



Pacific
Community
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Pacific handbook for gender equity and social inclusion in coastal fisheries and aquaculture



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MODULE 6

Community engagement



Pacific handbook for
**gender equity and
social inclusion**
in coastal fisheries and aquaculture

Module 6:
Community engagement

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Noumea, New Caledonia, 2021

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Original text: English

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This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the Government of Sweden. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the Government of Sweden.

This publication should be cited as:

Delisle A., Mangubhai S. and Kleiber D. 2021. Module 6: Community engagement. In: Barclay K., Mangubhai S., Leduc B., Donato-Hunt C., Makhoul N., Kinch J. and Kalsuak J. (eds). Pacific handbook for gender and social inclusion in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture. Second edition. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community. 26 pp.

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Key points

- Communities include different people who use, access and rely on coastal fisheries and aquaculture in different ways. Development of coastal fisheries, aquaculture or natural resource management rules can have different effects for women and men, and people of various ages, tribes, clans, religions and abilities.
- Some people have less power and voice, which limits their ability to participate in community decision-making. There are also diversity and power differences within groups – not all women, and not all men, are the same. These differences may create hierarchies and structures within communities, and power imbalances that lead to and reinforce inequality.
- Being *inclusive* means trying to ensure all voices are heard and interests met. External influences and interventions may also create or further widen inequalities if power imbalances are not identified, negotiated and mitigated during community engagement processes.

What is community engagement?

A *community* is a group of people living together in a given physical space, such as a village or group of villages, settlement, town or city. Beyond sharing a physical space, people in communities are often presumed to share common values and beliefs. In the case of marine management and development, people in communities may also be assumed to have equal access to marine resources and rights to their use, and to have common priorities for the management of those resources. In reality, communities are diverse. They contain women, men, people of different ages, tribes, clans, religions and abilities. There is also diversity within groups: not all women are the same, just as not all men are the same. Men and women have different needs, concerns and aspirations. These social differences often come with differences in the ownership, accessibility and use of marine resources, and the power to make decisions about those resources.

Throughout the Pacific Islands region, the issues people face vary from one community to another depending on how their community is organised, the governance systems that control access to and use of marine resources, local tenure arrangements, levels of education and wealth, and cultural practices and traditions.

*Engagement*¹ is a process and an outcome of making decisions together. This process works to build collaborative relationships. There are different types of participation and inclusion, and some do not actively include everyone in decision-making. Engagement takes specific steps to create inclusion in the decision-making process (e.g. ensuring decisions are made together with the widest possible involvement).

Achieving active, free, effective and meaningful engagement requires:

- supporting people's individual right to participate and be included, while taking into consideration power imbalances between people and, especially, marginalised voices in a community;²
- working with excluded or marginalised groups (see the definition of *social exclusion* in Module 1) in the larger community context, and not just working with them in isolation;
- working with men, women and other community members who are well respected, who behave in highly moral and ethical ways, and who may hold influential roles within a community, to help facilitate the inclusion of those who are excluded or marginalised;
- achieving a balance between inclusion and respect for individual versus community rights.³

1 See ladder of community participation (Fig. 4, page 7) in Govan H., Aalbersberg W., Tawake A. and Parks J. 2008. Locally Managed Marine Areas: A guide for practitioners. Suva: Locally Managed Marine Area Network.

2 FAO. 2015. Voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty reduction. Rome: FAO.

3 The principles of individual versus community or wider society rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

During the engagement process, not everyone has to agree. However, the process should find ways for everyone to work together, and acknowledge and respect other people's views. In other words, the *right to participation* means ensuring everyone has access to the engagement process and creating a platform that upholds this fundamental human right.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION MAY VARY – 'UNCONSCIOUS BIAS'

In many societies, women have less capacity or means to influence and participate in decision-making processes than men, but this is not always the case. A gender and social inclusion (GSI) analysis might identify issues surrounding women's participation in their community or broader society. For instance, *unconscious bias* may make fisheries managers and practitioners see all women as more vulnerable than all men in a community. However, some women — such as those with family ties to village leaders, a pastor's wife in Tuvalu, the eldest daughter in Tonga, or the holder of a *matai* title in Samoa — might hold significantly more power than some men in the same village. Women and men who marry into a community might have less opportunity for decision-making than those born in the community.

Note: Unconscious bias is described in Module 1. Module 2 describes GSI analysis.

Why does GSI matter when it comes to community engagement?

The types of approaches we use for community engagement can have a significant impact on the outcomes of an initiative or project, and more importantly on people's lives⁴ (Fig. 6.1). A GSI-sensitive lens can guide practitioners and enable them to reflect on their own approaches to leading or facilitating a community engagement process. The concepts in Figure 6.1 can also apply to the social inclusion of other marginalised groups in the community, such as youth, the elderly and people living with disabilities (see Module 1 on how to identify socially excluded groups in a community).



TIP: Use this module as a guide

This module is not about learning how to do community engagement, but about building a GSI lens into community engagement processes, tools and techniques. Use this module as a guide, and implement the tools, strategies and insights in a way that is sensitive to culture and place.

⁴ Lawless S., Doyle K., Cohen P.J., Eriksson H., Schwarz A.-M., Teioli H., Vavekaramui A., Wickham E., Masu R., Panda R. and McDougall C. 2017. Considering gender: Practical guidance for development initiatives in Solomon Islands. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish. Program Brief 22.



Misconception: A GSI approach is about 50:50 representation

In some cases, people assume that a GSI approach to community engagement means insisting on having equal numbers of women and men at meetings. However, even if they are present, women or other marginalised groups may not feel comfortable speaking in front of the men in the village due to cultural protocols. Enforcing attendance quotas (i.e. making numbers equal) may be a culturally insensitive and ineffective engagement approach.

Instead, practitioners who apply good gender practice when engaging with communities understand that it is more about the process of finding unique, culturally sensitive ways to give all groups an equal opportunity to engage, be heard and have their interests and aspirations taken into account. Community engagement processes that include a GSI lens might require (more) time and investment of resources depending on the social and cultural norms at any given place: e.g. consulting with local authorities to explain the importance of diverse participation in meetings to gain their support; mapping those considered more marginalised in the given context/place; choosing a strategic, open and accessible venue; or considering separate meetings with women, youth, etc.

Community engagement approaches that are *gender blind* do not consider gender differences and may unintentionally reinforce or worsen inequalities within a community (Fig. 6.1). For example, a traditional closure (e.g. *tabu*, *rau'i*, *sasi*), or establishment of a marine protected area where women glean, can impact food security as the women may need to travel further or work harder to feed their families. An aquaculture project introduced to a community without consideration of gender might create disproportionate time burdens on women, with the result that the costs outweigh the benefits. In community-based management, the risks of being blind to gender or social status may mean that women are excluded from their fishing grounds, or that new rules make life more difficult for migrants (or bar them) from fisheries. As a result, community members might not follow the new rules, conflict may arise and fisheries management may be perceived as not being legitimate or community-based and therefore is not sustained in the long term.

In contrast, community engagement approaches that are *gender aware* consider women's and men's differing gender roles, knowledge, needs and capacity to participate in community decision-making and in planning and implementing new projects or ongoing activities. These approaches take into account the different and sometimes complementary ways that men, women and other groups own, access and use resources, and how they contribute individually and collectively to their community.

Awareness is just one important step. We also need to understand how community engagement processes can impact women, men and other groups differently. Approaches that take advantage of gender inequalities, behaviours or stereotypes to simply achieve ecological, fisheries development or management outcomes are considered *exploitative* as they reinforce or further exploit gender norms and dynamics (Fig. 6.1). For example, a gender-exploitative engagement process might assume that women's interests can be represented by male leaders, male relatives or spouses. Or an external partner might want to accelerate a process (e.g. to establish a marine protected or managed area quickly) and thus might go straight to the community leader to make a decision, without enabling anyone else in the community to provide input.

Gender accommodative approaches work around barriers to women's or men's participation and try to acknowledge and compensate for gender differences, norms, relations and inequalities. While accommodative approaches can be an important first step toward promoting gender equality, they often do not address underlying structures that perpetuate inequalities in a community. For example, holding meetings at times and places that work for both

women and men, or holding separate meetings for them, does not necessarily mean women's opinions will be taken into consideration when the final decisions are being made. Projects that seek to generate income for women may accommodate the norm of women earning less than men, but they do not address the underlying causes of this income gap, such as women's disproportionate responsibility for care duties in their home. In other words, gender-accommodative approaches often do not achieve substantial changes in equity and fair engagement.

A *transformative* approach aims to transform harmful social and gender norms, change power imbalances and eliminate gender-based discrimination. It encourages people to question existing gender and social norms, attitudes, beliefs, structures and power dynamics that impede the achievement of their life goals or the goals of the community. It encourages them to take a more *people-centred* approach that values everyone's contribution and participation. A transformative approach addresses underlying inequalities, and ensures resources and benefits are fairly and equitably distributed. This is the difference between focusing on the symptoms of inequality and tackling the actual root causes. For example, a project could use tools to assist women and men to identify their roles and responsibilities in coastal fisheries or aquaculture activities and then discuss whether these roles could be fairly shared and how.

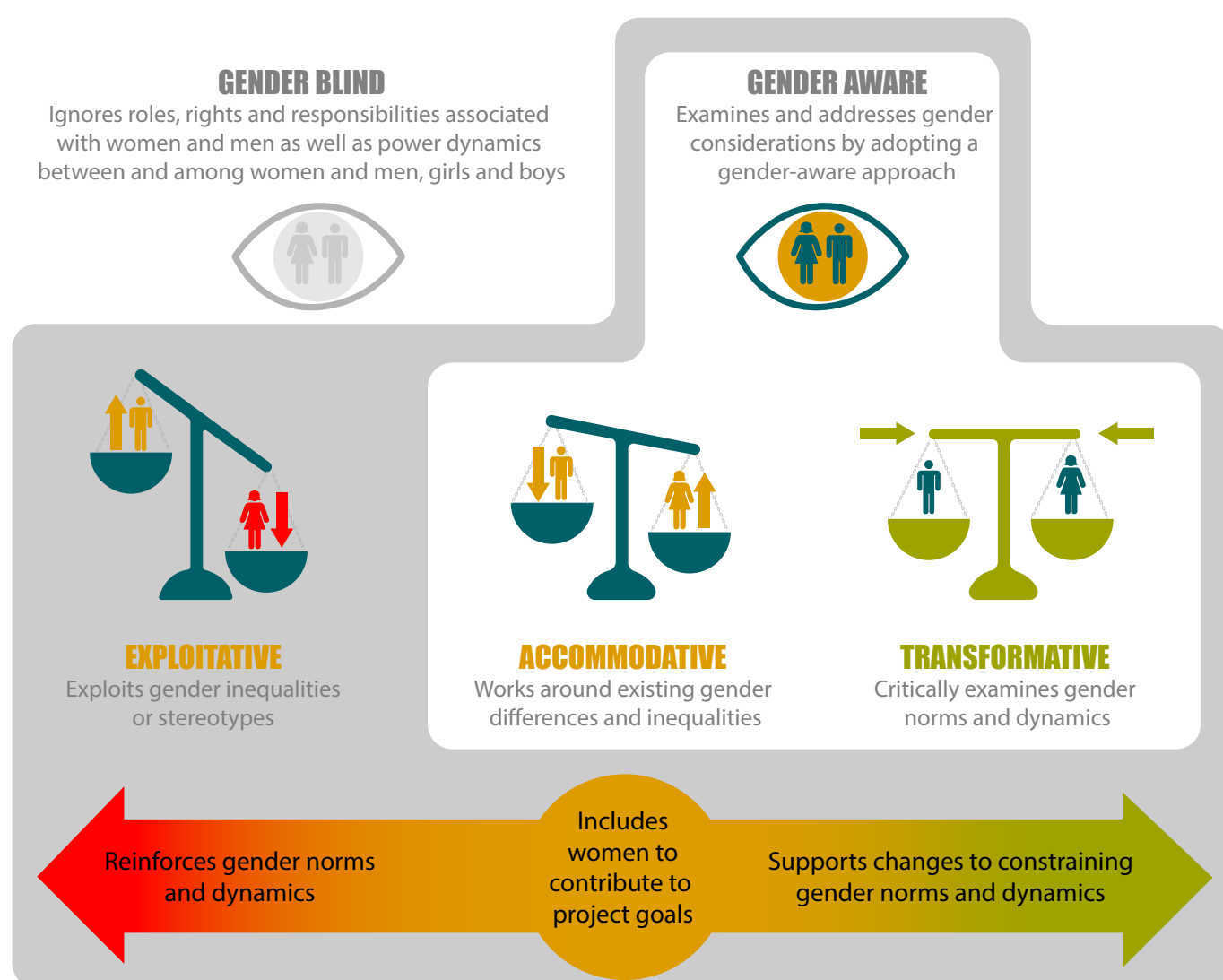


Figure 6.1. Defining gender approaches. (Reproduced with permission from Kleiber et al. (2019a)⁵ and adapted from the FISH Gender Strategy.)⁶

5 Kleiber D., Cohen P., Gomese C. and McDougall C. 2019a. Gender-integrated research for development in Pacific coastal fisheries. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program brief: FISH-2019-02.

6 CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. 2017. Gender strategy. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Strategy: FISH-2017-13.

Case study: Consequences of a gender-blind approach



In Ukiangang, a village on Butaritari Island, Republic of Kiribati, the village leaders were keen to protect their coastal fisheries. Some of the other villages on the island had recently launched community marine protected areas and Ukiangang leaders were eager to use a similar approach to ensure the sustainable use of their coastal resources. They decided to create a marine protected area that was permanently closed to fishing and included a major part of the sand flats and inshore reefs near the village. This meant many women and youth were forced to walk further to access these habitats, and men without boats could no longer access their fishing ground. As a result, many men without boats did not comply with the rules. The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development worked with the leaders of the village to widen the participation of other community members in the decision-making. Following meetings with various groups in Ukiangang, the boundaries of the community marine protected areas were revised.

Case study: Gender-transformative approach in aquaculture



Organisation 'Z' wanted to apply a gender-transformative approach to the design and management of homestead ponds. Aquaculture ponds are often owned and managed by men but are operated as a family business with wives or other female relatives involved.

To ensure that all parties were visible, the organisation used a questionnaire to identify 'who is behind the fish farm?', and to document roles, responsibilities and time investments.

To increase women's engagement, the aquaculture project team worked with married couples involved in fish farming. During workshops, men and women were encouraged to draw a diagram of their aquaculture farming systems and their roles. Couples discussed together the significant roles both parties needed to play to ensure the success of their pond and all the other activities they performed around the household. They were then encouraged to discuss ways they could better work together and help one another for the benefit of their aquaculture business, including sharing household duties. Couples also discussed how they used and saved their money.

The discussions were shared, which allowed workshop attendees to hear the diverse ways that each couple planned to divide their workload, and helped promote the idea of couples working as a team in their aquaculture initiative, including making decisions together. Women's participation and self-confidence increased in later workshops. Men accepted the participation of women as they recognised the roles they played in the livelihood activity.

Building GSI into community engagement

Goal of inclusive community engagement

GSI must be included in community engagement processes if they are to be effective. The goal of inclusive community engagement is to consider everyone who could be impacted by a coastal fisheries management or development or aquaculture activity.⁷ Practitioners must work to overcome identified barriers that stop certain groups accessing and sustainably using marine resources or contributing to the decision-making process.

GSI community engagement is empathetic and collaborative in its intent. It recognises the characteristics, context, and barriers to participation and inclusion of different groups within a community. It creates an enabling space that builds confidence, where individuals can act independently and also feel free to act collectively. Simultaneously, this inclusive community engagement process can influence the attitudes, norms, institutions and policies that drive inequality in the first place, leading to long-term structural change and reversing the excluded status of some groups.

7 Schwarz A., James R., Teioli H. and Cohen P. 2014. Engaging men and women in community-based resource management processes in Solomon Islands. Case Study: AAS-2014-33. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. 7 pp.



Inclusive community engagement: a process

Community engagement through a GSI lens is often a dynamic process that follows different strategies during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity. We can think of the community engagement process as a cycle (Fig. 6.2). This allows a team of community facilitators to build GSI considerations into the community engagement process before, during and after community meetings (Fig. 6.3).



⁸ Kleiber et al. 2019b. Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management. An addendum to “Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitators guide” and other guides for CBRM. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-08.

Step 1. Before entering a community

This step is to aid practitioners or facilitators in planning inclusive community engagement with a clear GSI focus to identify, reduce and mitigate potential barriers to participation. Consider the background and composition of team members and their skills in community engagement and, where necessary, address GSI training needs. It is also important to ensure that community leaders understand what the community engagement process with a GSI lens will look like. (There is a checklist of questions at the end of this module.)

Composition: Practitioners should consider the ratio of men to women on the staff of their institution and who has primary responsibilities that involve community engagement. At the national level, increasing the number of men and women staff working together to undertake community engagement processes with a GSI lens should be given priority.

Capacity: There is limited knowledge and capacity for integrating GSI in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors — many staff have not received any training, and many fisheries institutions do not invest in gender specialists or gender focal points. At the national level, priority should be given to increasing the capacity for GSI in these sectors, including training practitioners on integrating GSI in existing community engagement processes. Facilitation and participatory rural appraisal techniques should be priorities for staff working directly with communities.

Partnership: After assessing the existing capacity of staff for GSI, fisheries managers and practitioners are encouraged to form partnerships with other government agencies or civil society organisations with expertise in GSI. Training and capacity can be developed in partnership with government ministries or agencies for women, development organisations such as SPC and UN Women, or NGO partners and academic institutions with gender expertise.

GSI data: There is little sex-disaggregated data on coastal fisheries and aquaculture activities available to inform management and enable measurement of impacts. Without this information, development and management activities may be *gender blind* and may not achieve their intended outcomes. Design tools to ensure that data collection, analysis and reporting take gender into consideration and data is disaggregated.

Mapping community groups: Community structure, groups, committees, households and individuals who are active in coastal fisheries and aquaculture activities should be identified and mapped, paying special attention to those who have less opportunity to participate, such as youth, the elderly and people living with disabilities (see Module 1 for tips on identifying marginalised groups).

Community awareness: The plans and goals of development or management activities for coastal fisheries and aquaculture should be widely shared through appropriate communication channels (e.g. radio, village meetings, theatre, social media, etc.) and made available at appropriate times to different members of the community (e.g. men, women, youth, the elderly and people living with disabilities). For instance, radio programmes could be broadcast during evening hours when women are more likely to be listening.

Step 2. While in a community

Practitioners should aim to interact with all groups within a community. Decide which strategies and tools to apply according to the goals and objectives for the desired level of participation they want to achieve (Fig. 6.3). It is important to adhere to social and cultural protocols while working with and within communities. It is also critical to ensure compliance with measures to protect children with whom any person involved in the activity might come in contact (e.g. no inappropriate touching, hitting, sleeping arrangements, or being alone with a child without a parent or relative). These measures should include the laws and policies of the country concerned,⁹ and social safeguards or codes of conduct developed by the organisation(s) involved to protect children. At the community level, some organisations have developed their own codes of conduct for their staff, or have written agreements with local communities to define the nature of the partnership. Furthermore, practitioners involved in the community engagement process should set and agree on a protocol to assist their staff in case they witness gender-based violence.¹⁰

Consent for participation: Processes for obtaining free, prior and informed consent must be followed correctly.¹¹

WHAT IS FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT?

Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is a specific right that relates to work with communities, especially Indigenous Peoples all over the world. *'Consent should be sought before any project, plan or action takes place (prior), it should be independently decided upon (free) and based on accurate, timely and sufficient information provided in a culturally appropriate way (informed) for it to be considered a valid result or outcome of a collective decision-making process.'* FPIC allows communities to give [or withhold] consent to a project that may affect them, their land or sea. They have the right to withdraw their consent at any stage without penalty or repercussions. And, just as importantly, FPIC enables communities to negotiate the conditions under which a project will be designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Grievance mechanism: Complaint mechanisms should be put in place, agreed on, and widely communicated, e.g. through a Memorandum of Understanding between all partners and inclusive of communities, ministries, NGOs and education providers. The raising of a grievance must not preclude communities from continuing to enjoy the benefits generated by a coastal fisheries or aquaculture development or management activity.

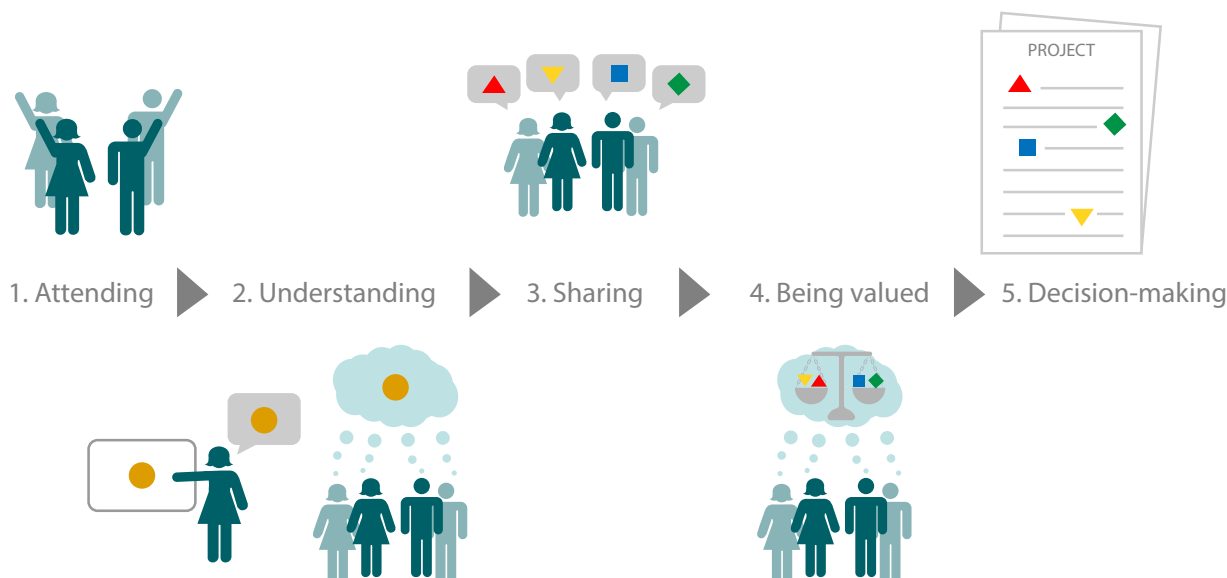


Figure 6.3. Process steps contributing to inclusion. (Reproduced with permission from Kleiber et al. 2019b.)¹²

⁹ Pacific Island countries are parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and therefore most governments have a ministry dedicated to work on children's issues. Staff undertaking community engagement might not have the expertise to deal with child protection issues. Therefore, practitioners are encouraged to liaise with specific ministries within their countries to understand all the laws and policies in place to protect children.

¹⁰ Staff undertaking community engagement might not have the expertise to deal with gender-based violence or may feel it is not their role to interfere. Clear protocols should be put in place by national agencies and other stakeholders to ensure staff are protected and know who to get assistance from (e.g. refer to the appropriate agency in-country).

¹¹ FAO. 2016. Free prior and informed consent: An indigenous peoples' right and a good practice for local communities. Rome: FAO. 52 pp.

¹² Kleiber et al. 2019b. Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management. An addendum to "Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitators guide" and other guides for CBRM. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-08.

Attendance: Both formal and informal meetings, where information is shared and/or decisions are made, should include a diversity of members from the community (women, men, elders, youth, people with disabilities). Consider the location, timing and duration of community consultations to ensure they suit all participants. The meeting should take place in a safe venue that all members of the community can easily access. The timing of the meeting should consider when different groups might be available (i.e. outside of times for meal preparation, or subsistence, cultural or faith-based activities). Also think about the length of the meeting — some people might not be available for long periods of time. Multiple workshops (with or without joint reflection) may be needed to reach everyone in the community.

Understanding: Community members are likely to have different levels of ability to access and understand information provided by outside groups. Consider language barriers, level of education including literacy, choice of practitioners (men or women), avoidance of overly academic or scientific language, and means of delivery (e.g. use of appropriate awareness materials or information tools). Different modes of delivery may be required to reach everyone in the community. Also consider the time allocated to different groups to ensure everyone understands the issues. Additional consultations might be necessary to build the knowledge, capacity and confidence of specific groups in the community to enable them to participate meaningfully.

Sharing: There may be significant constraints on the ability of different members of a community to share their own experiences, ideas, opinions and priorities. Consider removing barriers to sharing, such as low confidence or existing conflicts. For example, smaller discussion groups may be needed (e.g. women only, youth only) to allow people to speak in a comfortable and safe space. It is critical to ensure that any approaches used do not result in gender-based violence. Forcing women to speak openly in front of their husbands could result in violence later in the home. Similarly, forcing a young person to express strong views contrary to those of their elders or chief could lead to exclusion or banishment from their community. Following these separate meetings, consider appropriate mechanisms for joint reflection, such as using a spokesperson for each group.

Being valued: The experiences, ideas, opinions and priorities expressed by different members of a community should be available to, and understood by, other members of the community and be given equal value. At the beginning of a meeting, establish the rules (with community agreement if possible) for participation, reflection, deliberation and conflict resolution. Be transparent in documenting and reporting various people's perspectives and also be transparent in reporting towards identifying how different views/opinions may have been treated differently. If necessary, this information can be used to revise existing strategies to ensure that all voices have been heard.

Case study: Equalising power dynamics in community meetings - seating arrangements

In many meeting places, women sit at the back. In Fiji, practitioners often change position and hold the meeting from the back. This means that less vocal groups are closer to the practitioner and may be more confident about asking questions or discussing the topic. Or a practitioner can move to the middle of the meeting so that half the participants (whatever the community group) are on the right while the other half are on the left. Importantly, practitioners must be sensitive to which groups are closest to them, and which are furthest away, and how that might affect participation. Three examples of potential seating arrangements are shown in the image below.

Potential seating arrangements to consider

Mixed group, no defined seating arrangement



Mixed group with defined seating arrangement, with women and other marginalised groups closer to the facilitator



Groups divided into two according to gender, with male and female facilitators



Decision-making: The experiences, ideas, opinions, and priorities of different members of a community can be reflected in initiatives, projects and practice. The opinions and ideas of the diverse members of a community should be given appropriate time for discussion by all and should be reflected in a collective agreement for the project's implementation. Allow time and resources to work with community members who are well respected and who may hold influential roles within their communities to support/facilitate the inclusion of those who are excluded. Practitioners can also work with local governance structures to identify possible avenues for ensuring an equitable engagement process.



TIP: Selecting community champions

Selection of community 'faces' or champions does not necessarily mean focusing on those who have traditional titles, key positions in institutional structures, economic influence or the 'loudest voice'. These members may not be best suited to championing the community engagement process. Pacific communities are often small and tightly knit, 'where everyone knows everyone'. Talk to your local counterparts who are better positioned to identify key influential personalities based on criteria that are more likely to win people's trust, reinforce inclusivity and mobilise people for action. Qualities that build trust include ethical or moral characteristics, for example, people who are known for engagement in, and sacrifice for, community interests; speaking up for marginalised groups; a strong caring and sharing history; religious or spiritual values that are genuine and well respected; or for 'walking the talk'.

Step 3: Post-community meeting – critical reflection and adaptation

Throughout the project cycle and following the use of the chosen GSI facilitation strategies, practitioners should critically reflect on the effectiveness of their engagement in addressing GSI, including evaluating impacts on other community members (Fig. 6.3). As part of this reflection, practitioners can use field trip diaries to capture their experiences and thoughts on the community engagement process. Allocate time to share reflections among practitioners of both genders, and take steps to revise strategies if needed. Consider the best methods of providing the results of a project or initiative to everybody. Lessons learned should also be widely shared with other projects focused on developing or managing coastal fisheries or aquaculture activities.

Adapt: The goals and activities of a coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity should be collectively revised and understood by different members of a community as project implementation progresses.

Compile and share lessons: Identified barriers to participation, the results of reflection, and lessons learned from the strategies and techniques tested to create a community engagement process with a GSI lens, should be compiled and widely shared among practitioners and considered for training purposes.

Take action: Lessons learned about social inclusion during the engagement process should be acted on in the activities that follow.

Strategies and approaches to community engagement

There are four basic strategies (or approaches) that can be applied to community engagement to *reach* all community members, to *benefit* them all, to *empower* them all and to *transform* their lives in a positive way (Fig. 6.4). These strategies provide a useful framework for those working on development or management of a coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity and enable them to rigorously assess how well they are doing. The strategies can be applied to specific community groups (e.g. youth) that may not have equal opportunities to engage in the development or management of a coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity.

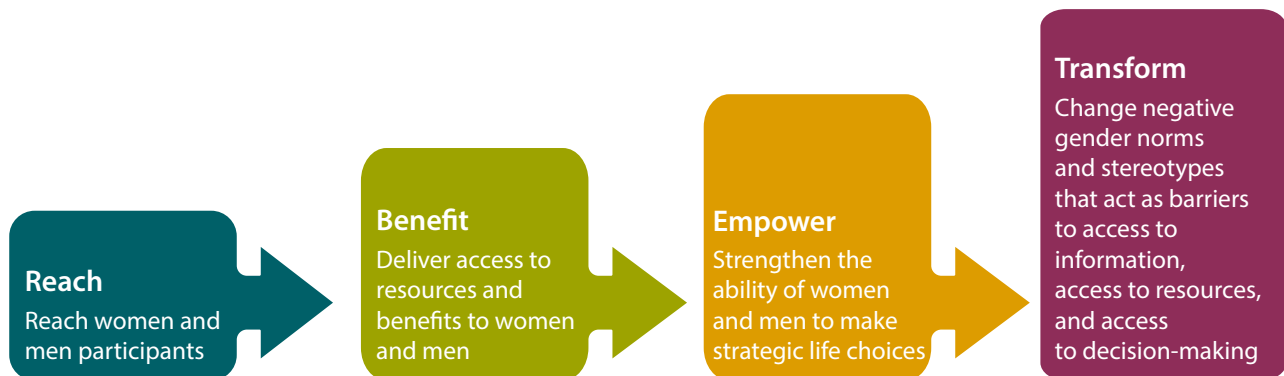


Figure 6.4. Strategies used in community engagement. Source: Kleiber et al. (2019), adapted from the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (2017), Johnson et al. (2017); Theis and Meinzen-Dick (2016).

Generally, most approaches used in the coastal fisheries and aquaculture sector are skewed towards reaching women, youth or other groups, but few of the members of these groups truly benefit, become empowered or experience some positive transformation in their lives. This is why it is important to track participation beyond simple attendance, and to understand (i) how household and community relations and dynamics might prevent women, youth or other members from taking advantage of new opportunities; and (ii) how benefits may be accessible by only a small subset of the community. Coastal fisheries or aquaculture activities that benefit women (e.g. by improving incomes or nutrition, etc.) might not necessarily empower them (e.g. to have a voice in how income is used in the household). It is equally important to understand that projects designed for, and focused exclusively on women, without considering appropriate roles for men, may fail because they lack support from men or induce interference.¹³

¹³ Eves R. and Crawford J. 2014. Do no harm: The relationship between violence against women and women's economic empowerment in the Pacific. Canberra: Australian National University, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM).



Table 6.1 provides examples of approaches that can be used under each strategy, and indicators to measure the impacts (both positive and negative). Measuring reach is relatively simple and inexpensive, but measuring benefits, empowerment and transformation is more challenging and costly. However, examples are provided.

Table 6.1. Approaches to reach, benefit and empower men and women, and transform gender norms in communities. Adapted from Johnson et al. (2018) and Kleiber et al. (2019b).

Strategies	Examples of approaches	Indicators
Reach aims to engage and include all members of the community in participation in activities or projects. It includes considering attendance at meetings, workshops and training, as well as holding these gatherings at times when both men and women are available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of women at workshops • Use a quota system for training (e.g. at least 30% of participants are women or youth) • Hold separate workshops for men and women to share awareness materials • Schedule workshops for times when women can participate • Use both male and female facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women or youth participating in a workshop or project • Percentage of women or youth on a committee or in a group • Number, or percentage, of women or youth trained
Benefit aims to provide specific benefits to all members of the community (e.g. access to resources) to increase their well-being, such as improved food security or income generation. The benefits must include those that women themselves value, recognising there may be differences between genders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure both men and women receive training (e.g. in aquaculture techniques or value-adding) • Ensure both men's and women's needs and preferences (which may be different) are included • Ensure women and youth have equal access to funds, loans, and grant mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex-disaggregated data for monitoring outcome indicators (e.g. income, yields, nutrition, health, access to funding, etc.) • Proportion of women, youth and other marginalised groups benefiting, based on outcome indicators
Empower aims to increase or strengthen the ability of all members of the community to make strategic life choices for themselves (e.g. on use of income) and to put those choices into action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create mechanisms for shared decision-making where the perspectives of women and youth have equal value in shaping outcomes • Address the disempowerment of women (e.g. gender-based violence, time burdens) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's ability to make decisions (e.g. on use of their income) • Women's participation in joint decision-making • Reduction of issues that disempower women • Women's and youth's perceptions of empowerment • Number of instances of backlash due to empowerment
Transform aims to change harmful social and gender norms and eliminate gender-based discrimination; increase the participation of women and other marginalised community members in decision-making; increase self-determination; and support economic empowerment of women in all their diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create processes that address underlying inequalities or harmful gender norms and relations • Develop processes that specifically aim to change the harmful behaviour of men towards women, or of older women towards younger women, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the gender asset gap • Community members' perception of attitudinal change in regard to harmful behaviour • Men's and women's respect for each other's views • Men's and women's changing attitudes to gender norms

Culture and traditions in inclusive community engagement

Human rights values and principles vary across the Pacific Islands region and have changed over time. A community engagement process with a GSI lens can look at culture and traditions and identify types of practices that give rise to both opportunities and challenges (Fig. 6.5).

Challenges: Gender roles, social status and social hierarchies are often deeply ingrained in cultural traditions across the Pacific Islands region. Questioning power and identifying what differentiates men and women across all ages and social status groups may be uncomfortable for practitioners. Cultural barriers might come not just from men, but also from other groups in a community. Principles of equality may be viewed as being ‘foreign’, ‘westernised’ or ‘urban’ concepts that are in conflict with traditional cultures and values. Some opportunities might also become challenges. In some instances, a process is seen as fair when someone takes a decision on behalf of the household or the community. However, in those instances, the concept of fairness is far from being equal or inclusive.

Opportunities: Pacific cultures value fairness, working together as a community for the collective good, protection of the most vulnerable, helping and serving others, participation, dialogue and consensus building.¹⁴ These values are opportunities that should be promoted through the community engagement process and used as a foundation for greater GSI.

Solutions: Gender equity can be improved while maintaining core cultural values, sometimes by simply changing practices that have harmful outcomes. Pacific Island cultures, like cultures everywhere, are not static. They change over time as a result of urbanisation, education, technology, media, communication, migration, and so on. This does not mean cultural identity and practices are wiped out. Rather, they continually adapt. For example, in the past, it was rare to see Pacific Island women working in the government and occupying decision-making positions. Now it is becoming the ‘norm’ in many countries.

Social change is never an easy process, especially as some people may fear losing their privilege and power, but it is usually necessary to address new challenges. The message here is that ‘everybody should work together, side by side, so that we can all advance as one community’. One way to approach these discussions is to think about the origins of a practice that causes social exclusion and examine whether it is still useful today, or if it has become something that the community would like to change. For example, a change in practice may be necessary to allow the full potential of women and men to be utilised for the overall good of the community, because harmful practices suppress an individual’s ability to strive to do his or her best for the benefit of the common good. In fact, fair and equal treatment of an individual is the basis for a healthy community, and a healthy community is the backbone of Pacific communal lifestyles.

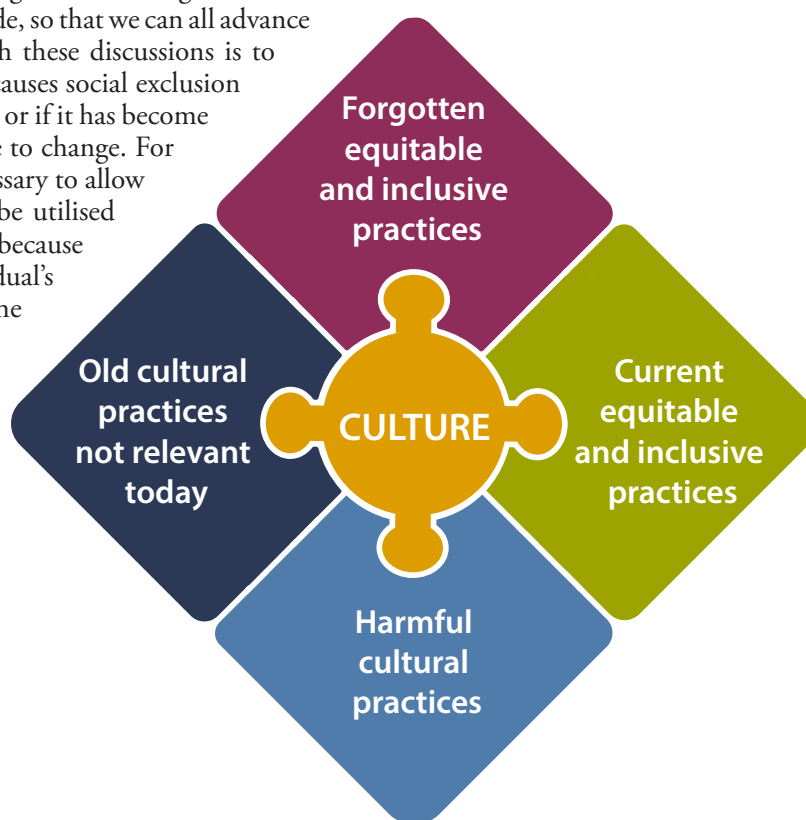


Figure 6.5. Gender and socially inclusive practices within cultures. The three case studies below show examples of some of these practices.

¹⁴ Tukuitonga C. 2015. Opinion: Advancing human rights in the Pacific. <https://www.spc.int/updates/news/media-release/2015/12/opinion-advancing-human-rights-in-the-pacific>

Case study: Old cultural practices that have lost their relevance -
women's place in Tuvalu's Falekaupule



Women were traditionally excluded from actively engaging in the Falekaupule, the local decision-making body. Instead, they were only allowed to sit at the back and observe. This exclusion was to protect them from the physical and verbal violence that used to occur during heated political debates. The discriminatory rule was also embedded in the law, which even hindered women's formal participation in the local decision-making structure. Tuvaluan political debates at local level are no longer associated with such physical or verbal violence. Furthermore, the law was amended in 2012 to allow women's voices in the Falekaupule. However, they are still largely excluded due to the long-standing practice. This is an example of an old cultural practice that is no longer relevant but is nonetheless still in use. More pro-active approaches to changing outdated cultural practices and norms will ensure women's voices are heard in community engagement processes.



Case study: Equitable and inclusive practices that have been forgotten



In some parts of Fiji, a woman was given a special portion of land within the community she was born in. This practice called *covicovi ni draudau* ensured she always had access to land and resources, and she maintained her cultural and spiritual connection to her ancestral home. The land provided a reserve for her food security. In the past, this practice also gave her children access to resources within their mother's land and community. When the woman died, that same land was returned to its original ownership.

Case study: Harmful cultural practices - the 'culture of silence'¹⁵



The 'culture of silence', which has unwritten rules of only speaking when spoken to or if asked, and not going against decisions made by elders and community leaders, is common in many Pacific Island cultures and continues to limit the full participation of women and young people in decision-making processes, including those relating to fisheries and aquaculture. There are ways of enabling different members of a community to share and participate in discussions, while maintaining respect for each other and their culture.

¹⁵ Vunisea A. 2008. The 'culture of silence' and fisheries management. SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin #18, March 2008. Noumea: SPC. 42-43.



Monitoring inclusive community engagement

Inclusive community engagement should be monitored and evaluated throughout the community entry process and adapted to ensure (i) equitable participation for all community group members; and (ii) minimisation of unintended or harmful consequences. Table 6.1 provides a list of possible indicators for measuring the results of the type of community engagement approach selected by practitioners. Module 3 provides more detailed and practical guidance on monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

It may also be useful to think of monitoring inclusive community engagement at the following levels:

Institutions: The institutions (existing or created) through which the coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity is implemented should include different members of the community, with careful consideration of those identified as marginalised. The institutions should also be evaluated in terms of their provision of a space in which all opinions and ideas are valued, respected, supported and treated equally by all.

Evidence-based: The community engagement process with a GSI lens should provide evidence showing consideration of the needs and concerns of different community members, particularly youth, the elderly, people living with disabilities or other groups that are more likely to be left out.

Visioning: Throughout the community engagement process with a GSI lens there should be evidence showing that the goals, strategies and outcomes of the project are shared with all community members during the development and management of a coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity.

Prioritising: The community engagement process with a GSI lens should include priorities that adequately address the needs of all community members, as well as strong indicators of equitable participation that are SMART (i.e. specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound).

Validating: An effective community engagement process with a GSI lens should be reflected on and adapted during the development and management of a coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity and validated by all those who take part in the activity.

Accountability: The community engagement process should be accountable to the different members in a community, e.g. women, men, elders, youths, people living with disabilities. It should include strong MEL mechanisms to enable timely revisiting of the development and management of a coastal fisheries or aquaculture activity to incorporate experiences, ideas, opinions and priorities that have been left out or learned, and to allow for an adaptive management process (see also Module 3).

This module contributes to the outcomes of *A new song for coastal fisheries* and the *Small-scale fisheries guidelines (SSF)*

- SSF 6 – Social development, employment and decent work
- SSF 8 – Gender equality
- SSF 11 – Information, research and communication
- *A new song* Outcome 1 – Informed, empowered communities with clearly defined user rights
- *A new song* Outcome 2 – Adequate and relevant information to inform management and policy
- *A new song* Outcome 7 – More equitable access to benefits and decision-making within communities, including women, youth and marginalised groups

Tools, guides and resources

- CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. 2017. CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (FISH): Gender Strategy 2017. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish.
- FAO. 2015. Voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty reduction. Rome: FAO.
- FAO. 2016. Free prior and informed consent. An indigenous peoples' right and a good practice for local communities. Rome: FAO.
- Govan H., Aalbersberg W., Tawake A. and Parks J.E. 2008. Locally Managed Marine Areas: A guide to supporting community-based adaptive management. Suva: Locally Managed Marine Area Network.
- Johnson N., Balagamwala M., Pinkstaff C., Theis S., Meinzen-Dick R. and Quisumbing A. 2018. How do agricultural development projects empower women? Linking strategies with expected outcomes. *Journal of Gender, Agriculture and Food Security*, 3(2): 1-19.
- Kleiber D., Cohen P., Gomese C. and McDougall C. 2019a. Gender-integrated research for development in Pacific coastal fisheries. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-02.
- Kleiber et al. 2019b. Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management. An addendum to "Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitators guide" and other guides for CBRM. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-08. <https://digitalarchive.worldfishcenter.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12348/3747/FISH-2019-08.pdf>
- Theis S. and Meinzen-Dick R. 2016. Reach, benefit or empower: Clarifying gender strategies of development projects. Accessed 21 March 2017. <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/reach-benefit-or-empower-clarifying-gender-strategies-development-projects>

Checklist for GSI community engagement process

Step 1: Before entering the community – plan

- ☐ Considering the gender composition of the team
- ☐ Considering the knowledge and skills of team members in GSI community engagement
- ☐ Finding out there are current barriers to inclusive engagement in the community of interest
- ☐ Identifying all community groups, i.e. men, women, youth, people living with disabilities, etc.
- ☐ Knowing about cultural protocol
- ☐ Setting up appropriate community awareness campaigns to inform all community groups
- ☐ Designing GSI data collection methods
- ☐ Making an active effort to reach out to different community groups and their leaders
- ☐ Identifying stakeholder groups that can support inclusive community engagement
- ☐ Considering timing and duration of meetings
- ☐ Formulating a protocol to deal with cases of gender-based violence

Step 2: While in a community – select the appropriate strategies and tools to use to ensure inclusive engagement

- ☐ Obtaining free, prior and informed consent
- ☐ Setting agreed-on grievance mechanisms
- ☐ Respecting child protection rules
- ☐ Following cultural protocol
- ☐ Talking with community leaders about the GSI community engagement principle and building the legitimacy of the process
- ☐ Providing additional resources or skills to marginalised groups to ensure equitable participation during each project step
- ☐ Selecting appropriate modes of delivery and awareness materials
- ☐ Making sure that the meeting catering does not limit women's participation
- ☐ Setting meeting times that are convenient for men, women, youth, people living with disabilities, etc.
- ☐ Making the meeting space safe for men, women, youth, people living with disabilities, etc.
- ☐ Talking to the chief and women's group leader before the meeting
- ☐ Having clear meeting rules to ensure respect for all community members
- ☐ Making active efforts to hear the voices of less vocal groups (i.e. prompting particular groups to speak – 'Do the young men at the back have anything to say?')
- ☐ Having someone count how often men, women, youth, people living with disabilities, etc. speak in the meeting
- ☐ Allowing women to bring children under their care into a meeting
- ☐ Having separate meetings (i.e. single sex, age-based, etc.) followed by joint reflection
- ☐ Having separate meetings (i.e. single sex, age-based, etc.) without joint reflection
- ☐ Allowing appropriate time for discussion of all ideas from all community groups
- ☐ Having both male and female facilitators/data collectors in the team (and assuming appropriate roles according to who is in the community meeting)
- ☐ Using theatre and storytelling to engage voices from all community groups
- ☐ Staying in the community and allowing for time and space for informal conversations
- ☐ Providing clarity on how results will be returned

Step 3: Post-meeting – allow for all team members to critically reflect on the engagement process and re-evaluate if necessary

- ☐ Sharing notes from both male and female facilitators on the community engagement process
- ☐ Talking among both male and female facilitators on the equitability of the process
- ☐ Evaluating unintended or negative consequences arising from the community engagement process
- ☐ Highlighting any previously unidentified barriers to participation
- ☐ Adjusting strategies and tools to the community engagement process
- ☐ Reporting to different community groups on results
- ☐ Compiling lessons learned
- ☐ Sharing lessons learned
- ☐ Taking actions based on lessons learned
- ☐ Returning results to the communities

