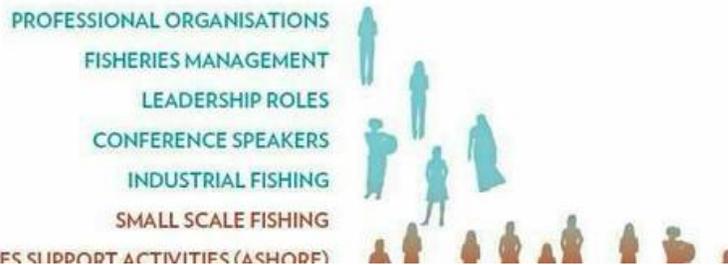




WHERE ARE WOMEN IN THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY?



FISHERIES SUPPORT ACTIVITIES (ASHÖÐF)
Women make up half the labor force in the seafood industry yet are still not visible. Photo: WSI

Women push for stronger role in seafood sector

Although women make up half the workforce in the seafood industry, the majority are in low-level jobs and barely any are in executive, decision-making roles.

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It is a fact that cannot be denied: in senior executive positions within the seafood sector, men still far outnumber women, but there are signs the tide is changing, albeit slowly.

"We make up half the labor force in this industry yet we are still not visible – we need to make ourselves visible and change that situation," Marie Christine Monfort, president and co-founder of the Women in the Seafood Industry (WSI), told **IntraFish**.

WSI was at the 12th Icelandic Fisheries Exhibition in Reykjavik in Iceland, marking the very first time that a women's association exhibited at a professional fisheries fair.

"Time has arrived for change and we are seeing support for our movement from both men and women," said Monfort.

In cooperation with the University of Vigo, WIS also arranged for three women -- now working in the seafood industry -- to attend the show and relate their experiences of the industry and meet Iceland's fisheries minister.

"I think it is still a sexist industry," Marianna Toussaint, from the FAO, told **IntraFish**. "Women tend to fill up the lowest positions while men occupy the higher positions."

However, Carmen Gonzales Garcia, who now works for Fish Accelerator, told **IntraFish** "maybe in the next 10 years this will change."

"I think it is a generational thing and stereotypes are still strong," Garcia said. "There are still barriers and stigma in the way. It is mainly the older generation, but a younger generation is coming through."

Sofia Lorenzo, who works at Pescanova, told **IntraFish** a lot the inequality has to do with lingering paternalistic attitudes towards careers, in particular for women who want to be at sea on fishing boats.

"It should be the individual's decision," she said. "So there is still difficulty, breaking down that first barrier and getting into the industry."

All three women said they were at the show to inspire and show other early-career women what is possible.

Meeting Iceland's Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Thorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir, was a highlight for the women.

"The minister told us how we are not alone, and must keep pushing. She said women must speak up, be visible, not stay in the corner and express their opinion," Garcia said.

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