INTRODUCTION

Building aquaculture capacity for individuals, communities, and institutions in developing countries is core to the overall mission of the AquaFish Innovation Lab to enrich livelihoods and promote health. Aquaculture is important for overcoming poverty and hunger, and its success relies on the transfer of reliable and high quality information. AquaFish’s significant and still growing international network of trained aquaculture researchers and professionals is able to train and empower the next generation of aquaculturists through a continuous pipeline. Gender equity is an integral theme of the AquaFish capacity building effort, aiming to help communities take ownership of aquaculture research and outreach priorities and helping countries shape their aquaculture sector.

AquaFish builds capacity and ensures long-term program impacts through:
1) Building linkages between US and Host Country researchers and institutions,
2) Supporting long-term training of students and researchers,
3) Providing short-term training opportunities such as workshops and courses, and
4) Focusing on gender integration in aquaculture & fisheries.

Capacity building benchmarks and milestones, through a rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation strategy, have been set in order to track program progress and outcomes, and manage for continuing successes.

LONG-TERM TRAINING

Long-term training is defined as academic training lasting six months or more, including but not limited to degree programs. Long-term training typically culminates in a BS, MS, or PhD degree (or equivalent), but can also lead to a high-school diploma, a technical certificate or Associates Degree or post-doctoral studies. Direct involvement in AquaFish research projects provides Host Country and US students with opportunities for training and experience, ensuring lasting impacts towards community development.

Since 1983, AquaFish has supported approximately 1,000 post-secondary degrees in a variety of disciplines at universities around the world. The figure at the right represents the number of individuals trained by gender.

GENDER INTEGRATION

Gender equality and female empowerment are core development objectives in the AquaFish portfolio, and are fundamental to accomplishing effective and sustainable development outcomes, improving family nutrition, and ensuring the most basic human rights. The degree of hunger within a society is in large part associated with the status of women—the family nutritional gatekeepers. In the past decade, efforts to overcome these inequalities have narrowed many of the gender gaps, but equality issues remain, particularly in low-income and conflict-affected countries.

Gender integration is implicit and interwoven throughout the program, with the intention of creating equal opportunities for participation in the program’s research, training, educational, and other activities.

- Between 2006-2011, women’s participation in AquaFish short-term trainings increased from 32% at the start to 39%.
- In the same time period, women have represented 48% of the AquaFish long-term training program.

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