Building Human Capacity and Gender Equity Among Global Aquaculture Stakeholders

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Introduction

The development and strengthening of human capacity in partner countries is a central objective of the AquaFish Innovation Lab. One success of AquaFish is the development of an expansive collaborative network of international researchers, professionals, students, and stakeholders dedicated to the sustainable development of aquaculture and fisheries. AquaFish builds capacity through providing aquaculture training in the form of workshops and other activities (short-term training), as well as support to students pursuing bachelor’s and graduate-level degrees (long-term training). Another core component of the AquaFish capacity-building effort is gender equity and integration, as women’s participation is essential to the successful growth and development of the aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

Long-term Training

AquaFish provides support, mentoring, and academic guidance for students in post-secondary degree programs in a wide array of disciplines, helping early-career researchers build and strengthen their professional networks. In addition to the award of a degree, students benefit from hands-on activities and access to an international network which can help propel them to future positions in aquaculture, fisheries, and science-related disciplines.

Since 2006, AquaFish has supported nearly 600 students in pursuit of post-secondary degrees, creating a pipeline of educated professionals who move on to careers in government, academia, and private enterprise upon graduation.

Short-term Training

Through short-term trainings, AquaFish partners teach about innovative aquaculture technologies and provide farmers, extension agents, and producers, with knowledge needed to implement and adapt strategies to their unique conditions.

Since 2006, more than 9,000 people in aquaculture and fisheries have been trained by AquaFish partners on a variety of topics, including fish harvesting and processing, record keeping, best management practices, and hatchery techniques.

Gender Equity and Integration

Women have long been underrepresented in science, engineering, and technology careers. Although improved in recent years, collective quantitative data shows that women do not remain in science at the same rate as men and they lack access to resources and training opportunities. To address this, AquaFish sets a benchmark of women and girls comprising at least 50% participation in both trainings and support of degree-seeking students. Additionally, AquaFish designs strategies to engage women throughout the aquaculture sector including in research at universities, high level management in organizations, and as private operators in lending, fish marketing, and farming. AquaFish has successfully increased the proportion of women’s participation in short-term trainings from 37% in 2008 to 50% in 2016. Furthermore, 50% of all AquaFish-supported long-term students were women in 2016.

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