

## Women in fisheries profiles

### Delvene Boso

*Delvene Boso and Teri Tuxson*

coastal fisheries management. I felt strongly that the environment and fisheries space was what I was most passionate about and where I felt I could contribute most to my country.

**Can you share with us your experience working at WorldFish?**

I started work at WorldFish in 2007 as a Research Assistant. I was part of the research team doing post-tsunami marine surveys in Western Province and supporting socioeconomic research

Delvene Boso was born in Honiara, Solomon Islands, where she spent many of her early school years, and where pursued her professional career in marine science. She is a mother of two, a wife of 15 years, and she is currently a Senior Researcher with WorldFish. Delvene has contributed significantly to the coastal fisheries sector in Solomon Islands and the Pacific Islands region for almost two decades.

Delvene's parents are originally from Kia in Isabel Province. Her father worked at the then Solomon Islands Plantations Limited. So much of her and her two siblings' childhood were spent at the palm oil plantation neighbourhoods of Ngalimbiu and Foxwood in East Guadalcanal and on school holidays, they returned to their home village of Kia.

**Where did you receive your education?**

I attended school at Saint Nicholas Primary School (as it was known back then) and Chung Wah School, and did seven years of secondary school at the King George Sixth National Secondary School in Honiara. I undertook my undergraduate university studies in Australia studying Marine Science and Management at Southern Cross University in Lismore, and my third year at Coff's Harbour National Marine Science Centre.

**What are some fond memories you have of growing up in the islands?**

In my home village of Kia, houses are built on stilts over the sea. Many a school holiday during my childhood was spent in the village, going on picnics and camping out on the islands. Where I come from, tribal ownership of resources is strong, the sea is interconnected with the land, and so there is a heavy dependence on the marine environment for subsistence and livelihoods. This provided much of my motivation to work in

on the impact of the national beche-de-mer ban in Kia, Isabel Province. I later moved into a Senior Research position and in 2011, I was offered the Country Director role. As the Country Director, I managed the WorldFish Solomon Islands country programme. My role included managing budgets, staffing, infrastructure, partner relations and communicating with internal and external audiences. In 2022, I made the decision to return full time to research. As a Senior Researcher now, I contribute to the conceptualisation and planning of projects, lead implementation of said research projects, including conducting field research, analysing data, writing reports and liaising with provincial, national and international partners.

**What do you see as a significant achievement working at WorldFish?**

I spent a majority of my professional career with WorldFish working with local communities, and with provincial and national governments on coastal fisheries management, focusing on scaling community-based resource management (CBRM). In the past decade, we have learned together as a collective but there is still much to learn, and yet to improve how we can manage our fisheries resources to ensure we can continue to reap the benefits from it too.

**What do you like the most about working at WorldFish?**

One thing I like most about working at WorldFish is that the organisation endeavours to ensure its fisheries research programme is aligned with national government strategies and policies. In that way, the research is grounded with national priorities. Aside from that, I like that you get to meet lots of people and build an extended network of peers from local communities to provincial and national partners, to regional and international partners.

You were recently the vice-convenor at the 3rd CBFD (Community-Based Fisheries Dialogue) in Noumea, New Caledonia. Can you explain a bit about the CBFD and your role there?

The dialogue provides communities, civil society organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actors (NSAs) the opportunity to share experiences and lessons-learned on community-based fisheries initiatives to strengthen efforts in maintaining a productive and healthy ecosystem, and their associated fisheries resources. These are critical to the well-being of coastal communities. It is also an opportunity for CSOs and other NSAs to provide advice on key needs and issues associated with the sustainable access and use of coastal fisheries resources across the Pacific Islands region. During the recent 3<sup>rd</sup> CBFD, I took on the role as vice-convenor. As vice-convenor, I provided support to the convenor in all aspects of preparation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> CBFD, held within the 6<sup>th</sup> SPC Regional Technical Meeting on Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture.

What advice would you give to women involved in fishing or fisheries management?

My advice to young women interested in fisheries management is to go for it. It is a broad area that you can specialise in, and once you find what you are most passionate about, I recommend putting yourself forward to take up opportunities

and build your confidence and repertoire. It may be a difficult space to find formal employment, particularly in the context of Solomon Islands, so volunteering yourself helps you to get yourself out there. And don't just stop at your diploma or undergraduate studies, the learning never stops!

It is true when you say that "the learning never stops"? Can you share with us your plans for the future?

WorldFish as an organisation is always supportive of its staff furthering their qualifications in the field. In 2024, I will be leaving WorldFish to undertake further studies. My area of interest is on balancing fisheries management and development needs. In the rural setting where communities are still highly dependent on coastal fisheries resources for food and nutrition security, it becomes crucial to ensure that development initiatives are environmentally sustainable to ensure that the resource base remains healthy and resilient to sustain future populations.

*Thank you, Delvene, for your time and for sharing with us a little bit about working in community-based resource management in Solomon Islands. We hope your story can inspire other young women to pursue a career in coastal fisheries. We wish you all the best in your future studies and endeavours!*

Delvene in Kavieng © Caroline Vieux

