questionnaire was disseminated through the internet and publicized through fisheries and social media including twitter it reached those seafood workers who have access to electronic devices and probably may not have reached a large proportion of male and female workers including those who are involved in certain activities such as family based aquaculture, small scale fishing. A majority of respondents therefore are probably occupied in office work.

The goal of this research is to contribute to knowledge and offer a basic understanding of the issue. Its objectives are threefold:

- to collect the perceptions of seafood professionals on the gender division of labour in the seafood industry;
- to detect barriers for gender equality;
- to identify a range of good practices that would support gender equality and to help leaders make the change toward a more gender inclusive industry.

The survey contemplated three main dimensions. At first respondents were invited to describe the segment of the industry he or she works in, the size of their company, the department and position she or he occupies. In a second part, respondents share their views on how their industry considers women and gender issues. Finally the third part focuses on the respondent’s company and how it incorporates gender equality - or not.

Considering that they too are participants in the seafood industry, it was considered important to not only collect women’s voices but also men’s opinions. This methodological choice may be obvious, however we think it is important to underline it because other efforts to collect data about this issue have only been addressed at women. This means that only half the concerns were taken into account and understood. Furthermore, as men hold decision making positions, they would be key to the process if changes are considered to be needed. However getting men’s attention was not easy. After two months and a low percentage of male respondents, WSI advertised the questionnaire specifically addressed at men. In the end, we collected 203 responses from men, i.e. 29%.
Why a worldwide survey?

The stories of fisherwomen from countries as different as Senegal, Palestine, India, Canada, France and Australia, strike us with their similarities of experiences. In all cases, albeit different in many aspects, they had to struggle against gender discrimination, they had to break with stereotypes and to battle to impose their presence [WSI WATCH 2017].

Research has proved that “gaps in salaries, precariousness, female unemployment, segregation of occupation, sexual division of work take different forms according to the country, however they can be found everywhere. In fact, a certain number of hard cores of discrimination exist in all latitudes, even if in very diverse forms.” [Maruani 2014]

In other words, academic studies including those related to fisheries and aquaculture teach us that patterns of hierarchy and patriarchal values are very similar across the world.

Limits of the exercise

As with any device for collecting information, the methodology and the research tools chosen to conduct this study necessarily have their limits. Surveys are only able to collect information “provided in response to only the questions initially foreseen [...] The choices made during the writing of the questionnaire thus determine what aspects of the study objectives will be analysed, as well as how they will be enlightened. These choices also involve, therefore, the nature of the results that can be produced” [Parizot, 2010].

Gender equality is a very complex concept and the global seafood industry involves an infinite array of occupations. The professional areas covered by this survey are vast, diverse, where activities are numerous and regional specificities abound. Notwithstanding how perilous the challenge in tackling this multifaceted issue in such a heterogeneous environment, the large number of responses allows us to consider that this survey is worth sharing. The quantitative method allows responses to be objectified and - after ensuring some conditions - enables comparison. This makes it possible to reinforce the WSI survey conclusions described elsewhere (high gender diversity and great inequality, lack of awareness, specific barriers such as a misogynistic culture) and to suggest new ways forward for greater gender inclusion.
2.2. Respondent Characteristics:

A total of 695 responses were collected, of which 71% from women and 29% from men.

Men 29%  
Women 71%

Responses were collected from all continents, although the geographical distribution of answers could reflect WSI’s network with nearly 50% from Europe.

Fig. 1 Region of respondents’ company headquarters

Employees from all sizes of organisations replied to the questionnaire, with respondents from small companies dominating (219 responses), followed by respondents from large companies (147). However the level of respondents from micro structures is rather low given the prominence of these structures in the fishing and aquaculture sectors.
The seafood industry includes a wide array of businesses, from producers of fish, molluscs, crustaceans and seaweeds, through to processing, professional organisations, public administration and NGOs.

50% of all respondents work in activities adding physical value to the product (fishing, aquaculture, processing, selling/retailing). The other 50% are working on managerial aspects (resource management, policy making, advocacy, etc.) of businesses in private or public services.
NOTE TO READERS

Throughout this report, some qualitative data was used to complement our quantitative results. Respondents could openly and anonymously express their perceptions, opinions or knowledge about gender in their professional environment. This initiative was voluntary since adding comments was not a requirement to submit the survey.

Readers of this report will find those personal comments presented in italics followed by the sex, sector, and the respondent company’s geographical origin (which may or may not be the same as the respondent’s origin). Showing the origin illustrates not just the large array of responses, but also the variety of perceptions of this issue and diverse social realities.

Taking into account that gender is a social construct that varies between countries, opinions on this issue in particular will be influenced by economic, social and cultural contexts. In other words, not all countries are at the same stage on the path to gender equality. For an accurate understanding, we cannot isolate comments presented here from their cultural area or national situation on this matter. For instance, comments from Norway – world leader in gender equality - could not really be compared to those from Chile, where gender issues are addressed much less. In order to better grasp those differences between countries, the table below illustrates the gender inequality index elaborated by the United Nations Development Programme, in a sample list of countries where aquatic industry are important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HDI rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender Inequality Index</th>
<th>Population with at least some secondary education</th>
<th>Labour force participation rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>0.530</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is the ratio of the Human Development Index (HDI) calculated separately for females and males using the same methodology as in the HDI. It is a direct measure of gender gap showing the female HDI as a percentage of the male HDI. The GII is an inequality index. It shows the loss in potential human development due to disparity between female and male achievements in two areas, empowerment and economic status, and reflects a country’s position relative to ideals for the key area of women’s health. Overall, the GII reflects how women are disadvantaged in these areas.
3. The Seafood Industry: Gender Diverse and Unequal

3.1. Gender Diversity, a shared Fact by Seafood Players

Nearly 40% of all respondents who had an opinion on the workforce by sex (96.3% of all), said their companies employ > 50% women in total workforce. As already stated, globally the industry is highly gender mixed with one in two workers being female. 62.4% of all respondents work in companies where women constitute 25% to 80% of the workforce. As it has been said, it is a well-known fact that women are present in large numbers throughout the value chain of the seafood business.

Fig 4. In your company, what would you say is the % of female employees?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>% respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% to 50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% to 80%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;80%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Gender Inequality, a Reality Spread across the Seafood Industry

Of all respondents, 50% declared that they occupied an executive position. Of all women respondents 44% hold an executive position while 66% of men are in this position. Males are more often in power positions compared to their female counterparts.

Fig 5. % of executive respondents

All Men 29%

All Women 71%

Executive Men 66%

Executive Women 44%
Not equally attractive and equitable

More than half of respondents (56%) of both sexes believe that the industry is not equally attractive and equitable. However, 38% consider that the industry is equally attractive and equitable to both genders. A marginal 6% have no idea about this.

Fig 6. Is the seafood industry equally attractive and equitable by sex?

Scandinavia is the region where professionals have the strongest perception of equality and gender fairness, fully coherent with the macro gender inequality index which ranks Denmark, Iceland and Norway at the top of countries closest to full gender equality. This situation is in contrast with the perception in the rest of Europe and North America. Responses from Asia and Oceania were rather positive, although the low number of cases from these continents requires further research in order to draw conclusions. The low number of responses from the Middle East doesn’t allow interpretation either.

Results for developed countries are more informative. First, these are areas with comparatively fewer studies on the subject; secondly differences are noticeable. For example, Scandinavia occupies a special position with positive perceptions higher than negative ones whilst the views of other Europeans and North Americans are not as positive.
If we look at these opposing perceptions according to the size of the companies, the crossing of variables shows that the trend is replicated, which confirms that perception of inequality in this business is pervasive.

This interesting result shows that the intensity of gender related debates is not directly proportional to the percentage of women in the company, but more to gender diversity. In very male dominated businesses, such as fishing, this is not really a subject (only in 25% of companies).

By contrast in companies where women represent 25% to 50% or even more of the total work force the subject is talked about in 40% to 50% of all companies. Thus we could say that gender issues are talked about where there is gender diversity: the higher the gender diversity the more opportunities to discuss about the subject.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of women in the company</th>
<th>% of women as Non-executives</th>
<th>% of women as Executives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% to 50%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% to 80%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;80%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10 indicates that the intensity of the debate on gender equality is not strongly related to the number of women executives within companies.

**Fig 9. Number of companies where >80 % executives are females**

**Fig 10. Gender issues talked about according to % of female executives in the company**

The >80% barre reflects the situation of a low number of respondents <5%.
We know that in some cases, high profile women may adopt a protective attitude and don’t want to address these issues, choosing to assimilate to the dominant male culture. “[…] those who never mention the masculine nature of their work universe have adopted an obvious assimilation strategy (whether at the level of dress code or attitudes and language) which places them clearly on the side of the dominant culture, even if it means disassociating themselves from the category they belong to. The experience of the minority in technical management progressively tends towards invisibility of gender and more than one woman states that she does not think of herself as a woman and “doesn’t ask questions.” […] The weight of acceptance by peers is such that they must show proof of loyalty without overshadowing their colleagues, at the risk of seeing themselves demoted from one day to the next.” [Guillaume, Pochic 2007].

In another set of questions, we asked why companies would not open up the debate. For 39% of all respondents, the absence of discussion is due to the absence of gender inequality i.e. the problem has been solved. This is the opinion of 55% men for 34% women. Of these respondents, 75% originate in developed countries (Europe including Scandinavia and North America), areas where laws, social requests and justice are the most gender sensitive (cf. Gender Inequality Index). Among respondents considering that problems have been solved a majority are women, workers who are directly impacted and the best positioned to perceive changes.

For 60% of all respondents, gender inequality is not recognised, not seen as a priority or as a subject which is too sensitive to talk about.

Globally, a large majority of women and a majority of men consider that the industry is not equitable for both genders.

This result matches exactly the findings of a recent survey carried out by Pews Research in the United States: a 63% majority of women say obstacles continue to make it harder for women than men today, compared with 34% who say that obstacles have largely gone. Furthermore, 56% of men say those challenges have mostly been eliminated. [Fingerhut 2016]

When we explore the situation by sectors in the WSI survey, in all of them except the NGO sector, negative responses saying that the industry is not equitable and equally fair to women outnumber the positive ones. Note a 10 point difference between fishing (not equitable for 64%) and aquaculture (not equitable for 55%).
Unequal and abusive treatment towards women: discrimination and sexual harassment

Discriminations

Discriminations at work being the reason for prompting discussion about gender equality were mentioned by a third (33%) of women and only 8% of men. Here are some women’s testimonies about their own experiences of dealing with discrimination. This shows how this has been operating, forcing women in different sectors and occupations to cope with this unfair reality.
Historically there have been few females in the [fishing] industry, so many of us coming in are younger. This is often used as an excuse for lower roles and not having ideas or actions tackling seriously sexist discrimination at work. Woman, NGO, Europe other than Scandinavia.

When I manage our staff, I often get reprimanded for coming across like a bitch, which is never my tone or the way that I approach our team. But if someone else manages staff under similar situations, they are allowed to be firm and stern and there is no issue. Woman Fishing, North America.

Where I work they are very gender inclusive and it is rarely an issue. But in my position as Director of Special Projects I work with a lot of outside companies in the industry and often experience gender bias when at conventions and even face to face meetings. They often perceive me as less intelligent, having a lack of understanding of the topic, or even as simply being there as eye candy as opposed to holding a position of any authority. The assumption of so many men in the industry that a young woman who takes care of her appearance is little more than an airhead there to look nice is prevalent at many trade shows I have attended. I firmly believe that doing better to highlight strong willed, highly intelligent and up and coming women in the industry would go a long way towards changing that mentality into greater acceptance. It is so much harder for a woman to get ahead when she must also fight against those ideas. If we represented a stronger presence and spoke up more often, those who think women aren’t as important would see that they are wrong in that thinking. But it will take a lot of work. Cultural repression of women being "unfit" to work in a "man’s" position of authority (overall in the industry not office specific). Trading/retailing, woman, North America.

Sexual harassment

12% of women who stated that gender is discussed in their company, referred to sexual harassment.

I am actually filing a complaint with the Attorney General's office due to the lack of capability to handle my sexual harassment claims appropriately during my last tenure. Sexual harassment is still pervasive in office environments of this industry. Woman, Services, North America.

There is a work and sexual harassment committee but this does not solve the problem. Woman, Aquaculture, South America.

There is a need for training on sexual harassment in my company, Woman North America

Sexual harassment is still pervasive in office environments of this industry. Woman, Services, North America

Recently instituted required harassment training (online course). NGO, woman, North America.
We see that most respondents who referred to sexual harassment being a subject addressed by their company are from developed countries. Not being addressed by the company doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist.

On the contrary, sexual abuse in the seafood industry has been regularly denounced by human rights organisations such as National Guestworker Alliance and researchers, in countries regardless of the level of countries’ economic development. Where women workers are made vulnerable by the lack of protective work contracts, where access to fish for female traders is subject to the good will of an officer or a fisherman, abuse of power and exploitation takes the form of sexual misconduct and violence. As Meryl Williams says: “time is ripe for openly addressing exploitation of and violence against women in the fisheries sector” [Williams, M 2017].

**Unequal opportunities for career progression**

For nearly one in two (46%) of female respondents, the main reason for a company to address this issue is the unequal opportunities for career progression for both sexes. A third of all men report the same.

- **At least in North Pacific US fisheries, women have been prominent in participation in areas such as leadership of fishermen's associations and as consultants in logistics, fisheries observer provision and data analysis. Nonetheless they are still under represented in management councils and scientific and industry advisory panels. Man, Research/academic, North America.**

- **The services rendered by women are not recognised in my office by male counterparts. This puts us under a lot of mental pressure and leads to disappointment. The workforce here being male dominated, our issues are being taken care of less and quite often unnoticed. I wish the sector recognises our role and treat us as equal. Woman, Services, Asia.**
Box 1

**Glass ceiling**

Marilyn Loeden! Although this name may not ring a bell you will all have heard of the “glass ceiling”, the expression she first used in the late 70s to express the invisible barrier that prevents women from climbing the hierarchy ladder and succeeding. The introduction of this concept helped the realization that women’s deficiencies were not always responsible for their absence at top management positions; cultural not personal explanations were to blame.

“Numerous research shed light on some of the areas of the “glass ceiling”, consequence of the weight of organisational norms and practices shaping the exercise of these professions that women must confront in these real “male bastions”. Thus all of this research brings us closer to the situation of women in management [...], confronted by formally “neutral” processes (recruitment on the basis of a diploma or competitive examinations, promotion and performance criteria, demands of mobility) but in fact having to submit to masculine or virile cultural “work norms” (total availability, ideal model of manager, [...]) and/or “informal practices” of recruitment and promotion (co-opting process, belonging to networks, support of mentors) which tend in most cases to favour men. The minority situation of some very visible “exceptional women” allows organisations involved to put forward this feminization - and to pride themselves on it - without at the same time threatening the masculine “balance” of the organisation.” [Laufer 2013]
4. **Barriers to Gender Equality**

So far we have been able to establish the nuances regarding the perception of gender inequalities in the industry and identify in which areas this imbalance has been expressed more strongly by respondents. In order to be able to move towards a more just and egalitarian reality between the sexes, it is still necessary to look at and understand other aspects that also nurture this mechanism acting as barriers. Firstly, responses to closed questions as well as comments by seafood professionals make clear that the lack of awareness or misunderstanding of business leaders make this issue a non-issue, invisible to decision takers. Secondly, they show that several management biases are obstructing gender equality.

4.1. **Lack of Recognition**

Survey results show that a large presence of women, which makes for a more diverse working environment, doesn’t necessarily involve a discussion about gender within companies. We specifically ask seafood professionals whether gender issues are talked about in their organisations. “Talked about” could evoke a large array of situations: from informal discussions between colleagues to formal written human resources (HR) policy.

Globally, 58% of all respondents (61% of women and 51% of men) declared that gender issues are not talked about in their organisation.

This varies from 64% in fishing companies to 55% in aquaculture, from 54% in the academic environment to 46% in NGOs.

**Fig 13. To your knowledge are gender issues talked about in your company?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading/retailing</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Association</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Academic</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood processing</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This subject is more an issue in 54% of large sized companies (>500 employees) than in small ones (30%).
For 39% of respondents, this is a non-issue because there is no gender inequality. This could mean that if the problem had existed it would have been solved. This view is shared by a majority of men (55%), although only a minority of women (34%). However, the most frequent response (47%) for explaining the non-existence of this issue in companies was that gender inequality is not recognised. Half the women respondents (52%) believe that this lack of recognition could explain why companies have been silent about this matter. We estimate that this is a major barrier in positioning this matter in the seafood sector.
4.2. Barriers to Positioning Gender Inequality as an Issue

Not seen as a priority

For some respondents, tackling gender inequality – which requires dedicated resources (personnel, training, planning and projections) – is perceived as a non-priority issue. From respondents’ comments we understand that in their choice of social commitments some companies may emphasise some commitments to the detriment of others. For instance, countries like the USA and South Africa have been giving more attention to racial diversity. This clearly responds to population characteristics and concerns that vary between nations:

- Gender inequality is not recognised, more focus on racial diversity, Woman, Public services, North America

- The equity context in marine research in South Africa focuses more on race than gender although gender is part of it. As a result, transformation initiatives in marine research focus on the demographic profile of the scientific cohort ahead of the gender profile only. Best case in this regard is the identification and advancement of black females within marine science at postgraduate level and increasing numbers of black female students coming into our targeted transformation initiatives. Women, Academic institution, South Africa

In the seafood industry in particular, certain issues have been tackled more, such as environmental consequences caused by this business. Nowadays it is unusual to find a seafood company which doesn’t have a Social Corporate Responsibility policy that addresses marine environment protection through a range of precautionary or compensatory measures. In practice, somehow environmental concerns eclipse social issues like gender inequality.

Amongst other elements that could explain why this has not been seen as a priority, we also identified perception on assort of relative lack of compatibility between making a profit and addressing gender inequality. Some of these comments refute the widespread and multi-evidenced idea that gender diversity increases company profits [Catalyst 2007, Mc Kinsey 2010].

- Too busy making profit. Man, Fishing equipment, Scandinavia.

- People are too busy to acknowledge these kinds of issues. Woman, Public services, North America.

- Company is supposed to make profits, not correct inequality. Man, Aquaculture, North America.
In addition, several respondents perceive attention to gender as antagonistic to meritocratic principles where employers’ choices would be objective and governed by the value of the candidate only, regardless of sex. In other words, positive gender discrimination – especially as applied in recruitment processes in order to respect quotas policies – is not necessarily an initiative generally well perceived.

- **Within our company culture, that doesn’t favour men for being men, but men and women for their qualifications, I don’t think focusing on gender is positive.** Woman, Aquaculture, Scandinavia.

- **We focus on competence and personal abilities more than gender.** Woman, Aquaculture, Scandinavia.

- **The issue is about attracting people to the industry per se, not a gender issue.** Woman, Public services, Europe other than Scandinavia.

Meritocratic principles are built on the assumption that objective evaluations are possible. This assumption is highly questionable. Numerous studies have shown that meritocratic practices fail to reach these objective evaluations and that gender norms influence who is considered to be of merit or not [Powell 2016].

**A women’s issue**

Another element reinforcing misunderstandings on this issue is that talking about gender in the seafood industry is still widely understood as a woman’s issue. This means that only women would be concerned in improving equality conditions, with men excluded from the discussion. This lack of concern by men makes them pay little attention to this issue and puts them off understanding their role on this issue. This respondent’s comment clearly exemplifies this lack of concern:

- **Why pursue this (gender equality) if women aren’t interested?** Man, Aquaculture, South America.

In the academic world, gender related researches in the seafood industry are primarily carried out by female social scientists. In the seafood business, meetings at large seafood conferences which address women’s situation are fringe meetings, largely drawing women. For example, the Women in Seafood seminar organised by Intrafish in Seattle in June 2017 brought together 100 high profile women with only a handful of men. The same happened in Bergen in March 2018. The Intrafish-Seafish survey carried out in 2017 was exclusively directed towards women [WSI WATCH 2017]. Out of the 90 specialists who attended the webinar organized by Seafood Source media in June 2018, where the first results of this survey were revealed, only 10% were men.
If we follow the relational aspect in the definition of gender, it is crucial to get men involved in the discussion and to set female-male relationships within a framework of equality. Furthermore, since in the business environment it’s mostly men who are at the top of organisations, they become key agents for change. Gender inequality should not remain a struggle “by women for women” as the UN advocates fiercely in its “HeForShe” campaign.

One respondent precisely underlines this issue:

- We have a women-network, and issues are talked about, we also have a committee discussing this issue. The problem is that men are not involved in the conversation and that the core underlying issues are not solved/dealt with. Woman, Services, Scandinavia.

### 4.3. Barriers Reproducing an Unequal Environment for Women

Analysis of the survey identifies not only elements impeding the positioning of gender equality as an issue within the industry but also underlines barriers which reproduce an existing unequal environment for women.

Top barriers for gender equality include the seafood industry being perceived as “not attractive to women” (80% of respondents) and that there are “too few female candidates” (82% of respondents). However the most frequently cited barrier is “the lack of incentives at school level”.

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**Fig 14. Do any of the following play a role as a barrier to gender equality within the industry?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unconscious bias</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry leaders don’t pay attention to issue</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This industry is not attractive to women</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too few female candidates</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of incentives at school level</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of incentives at school level

Why wouldn’t a woman work in the seafood industry? What would make a young female disinterested in having a career in fish farming, fishing or engineering in a maritime environment?

Strong gender norms and stereotypes prevent educational advisers from orienting potential female candidates towards fishing, fish farming and engineering. These prejudices also prevent school managers from running neutral advertisements that would appeal to both genders, often unconsciously. At the end of the day women are often inhibited about applying for certain specialised training courses.

In 2012, out of 180 students enrolled in the Icelandic School of Marine Engineering only eight women were starting the programme with a mere five studying at the highest level [Willson, 2015]. In Tasmania, women represented 6% of the 6,431 registered to undertake seafood training courses. [Tasmania Seafood Industry Council, 2017]. According to the Norwegian Directorate of Education, in 2017 60 out of 208 students in the fish farming category are young women. In the same year in Norway deep sea fishing attracts even less women, with 8 out of 114 applicants [WSI SEAFOOD WATCH 2017]. In Chile, out of 31,196 women who undertook technical education in 2016, only 273 graduated in a maritime trade (merchant ships, fishery, aquaculture, port operations, merchant ships crew), representing only 0.9% of the total numbers involved in these technical fields. Women represent 38% of alumni of all maritime trades in Chile, signifying that this field is effectively attracting more men (Centro de Estudios MINEDUC, 2016).

Industry leaders don’t pay attention

This item has caught the attention of 76% of respondents (85% male, 73% women). The lack of interest by leaders induces a status quo with no progress in sight. To some extent this remark is encouraging as it suggests that if leaders paid attention, the problem would be solved or at least addressed.

Unconscious bias/ Biased interview process

A large majority of respondents consider that the recruitment process is influenced by unconscious bias. Unconscious gender bias reflects the difference in perceptions and ratings of men and women with identical qualifications (cf. Howard and Heidi Box). Multiple studies have evidenced negative bias against women being evaluated for positions traditionally held by men. This distortion doesn’t come out of the blue and above all it’s far from natural; it is deeply rooted “in our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. We may not even be aware of these views and opinions, or be aware of their full impact and implications” [Equality Challenge Unit, 2016].
Returning to our survey and the seafood industry, a significant number of respondents (71%) recognised that an unconscious bias effectively operates as a barrier to gender equality. It’s important to note that as this is precisely an unconscious bias, it could be expected that respondents, especially men, are not aware of this issue, so this barrier is most likely to be under declared.

- *Male leaders choosing more male leaders over equally or even more qualified women.* Woman, Professional organization/trade union, North America.

- *I think my organization falls well into the category of unconscious bias.* Woman, Research/academics, North America.

- *(We should run) unconscious bias workshop.* Woman, Public services, North America.
When Howard is hired and Heidi is not

In a fascinating book “What works: gender equality by design” in the chapter “Unconscious bias is everywhere” Iris Bohnet, economist, professor at Harvard University and author of numerous articles and books introduces us to Howard and Heidi. These two capitalist entrepreneurs with identical competence and experience were presented to business school and MBA students in an exercise where they were asked to evaluate the two candidates. Howard the male candidate was always picked for being more competent and likable compared to his female colleague. This revealed that the “prototypical leader in the minds of the students is male”. If women like Heidi demonstrate that they can do a “man’s job” they no longer fit the mental model of the “ideal women”. This “gender bias” does not only happen when recruiting top managers but is “everywhere” [Bohnet 2016].

The iconic story of the Boston Symphonic Orchestra offers another telling illustration of recruiters’ decisions. In an attempt to overcome gender-biased hiring, in the late fifties this orchestra asked musicians to audition behind a screen to avoid the jury voting according to sex. In the 70s and 80s most orchestras followed this recruitment procedure and this simple change in selection contributed to a significant increase in the rate of women musicians recruited. “In between the two processes we find awareness, a curtain and the decision based on talent, not on sex” [Goldin, Rouse 2000].
**Working conditions**

“Working conditions not adapted to women” and “unequal opportunities for both men and women” were among the main factors cited for gender segregation. These two important items require explanation. According to comments referring to these two responses we repeatedly find the issue of traditional time allocation between men and women and between working and family work. Since family and children are still mostly associated with women rather than men, this becomes a gender critical issue. Indeed, research has shown that “The more the number of children increases, the more the rate of full time maternal activity decreases. The model of full time work is still strictly masculine.” [De Singly, 2013]

Several respondents mentioned that outdoor seafood jobs do not have “working conditions adapted to women”. The most perfect example of a job “with working conditions not adapted to” women is that of a fisherwoman. These deeply rooted prejudices in most countries, and even taboo in several, are invalidated by numerous experiences as we will see later.

**Lack of women candidates**

For 83% of all respondents the industry is characterised by a lack of female candidates, which would explain part of the gender imbalance. At first sight, this could be perceived as contradictory given the numbers presented in this report about women’s participation in the seafood industry. If women represent about 50% of the labour force, how can we explain this shared perception about a lack of women candidates? As research has shown, women are mostly at the bottom of organisations, occupying low paid and low skilled jobs. So, we can assume that respondents must have been thinking about insufficient numbers of women candidates for executive or top positions. If this is the case, why would executive women not choose the seafood industry? Several hypotheses were implicit in the comments: more highly trained or educated women have more power to choose in which business field they wish to pursue a career, not necessarily attracted to a “male dominant industry”; real and symbolic penalties on maternity or serious difficulties in reconciling work and family life; sexism or silent segregation from a “men’s club” which takes the decisions.

- The great majority of the executive team and most of the staff are still men. We do not have a maternity policy, which nearly deterred me from taking the job at all. Woman, North America.
- Up until the last few months I worked in the for-profit seafood processing sector in an executive position […] I met many individuals who I felt were more receptive and acknowledging [gender inequality] and support me and my position. However, I also met others that were condescending and refused to let me speak or have a seat at the table, even when it was relevant to my role. Woman, NGO, North America.
- Up until the last few months I worked in the for-profit seafood processing sector in an executive position […] I met many individuals who I felt were more receptive and who acknowledged gender inequality and support me and my position. However, I also met others that were condescending and refused to let me speak or have a seat at the table, even when it was relevant to my role. Woman, NGO, North America.
“This industry is not attractive to women”

80% of all respondents (83% men, 79% women) to this question declare that this “industry is not attractive to women” for explaining gender inequality. This response doesn’t come out of the blue.

But where this generally admitted opinion does originate from? Is this a seafood industry specificity? Does it reflect a prejudice or a reality? Propagated by who? By industry’s leaders, by women? Comments in the survey do not explicitly explain this trait but we can relate it to other perceptions been part of this survey results: this industry doesn’t offer equal opportunities to both sexes, and that its image is that of an old-fashioned male environment, with few incentives at school level.

When respondents say this they refer to women who have opportunities to choose this industry versus another and who may contemplate middle to upper management positions. And if this is a reality, it constitutes an acute HR issue.

- Most women are unfamiliar with what opportunities are available hence they don’t look at seafood as a viable occupation. Services, North America, man

- My opinion: This isn’t very attractive work for Icelandic woman, Aquaculture, Scandinavian woman

- Women in professional positions are not paid or valued as much as men. Fishing, North America, woman

The precise question “Do any of the following play a role as a barrier to gender equality?” pointed towards several responses which all received high scores. Moreover respondents were invited to specify other possible barriers. 24% of respondents spontaneously mentioned the lack of role models.

It is not really that surprising that there is a lack of women candidates and women role models with – as we have described - so much discrimination at work, unfavourable working conditions, strong prejudices and unequal opportunities. These barriers do not operate separately from each other; rather they stimulate each other creating a sort of vicious circle that shapes gender characteristics of social ties and interactions among professionals in the seafood industry.
The vicious circle reproducing gender inequalities in the seafood industry

The chain of causes and consequences simplified here appeared clearly in the responses collected throughout the survey. The causes and consequences links are even more complex in reality.
5. Positive Initiatives on the Path to Equality

In the last chapter we reviewed what respondents perceive as the main obstructions to establishing gender equality as company policy. This chapter looks at initiatives suggested by respondents which would be the most impactful in fostering gender equality. We invited them to rank the most effective strategies in opening doors and providing guarantees to women in the industry. In addition to respondents evaluating several options, the survey sought to draw upon respondents’ own knowledge and experiences of initiatives within their company which would improve women’s status and foster gender equality.

5.1. Awareness: First Step for Change

Although gender inequality was recognised as an existing issue by nearly half the respondents, we have just seen that in some companies this is something not even talked about. Even so, gender issues exist and are addressed in 41% of companies of seafood professionals. This is crucial since the first step in making changes is to recognise this issue in order to make it exist among organisations. It could be assumed that the fact that respondents have answered our questions about barriers hampering the path to gender equality is already a form of recognition of this as an issue.

What makes a professional environment favourable to gender equality? According to respondents’ perceptions national laws are definitely considered to play a positive role. Voluntary HR policies and programs set up internally by private companies are also recognised as having a favourable effect.

Institutional commitments lay the groundwork of guarantees

Institutional commitments on gender equality at national or international level may include political strategies, awareness programmes and laws.

National laws have been laying down the grounds for equality over the last decades, in different ways and proceeding at different speeds depending on each individual country. Such initiatives ensure respect of equality as well as creating awareness among employees and citizens. Family policies and the labour code – needless to say with variations between countries - guarantee minimum benefits and rights that must be applied and respected by organisations. Despite these, in many countries there is still a long way to go to ensure women’s basic rights as citizens and workers.

- Women workers are the backbone of the seafood processing industry in Papua New Guinea. The country’s labour policy is quite strong in terms of employment equality. However, (…) there is still a lot of work to do in terms of protecting women’s rights in Papua New Guinea. Fisherman, Asia.
Respondents who participated in the survey are aware of the impact of legal protection and understand that these mandatory measures are playing a role in advancing gender equality.

- There is an instrument that is being applied in relation to the labour climate (SUCESO, Chile). Woman, Public services, South America.

- Recently, there is an initiative by government through the enactment of the Gender Equality Act (203) which calls for equality for men and women in jobs and decision making positions. Woman, Africa.

Some companies could be inspired by the groundwork of compulsory state guarantees to go further and propose a better professional environment for women.

- We comply fully with government policies on employment including maternity leave, minimum pay, etc. and go beyond that by encouraging women employment in all positions. Man, Aquaculture, Asia.

Moreover, “having laws on the books is not the only thing that matters. In many economies a more gender-equitable legislative base may coexist with high gender inequality resulting from poor implementation of the laws, whether due to poor enforcement, poor design or low capacity. Thus for women, laws on paper do not necessarily reflect legal realities.” [FSC, 2016]. Although Iceland first passed legislation on equal pay as early as 1961, this was inefficient in eradicating the gender pay gap: in 2015, women earned 14-20% less than men, according to Statistics Iceland2. In France, the first law referring to “same job, equivalent salary” dates back to 1972; in January 2018, the pay gap between men and women for an equivalent job was still 9%.

**Progressive companies**

Companies which have been playing a role as strategic players in fields like family-work reconciliation could also play a role in matters of gender equality. Research has showed that in countries like the USA, employers are explicitly engaged in working from home employee management – particularly tackling work-family balance – aiming to improve their company’s image and economic profitability. [Ollier-Malalterre, 2007 & 2008, in Lefèvre et al, 2009].

A useful way of evaluating respondents’ own companies on their gender equality “performance” is through comparison with other seafood organisations. Through various ways such as doing business together or attending meetings at international conferences, professionals have the opportunity to meet other managers and learn about how others run their business. WSI survey respondents were rather positive in evaluating their own companies, perceived as more progressive on these matters, whilst they were very critical about the seafood industry as a whole, described as an old fashioned “boy’s club”.

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2 The new law in effect since January 1st, 2018, makes it mandatory for companies and institutions with more than 25 employees to prove that they pay men and women equally for the same job.
• Within our company we give quite good opportunities to women, but the industry at large is still a boy’s club. Woman, Services, North America.

• Most of the people I do work with in the fishing industry are men, so while my workplace is equal, working with outside organizations means working with the "boys' club" in fisheries management and promotion. Woman, Academia, North America.

• Our company is very progressive in terms of hiring and promoting women. The industry as a whole is not. Woman, Fishing, North America

• Where I work they are very gender inclusive and it is rarely an issue. But in my position as Director of Special Projects I work with a lot of outside companies in the industry and often experience gender bias when at conventions and even face to face meetings. Woman, Trading, North America.

From these testimonies, we note that gender (in)equality awareness could be developed through the exercise of comparing the realities of different companies. This is what we like to call “recognition through contrast”, which means evaluating the business environment through a comparative method which stems more from professionals’ subjectivity than from more institutionalised forms of comparison such as rankings. This could show that some companies are more advanced than others on the path to gender equality and these differences could be an opportunity for progressive companies to become “role models” for others in terms of social responsibility actions.

5.2. Initiatives to Get Rid of the Myth of Men’s Jobs

We would like to call here “the myth of men’s jobs” the argument according to which there are jobs that only men can perform. This justification is based on certain qualities that only men are presumed to have, such as physical strength, endurance and courage. This idea is still widespread in many coastal communities around the world. The epitomic and discriminatory picture of the fisherman which supposedly requires physical strength and mental robustness that women don’t possess is still very much alive. Women are discouraged to embrace this job in most if not all countries, even where the industry suffers from labour shortages. Put simply, in the seafood industry the idea persists that some jobs are for men and some jobs are for women. Frequently this job gender segregation is openly expressed when the discussion addresses jobs at the bottom end of the scale in fishing or processing. Some responses we collected echo this belief:

• The fishing vessels are not prepared for two genders. Woman, Fishing, Other countries in Europe.

• Our production is not geared towards women. It is physically very tough and does not suit women. Woman, Processing, Scandinavia.
• More land based positions are made available for women as many fishing vessels are not equipped to accommodate women. Woman, Fishing, Africa.

As we have seen, a large presence of women in companies makes for a more diverse professional environment. However this gender diversity can be based simply on the presence of men and women coexisting in the same workplace, whilst occupations, functions and tasks are specific to each gender. This sexual division of labour is not neutral and is detrimental to women who could be marginalised from better paid jobs.

• In our company women are mainly functional in the office setting and light production activities. The pay schedule is different since both genders are not involved in the same work. The processes involve heavy lifting in that case men are more suitable. Man, Processing, Scandinavia.

Progressing to equality means that woman and men’s opportunities, responsibilities and rights are granted irrespective of their sex. Experiences which questioned this idea of gender segregation were also found in the WSI survey. Through their testimonies, respondents reveal how this argument turns out to be just a myth.

In the processing industry frequently jobs are assigned based on workers’ gender. For instance in Chile in the salmon processing industry men are frequently attached to certain tasks (fish slaughtering) and women to others (boning fish). This distribution of jobs by sex is even advertised in job announcements. Yet, managers frequently turn a blind eye to gender when it comes to production rushes or company needs proving that assignment according to sex is a habit more than an obligation.

• I worked for six years for an important salmon company in Aysen (Chile), in which some opportunity spaces were opened to women and they did very well, the same as men or even better than them doing some jobs. I'm talking about working in shifts (0 x 5), in farming Centers, far from the urban inner city. Man, Processing, South America.

• Positions which were normally recognized as male jobs are now for women too. Man, Processing, South America.

• The company is actively trying to promote gender equality both on land and sea. Man, Processing, Scandinavia.

By applying some technical advances, trades that were always believed to be only for men, can perfectly well be carried out by women.

• Need assistance to upgrade vessels to suit females. Woman, Fishing, Oceania.

• Setting up tools which assist handling to make work less difficult physically (particularly for heavy loading. Woman, Processing, Other countries in Europe.
We have received several testimonies which are loud and clear: women can do the job.

- As a young woman in the fishing industry I feel like I have strong role models, both men and women. There are people for me to look up too but when it comes down to it I'm always the only girl on the boat (but that's the nature of a 2 or 3 man crew), one of the only women (out of captains and crew) in my fishing group, as well as the youngest of the smaller number of women in the room at industry meetings and functions (where I am an observer/listener accompanying my father). Unless they have a family connection like I do, there is a serious barrier between women joining the fishing industry and getting hired as a crew member. Promoting women currently working and being successful will give more girls/women the confidence they need to look for a fishing job, and may help shift the attitude of men toward equal consideration for male/female potential crew members. It's not that fishing is unattractive to women so much as the work environment would be uncomfortable based on a lot of male captain/crew's attitudes regarding women on the boat. It's hard to get a chance unless you’re family. And there's no executive to set a policy change as each vessel is essentially its own small business. Never mind the fact that a lot of men don’t believe women can physically do the work or mentally withstand the conditions. It’s also intimidating for women to put themselves in the vulnerable position of living with a (probably male) crew if they don’t already trust those people. And, in my experience, some men find it annoying that they feel pressure to police themselves or modify their (sexist) behavior when a woman joins the crew. Fishing boats don’t work the same as large companies. You can’t set a policy that requires equal opportunity, because each captain or owner is their own CEO. In order for women and men to be represented more equally on the water the change has to be a cultural one. I don’t work at a company. I run a boat, but it’s still working for my dad. We talk about my experience because I’m the only female gillnetter he has on the two boats he owns. But in his companies that own/operate tenders and crab boats he has two female captains. Woman, Fishing, North America.

- A key considering factor is that women CAN do the job - it wasn’t well known, especially in the past, however, there are some changes that are starting to happen. Academic, woman, Africa.

- Do not judge women being delicate females. Give anyone a fair chance, no matter their gender. Males and females can work equally as hard in any environment. Females should be encouraged to apply for jobs that they believe only males are able to do. Woman, Aquaculture, Africa.
5.3. Work-life Balance

We have seen that work-family balance was one of the top barriers to gender equality at work. It’s hardly surprising therefore that it comes top on the list of positive corrective measures suggested by respondents (47% of women, 35% of men). Respondents indicating this concern is not unusual because in many companies maternity is still seen as a problem that supposedly carries economic losses for companies. This vision about pregnancy and motherhood (re)produces the mechanics of discrimination which end up penalising women.

- Difficulties with returning to the career after a break, lack of support for childcare. Woman, Research/ academic, Europe other than Scandinavia.

- Maternity issues, temporary workers have been discriminated against if they get pregnant; only if they have fixed-term contacts do they not lose their job. Man, Processing, South America

- Stopping seeing pregnancy as an illness, seeing reconciliation of work-life balance as something natural. Having kids is about two, not just women. Woman, Public services, Europe other than Scandinavia.

Recommendations to the seafood industry have already been put forward in 2000 by Aslin, Webb & Fischer in a report initiated by the Australian Women’s Industry Network (WIN). They recommended to “develop more ‘women-friendly’ and ‘family-friendly’ workplaces, consider gender balance in work environments and encourage workplace flexibility”.

Achieving an efficient work-life or work-family reconciliation requires a range of measures (workplace-located childcare or nursery, parental leave, flexible hours, career breaks, working from home, etc.) which should include men.

Most comments highlighted that unquestionably this is an issue of and about women and that policy should therefore be designed to accommodate women’s work schedule. However some respondents propose the adoption of gender neutral parental policies where the father is also considered as a parent and should also benefit from specific arrangements.

- Give the same benefits to men in case of children like pre and post-natal. This is one of many reasons why men are more likely to be hired than women. Man, Processing, South America.

- Fair parenting opportunities for both men and women. Also flexi hours and ability to work from home allows parents (typically the mother) to collect kids from school and work later. Woman, Services, Europe other than Scandinavia

- Same time of maternity leave to both parents, Woman, Services, Europe other than Scandinavia
● **People are encouraged to take full leave when they have a baby, men and women equally.**
  Woman, Services, Europe other than Scandinavia

Paying attention to the specific needs of parent workers and setting up arrangements is one way to reduce the specific trap which prevents women having access to full work opportunities.

### 5.4. Strategies to Open Doors for Women

**Fig 17. What would be the most effective strategy to increase the % of women?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liaising with schools</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality training</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting women visibility/role models</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing media coverage of women</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing the corporate culture</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Changing the corporate culture**

The industry is regularly depicted as old-fashioned and male dominated; we received confirmation that this perception is shared by men and women all around the world. Changing corporate culture was the number one strategy cited to attract more women to the industry.

- **This is not about working conditions but patriarchalism and mentality and prejudice.** Woman, Public services, Europe other than Scandinavia.

- **Seafood industry is stuck in old ways.** Woman, Fishing, North America.

- **There is lip service to gender equality, but still old school mindsets within the middle management positions.** Woman, Research institution, woman, Europe other than Scandinavia.
- Paying more attention to what workers have to say [about this issue], finishing with the old management mindset and creating a renewed, new mentality, other ideas. Man, Processing, South America.

- Working with outside organizations means working with the "boys' club" in fisheries management and promotion. Woman, Academic, North America.

- My observation is that standards for management in the seafood industry are very old and male-focused, I think that making newer management practices the industry standard would go a long way to helping gender inequality in the industry. Woman, Services, North America.

**Increasing women’s visibility/media coverage**

Breaking the circle of invisibility was the second most effective strategy suggested to attract women to the industry. The absence of visible women, especially those occupying executive positions, makes it difficult for others to identify themselves as capable of occupying a place in that industry. Since 2105 a couple of media companies have decided to tackle this issue and have launched a series of interviews with women working in different segments of the seafood industry.

**Women’s networks**

Setting up a women’s network is perceived as an important step to promote consciousness, boost knowledge among female peers and increase confidence among candidates for management or senior management positions.

Creating a venue where women can support one another is seen as a potentially useful tool for women within a private corporate, institution or professional association.

- I believe there needs to be a network of women who come together worldwide to support one another and also create and execute solutions to the issues facing women in the industry. Woman, Processing, North America

- Using networks to directly target hiring of strong, capable women. Woman, Fishing, North America

Existing women networks were cited. Unfortunately no further details were provided about their organisation, agenda and efficiency at raising and solving issues.

- We have a women’s network and issues are talked about, we also have a committee discussing this issue. Woman, Services, Scandinavia

- Women network “Women Leading the Way”, Woman, Aquaculture, North America
Box 3

**Women’s network**

Network is a multiple shaped concept, with a diversity of agenda, membership rules and calendar of meetings. We understand that most of those who responded to the survey referred to and report what they have observed within their companies or institutions. Apart from these in-house programmes it is worth mentioning the plethora of networks or platforms bringing together women in seafood who are working in the same field within a defined geographical area such as the Women’s Fisheries Network (WFN) USA, the Women’s Industry Network Seafood Community (WINSC) Australia, Aktea Europe, Women in Fisheries Network Fiji and a handful of local organisations in Spain.

**Liaising with schools**

We have not received any specific comments to explain this item. Though we have seen earlier that figures of admission disaggregated by sex indicate that marine related schools train far more men than women. As Elisabeth Aspaker, former Norwegian minister of fisheries declared once during her mandate (July 2nd 2015) “I would encourage the industry to nourish a close connection with academic environment.”

5.5. **In the Name of Equality: What Companies Actually Do for Professional and Gender Equality**

The good news is that some companies have developed specific actions to achieve gender equality and that these voluntary programmes are positively acknowledged by their employees.

Work-life balance guidelines, training sessions for employers and employees on gender equality and positive recruitment policy are among the most cited optional programmes.

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3 Boletín informativo Red Española de Mujeres en el Sector Pesquero Juli 2017 Mujer en la industria pesquera
Fig 18. Do you know any positive initiatives for improving gender equality within your company?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introducing policies for work-family balance</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific active gender and awareness programme</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive hiring policy</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting equal salary</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate group/network of women</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work-life solutions**

Introducing policies for work-life balance was the positive initiative most cited (44%) by both women and men. Among respondents who underline this, 76% are women and 24% men.

- **A clinic on site** has made the lives of female employees much easier with regard to having access to medication for themselves and their children. This keeps the ladies at work, instead of them having to go to public clinics (multiple hours waiting time) that costs them and the employer valuable man-hours. Woman, Aquaculture, woman, Africa

- **Our processing plant created a shift for parents** with small children, which allows single or working parents to get children to school, work and be home in time to get them after school. It is commonly referred to as the "Mommy Shift". Woman, Aquaculture, North America.

- **We allow people to work from home, to have flexible schedules** and hours, and to work part time. I think that's really key to making your workplace attractive for working mums. Woman, Services, Europe other than Scandinavia.

- **Working hours adapted to single mothers.** Fishing, man, Scandinavia

- **3 month maternity leave.** Woman, Academic, Asia

- **Offering part time positions to keep women in the pipeline during childbearing ages.** Woman, Fishing, North America

- **We talk about ways to support moms returning to work in the corporate office; we talk about hours-shifts and commuting issues that affect our hourly workers; we talk about industry and work life issues that affect women and try to create a work place that meets their needs.** Woman, Processing, North America

- **Adapting work hours, plans being studied for childcare arrangements adapted to workhours (earlier in the morning).** Woman, Processing, Europe other than Scandinavia
Equality plan applied by Anfaco - Spain

The Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes de Conservas de Pescados y Mariscos-Centro Técnico Nacional de Conservación de Productos de la Pesca (ANFACO-CECOPESCA), a Spanish organization that represents the interests of the processing sector of fishery and aquaculture products, is currently applying a second Equality Plan for the period 2017-2020. In order to promote corporate sustainability, ANFACO-CECOPESCA seeks to comply with the principle of abolition of discriminatory practices in employment and occupation. This means integrating equal treatment and opportunities for women and men, this being a transversal principle for policies and processes within this organization.

The 2010-2012 Equality plan evaluation allowed better knowledge about the situation between women and men in terms of diversity, parity, employment conditions and equal opportunities. This last aspect is the strategic principle of the ANFACO-CECOPESCA Corporate and Human Resources Policy.

The main objectives of this Equality Plan are: equality in access to employment and in terms of hiring; internal promotion and training in equality criteria; family/work conciliation through flexibility measures; prevention of occupational risks with a gender perspective; prevention of sexual and gender-based harassment through a protocol application; awareness and communication of equality policies among employees; and application of diversity management measures for the respect of each individual characteristics.
Gender awareness

Gender equality is a new concept; its understanding remains limited. We have seen that some consider this a low priority matter, whilst for others it competes with other issues. The practical integration of gender equality within private businesses will require dedicated programmes to help employees participate in the change.

- Establishment of a gender desk within a supported budget, Woman, Research/ academics, Asia
- Promoting equality and participating in gender equality projects in the women’s sector, Woman, Professional association/ trade union, Europe other than Scandinavia
- I know that a group has been formed, and that they are attempting to survey women in the company to work toward positive change Woman, Processing, North America.

Gender equality rules

Active gender equality rules may be part of an equality plan decided by management. They may incorporate theoretical equality statements affirming the equal treatment of employees regardless of gender, religion, sexuality and ethnicity, although they’re not linked to any specific actions. Others may include special actions targeted at defined areas or limited groups of employees. In the most advanced plans, equality between men and women is made part of the company culture and equality indicators may be communicated to external ‘stakeholders’ [Eurofond 2004].

- The company is actively trying to promote gender equality both on land and sea Processing, Man, Fishing, man, Scandinavia
- There is an email group called Women in Leadership where we share stories and articles and information, parental leave has improved to allow for both female and male co-workers take longer maternity/paternity leaves, whenever we have a retreat we talk about women in leadership; we are always improving, that is why we talk about it but it is a very fair organisation. Woman, NGO, North America
Positive recruitment policy

A gender-sensitive recruitment policy may implement a transparent and unbiased recruitment and selection process, or may establish a positive gender discrimination policy.

- *(Our company)* tries to hire women to sales positions. Man, Services, Scandinavia.

- At corporate level *(from the parent organisation)* initiative for gender parity at all levels with targets set for 2020 and reporting of current performance for each of the organisations under the parent umbrella. Woman, Europe other than Scandinavia, Academia

- Focus on increasing number of female executives last years. In departments with unequal number of one gender (men or women) focus on finding new persons from opposite gender. Woman, Aquaculture, Scandinavia

This is what Hilde Waage, director of global HR for Ewos declared [Intrafish 2015]: “Be aware in the recruitment process. Require that there is at least one female candidate among the final candidates”.
Gender issues and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Environmental sustainability has become an integral element of business plans and is inserted in many companies’ sustainability reports. Under pressure from shareholders, consumers and clients, ignoring marine environmental status is a business risk that no responsible seafood company is willing to take anymore. As Rachel Mutter, Intrafish Editor, advocated at the women in seafood leadership event in March 2018 “It is ironic that this industry concerned with sustainability often seems to miss the most pressing sustainability issue that it has, which is its own workforce”

Within business globally “companies able to compete on the global market are increasingly addressing the gender equality agenda and are including it within their CSR strategies” [Gazzola 2016]. However seafood companies which have made a similar shift when it comes to gender equality and women’s empowerment are few and far between.

Out of a total of 3,000 companies, Equileap NGO retained a list of 200 companies which demonstrated a commitment to gender equality. 9 of these are in the food business, with none in the seafood sector [Equileap 2017]. An overview of the social commitment of 250 seafood companies (50 Spain, 50 Norway, 50 Peru, 50 USA, 50 Thailand) as seen in their CSR reports or website, shows that only two companies* implemented a project for the advancement of women, whilst less than 10 refer specifically to gender equality, women’s rights or work-life balance without providing any details. A few more refer to a vague promise of “no discrimination on grounds of religion, colour, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, race or disability” duplicating the compulsory rule embedded in national laws. The absence of gender equality efforts doesn’t necessarily mean that they don’t exist but surely reflects that they are not perceived as a positive value worth mentioning.

*Highliner Foods, a North American seafood processor has set up equal opportunity/affirmative action to increase the number of women in senior roles (Women Leading the Way project). TASA, a Peruvian fishmeal and fish oil producer runs a project that trains women leaders of Huanta (Ayacucho) as entrepreneurs and producers of nutritious foods.

With the help of Mariana Toussaint, FAO consultant
Focus on cultural areas: main geographical priorities

When we started this research we suspected that this issue would resonate differently in different types of organisations as well as in different parts of the world. In the table below we report what respondents proposed spontaneously as positive actions for gender equality by continent.

Fig 19. Positive initiatives for improving gender equality within your company by region?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scandinavia</th>
<th>Other countries in Europe</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>South America</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Oceania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive hiring policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-family Balance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving work conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender awareness programme</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work-family balance, gender awareness programmes and positive recruitment policy are perceived as the most impactful initiatives.
The benefits of gender equalities at work

Find here a quick review of likely outcomes for companies who embrace gender equality, documented in an abundant economics and management literature.

This list is not exhaustive. Gender equality at work will bring opportunities to larger pool of candidates, attract better candidates, increase business performances, improve operating margin and longer-term value creation, offer better distribution of profit, create higher wellbeing at work for all employees, increase job satisfaction, lower absenteeism, lower employees turn over, break possible abusive situations and related misconducts, reduce poverty.
6. The Path Forward: Stimulating Gender Equality Dialogues in the Seafood Industry

In this report, we wanted to make women visible as well as referring to their situation from the specific aspect of the study of gender. This begins by delving into the social differences between men and women particularly in the seafood sector. In other words, we seek to study the state of gender relations, understanding that the situation of women is built - in part - by a recurrent type of unequal relationship with men, a situation supported by patriarchal societies.

In advocating the breaking the cycle of gender inequalities –that we spot in this survey-, we understand this process as the split of various forms of discrimination that accumulate such as gender, "race" and ethnicity, social class, forms of disability, sexual orientation, etc. We invite seafood industry actors to think about inequalities and different forms of discrimination experienced as part of the same process and not separately as it have been doing at the moment by ranking one inequality factor over another. In order to ensure sustainable processes and responsible operations, the industry must add to this internal duty an external one, which is the concern for the environment and for communities impacted by large industries sites.

This survey has provided evidence that gender inequalities are pervasive, but also that things can be improved thanks to progressive and responsible companies and to increasing focus on these matters from society and public institutions. All the same, a lot still needs to be done on the path toward gender equality.

From the analysis of WSI’s survey results, we would like to propose three steps that have emerged as clearly efficient tools for breaking the vicious circle of gender inequality: raising the consciousness of stakeholders so that they understand what is at stake, engaging men in this conversation and encouraging progressive actions at the workplace. What we suggest here are clues for reflection and action that must be considered by seafood players in each context, taking into account their specific working environment. In order to better understand this issue and make progress, further research will be very enlightening *inter alia* through more in depth analysis by organisations’ various areas (public, private); production sector; production size (small or large scale); industrial or artisanal fisheries, and territory (urban, rural), etc. These specificities highlight that there is no single formula for advancing towards gender equality, although there are experiences (even outside the seafood industry) from which other companies can draw inspiration. The WSI survey confirms what was previously stated by research and other entities: issues related to the situation of women (such as gender pay gap, gender bias, lack of opportunities, sexual harassment, among others), exist worldwide.
6.1. Raising Consciousness

As Mickael Kimmel, American sociologist, says: “When it comes to advancing women in the workplace, one of the biggest hurdles is men’s lack of interest. (…) Men can’t see what the issue is. Privilege is invisible to those who have it.” [Kimmel 2018]. And it turns out that those who have it are the decision makers. It is thus indispensable to raise their consciousness and stimulate their sensitivity to gender issues.

- In order to raise consciousness, the issue (i) needs to be recognised and (ii) responsibilities needs to be taken by stakeholders, that is by nations at macro level and by companies at micro level. We have seen that national legal frameworks have helped raise consciousness on (in)equality and reduce it. Transnational measures such as the EU gender mainstreaming criteria for accessing the European maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF) are there to force private players to question their practices and ultimately to change them.

- In order to grasp the full measure of the subject and all its implications, concrete and pragmatic measures could include gender awareness programs to be developed by private players. Prior to the allocation of public finances, gender mainstreaming requirements should be applied at national or international levels. An explanatory phase directed at the applicants of public funds would be helpful in the understanding of such schemes.

- Realising the situation of gender relationships within an organisation and being fully aware of gender imbalance may lead to objective diagnosis. Companies may decide to get an external audit or certifications with the aim of achieving a gender equality label such as EDGE (Gender Equality Certification), or GEEIS (Gender Equality for European and International Standard).

Highlighting the gender gap, making the invisible visible, raising the consciousness of leaders that their business is based on gender inequalities is the first move to address the challenge and make changes happen.
6.2. Involving Men in the Path to Gender Equality

Men are part of this social issue, they have the power to make things happen or not, yet they have a very different perception of the situation compared to women.

A female respondent from North America explained: “We have a women-network, and issues are talked about, we also have a committee discussing this issue. The problem is that men are not involved in the conversation and that the core underlying issues are not solved/dealt with”. This echoes with what Torunn Knoph Halhjem, senior director at Trident Seafoods expressed during the Women in seafood summit held in Bergen in March 2018: “We can sit all day long and talk about the value of the importance to bring women in the industry, but whether we like it or not, it is more important to have CEOs like Joe Bundrand⁴ talk to each other.” Both women express clearly that bringing men into the discussion is a prerequisite to make changes happen.

This is not a women’s issue but a shared (across gender) societal concern, where balancing relationships between the two genders in a progressive environment is at play.

Interestingly enough, when we talk about this subject to male executives, we note a clear difference in their reaction depending on their personal situation: if they have close female relatives in the seafood industry such as daughters, they are more likely to be open to the discussion. However the subject definitely needs to be brought out of the personal sphere, because we are talking about applying a principle of justice and equality to the work environment.

The survey revealed a strong gap in perception between men and women, between those directly concerned and others less concerned. There is an urgent necessity for a shared diagnosis, which should also involve professional organisations (fisherfolk cooperatives, trade unions, professional organisations) which in most countries are run by men.

In addition, evidence of the benefits that leaders and communities would gain must be brought to the table in order for decision makers to take actions.

⁴Trident Seafoods CEO
6.3. Stimulate Gender Equality Dialogue in the Seafood Industry

This survey showed evidence of the widespread perception of gender inequalities among seafood professionals, albeit to a variable extent. It shows great variations across continents, across sectors. It reveals the mechanism of a vicious circle of inequalities. It also shows, as was evidenced elsewhere\(^5\), that there is a general lack of understanding of the issue and of what is at stake.

Throughout the survey some employers were praised for their gender sensitive and pro-active policies, which the industry as a whole does not practise. This tells us that there is room for improvement which can be arranged progressively.

WSI feels that the time has come to start a dialogue on this key element of social sustainability across all seafood stakeholders. This dialogue will be based on common knowledge and understanding, will help identify the need to improve practices and will inspire positive developments. These dialogues could be inspired by the Aquaculture Dialogue set up by WWF and could be arranged regionally. The ultimate aim may not be to develop standards *per se*, but to inspire positive actions.

WSI calls upon the responsibility of international organisations and national institutions, professional associations, trade unions, private corporate and NGOs to encourage and facilitate the organisation of a Gender Equality Dialogue in the Seafood Industry.

WSI is convinced that dialogue between these multi stakeholders would help the seafood industry and many of its segments to move towards more inclusiveness and gender equality.

\(^5\) It was one of the strong conclusions of the “Gender in CSR” workshop that took place on June the 19\(^{th}\) during the Seaweb Summit.
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WSI 2016. Few women at the Top, November 2016


WSI 2018. Why are there so few women speakers at seafood conferences? January 2018 In Undercurrents news.
Coming up in 2018

**WSI Video competition**

With the support of MATIS and the French Development Agency (AFD), WSI launched for the second year a “women in seafood” video competition. All details here:

womeninseafood@wsi-asso.org

**WSI & CONXEMAR**

WSI and CONXEMAR organise a “Women in Seafood” event during the Seafood Exhibition which takes place in Vigo every year. During this event Spanish and Icelandic seafood top executive will present their views on the question. October the 3rd in Vigo, Spain. Contact us for invitation:

womeninseafood@wsi-asso.org

**WSI at Spanish conference**

The Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and Environment (General Secretariat for Fisheries) is pleased to announce that the International Conference of Women in Fisheries will take place on 5, 6 and 7 November 2018 in the city of Santiago de Compostela, Spain.
If you want to receive the WSI newsletter on a regular basis, email us at

womeninseafood@wsi-asso.org

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Where Are Women in the Seafood Industry?

- Leadership (CEO, CFO, Etc.)
- Professional Organisations
- Fisheries Management
- Conference Speakers
- Industrial Fishing
- Small Scale Fishing
- Fisheries Support Activities (Ashore)
- Selling and Marketing
- Administration
- Quality Inspection
- Researchers, Marine and Social Sciences
- On-Stage Fishing - Gleaning
- Small Scale Aquaculture
- Seafood Processing (Employees)
- Environment Activism