

IDENTIFYING GENDER INEQUALITIES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE IN SHRIMP VALUE CHAINS IN INDONESIA AND VIETNAM



Nguyen Van Bap (husband) and Trinh Thi Phuong (wife) at their shrimp farm, in Vietnam. Credit: Oxfam Vietnam

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GRAISEA

Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia (GRAISEA) is a regional programme which is funded by the Government of Sweden. Based on the recognition that financial viability and gender equitable and sustainable supply chains are not mutually exclusive, GRAISEA promotes win-win-win propositions: wins for communities, small-scale producers and larger businesses.

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1 BACKGROUND

As part of the Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia (GRAISEA) programme, Oxfam and partners - International Collaborating Centre for Aquaculture and Fisheries Sustainability (ICAFIS) Vietnam, Centre for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD) Vietnam, and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Indonesia- work on:

- Pilots to include the transformation of gender relations and norms in smallholder led sustainable value chain development activities. The value chains chosen are palm oil and shrimp aquaculture. In shrimp aquaculture the pilots involve communities and smallholder farmers, with women and men in producer groups and as workers, and with private sector partners in two countries: Indonesia and Vietnam
- Improving smallholder based value chain models, principles and guidelines - using the lessons from the pilots – within multi stakeholder forums like the South East Asian Shrimp Aquaculture Improvement Protocol (SEASAIP) and the global Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)
- Advocacy towards ASEAN and its Member States using the lessons from the pilots for promoting corporate social responsibility and responsible and inclusive private sector regulatory frameworks with the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) as well as the ASEAN initiatives around aquaculture and fisheries such as South East Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC)

Since the inception of GRAISEA at the beginning of 2015, two pilots in shrimp aquaculture started respectively in Indonesia and Vietnam. In the pilots, Oxfam connects to the ongoing efforts to work on more sustainable shrimp aquaculture. Worldwide there are multiple certification initiatives and aquaculture improvement programmes. One of them is the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). In the ASC, Oxfam has been advocating to include social aspects as part of its standard. The ASC shrimp standard, for example includes criteria around fair contract farming, has a comprehensive set of decent labour rights criteria, and request companies to conduct due diligence on effects and impacts for the surrounding communities (ASC, 2014). It has recently started a public consultation on ASC group certification guidelines².

The so-called participatory Social Impact Assessment (p-SIA) is a requirement, next to many others, before ASC certification can be achieved. It is often connected to the Biodiversity Environmental Impact Assessment (BEIA). See Box 1 and Annexes I and II of the ASC shrimp standard.

(http://www.asc-aqua.org/upload/ASCShrimpStandard_v1.0.pdf)

BOX 1 PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (P-SIA)

The p-SIA is included as a key tool in the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) guidelines for a responsible and sustainable shrimp standard. It especially relates to ASC standard principle 3: develop and operate farms with consideration for surrounding communities. This principle seeks to minimize injustice or unrest in affected communities that may result from shrimp farming activities.

Using p-SIA especially assists in assessing three ASC criteria:

3.1: All impacts on surrounding communities, ecosystem users and land owners are accounted for and are, or will be, negotiated in an open and accountable manner

3.2: Complaints by affected stakeholders are being resolved

3.3: Contract farming arrangements (if practiced) are fair and transparent to the contract farmer

ASC defines the Participatory Social Impact Assessment (p-SIA) as: an assessment of positive and negative consequences and risks of a planned or ongoing farm or farm development undertaken in such a manner that all stakeholder groups have input in process, results, and outcome of such an assessment, and that steps taken and information gathered is openly accessible to all.

The p-SIA methodology has seven steps:

1. Stakeholder Analysis
2. Description of farm and effects
3. Initial listing of probable social impacts: these can be economic aspects, natural resource access and use, human assets, access to physical infrastructure, social and cultural aspects (incl. gender equity), and governance aspects
4. Deeper research on important impacts
5. Propose adaptations
6. Agree on impacts and measures to address them
7. Summarize conclusions and agreements

The assessment is conducted by a team of experts which will visit the location and have interviews, focus group meetings, participatory rural appraisal techniques like resources mapping, transect walk, etc. with stakeholders involved.

In the pilots, Oxfam and partners work with the p-SIA as a tool to identify social issues in shrimp aquaculture. In this it also wants to assure that gender relations are well addressed. The ASC shrimp standard does mention gender in its principles but mainly in its *Principle 4: operate farms with responsible practices*. In principle 4, some of the included criteria are: assuring equal wages and non-discrimination (gender, minority groups) in the work environment; assuring work environment health and safety, assuring non harassment, and so on. In principle 3, gender is only referred in one line (see Box 1 above) in the guidelines for the p-SIA. In the past year as part of GRAISEA Oxfam and partners piloted the application of an “engendered” p-SIA using two different gender analysis and action planning approaches. These were carried out in two different locations: Tarakan, North Kalimantan in Indonesia and in the Mekong delta in Vietnam.

another tool to be used for ASC certification, the Biodiversity Environmental Impact Assessment (BEIA).

The p-SIA followed the seven steps as prescribed by the ASC (see Box 1). The engendering was done by:

- including in the p-SIA analysis a Gender Analysis Pathway (GAP); this approach focuses on four aspects: **Access**: equal opportunity for men and women to access information, income and employment; **Participation**: equal opportunity for men and women to participate in existing socio-economic organizations and other development programmes; **Control**: equal opportunity for men and women to have control over development resources (water, land, technology, agriculture); and **Benefit**: equal opportunity for men and women to gain benefits;
- in the p-SIA, main elements of assessment are done through the use of individual interviews, focus group discussions and Participatory Rural Appraisal tools like seasonal calendar, social and natural resources mapping. A significant component added was a participatory establishment of a 24-hour calendar (men and women separately) with specific interviews with women. As there were no women pond owners the interviews were conducted with women labourers and wives of pond owners and labourers. These interviews were using the above elements of the Gender Analysis Pathway
- the p-SIA was conducted simultaneously with the BEIA and conducted by a team of 5 persons during 2 weeks; it has to be noted that the team had already experience in the location due to an earlier ASC gap assessment study.
- the p-SIA documents are providing recommendations for addressing social impact issues which should be taken up by farm owners and stakeholders involved.

The findings were documented in two assessment reports. Additionally in this paper also two other gender studies were utilized (WOCAN, 2015 and Pramudya, et. al, 2016)

Vietnam

Partners; ICAFIS and MCD, with the support from the Oxfam's GRAISEA programme work in two provinces in the Mekong Delta: Ca Mau and Soc Trang. These provinces contribute significantly to national shrimp production. ICAFIS and MCD work with 22 farmer groups in the provinces. These groups use various shrimp farming systems: from extensive to semi-intensive to intensive.

In the two provinces, shrimp farming is dominated by men. Workers in processing factories and collectors are mainly women. Managers and owners of processing factories are mainly men. Typically, women do most of the household chores and care for children, sick and elderly. Borrowing money is done by men, but women handle daily finances and buy daily supplies at the market for the household. However, women have less access to training and commune meetings than men.

A baseline conducted as part of the GRAISEA programme revealed that 54% of the households have improved incomes after converted to shrimp farming. The other 46% had similar or lower incomes. The overall indebtedness increased as over half of the households incurred more debt on average. Shrimp diseases, water pollution, low quality breeds and abnormal climate-change related phenomena were cited as the main causes.

In Vietnam the p-SIA was combined with a number of tools from the Gender Action Learning System (GALS). Please refer to Box 2 for a description of this methodology.

From October to November 2015, the Vietnamese NGO CECM⁴ and Oxfam trained about 50 key persons from local government, the farmer groups and staff of MCD and ICAFIS in a number of GALS tools, and how these can be integrated with the p-SIA.

In the training, GALS tools were introduced:

- The Gender Identity Diamond, a tool that communities use to identify priorities for changing gender relations;
- The Gender Balance Tree, a tool that families and communities use to analyse the gender division of labour (including productive tasks, care work and household chores) in relation to household expenditures, and identify what can be changed;
- Challenge-Action trees for identifying root causes, solutions and practical actions for increasing gender equality;
- The Social Empowerment Map, a tool that communities use to identify relationships/social networks of men or women within the family, community, and with outsiders (local government, other actors/ stakeholders of shrimp value chain, mass organizations)
- Livelihoods Map is an additional tool that was created by CECM (not in original GALS tools but based on its approach) that communities use to identify and analyse key livelihood activities, infrastructure, natural resources, etc.

BOX 2 GENDER ACTION LEARNING SYSTEM (GALS)

The Gender Action Learning System (GALS)⁵ is an empowerment methodology that can be applied in development programmes, supply chains or economic planning processes. It aims at gender equality and pro-poor livelihoods improvement, and win-win collaboration with the private and public actors involved. The methodology is applied at multiple levels:

- Individuals and households use it for life and livelihood planning and changing gender relations;
- Groups and communities use it for collective action and gender advocacy for change;
- Institutional awareness raising and changing power relationship with service providers, private sector stakeholders and government bodies.

It consists of:

- A series of visual diagramming tools that are used for visioning, analysis, change planning and tracking by individuals, households, stakeholder groups or in multi-stakeholder settings;
- A set of principles related to gender justice, participation and leadership;
- Peer learning mechanisms for ongoing action learning in communities;
- Guidelines to sustainably integrate GALS in interventions such as in value chain development, financial services, business development services and agricultural extension.

It starts with creating community ownership and action priorities for gender equality through participatory exercises and tools. This is followed by an approximately six month period of action learning in which both organizational staff and community participants develop pictorial visions and plans for gender equality and improved livelihoods, based on community-led analysis and peer sharing. Participants are enabled to identify and implement sustainable strategies to increase incomes, resources, economic choices and negotiation power. It thus triggers “change from within” rather than depending on outside support. This is followed by a staged implementation of activities to engage the skills,

energies and resources of the private and public actors involved. The starting point is win-win. Since its development from 2008, GALS is applied widely in programmes of Oxfam and other NGOs, and is taken up by UN-supported government programmes and private sector operations.

Reference: www.oxfamnovib.nl/weman and www.ifad.org/topic/household_methodologies/overview



Figure 1: women and men shrimp farmers in Soc Trang, Vietnam doing a participatory analysis of gender issues using a GALS tool (Reemer, 2016)

After this training key GALS facilitators of the two project areas were trained on how to apply the tools. To date, MCD and ICAFIS have been working with the Gender Balance Tree, Challenge Action Tree, the Livelihoods map and Social Empowerment map. Follow up is planned in the coming months.

The approach was tested in Ca Mau and Soc Trang provinces with in total 6 shrimp farmer groups (some starting associations, some cooperatives, and also varied in membership) and in presence of involved stakeholders like village chiefs and a representative of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Both men and women from the farmer groups were invited.

3 RESULTS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In the case of Tarakan in Indonesia, it appeared that women in general are not significantly involved in managing shrimp aquaculture. This is due to a number of factors:

The ponds are remotely located (e.g. 20 km by boat to nearest town)

- The pond areas are also dangerous because of wild animals and robbery. Robbers are said to threaten boat passengers at gunpoint forcing them to abandon the boats and jump into water. This is a key reason indicated by men to not want their family and especially women to go to the ponds. Usually women cannot swim. It is also a reason for the pond owners to employ male labourers.
- Aquaculture allows men and women to earn more income through the production activity itself, but also spark activities like milkfish farming, crab gathering, production of fruits and vegetables, small shops, etc. Women are quite active in these diversified sources of income. It is noteworthy that women are also very active in factories of shrimp processors (WOCAN, 2015), but this was not part of the p-SIA analysis which focused on the production part of the value chain
- The respondents did not see the present division of responsibilities as a problem, neither by men or women. They indicated that it is the “usual” division in which reproductive activities (childcare, care of family, house management) are with the women, production with men and involvement in community groups by both. As part of the p-SIA this was not further analysed or challenged and therefore the p-SIA did not generate many actions points to be addressed regarding gender issues.

Regarding methodology it was found that overall the inclusion of gender specific analysis and action planning combined well with the p-SIA. This is important as so far the support programme had not given a lot of attention to gender issues.

In Vietnam, more steps were carried out before and during the p-SIA to combine the self-analysis and the mobilization of GAL principles.

As indicated in Box 2 the purpose of any information gathering and analysis in GALS is empowerment. The information is therefore not collected by an external researcher, but by stakeholders themselves, so that they have ownership of the issues and in finding possible solutions. Moreover, GALS aims to go beyond “gathering of facts”, it aims to surface how differences between men and women are socially constructed, how these negatively affect livelihoods and welfare, and enable individuals, groups and organizations to change these in a sustainable way.

Some of the findings were:

- When analyzing gender differences in finances, both women and men first indicated that decisions about expenses are made “together”. Men, indicated that “*it is the women who handle the money, not us*”, suggesting that women have higher control of income than men. Deeper self analysis showed that although women handle the daily finances and keep the cash, men make the final decisions on larger investments and expenditures. Men generally “consult” women, but that does not mean that the final decision is based on consensus, nor that women’s priorities are taken into account.
- The fact that women handle daily finances suggests that women have some freedom to spend according to their priorities. However since local norms give the responsibility of family welfare to women, the handling of household finances can also be seen as a form of household chore.
- Women have little say in the sale of products, and practically no say in investments in shrimp farming, buying of feeds, monitoring and decisions to deal with risks. Adolescent or adult sons have more say in these matters than mothers.

- Alcoholism was prioritized as a key issue for self-analysis during the p-SIA in Soc Trang. This had not been part of the baseline, but participants felt that it affected both the happiness in the family and the shrimp farming activities.
- In many sessions, it was the first time that women were invited to discuss with men on shrimp farming. Although there are examples where the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development had made efforts to provide training to women, their participation had been low. Farmers groups usually comprise of men and meetings are therefore attended by men only. GALS mobilized both groups to address issues together.
- The social network of women is often less than those of men, and often reflects among the family relationship with relatives, neighbors, and women's institutions only, whereas men are dominant in the economic and power relationship. During group discussions, women interestingly tended to analyse issues beyond shrimp farming and money and identify more practical solutions than men.
- The use of visualization techniques was appreciated and enhanced participation of all, especially women, who would otherwise be less vocal and active in the discussion;
- In terms of actions, an integration of p-SIA with GALS tools seemingly raises awareness of gender inequalities in stakeholders through their interactive participation. One of the p-SIAs for example led to a combined vision of:
 - cooperation among households both in and outside of the farmer groups for sustainable production
 - work together on improved disease control and use of quality breed- happy families with couples sharing household chores as well as tasks in shrimp farming;
 - efficient and well established water flow systems



Figure 2: representatives from shrimp farmers in Ca Mau, Vietnam, developing their vision for gender relations and improved livelihoods (Reemer, 2016)

4 P-SIA, RESPONSIBLE SMALLHOLDER AQUACULTURE AND GENDER: WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Shrimp aquaculture is a booming business in South East Asia but also a sector with big economic, social and environmental challenges. A variety of initiatives try to address these challenges and are providing sets of tools and guidelines. One important element promoted is a p-SIA aiming to look together with all stakeholders into positive and negative social impacts of shrimp aquaculture. Oxfam has been testing the methodology and specifically wanted to see how far gender equality aspects are or could be included. The two case studies in Indonesia and Vietnam show the applicability of an “engendered” p-SIA in two different contexts, but also applying two different gender approaches: using Gender Analysis Pathway and the Gender Action Learning System.

Though the pilots are still continuing, some lessons regarding gender and p-SIA could be:

1. In both contexts, it is obvious that the present guidelines as part of the initiatives like ASC to responsible shrimp aquaculture models are not (yet) effectively including gender specific analysis and action planning to increase gender equality.
2. It also became apparent that most stakeholders, active in sustainability initiatives in aquaculture in both countries, neither governmental, private sector, nor non-governmental have yet integrated gender specific analyses and action planning in their efforts to support smallholders.
3. Using the p-SIA tool offers high potential to enter into analysis and discussion with stakeholders on social challenges and provides an interesting toolbox. However, it is important to not overestimate what can be done within the framework of a p-SIA. The p-SIA is conducted as part of a trajectory towards receiving ASC certification, and has the risk to be seen as a “one-off” activity (to be conducted quickly and be ticked off as part of the overall certification process). There is also a risk of it being seen as an assessment only, whereas it should be clear that it is only the first step in a longer process towards addressing social challenges. After the assessment and development of an action plan the real work starts: implementing actions and addressing the real causes for negative impacts.
4. Oxfam is of the opinion that it is essential that gender equality is part and parcel of all these steps. Both Gender Analysis Pathway and GALS are two options that provide tools and guidelines on how to do this. These are in terms of specific aspects to be looked into, the way men and women participate (equally, interactively and self mobilizing rather than participating passively as respondents), and in the identification of issues. It requires creativity of the facilitators of the p-SIA to integrate parts of these in a p-SIA and adapt it to a specific local context.
5. GALS takes a rather fundamental approach in three ways;
 - i. From the beginning, GALS recognizes that social change and gender transformation are long term processes and cannot be “ticked off” in one p-SIA assessment; it indicates that although change is possible from the start, gender equality requires sustained and concerted effort with both women and men in the driver’s seat.
 - ii. Self-analysis and empowerment of the stakeholders are central in order to assure commitment and ownership from the start. Facilitators need to have a specific mindset and skills, (e.g. visualization) and often need to discard a top-down teaching approach many are used to;

iii. It wants not just to “gather facts” but to challenge and change existing social/cultural constructs about gender relations and positions of men and women.

The GALS methodology is therefore more than a set of guidelines and tools; it requires a concerted longer term effort with well trained facilitators rather than a one-off assessment. However, this has cost implications.

6. According to Oxfam, there are sufficient arguments from a human rights *and* from a business perspective, to request buyers of shrimp, processing companies and other stakeholders and supporters driving for change in shrimp aquaculture, to see how gender equality can be achieved and how each can contribute in terms of time, energy, and resources.

7. An initial first recommendation would be that ASC revises its guidelines re-conduct of p-SIA and includes gender specific elements, emphasizing also that a p-SIA is not a “one-off” exercise but the start of a process to address social impacts including gender equality issues;

8. Further testing is needed to identify in more detail what tools and processes can be integrated into p-SIAs, and what should be part of the process after or between p-SIAs. This should include lessons on how to optimize the balance between cost effective and scalable gender specific approaches which, at the same time, assure ownership and commitment, and address also the root causes of gender inequality.

9. At the same time, the pilots also showed that ASC certification is not easily attainable especially for groups of smallholders due to the high requirements of disease prevention and control, avoiding negative biodiversity and environmental impacts, and traceability of responsibly produced broodstock and feeds. Avoiding negative social impacts and to be gender transformative is adding to these challenges. This all poses high demands on group management and internal control systems, and involves high costs in analyzing the gaps, establishing the necessary measures, and the independent 3rd party audit. Resolving for solutions to these issues need further exploration beyond the scope of this paper.

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² Group certification of ASC is aimed to address one of the key challenges of certification: how to make certification attainable for smallholders.

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⁴ CECEM is the Vietnamese NGO Centre for Community Empowerment: it is providing trainings on GALS

⁵ GALS was developed under Oxfam Novib's WEMAN programme with Linda Mayoux and local civil society partners in Uganda, Sudan, Peru and India.

