



Exploring the access to, and experiences of people of diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identity engaged in fisheries:

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## A scoping study

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# Bios

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Dr Christina Kenny works on human rights and development with a focus on colonial histories, gendered citizenship, and gender and sexuality rights in the Global South, and has over ten years experience working with women and LGBTQ+ communities in Australia, Kenya and South Africa. Christina has worked with a variety of human rights based organisations in research and policy development in Australia and sub-Saharan Africa including the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Migration and Refugee Review Tribunals, The Australian Govt. Department of the Attorney General; the Women's Legal Centre and the South African Human Rights Commission (Cape Town); the British Institute of Eastern Africa, and the Kenya Human Rights Commission (Nairobi). Her monograph, *Reimagining the Gendered Nation: Citizenship and Human Rights in Post-colonial Kenya* (Oct 2022), James Currey (Oxford), is in press.

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## Glossary<sup>1</sup>

<b>Bisexual</b>	A person whose sexual orientation is toward one or more people of the same or different gender identity
<b>Cisgendered</b>	A person whose gender identity is consistent with their sex assigned at birth
<b>Gay</b>	A person whose gender identity is male, whose sexual orientation is toward other people whose gender identity is male. Gay may also be used as an umbrella term to refer to all homosexual people regardless of their gender identity.
<b>Gender expression</b>	“A person’s ways of communicating culturally-defined traits of masculinity or femininity (or both, or neither) externally through physical appearance (including clothing, accessories, hair styles, and the use of cosmetics), mannerisms, ways of speaking, and behavioural patterns in interactions with others.” Yogyakarta Principles (2007)
<b>Heterosexual</b>	A person whose sexual orientation is toward people of the opposite gender identity as themselves (assuming binary gender norms).
<b>Homosexual</b>	A person whose sexual orientation is toward people of the same gender identity as themselves.
<b>Lesbian</b>	A person whose gender identity is female, whose sexual orientation is toward other people whose gender identity is also female.
<b>Queer</b>	A reclaimed term increasingly used as an umbrella term for people of all kinds of sexual and gender diversity, and sometimes used to imply a more radical political perspective. ‘Queering’ may also refer to acts outside of sexual and gender diversity issues, where a binary or norm is challenged. It is in this context that ‘queer’ is used in this report. We acknowledge that queer has also been used as a slur and is still understood as a slur by some members of the LGBTQAI+ community.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	A person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender, or more than one gender.
<b>Third gender</b>	A person who has a gender identity that is neither female nor male. Third gender people may also demonstrate fluidity within their gender identity and may occupy social roles typically associated with one or more gender identities. Third gender identities are usually culturally specific, and third gender people may or may not identify as transgender.
<b>Transgender</b>	A person who identifies themselves “in a different gender than that assigned to them at birth. They may express their identity differently to that expected of the gender role assigned to them at birth. Trans/transgender persons often identify themselves in ways that are locally, socially, culturally, religiously, or spiritually defined.” Some transgender persons are binary, their gender identity being the opposite of that assigned at birth, while others may identify as non-binary trans masculine, non-binary trans

<sup>1</sup>Glossary terms are drawn from the Oxfam report, Emily Dwyer and Lana Woolf, (2019) *Down by the River: Addressing the rights, needs and strengths of Fijian sexual and gender minorities in disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response*, <https://www.edgeeffect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Down-By-The-River-May2018.pdf>

## Samoan – English dictionary

<b>Aualuma</b>	Organisation of women/girls indigenous to a village
<b>Aumaga</b>	Organisation of untitled men in a village
<b>Fa’afafine</b>	A third gender category in Samoan culture where a person who is assigned male at birth, performs women’s roles and may have a feminine affect. Fa’afafine may identify with neither, both or a combination of masculine and feminine gender identities.
<b>Fa’afatama/Fa’atama</b>	A fourth gender category in Samoan culture where a person who is assigned female at birth, who performs men’s roles and may have a masculine affect. Fa’atama may identify with neither, both or a combination of masculine and feminine gender identities.
<b>Fa’aoso</b>	Food gifts one bears to present to relatives upon returning to their home after travelling to fulfil cultural obligations such as funerals
<b>Fono</b>	Meeting
<b>Kili</b>	Cast net
<b>Lavalava</b>	Unisex garment of clothing that is normally a printed, colourful piece of cotton or light cloth worn like a sarong or wraparound skirt
<b>Ola</b>	Bag made from plaited coconut fronds to put the catch into
<b>Puletasi</b>	Two piece formal dress attire usually made of the same printed material worn by women. It consists of a dress and waist long wrap around cloth usually of the same print hence pule (print) tasi (one)
<b>Matai</b>	The holder of a chiefly title
<b>Matai title</b>	Chiefly titles that belong to families and to which all members of a lineage are entitled
<b>Pulega a matai</b>	Men’s council group (village chiefs’ group which is predominantly men)
<b>Mafutaga Tina ma Tausi</b>	Grouping of mothers and women married into a village
<b>Tombie</b>	A shorthand for ‘tomboy’ which is a colloquial term for a lesbian of masculine gender expression
<b>Uso</b>	Sibling of the same sex
<b>Va tapuia</b>	The covenantal relationship between people and their environment which is deemed sacred
<b>va fealoaloa’i</b>	mutual respect in social relationships

## Abbreviations

<b>MAF</b>	Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries
<b>SOGIE</b>	sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression
<b>SOGIE/SC</b>	sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression and/or sex characteristics
<b>SFA</b>	Samoa Fa’afāfine Association

## Fish dictionary

	<b>Samoan</b>	<b>English</b>
1	Aliao	Trochus
2	Alogo	Lined surgeonfish
3	Alualu	Jellyfish
4	Asiasi	Yellowfin tuna
5	Atu	Skipjack
6	Fe'e	Octopus
7	Fuga	Parrotfish
8	Fugafuga	Brown Sandfish
9	Gatala	Grouper
10	Gau	Shoulderblade sea cat
11	I'a lama	Reef fishes
12	I'a ma figota vaivai	Finfishes
13	I'a pulu	Bottom fishes
14	Ipo	No English translation available
15	Laea	Strephead parrotfish
16	Limu fuafua	Sea grapes
17	Maisu/sea/loli	Greenfish/Curryfish/Lollyfish (all Sea cucumber)
18	Malau	Blotcheye soldierfish
19	Mataele'ele	Onespot emperor
20	Pa'a	Crabs
21	Palu Loa/ Palu malau	Flame Snapper / Ruby snapper
22	Papata	Slippery lobster
23	Pipi	Pacific asaphis
24	Pone	Striated surgeonfish
25	Pusi	Moray eel
26	Saesae/ililia	Orangespine unicornfish
27	Sisi	Nerite
28	Tio	Royal oyster
29	Tugane	Venus shell
30	Tuitui	Sea urchins
31	Ula-sami	Lobster
32	Ula-vai	Prawns
33	Ume	Bluespine unicornfish

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# Executive Summary

**People of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression (SOGIE) exist throughout the Pacific and its diasporas, but many people of diverse SOGIE across the Pacific, and in Samoa in particular, are at best tolerated, superficially accepted or treated with indifference, and often face sustained institutional, cultural and social discrimination, as well as cultural, physical and sexual violence.**

Stories of marginalisation, which this scoping project has brought into conversation with more traditional research and policy work on Pacific fisheries supply chains inform approaches which aim to curb systemic violence against people of diverse SOGIE, promote their rights, and develop culturally grounded and locally produced resources to support marginalised LGBTQ+ communities and individuals to build resilience by improving access to safe and supportive training and working environments offering economic and training resources to promote and protect their employment.

In this project we push understandings of gender beyond the normative gender binary. While binary analyses can offer important critiques of the history of gender programming, this project seeks to develop and expand these concepts to include more complex understandings of gender, and the role gendered categories play in cultural, social and working life. We base this understanding on developments in International human rights policy as well as important developments in methodological approaches to studying gender in communities.

The Pacific research framework and protocols that guided this research utilised Samoan values of *va tapuia* and *va fealoaloa'i* which enabled the embedding of experiences that might otherwise have been considered peripheral within Samoan structures of heteronormativity. Mindful that research in the Pacific has been used as a colonising tool, in conjunction with *talanoa*, this project employed interactive grounded theory, phenomenological analyses such as intersectionality and queer methodologies which have important complementarities with Pacific research frameworks.

Through mapping the experiences and participation of individuals of diverse SOGIE working across fishing value supply chains in Samoa, we have generated new understandings of the communal nature of this work, and developed guidelines for conducting ethical, future work addressing the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE across agrifood supply chains in other Pacific nations. This innovative, interdisciplinary methodology also offers strategies which will fill many of the significant gaps in current knowledge of subsistence and coastal fisheries personnel, practices and catch.

One of our most significant findings was that despite the erasure, marginalisation and social exclusion that is experienced by communities of diverse SOGIE, their skill and lifelong participation in the fishing supply chain was a space within which these people individuals found acceptance. Our interviews with *fa'afafine*, *fa'atama*, and lesbian and bisexual women reinforce our understanding that deeply embedded social and cultural gendered roles and hierarchies structure the roles of women, men and people of diverse SOGIE, and children across the fishing sector. The experiences of people of diverse SOGIE in the formal and informal fisheries supply chains in Samoa are primarily affected by their experiences of fishing as a child with their parents and extended families, and village communities, as well as by their experiences as adults navigating social and cultural environments which are almost uniformly hostile to gender presentations and affects which lie outside strict masculine/feminine norms, and the cultural and religious requirement of compulsory heterosexuality.



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Within our study, a majority of respondents working in fisheries supply chains in our interviews admitted to having little or no knowledge of the involvement or experiences of people of diverse SOGIE working in these areas. This is reflected within the literature, where current participation data examining gendered participation in commercial and subsistence fishing is focused almost exclusively on the experiences and treatment of cis women, to the exclusion of all other groups. Critiques of gender sensitive programming in Pacific countries have noted that ‘there is conceptual confusion with ‘gender’ being conflated to “helping women”’ (Mangubhai and Lawless, 2021, 9), a foundational problem which is not confined to the fisheries industry, nor the Pacific region. We disrupt these assumptions and offer a crucial, foundational understanding of gender categories and roles as products of historical, cultural and social forces, providing a novel framework vital to the analysis of fisheries supply chains. Our expansive framing creates space to explore the ways in which people of all genders and a diversity of gender expressions are received in their communities. These gender identities and expressions are particularly important in the context of traditional gendered roles assigned to fishing, aquaculture and other farming practices. For instance, a holistic understanding of gender expression and affect is needed to capture, and understand the experiences of women working in male dominated industries and roles; of men who are also excluded from traditionally masculine roles or opportunities due to a perceived failure to perform or embody particular kinds of masculinity; as well as the ways in which same sex attracted women, particularly those who embody a more masculine affect are marginalised for ‘failing’ to perform expected feminine roles, gender presentation and expression.

Our recommendations highlight the complexity of the issues facing people of diverse SOGIE living in Samoa, and their skills and resilience in the face of pervasive marginalisation. There are so many avenues to explore in supporting these communities, and contributing to the quality of data available on subsistence and small-scale commercial fisheries in Samoa, as one fa’atama respondent explained:

I’m hands on, street smart... I’m very industrious ...

I have ‘poto salalau’ – everyday smarts – and that’s something I have used throughout life. ... but just wish we had opportunities that could enable us to capitalize on our type of knowledge. People look down on us. We’re not all dumb. We have intelligence.

It is imperative that the contributions of people of diverse SOGIE to village and family life are recognized and supported, in particular their skills and assistance across the fisheries supply chain, not only for the benefit of Samoan society more broadly, but as a foundational act of economic justice.

# Recommendations

**As this is a scoping study, these recommendations identify next steps which develop and expand the scope of this work, both in terms of agrifoods systems, thematic areas, and geographic reach.**

All recommendations have been endorsed by the Samoa Fa'afafine Association and The Rogers community group representing fa'atama, lesbian and bisexual women. The substance of recommendations pertaining to government departments have been discussed with a representative from the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries. The recommendations were also drafted following consultation with Fadzai Muparutsa, an internationally respected advocate for the rights of lesbian and queer women and program manager with the African peak body, the Coalition of African Lesbians.

In addition to recommendations which are directly derived from these consultations, field work and literature review relating to the lived experience of people of diverse SOGIE within commercial and subsistence fisheries supply chains, we have also identified three key areas of policy analysis which have previously produced substantial lists of recommendations pertinent to this work: Improving the quality of fisheries data, systems and regulation of subsistence fishing practices

1. The inclusion and support for women participating in subsistence and commercial fisheries, including valuing their material and structural contributions to family and village access to fish, marine invertebrates and seaweed; and
2. The protection and promotion of the rights of people of diverse SOGIE living in Pacific nations.
3. It is outside the scope of this project to synthesise these recommendations or to provide a complete list of recommendations derived from this literature. Rather, we have provided below some recommendations which identify indicative (though not exhaustive) literature for synthesis of existing recommendations.

In addition, we have provided guidance for fieldwork engaging marginalised Pacific populations, which articulates the strength of this project as well as lessons learned at 'Meeting the Objectives' (p.47).

# ACIAR

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## **A. Dissemination**

1. Share this report with DFAT to compliment the work DFAT is doing supporting people of diverse SOGIE in Pacific nations.

## **B. National, regional and international policy development**

2. Both the FAO and broader alternative agriculture discourse regard the family farm as a unit of production assumed to be desirable for environmental sustainability and community longevity', indeed, the FAO named 2014 the International Year of Family Farming.'

### **Recommendation:**

- a. To develop a policy position that challenges FAO and other international and regional agriculture bodies to embrace an inclusive identity of 'farmer' and 'fisher' which does not carry the assumption of heteronormative, nuclear families, or heterosexual masculine farmer. (Hoffelmeyer 2020, 352)

## **B. Further research – agrifood supply chains and sustainability**

3. This research has demonstrated the success of grounded theory and narrative approaches to field work in filling significant data gaps in fisheries. The field work methodologies applied here can support the collection of subsistence data for fish, marine invertebrates and other products made at a granular, village level. The addition of visiting markets and fishers in their home environments to periodically weigh their catch will provide essential ground-level data to inform the health of coastal fisheries as well as knowledge of stock depletion through life course, and intergenerational observations.

### **Recommendations:**

- a. Expand this scoping study and commission research to examine and report on the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE across agrifoods supply chains with the aim of increasing fa'atama, fa'afafine and other Pacific gender identities as well as lesbian, bisexual women's participation in commercial and subsistence fishing, aquaculture and agriculture identifying two Pacific countries with contrasting cultural structures and agrifoods supply chains – for example, Samoa (monocultural) and Fiji (multicultural).
- b. These data can also be used to track the effects of climate change and overfishing – do these phenomena affect women and SOGIE subsistence fishing practices differently/disproportionately to other, formal fisheries supply chains – an area of further exploration and research funding.

## **C. Further research – nutrition**

4. Several subsistence fishers noted that they were able to supplement their diet with marine invertebrates, seaweed and fish whenever they felt the need to vary their protein which was otherwise usually chicken, which is cheaper than buying fish.

### **Recommendations:**

- a. Investigate the question - do families who still subsistence fish have a better nutrition quality than families who only have access to bought fish?

## Government and policy interventions

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### A. Fishing support, training and funding

5. Very few respondents, regardless of their SOGIE, reported receiving government support in their fishing endeavours. For example, one market vendor noted that the toilet that services the market is 500m away from the stalls and so very difficult to access during working hours.

#### Recommendations:

- a. Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), in collaboration with Ministry for Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSO) canvas fishers in Samoa to assess their needs and where support might be offered. Several recommendations designed to enhance fisheries practice are also listed in FAO and other reports.
- b. ACIAR could fund desk collation and review of current recommendations to compliment inclusive community consultation in designing funding and infrastructural supports for small scale commercial and subsistence fishers.
- c. The Coastal Fisheries Plan (2013 - 2016) is out of date – awaiting cabinet approval of the Fisheries Sector policy. Once the Fisheries Sector Policy is approved, the drafting of the Coastal Fisheries Plan needs to include all relevant recommendations listed here including the expansive understanding of gender to include cisgendered, titled and untitled men and women, as well as people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression.
- d. Explore a visit or exchange program where fa'afafine from American Samoa come to discuss their work on long haul fishing vessels. Am. Samoa representatives could meet with the Samoa Fa'afafine Association as well as the MAF.
- e. ACIAR to work with Fa'afafine Association and village associations to fund pilot fishing projects? Consult with SFA on the scale and content of this work, including investment and equipment.

### B. Economic justice, inclusion, personal emotional and physical safety

6. Although people of diverse SOGIE are skilled fishers and enjoyed a wide variety of activities and roles across the fisheries supply chain, these respondents identified personal safety (including mental health and emotional safety) clothing requirements and gender expression were barriers to employment.

#### Recommendations:

- a. The sensitisation of government personnel at all levels, particularly those in MAFS and MWCSO to the needs of these communities, and the difficulties they face.
- b. Government and other regional and external agencies need to be sensitive to the needs of fa'atama participants in trainings and work opportunities such that there are spaces where people can earn a living and express their gender identity – including through clothing and mannerisms and any other gender expression – respondents described the Yazaki factory for fa'atama and lesbian and bisexual women as one such environment; or fa'afafine selling fish at the market, for example, is an affirmation of their gender identity.

- c. That any applications for support/funding are inclusive of applicants with non-normative family/business structures – eg. that considers applications from small teams of people like a small team from the Rogers community group, rather than only familial units.
  - d. ACIAR, in collaboration with the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry for Women need to explore pathways for people of diverse SOGIE to enter into the fisheries sector, recognising that pathways and skills sets of fa’atama are very different to the skill sets of cisgendered women; and fa’afafine are able to work in different roles than either cisgendered men or women.
  - e. That villages which currently host fa’afafine and fa’atama village groups, similar to those for untitled men (aumaga) and untitled women (aualuma) (we identified one in our research and hope to identify others in future work, noting that one fa’atama respondent reported he was a titled member of his village) be included where fishing consultations are conducted by the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries. The researchers and the Fa’afafine Association can assist with community outreach to identify such villages and groups who may be willing to participate in a trial.
7. Anecdotally, our research indicates that many fa’atama have criminal records due to the precarious nature of their lives and pervasive marginalisation. We note that there is currently a tilapia farming program run through Samoa Police, Prisons and Corrections Services. Based on evidence that fa’atama are sometimes not able to finish high school or university, all fa’atama respondents requested training, funding and business opportunities in order to engage in small scale commercial fishing.

**Recommendations:**

- a. Explore the potential for an elective program designed for women and children aged ten years and older with criminal records for violence, and other crimes of marginalisation (vagrancy, loitering and small thefts etc.) The criminal age of responsibility in Samoa is 10 years old. (Consortium for Street Children 2021). This program would include modules offering training for skills relevant to the fisheries supply chain, including long haul fishing, tourism (COVID permitting) and other commercial fishing; as well as modules on business management, reading and maths literacy programs as appropriate for the cohort/s.
- b. Recognise the considerable skills already present in fa’afafine and fa’atama communities and pay fa’afafine and fa’atama who have skills in fishing, gleaning and selling, to run workshops to teach interested people with a focus on fellow fa’afafine and fa’atama participants.

## The protection and promotion of the rights of people of diverse SOGIE living in Pacific nations

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Although this recommendation may appear to lie outside the scope of this research, and indeed, the scope of ACIAR's remit, it is imperative that this value lies at the heart of future work to involve people of diverse SOGIE across agrifood supply chains. This is, fundamentally, an economic justice issue, which will not be solved by economic or fishing/farming training alone. These investments in yield and skill will not be effective without a framework which recognises the full personhood of everyone involved in these activities. Programs and policies which assume a heterosexual and cisgender context neglect how queerness and gender non-conformity affects involvement in farming. As Hoffelmeyer argues, there is a pressing need to understand how heterosexuality is enforced and enacted in agricultural spaces. Just as understanding gender in agriculture requires an interrogation of unquestioned norms of masculinity, sexuality studies also entail an investigation of heterosexuality ... socio-spatial relations substantially inform queer livelihoods, [and are implicated in] where and how queer farmers participate in agriculture.' (2020, 348-9).

8. Synthesise recommendations from international, regional and national organisations and apply the findings from these reports to improve government interaction with and support for populations of diverse SOGIE, particularly with regard to informing gender mainstreaming policies across agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry programming, for example.

### **Recommendation:**

- a. The Samoa Fa'afafine Association Inc. 2016. Submission to the OHCHR UPR 25th Session, including:
  - i. that the Samoan Government provide the Samoa Faafafine Association with Core Funding under the budget of the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development budget for its strategic gender discrimination initiatives and Ministry of Health for its core strategic health objectives.
  - ii. the inclusion of Fa'afafine and Fa'afatama in the development of microfinance programmes, economic and social justice programmes. technological and marketing assistance for small business, business and vocational skills training.
9. Women are a marginalised group within fisheries supply chains:
  - a. Synthesise reports addressing the lack of women's representation in fisheries, and collate recommendations in order to:

### **Recommendations:**

- a. critically engage with reporting which addresses the important of gender mainstreaming, while erasing the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE, including:
- b. develop gender mainstreaming strategies which are truly inclusive of cis-gendered men and women, and people of diverse SOGIE, including but not limited to Fa'afafine and fa'atama.

# Introduction

**It is well recognized that individuals and communities of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression (SOGIE)<sup>1</sup> living in Pacific countries face significant institutional and social discrimination, and frequently debilitating cultural, physical and sexual violence.**

These communities of diverse SOGIE are also vulnerable to intersectional disadvantages including financial hardship, food and housing insecurity, and are often denied access to education.

Many fishers, and (often women) processors and traders have limited capacity to better utilise their stocks and so improve their fish-based livelihoods. Similarly, those involved in aquatic farming and trade have poor capacity to improve their production systems and lack access to reliable and quality inputs and information. It is not known to what extent these limitations for people working across fisheries supply chains apply to people of diverse SOGIE, and indeed, the participation of this group within the Pacific fisheries sector is currently invisible.

This project complements and extends the significant gender equality work in which ACIAR is currently engaged and offers unique perspectives and methodologies which complement work on the 2021 review of ACIAR's Women's Empowerment Policy and informs the strategic priorities of the Fisheries Program's gender portfolio. This project is also the pilot phase of a larger ACIAR project which, will develop new conceptualisations of inclusive and equitable agrifood systems participation within communities and across supply chains. This model moves beyond existing modes of engagement with women as the primary focus of gender-based advocacy and policy, and provokes a deeper dialogue with, and analysis of, gendered identities and heteronormative relationship structures within specific geographical and cultural locations. This approach works in collaboration with marginalised communities participating in agrifood supply chains to identify their support needs to ensure more equitable agrifood supply chain and development outcomes.

In addition, this scoping study will, in coalition with local community leaders and advocacy groups inform approaches which aim to: curb systemic violence against people of diverse SOGIE; promote their rights; develop culturally grounded and locally produced resources; support communities of diverse SOGIE to build resilience, expand their networks, and support marginalised people with access to economic and training resources to promote and protect their employment.

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<sup>1</sup>The acronym SOGIE rather than SOGIESC+ (Sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression and sex characteristics) has been used here as the experiences of people with variations in sex characteristics are not included in this study, although given the gaps in research identified for both cis women, and people of diverse SOGIE, it is probable that the experiences of people with variations of sex characteristics suffer from a similar, or greater lack of research and policy attention.

## Scoping study

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This scoping study maps the participation and experiences of people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression (SOGIE) across fisheries supply chains in Samoa, developing methodologies for use in future work addressing the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE across agrifood supply chains in other Pacific nations. It offers new knowledge of the experiences of women and people of diverse SOGIE working within fisheries supply chains, which begins to fill significant gaps in the current literature pertaining to women's contributions to subsistence and coastal fisheries personnel, practices and catch. This work includes a combination of interviews with government and international organisations, as well as community surveys and focus groups, and academic and grey literature review. The methodologies developed for this work will be applicable to future projects that ACIAR may pursue across fisheries, agriculture and forestry supply chains in the region.

The project pilots innovative research methodologies designed specifically for Pacific contexts by developing queer and postcolonial methodologies and theoretical frameworks which are better able to centre the knowledge and experiences of partner communities in the research project, make space for the diversity of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation over the life course, as well as account for the ways in which these changes affect an individual's relationship to community, as well as relationships to government and international institutions, regulation and authority. These methodologies are grounded in a human rights-based approach to development, but importantly extend and challenge international orthodoxies: challenging the binary and essentialist gender dyad, the focus on cis-heterosexual women as the only marginalised gender category, and foregrounding the challenges faced by rural communities.

This pilot project will inform future research investments that will contribute constructive critique of mainstream gender research, as well as to better understand how changes across social and political institutions and communities can improve local food environments and support the wellbeing of rural coastal communities.

## Objectives

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1. To map the participation and perceptions of people and communities of diverse SOGIE engaged in fisheries in Samoa, as a scoping study for a planned ACIAR project that would translate to other Pacific island nations and agrifood supply chains;
2. In particular, to understand the economic and social contribution, experiences and treatment of SOGIE individuals in this sector;
3. To identify any barriers to the full participation of such individuals, including access to land, investment opportunities, training and capacity building (eg. agricultural extension), and contribution to value supply chains;
4. To develop place-based research and data collection methodologies which are ethical and account for intersectional identities among research partners and participants.



## Methodologies

This research utilises a Pacific research framework, guided by **Pacific research protocols** (Bennett et. al. 2013). Research in the Pacific, particularly projects conducted by foreign researchers, have typically been a disempowering experience for Pacific Islanders (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). This work has undermined the agency of Pacific peoples and has ‘not highlighted or captured our abilities to reconnect, relate to one another and benefit from our relationships’ (Baba et. al. 2004, 18). As a result of years of being positioned as passive research subjects, rather than agentive knowledge holders, Vaioleti argues that Pacific peoples have experienced little improvement in their social or economic status, education, or health (2006, 22). Nabobo-Baba expresses the concerns of Pacific communities when she states that:

Research among indigenous peoples of the Pacific in the 21st century face a number of challenges. One of the most powerful of these is the unchecked and careless use of frames that do not take into account languages and Indigenous knowledge protocols, philosophies and principles, especially where and when their own knowledges and tribal issues are researched. Today, indigenous Pacific people are beginning to describe and articulate their preferred processes of knowledge gathering, processing and dissemination in a wider move to achieve some form of self-determination in academia and in knowledge institutions especially (Nabobo-Baba 2008, 141).

This project is conscious of these significant shortcomings in previous research protocols and contributes a model for ethical and locally grounded research which is informed by Pacific worldviews, ‘conducted in accordance with Pacific ethical standards, values and aspirations’ (Bennett et al. 2013, 107-8). This project’s design and implementation reinforces the need for research to be contextual and grounded in Indigenous methods and epistemologies from a ‘communitarian perspective’ for it to have value for community research partners (Gegeo 1998, 2001). Further, the researchers are committed to a skill-sharing ethic, which prioritises training local project partners in qualitative research methodologies, and builds relationships with local

knowledge holders such that these groups can design and deliver projects by, and for, their communities in the future.

Conscious of the ‘unique epistemologies’ of Pacific peoples, and what Vaioleti has identified as an ignorance of the ‘values and lived realities that allow understanding of issues pertaining to knowledge and ways of being that originated from the nga waima (spirits) and whenua of Samoa ... or the other Pacific nations’ (2006, 23), this project prioritises local knowledge production and methods of sharing knowledge. Pacific methodologies guiding this research ensure that people and knowledges of the Pacific have been instrumental in the conceptualisation of this project and also contributed at all stages in the life of the project. Specifically, the **Pacific methods of talanoa and story-telling** were utilised. Setsuo Otsuka explains that:

*Tala* literally means to inform, tell, relate, command, ask and apply. *Noa* literally means any kind, ordinary, nothing-in-particular, purely imaginary. Hence, *talanoa* literally means a face-to-face conversation whether it is formal or informal. It is commonly practised by the Pacific Islanders ... While *talanoa* is about chatting, it involves a deep, interpersonal relationship, the kind of relationship on the basis of which most Pacific activities are carried out. In *talanoa* research, researchers and participants share each other’s time, interest, and information, but also emotions of both parties. In fact, *tala* holistically intermingles researchers’ and participants’ emotions, knowledge, experiences, and spirits. Hence, *talanoa* research is collaborative, and removes the distance between researchers and participants, and provides respondents with a human face they can relate to since *talanoa* is all about ‘sharing’, based on face-to-face verbal interactions between researchers and participants (2005, 3-4).

This project also utilises **interactive grounded theory** and queer methodologies, which have important complementarities with Pacific research frameworks. Interactive grounded theory emphasises expansive narrative forms of data collection, through multiple, often open or unstructured, interactions, as well as formal and informal discussions and interviews and participant observation.

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The interactive grounded theory approach is also uniquely suited to the Talanoa method of data gathering: both privilege personal and community narratives, and open questions and discussion. Grounded theory then examines the discussions and draws findings from these data (as opposed to testing a hypothesis through narrow purposeful questioning.) Grounded theory is appropriate here as we are seeking to understand a collection of phenomena without an initiating hypothesis. Rather, we are seeking to map and understand experiences and processes we do not currently comprehend. The analysis emerges through close and iterative examination of the data, including interview transcripts, notes from participant observation, informal conversations, and purposive interviews (see for instance Lingard et. al. 2008, 1; Priya 2016).

**Queer methodologies** will assist researchers to foreground local understandings and expressions of gender identity, and explore the ways in which these expectations and expressions affect the opportunities available to people of diverse SOGIE working in, or who feel would benefit from working in, fisheries supply chain/s. Importantly for this project, a queer lens encourages researchers to interrogate normative gender relations, and the ways they are encouraged, enforced and rejected; as well as inquire about the production, expression and reception of non-normative expression of gender identity and sexual orientation. Brown and Nash explain that, '[q]ueer theory challenges the normative social ordering of identities and subjectivities along the heterosexual/homosexual binary as well as the privileging of heterosexuality as 'natural' and homosexuality as it's deviant and abhorrent 'other' (2010, 5). In strongly gendered systems such as the gendered coastal and subsistence fisheries roles identified in this field work and supporting literature, it is critical that in building an understanding of the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE, these experiences are contextualised within the larger context of gender relations within Samoan village life, and the ways in which gender norms are produced, performed and enforced. This is the core work of queer theory. More broadly, as a critical framework,

[q]ueerness resists norms and values, often as an engagement in the resistance of political ideas and ideals. ... [used in conjunction with qualitative research,

queer theory functions to] disrupt normalized ideals through an attention to both the event and the underlying understandings that are central to that event as it occurs, and to the analysis of what has happened (Wozolnek 2019, 5).

The dominance of cis-heteropatriarchy in the gender narrative in modern Pacific cultures is largely responsible for the intolerance and non-acceptance of non-heteronormative individuals. Centring the experiences of diverse SOGIE groups in the fishing value supply chains acknowledges that 'objectives for gender equality and gender equity cannot be disentangled from broader social structures that alleviate or exacerbate discrimination and social inequality' (Singh-Peterson et. al., 152). Thus, an **intersectional analysis of gender and identity** within this industry is necessary and must challenge:

assumptions that all people from a particular group face the same circumstances ... [and acknowledge that] people who have several marginalised identities might face extra challenges, such as multiple forms of discrimination, or always feeling on the outside or different' (Roy et. al. 2021, 7).

In the Samoan context, an individual's relationship with their family, their village and religious community affect their access to resources including fisheries, agriculture and education. To disregard these multi-dimensional identities is to assume that non-heterosexual identity is the only category relevant to a person's experience of discrimination or marginalisation (Crenshaw 1989, 149).

The employment of these complementary methodologies allows us to better understand the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE, and their lived realities through a phenomenological enquiry that is also, necessarily, an empowering post-colonial exercise of contextually appropriate research. The research setting is context-sensitive, as it is the geographic location which encompasses particular familial and community relations, as well as community understandings of, and relationships to, their local lands and waters. These contextual markers offer reference points that give clues for interpreting the experiences of those whose actions and beliefs can only be explained temporally and spatially (Patton 2002).

# Case study – Samoa

Samoa consists of two main islands, Savai'i and Upolu, and two much smaller inhabited islands, Manono and Apolima, hosting a total population of 195,800 people; as well as several small, uninhabited islands (Gillett & Tauati 2018, 269).

For Samoa, economically, socially, and culturally fish, fishing and aquaculture are important. Subsistence and commercial fishing are significant occupations in Samoa, and Samoans consume fish most days of the week (fresh, frozen or canned), and is a major export. Fish is also given for cultural purposes – *fa'aoso* – sent to friends and family in Apia from coastal villages (Gillett, & Tauati 2018, 270, 281). The key components of Samoa's marine fisheries are offshore tuna longline fishery, and the coastal subsistence and commercial fisheries. There is also some pelagic trolling by small vessels and deep-slope bottomfishing (Gillett & Tauati 2018, 271). Samoa's coastal fisheries catch is very diverse, including about 500 species. The most significant of these include finfish (surgeonfish, grouper, mullet, carangids and rabbitfish), octopus, giant clams, beche-de-mer, Turbo spp. and crab. Women have typically collected 'species of shellfish, beche-de-mer, sea urchins, octopus, crabs and seaweed from the shore area at low tide' and may also dive from canoes for urchins, beche-de-mer and seaweed. Importantly, techniques used by women tend to be simpler and involve only basic tools and equipment. Men have been involved in artisanal and commercial fisheries activities from boats, or diving with spears or spear guns (Pacific Community 2019, 4).

In spite of the centrality of fisheries and aquaculture to Samoan cultural and economic life, knowledge of the sector is incomplete in several important respects – an issue which affects many Pacific nations. While off-shore catch information is relatively good (where there is significant national and regional interest in tuna catch and export), data describing the practices and catch of coastal fisheries is much less robust – 'often based on inadequate or non-existent fisheries statistical systems', and in many Pacific countries, these statistics are 'often guesswork' by government fishery officers. As Gillett and Tauati explain, 'in general, the smaller the scale of the fishing, the less is known about the production levels, with quantitative information being especially scarce for the subsistence fisheries in most countries' (2018, 3-4).

For Samoa, even national catch statistics for both commercial and subsistence fishing are subject to wide variations in estimated catch due to a variety of data collection factors (Gillett & Tauati 2018, 270). A notable example is the 2018 FAO report, *Fisheries in the Pacific*, which stated that the profile for Samoa was written in 2017, using data from 2014, and that the reported fisheries statistics on total production, employment and trade were 'a more informal conjecture by a nominated person in the Samoa Fisheries Division' (Gillett & Tauati 2018, 271). While a report on *Gender and Fisheries in Samoa* published in 2019 by Pacific Community (SPC) noted that 'little information on community fisheries was found during the desk review' (2019, 4).

A contributing factor to these data gaps is the diversity and small scale of much of the fisheries and aquaculture activity in Samoa. As Gillett explains, 'coastal fisheries have not been well understood and managed mainly because they are multi-species and multi-gear type of fishery' (Gillett & Tauati 2018, 275). Coastal fisheries management is largely the responsibility of the 230 coastal villages, supported by the Community-based Fisheries Management Program, introduced in 1995-96 (Gillett & Tauati 2018, 276; King and Fa'asili 1998, 2). Aquaculture and artisanal fisheries provide income for families who sell products in markets or on roadsides. Most fishers market their catch straight after they arrive on shore. In villages participating in the Community Based Fisheries Management Program, fish are predominantly sold within the village to individuals, and to nearby villages, and a little also taken to markets. Most communities consist of both subsistence and small-scale commercial fishers (Tiitii, Sharp & Ah-Leong n.d.), 18). Women are involved in some harvesting, most post-harvest processing and small-scale marketing, while men tend to work in deep-sea fishing and tourism-related sport fishing (Pacific Community 2019, 3; Tiitii, Sharp & Ah-Leong n.d.).

## Gender in fisheries practice, research and policy in Samoa

This project is concerned with the levels of access to, participation in, and experiences of people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression (SOGIE) across fisheries supply chains in Samoa, where an almost complete lack of data examining this group across agricultural and fisheries supply chains has recently been articulated in the literature (Bett, Alver & O’Keefe 2021). Before we examine the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE, we first need to explore the ways in which gender, as a set of social and policy categories has been deployed in fisheries and aquaculture literature and policy. It is important to note that although the marginalised category of ‘woman’ has occupied much of the fisheries and aquaculture development literature and policy design, data on Samoan women’s experiences in subsistence and commercial fisheries is also incomplete, and women’s contribution undervalued. Recently, a report by the FAO and Pacific Community noted that while, ‘[w]omen in Samoa have an especially key role to play in ensuring the productivity and efficiency of agricultural and fisheries value chains ... [they are not] formally recognised as key stakeholders’ (FAO and Pacific Community 2019, ix). While women’s contribution may be recognised at a village level in some areas, and in various discreet projects, the report laments ‘the absence of a systematic and strategic gender- sensitive approach to guide the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)’ (FAO and Pacific Community 2019).

As we know that the information on coastal and subsistence fisheries is lacking; that information on women’s contribution to the fisheries sector is also lacking; and women are involved in subsistence fisheries at much higher rates than men it is unsurprising then, that knowledge of women working in subsistence and coastal fisheries in Samoa is especially poor. Although women contribute to about half of the annual coastal fisheries catch across the Pacific, fisheries management and development have historically been focused on commercial, high-value fisheries (dominated by men); whereas work dominated by women including subsistence fisheries, and post-harvest activities have attracted much less policy attention, and infrastructural support (Mangubhai & Lawless 2021, 1).

This lack of policy attention or government support was noted in the field work, where very few participants reported any support from government to develop their businesses or improve their yield.

The lack of attention to the fishing practices, and cultural and technical knowledge of women, is a lost opportunity to record and build on specialist, local knowledge, as ‘fishing communities are often repositories of valuable traditional knowledge concerning fish stocks, and have a high level of awareness of the marine environment’ (King & Fa’asili 1999, 1). One 2001 study reported that women made up an estimated 18% of all village fishers and were responsible for approximately 23% of the weight of seafood, ‘assuming they are responsible for collecting most of the bivalve molluscs and other invertebrates harvested in the villages’. Women were also found to be the main contributors to post-harvest processing of all village catches (Passfield et. al. 2001, 11).

Research that does attend to women’s experiences in fisheries value chains tends to focus on the structural barriers to women engaging in fisheries management and regulation (see for instance, Lawless, Cohen et. al. 2021), and often notes that little is known about women’s day-to-day experiences (Mangubhai & Lawless 2021). Observing the literature’s coverage of the physical behaviours of men and women engaged in fisheries, Purcell et. al. argue that:

[w]omen ... can differ from men in fishing, such as in terms of access or use of fishing grounds, catch rates, catch volumes, and species targeted. Yet to achieve gender equitable fisheries we must understand more than just their participation rates in fisheries and critically assess potential gender disparities in fishing practices, ecological knowledge and views about fishery management (2020, 2).

While the Pacific Community, in the 2019 Gender and Fisheries - *Summary of Key Issues*, observed that:

[t]he distinct roles, methods and knowledge used by women and men in their fishing activities indicate that they will have separate – but possibly overlapping – sets of knowledge and skills, and that they observe the environment differently. This highlights the importance of understanding gender roles and working with both male and female fishers to manage marine environments, monitor climate change and develop effective adaptation strategies (Pacific Community SPC 2019, 4).

As prescient as these arguments are, research could press further to inquire about the extent to which community-identified needs agree with the extension and development programs on offer and explore more critically the ways in which categories of gendered behaviour, roles and expectations shape the lived experience of Samoans at the village level. That is, to not only explore the reductive ‘men/women – male/female’ dyads, but rather, to understand the ways in which certain kinds of masculine and feminine expression and affect can be influential in an individual’s experience of community life – the opportunities they are offered, and the roles they are expected to take up (or reject), including for instance, offers of work on alias and other commercial fishing vessels, or running a successful market stall. Indeed, one of the most significant findings of this pilot project was that people engaged in fisheries did not want to change their current role/s and did not identify fishing and fisheries supply chains as sources of discrimination or marginalisation. The literature needs to acknowledge the cultural complexity encountered when seeking to achieve ‘gender equitable fisheries’: equitable in what sense? And who has identified fisheries as inequitable? As the fieldwork demonstrates, it is only through place-based, intersectional research design that the complexity of local gender politics and preferences can be understood.



## Gender and sexuality in Pacific cultures

Here, we identify some major themes and issues relating to the existence, reception and treatment of people of diverse SOGIE in the Pacific, with particular reference to their marginalisation. This review focuses where possible on literature from Samoa, although due to the lack of data, we also consider literature from the Pacific region including Australia and New Zealand.

People of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression (SOGIE) exist throughout the Pacific and its diaspora. The image of a cohesive interconnected whole, described by Hau’ofa as ‘our sea of islands’ (1994) depicts a unified Pacific but glosses over tensions endemic within the region. The reality in the diverse, modern Pacific with its small-scaled island social spaces, is that many people of diverse SOGIE live in fear of rejection and social exclusion (Dwyer and Woolf 2018), at best tolerated, superficially accepted, or treated with indifference within various Pacific Island nations and communities. More often, these communities face sustained institutional, cultural and social discrimination, as well as cultural, physical and sexual violence (Gerber 2014; Idris 2021, 9-10). A combination of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity, including compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980), combined with Christian ethno-nationalist discourse in the Pacific is largely responsible for intolerance and non-acceptance of non-heteronormative individuals (Presterudstuen 2014; Thompson 2014; Teaiwa 2014). Pulotu-Endemann argues that heterosexuality privilege in Pacific cultures exists today because of the Christian missionary agenda which colonised Pacific paradigms of sexuality, gender and identity (Pulotu-Endemann and Peteru 2001). For instance, in 2017 a prominent Samoan minister explained that while fa’afāfine are accepted in Samoan churches, same sex marriage ‘is a Sodom and Gomorrah practice’ (Barrett 2019; Human Dignity Trust 2019). The extent to which people and communities of diverse SOGIE are visible in mainstream Pacific societies vary. For instance, the Human Dignity Trust reports that although fa’afāfine are very visible in Samoa – the Prime Minister is the Chair of the Fa’afāfine Association – lesbians and gay men are not nearly as visible or well supported (Human Dignity Trust 2019).

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The fa'afāfine of Samoa, pinapinaaine of Kiribati, fakaleitī of Tonga, vakasālewalewa of Fiji, mahu of Tahiti and 'akava'ine of Cook Islands (Alexeyeff 2008; Besnier 2002; Fitzpatrick 2013; George 2008; Schmidt 2003, 2016; Tamata 2016) make up the most visible gender and sexual minority that exists in the Pacific. Common to the fa'afāfine, pinapinaaine, fakaleitī, vakasālewalewa, mahu, and 'akava'ine experience is their expression of a feminine oriented gender identity as 'performed effective comportment' in which gesture, stance, intonation patterns, voice pitch, and more are used to signify femininity (Alexeyeff 2000, 299). These categories are also referred to as a possible third gender (Shore, 1982) which is also a contentious issue. As such, Besnier (1996) notes that fa'afāfine and other modes of gender identity and expression across the Pacific is complex, remains poorly understood by outsider observers, and raises thorny categorical questions. Besnier situates these transgender identities 'between' the two normative genders and contends that this gender liminality 'is the locus of a great deal of ambiguity, conflict and contestation' (Besnier 1996, 286). For fa'afāfine, gender liminality is evident in their engagement in labour associated with women such as cooking, sewing, child-rearing, housework, a feminine demeanour, a greater affinity with women than men (e.g., in friendship), some experience with cross-dressing; and engaging in sexual relations with 'straight' men (Besnier, 2002; Presterudstuen, 2014; Schmidt 2016). Even though fa'afāfine are a part of Samoan society, prevailing attitudes that move capriciously between acceptance and harassment are indicative of the hypocritical divergence between theory and praxis (Kaltenborn 2003). In Samoa, boys who fail to exhibit proper masculinity are mocked, and accused of being fa'afāfine (Schmidt 2017), while some fa'afāfine in Samoa also report having access to masculine cultural spaces and rights as adults.

Modern, local attitudes of indifference or exclusion toward people of diverse SOGIE in Samoa and the Pacific more broadly, are rooted in uncertainty surrounding the existence of individuals with ambiguous gender expressions and diverse sexual orientation in pre-colonial Pacific communities. Fa'afāfine activist and artist Shigeyuki Kihara associates the silencing of fa'afāfine voices and their lack of recognition to lingering racism and homophobia in the Pacific that is rooted in western concepts of gender norms imposed by missionaries and colonial governments (Ann 2012, 1).

Regionally, the marginalisation of people with diverse SOGIE can be attributed to the dismissive writings of anthropologists such as Jeanette Mageo (1996, 1998) who reduces the existence of fa'afāfine in Samoa to a mere innovation insisting that such observations were largely absent in early nineteenth century missionaries' writings. However, Pulotu-Endemann (cited in Katavake-McGrath 2021) argues that fa'afāfine of Samoa like the fakaleiti, mahu and whakawahine of Tonga, Tahiti and Aotearoa existed before the arrival of missionaries in the 1820s. These sentiments are supported by fa'afāfine activist Alex Su'a who stated that pre-contact, South Pacific had community members who, while of the male sex regarded themselves as being of the feminine gender (cited in Tamata 2016). According to Farran, sexual encounters between mariners and fa'afāfine during colonial times were also documented (cited in Feu'u 2013).

Despite the vast majority of the literature on people of diverse SOGIE in the Pacific focusing on the experiences of feminine men, women who are same sex attracted, and/or present as masculine or tomboys also exists in Fiji and Samoa (Teaiwa 2014; Tcherkézoff 2014) but receive no policy or academic attention. Although fa'afāfine experience some community acceptance and even celebration, albeit complicated by religious censure of non-heterosexual and gender non-conformity, this acceptance is not extended to lesbians, bisexual women or fa'atama - women who understand themselves as masculine. Tcherkézoff notes in the Samoan case that the 'heteronormative hegemony applies equally, although more severely, to women's same-sex relationships' as parents' intolerance of tomboy behaviour in their daughters is clear (2014, 130). Samoans maintain that tomboys are not part of the culture, and while mothers of fa'afāfine may actively encourage their sons' effeminate ways, parents of tomboys find displays of tomboy behaviour from their daughters deplorable and rarely support them (ibid).

As there is little room in the Samoan gender framework for exceptions to the prescribed norms of hegemonic masculinity, the fa'afāfine category which allows males to straddle the boundaries of the worlds of men and women does important cultural work (Schmidt 2016). Women are not so fortunate.

Male dominance, hegemonic ideologies, and lack of vernacular to describe same-sex relationships between women is indicative of the repressive nature of available gender expressions, resulting in the almost complete invisibility and profound marginalisation of lesbian, bisexual women and fa'atama (Tcherkézoff 2014).

The sexualisation of non-normative Pacific identities is also a point of contention as 'communities across the Pacific have generally responded unsympathetically to those who choose to articulate homosexuality as an essential and defining identity 'trait' of these gender diverse identities (George 2008, 165). Of course, not all individuals of diverse SOGIE identify as homosexuals (Wallace, 2003) yet it is the defining misconception associated with their social peripherality and ostracism. The consequences of this misconception are exacerbated by the criminalisation of both sodomy (between either two men, or a woman and a man) [Crimes Act 2013, s 67, s68], and 'Keeping a place of resort for Homosexual Acts [Crimes Act 2013, s 71] (Human Dignity Trust 2019). While there have been no reports that this legislation has been relied on to prosecute such acts, the existence of these provisions in a modern Crimes Act is concerning and speaks to a cultural reticence toward embracing non-normative sexualities.

Anthropologists' skewed representations of the non-existence of homosexuality and homosexual relations in the Pacific have contributed to the marginalisation of gender and sexual minorities in Fiji (George 2008). Presterudstuen (2014) confirms that despite the silencing of non-heteronormativity in colonial writings, transgendered males or vakasalewalewa (although purportedly asexual) occupied a social position in pre-modern society (albeit minor in comparison to other countries in the region) and asserts that the conspicuous presence of cross-dressing hyperfeminine and heterosexual gay males in contemporary Fiji could not have sprung out of nowhere. Similarly, Elliston's work in Tahiti (2014) outlines the rift between raerae (a modern term originating in the 1960s for denoting male-to-female trans persons) and māhū (a older Tahitian term, literally meaning "in the middle") communities (38). She emphasises that the historicizing narrative of the māhū gender identity foregrounds it as 'traditional' and 'culturally authentic' and marginalises the raerae whose queer, sexualised identity and recent emergence in the 1960's is less socially accepted (ibid, 41).

Current attitudes regarding the validity and reception of modern minority gender identities and/or expressions continue to be heavily influenced by interpretations of colonial writings and a dependence on the confirmation of the historic presence of gender diversity and/or ambivalence across the islands of the Pacific. The absence of such evidence is used to argue for the invalidity of the diversity of gender identity and expression in these modern, gender diverse communities. This reliance on colonial documentation for proof of modern cultural expression is not a valid strategy and, as Besnier argues, the exclusion of such individuals from European records does not negate their existence – indeed, 'little can be inferred from historical silence' (cited in Weedon, 2019).

In addition to contending with historical contestations generated through the colonial encounter, Pacific Islanders of diverse SOGIE must also now address current Western accounts of gender diversity in the Pacific. This is evident in the Samoan context where Feu'u notes that the identity of fa'afāfine has amassed a sizable scholarly interest – much of this work from Western scholars – and attempts to map western categories over Indigenous Pacific identities. This is a move that has been rightly criticised (2013, 1). Many Fa'afāfine reject these western categories of identification because of the overemphasis on the sexual aspects of fa'afāfine identity which is based largely on misinformation (ibid). However, the reluctance to accept any correlation between fa'afāfine and Western sexual identities signifies an obvious denial of the centrality of sexual relations (Wallace 2003). Perhaps, as Besnier suggests, there is a 'possibility of overlap between, if not the mutual permeation of, gender liminality and homosexuality' (ibid, 142). This rationale for the rejection of western categories of identification is demonstrated by Besnier's explanation that Samoan families do not equate young fa'afāfine with an 'eventual (homo)sexual orientation and sexual relations with men are seen as an optional consequence of being fa'afāfine, rather than its determiner, prerequisite, or primary attribute' (cited in Schmidt 2003). Schmidt notes that the issue of fa'afāfine sexuality in the 'traditional' context is 'an area where understandings are complex and at times contradictory' (2003, 419).

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Proponents of Samoan cultural discourse are adamant that to understand the fa'afāfine identity is to have knowledge of the fa'asamoa (Samoan culture) as it is a cultural persona and a gender identity and should not be misconstrued as merely sexual (Pulotu-Endemann 1997; Toelupe 2011). As it is both illegal, and socially unacceptable in Samoa for two men to have sexual relations, associating the fa'afāfine with Western sexual identities would deem them [?] to be homosexual and therefore unacceptable in Samoan society. Artist and fa'afāfine activist Shigeyuki Kihara rejects oppressive Western labels and expresses that her existence as fa'afāfine in the va (social space) between male and female is in response to, and perhaps in rejection of, Western hegemonic cultural forces (cited in Wolf 2010). Schmidt's suggestion that Western researchers examine their own assumptions and accept that non-Western, non-heteronormative populations are 'equipped to make sense of their own lives and experiences in relation to the cultures they're embedded in' (2017, 13) could assist in the elimination of post-colonial discourses that continue to marginalise these non-normative groups and identities.

Narratives of gender diverse or non-binary individuals as peripheral and discriminated against in their communities features prominently in the literature. Members of sexual minority groups suffer mental health related problems due to lack of support and because many are ostracised by family the impact of violence, trauma and subsequent social and economic disadvantage further marginalises them (Hutchinson, 2020). For instance, Tongans consider fakaleiti to be on the fringes of society and cultural knowledge of the fakaleiti community is knowledge that is not prioritised (Besnier 2002).

The vulnerability of people of diverse SOGIE is demonstrated by the murder of prominent Tongan, gay activist, Polikalepo Kefu in 2021 (Ma'ia'i 2021). Vulnerability, discrimination and marginalisation experienced by sexual and gender minorities under normal circumstances in Fiji is exacerbated by natural disaster and it is a barrier to their ability to rebuild their lives and recover (Dwyer and Woolf 2018). Hutchinson (2020) notes that the exclusion of LGBTQI+ communities in Fiji from crucial conversations pertaining to the impact of climate change to communities is indicative of their secondary status in society. Shaming and blaming of the LGBTQI+ community by sectors of the Christian church in Fiji as the cause of the COVID19 pandemic has further entrenched the already existent 'overflowing basket of homophobia and transphobia' (Anthony, 2020).

It is well established that women and girls across the Pacific region suffer some of the highest rates of gender-based violence, and so too do lesbian and transgender women, although these groups receive the least attention (SPC 2020). Despite the assurance of the equality and rights of all citizens in Pacific Island countries and territories as enshrined in constitutions, huge inequalities still exist for LGBTQI persons (SPC 2020).



## Provision of LGBT rights in legislation in Pacific island countries

(Idris 2021, 11)

Country	Same sex sexual relations decriminalized	Same sex civil union	Same sex marriage	Adoption by same sex couples	Open LGBT military service	Anti-discrimination	Gender Identity
Fiji	YES	NO	NO	NO	-	YES	NO
Kiribati	No for males Yes for females	NO	NO	NO	N/A	YES	NO
Marshall Islands	YES	NO	NO	NO	N/A	YES	-
Micronesia	YES	NO	NO	NO	N/A	YES	-
Nauru	YES	NO	NO	NO	N/A	NO	NO
Palau	YES	NO	NO	NO	N/A	NO	NO
Papua New Guinea	No for males Yes for females	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Samoa	No for males Yes for females	NO	NO	NO	N/A	YES	-
Solomon Islands	NO	NO	NO	NO	N/A	NO	NO
Timor-Leste	YES	NO	NO	NO	-	NO	-
Tonga	No for males Yes for females	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Tuvalu	No for males Yes for females	NO	NO	NO	N/A	NO	-
Vanuatu	YES	NO	NO	NO	-	YES	NO

Reforms in the law, and the drafting of inclusive policy and frameworks that address these human rights abuses offers some respite. In a shadow report to the United Nations (Oceania Pride et. al., 2014), it was noted that Fiji's new 2013 constitution is unique to the Pacific islands region as it specifies protection from unfair discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. But the Constitution falls short of positive realisation of universal human rights as the denial of marriage, adoption, and inheritance to LGBTQI violates the principle of universality and non-discrimination.

Although not as advanced as women's rights movements in the region, there is much progress in law reform for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expressions and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC+) the last decade owing to strong

Pacific SOGIESC+ NGOs working at different levels (Rodrigues, 2020). Fiji's diverse groups of Pacific Islanders of Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and/or Expression and/or Sex Characteristics (PIDSOGIESC+) NGOs who work across a range of SOGIESC+ rights issues, including law reform and activists in Tonga and Samoa who have driven local advocacy campaigns is evidence of progress (ibid, 2020). In Samoa, the inclusion of a roadmap as 'Guidelines and Standards' to be considered and adopted by law enforcement agencies when dealing with SOGIESC persons signifies progress (Samoan Fa'afafine Association, 2015). The emergence of the Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network (PSGDN) as regional focal point for PIDSOGIESC+ advocacy which prioritises law reform in its strategic plan (2020-24) bolsters national engagements (RSC 2020).

## The identification of, and engagement with marginalised populations within fisheries research in the Pacific in policy and regulatory frameworks

Recent research on gender programming in Pacific countries has noted that 'there is conceptual confusion with 'gender' being conflated with 'helping women' (Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021, 9), a foundational problem which is not confined to the fisheries industry, nor the Pacific region. Indeed, UN Women describes its mandate as 'the global champion for gender equality, working to develop and uphold standards and create an environment in which every woman and girl can exercise her human rights and live up to her full potential' (UN Women); and the United Nations' Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines) asserts that 'gender equity and equality is fundamental to any development', and recognise 'the vital role women [play] in small-scale fisheries' (Mangubhai & Lawless 2021, 2).

The conflation of sex and gender in the vast majority of international programs which address gender inequality has created a pervasive understanding of gender equality as women's programming. This framework assumes that women and girls are 'inherently vulnerable and inferior to men, rather than contextualising [women's marginalisation in fisheries through understandings of] gendered environments where their vulnerability is an outcome of oppressive and exploitative norms, power relations, structures and processes' (Mangubhai & Lawless 2021, 8). Mangubhai and Lawless argue that the exclusion of men from these programs reinforces the perception that the solution to these gendered exclusions rests with women themselves, and does not identify men as contributors to these issues. Gender inclusive programs should be contextual, and evidence comprehensive understanding of culturally specific approaches, and barriers, to gender inclusion.

Gender inclusive practice considers 'different roles, responsibilities, experiences, obligations, needs, rights and power relations associated with being female or male' (ibid., 2).

While we agree that these framings erroneously locate the responsibility for changing cultural and institutional barriers with women themselves, in this project we seek to push understandings of gender beyond the normative gender binary. While binary analyses are important, and offer critiques of the history of gender sensitive programming (as we have discussed above), this project seeks to develop and expand these concepts to include more complex understanding of gender, and the role gendered categories play in social and working life. We base this understanding on developments in International human rights policy as well as important developments in methodological approaches to studying gender in communities.

Recently, with the introduction of the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression at the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (UN OHCHR) the international human rights system has begun to explore and develop international level policy documentation and guidance which incorporates gender theory as a set of foundational principles. For instance, the Independent Expert for SOGIE has called for input for a 2021 thematic report which requires:

gender theory informed approaches [that] recognize gender as inextricably linked with social construct - that the meanings attached to sex (and other) differences are socially created. They challenge the assumption that gender identity necessarily correlates with biological sex and recognize the validity of a wide range of sexual orientations and gender identities. The recognition of gender as determined by social construct is common to many feminisms, as well as LGBT theory, as is the recognition that gender, sex and sexuality interconnect with other axes of power and identification such as race, age, ethnicity, religion, [dis]ability and health status among others. This approach provides for recognition of how race is gendered and gender is raced, as well as the many other factors which affect how one is allocated rights, privileges or deficits and limits to rights through the regulation of gender (OHCHR 2021).

In seeking to record and interrogate particular contextual disadvantage and discrimination, this project draws on this emerging international discussion and the crucial foundational understanding of gender categories and roles as products of historical, cultural and social forces. This expansive framing creates space to explore the ways in which people of all genders and a diversity of gender expressions are received in their communities. For this project, these gendered identities and expressions are particularly important in the context of traditional gendered roles assigned to fishing, aquaculture and other daily practices. For instance, a holistic understanding of gender expression and affect would help us to capture, and better understand the experiences of women working in male dominated industries and roles; of men who are also excluded from traditionally masculine roles or opportunities due to a perceived failure to perform or embody particular kinds of masculinity; as well as the ways in which same sex attracted women, particularly those who embody a more masculine affect, are marginalised for 'failing' to perform expected feminine roles, gender presentation and expression.

Significantly, gender roles and hierarchies are explicitly drawn on in the management of community-based fisheries and marine resources. Coastal villages have village fisheries management advisory committees to implement plans developed in cooperation with the Fisheries Division (Pacific Community SPC 2019, 3). Government support for these programs works

within traditional *matai*, of chiefly system of governance, at the village level. This model operates under the auspices of a village council comprised of *matai* from various village families. Women who are allowed to hold *matai* titles can sit on the councils but, in most cases, leadership is exclusively or very heavily male. This male dominated model of decision making is grounded and upheld by Samoan culture and social norms' (Pacific Community SPC 2019, 3).

While some women are more independent than others, and can take the lead in aquaculture activities, there is an 'ongoing expectation that they must not abandon their roles as homemakers, mothers and 'village women' (ibid., 4).

In addition to strong gendered expectations of leadership, work is also organised around clear gendered roles. In aquaculture, for example, men and women divide the work of tilapia farming. Men tend to do the heavier tasks of digging ponds and piping water, while women are more likely to be responsible for regular pond maintenance. Men and women feed and harvest the fish and women do most of the post-harvest processing (ibid., 4). In these examples we can already see the embeddedness of gender as a socially and financially organising category within village life. The reliance of government, INGOs or other external organisations on existing communal governance structures to roll out programs reinscribes the centrality of existing power relations. It is after these programs are assessed as failing to adequately address gender inequality that the cause is located within pre-existing power relations. People who exist outside these normative identities often find that this definitional incongruence – that they are incapable of fitting easily within gender work roles – is at the heart of their social and financial exclusion.

# Field Work

## Community consultation

A series of purposive interviews with key stakeholders were conducted over a six-week period, organised by in-country co-lead for this work, Dr Fetaomi Tapu-Qiliho based in Apia and co-facilitated by local, Samoan LGBTQAI+ community leaders.

The **Samoa Fa'afāfine Association** (SFA), the peak body for all LGBTQAI+ communities in Samoa, was invited to join the research team in the data collection phase as facilitators of discussion groups and key community interlocutors. Two members of the executive committee were the facilitators of the fa'afāfine focus group discussion in Savai'i. Their knowledge of communities of diverse SOGIE across Samoa was crucial in identifying potential focus group participants and safe spaces for focus groups to take place. Two interviews with fa'afāfine fishers were also conducted through the assistance of SFA networks. A discussion group was also organised with six fa'atama (broadly translated as trans men, and the correlate to fa'afāfine) in Upolu on 23rd December 2021, also organised through an SFA affiliate group, **The Rogers**, a community group supporting lesbian, bisexual women and fa'atama people.

Follow-up discussions were organised with the fa'atama participants (3rd February 2022) to discuss the draft recommendations and fieldwork findings. These discussions are reflected in the discussion section below, and all recommendations have been discussed and approved by The Rogers and members of the Fa'afāfine Association executive.

It was not possible to interview the **Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network** (PSGDN). Attempts to contact them were not successful.

Interviews with fish sellers were conducted at the three main fish markets in Samoa. Roadside fish vendors were also interviewed. Interviews with tilapia farmers did not take place due to participant's illness and pre-Christmas commitments which made rescheduling within the project timeline impossible.

(See Appendix for list of de-identified completed interviews, interview questions, and survey questions).

## Roadside sellers and Market sellers

We surveyed a total of 21 interviewees: 11 roadside vendors and 10 market vendors. The roadside and market vendors ranged in age from 19 to mid-50s, predominantly women. Of the market vendors, two identified as male, one as fa'afāfine, the remainder identified as female. Three roadside vendors identified as male, the rest as female. It was almost universally reported that women almost exclusively did the selling, while men did the 'heavy work' (fishing on and past the reef, and transporting the fish to the market).

The roadside vendors had been selling for an average of 15 years, and the market vendors slightly less at 12.5 years. The market vendors were split between a majority who worked 5-6 days/week (often 65+ hours) and a few who only worked on Saturdays or weekends. Their average earnings were \$750 per week, but this naturally varied with the disparity in hours. The roadside vendors worked fewer hours (an average of less than 15) and concomitantly lower weekly income (approximately \$400). Seven of the ten market vendors owned their own fishing vessel, as did 9 of the roadside vendors.

All except one of the roadside vendors owned their own fishing business (the remaining one worked for her family's business). Of the market vendors, all owned their business or worked in their immediate family's business, except for one (fa'afāfine), who worked as an employee of distant relatives. The only fa'afāfine seller at the markets reported that they worked 9 hrs a day, more than 50 hours a week, making \$200 a day in sales (up to \$1000 a week in sales), and earning only \$150 a week herself. This arrangement was much less lucrative than any of the other market sellers who owned their own business, and had family to help them.

Several reported a degree of shame and stigma over selling fish:

There is also shame and there is a stigma associated with selling fish. Sometimes, I think people laugh at me and say that I'm a fish seller. But I don't dwell much on what people say because I just think of the money that I need. [Market seller]

Some of the ladies don't want to do it anymore because there's shame associated with selling these and there's a stigma relating to poverty if people sell by the roadside, but I don't worry about that. Some ladies come and sell their clams here at my table because they don't want to sell in front of their own houses, they're ashamed. [Roadside seller]

It was almost universally reported that COVID-19 had impacted on the sellers' incomes to a significant or very significant degree due to the complete absence of tourists and diaspora Samoans buying large quantities of fish at the markets, to freeze and take back to their countries of residence.

None of the roadside vendors had had any government assistance with their business, although one said she had taken out a small loan to pay for her canoe. Four of the market vendors mentioned a local market sellers' association which had provided them with small grants, training for fishermen and facilities for the market.

Most of the interviewees reported that they enjoyed their jobs (many said that they 'loved' their work) despite it being sometimes hard work – 'it's good money for my family', 'I love what I do – it's easy work, I just sit here in the shade... meet people, relax, sell and laugh with people', 'You have to have a passion for it. I've lasted for 6 years. And this is my spot. I was educated at university in Fiji and also had an office job. But I choose this. It's good money and I'm my own boss.' All of the roadside vendors also said it was their sole source of income. Many of the roadside vendors noted that the expense of getting their catch to the market was a main reason for selling by the road, as well as the added convenience of being very close to their homes. The 'relative ease' of transporting fish from rural to urban markets was noted by Gillett and Tauati in their 2018 report for the FAO on Fisheries in the Pacific (285).

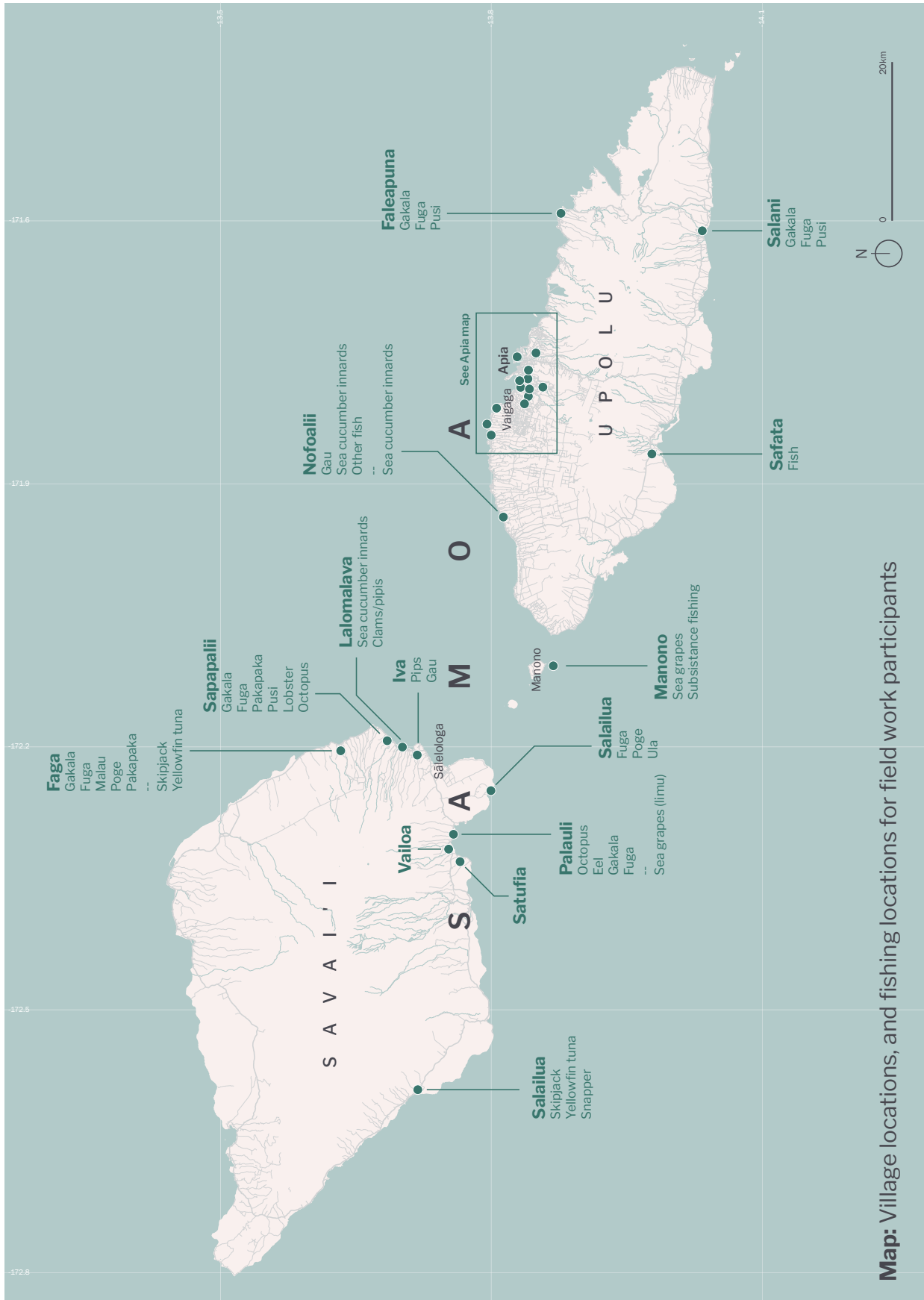
Of those who owned their own business, almost all of the roadside vendors and a majority of the market vendors reported that they had come from families who fished, and that was how they got into the business. Additionally, almost all of the vendors said they did not work alone but received help, primarily from family members. The majority of market vendors (6 of 10) reported that market vendors assist each

other – sharing food from each other's stalls, selling at the same stall to split the cost of renting the stall (stalls were either \$4 or \$10 per day, and daily earnings were reported between \$100 - \$300 per day), referring customers to stalls with the fish they were looking for, and offering each other hot drinks or food during the day. The reliance on family members to support these business activities highlights the embeddedness of Samoans within their families, and the centrality of family in income generation. Where people of diverse SOGIE have been denied these networks, this would severely affect their ability to build viable a business, or access to the income available through fishing.

Data collected reinforces our understanding that deeply embedded social and cultural gendered roles and hierarchies structure the roles of women, men and people of diverse SOGIE, and children in the fishing sector. Men are predominantly associated with the masculine tasks of operating heavy machinery, and fishing at and beyond the reef. Women on the other hand are confined the role of selling, collecting marine invertebrates and other post-harvest tasks which are perceived to rely less on feats of physical strength. It is interesting to note that the public/ domestic dichotomy identified in dominant, feminist assessments of labour division is complicated here, as men are reported to prefer that women operate in the public domain as sellers and handlers of the business operations. Fewer men than women operate as sellers of fish as it is understood as a role more akin to the domestic role of housekeeper. Interviews with women attest to this, explaining that as the organisers of their families, the roles they play in the value chain as sellers, book-keepers and post-harvesters are in keeping with expectations of them as women:

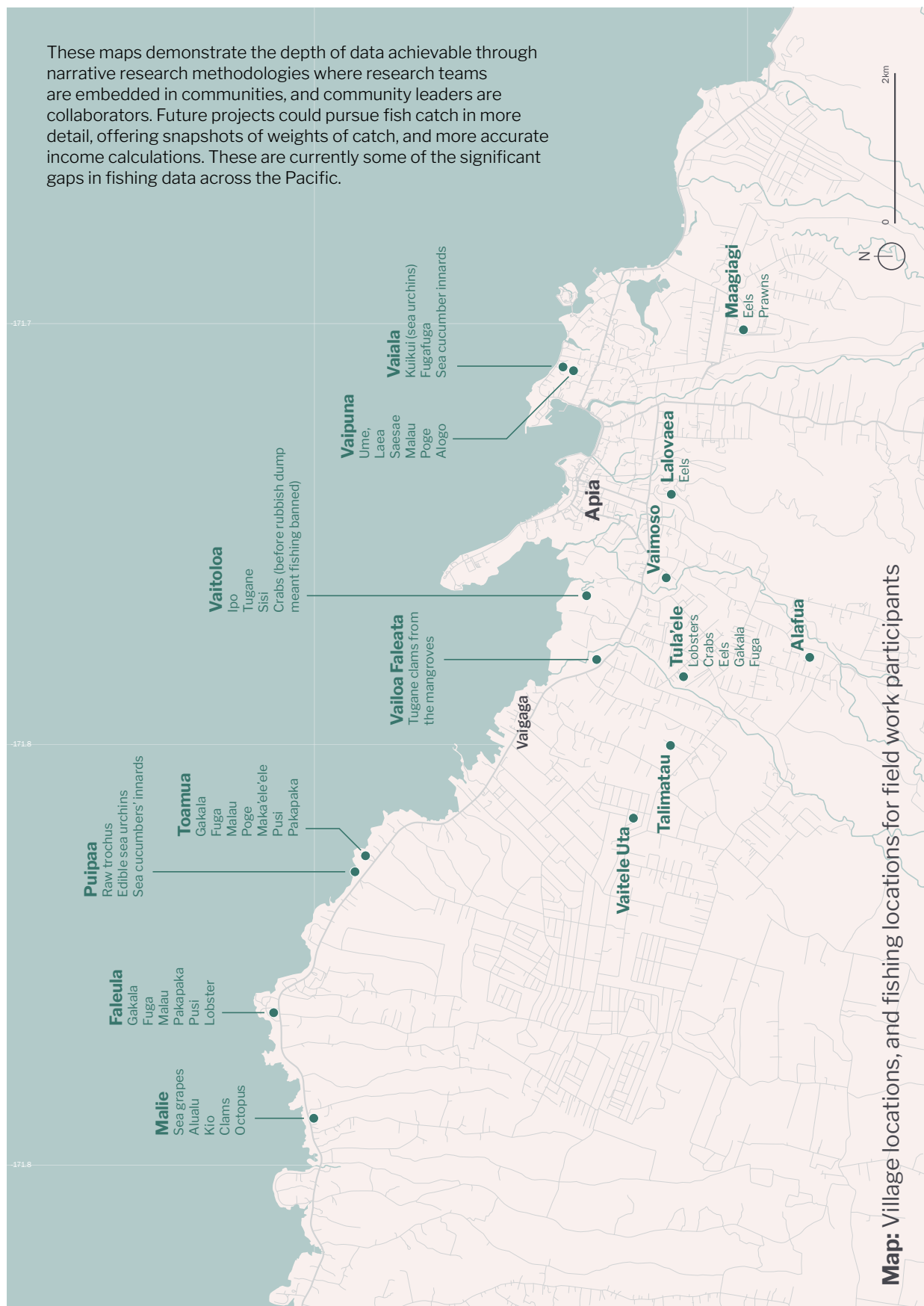
We're good at selling fish. We display our fish nicely. I don't think men would be able to display the fish as nicely as we do. Us women, because we control the finances in our homes and organize our homes, it's easy for us to sell fish and organize it. So, here in the market, we don't do any heavy labour or anything that needs us to use much strength. It's an easy job too. We just enjoy sitting around in the market and chatting and selling fish [Market vendor]

## Samoa and fishing catch of study participants (Savai'i and Upolu)



Map: the islands of Samoa, with villages of participants interviewed in this project marked and the catch at each location listed as reported to Dr Tapu-Quihio during data collection.

## Samoa and fishing catch of study participants (Apia detail)



Map: Samoa and fishing catch of study participants (Apia detail)

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Current data examining gendered participation in commercial and subsistence fishing is focused almost exclusively on the experiences and treatment of cisgendered women, to the exclusion of all other groups. This is reflected in our field work, where the majority of respondents working in fisheries supply chains in our interviews admitted to having little or no knowledge of the involvement or experiences of people of diverse SOGIE working in these areas.

When asked whether there was any difference in treatment of fish sellers/vendors based on their gender or gender performance, interviewees agreed that the prerequisite for success as a vendor and seller was a good catch, cheap prices and a positive customer-oriented demeanour. The one fa'afāfine market vendor that was interviewed also attested to this. He stated quite proudly that he is very popular at the market because of his unique positioning as the only fa'afāfine vendor. Regulars at the market warm to his bubbly disposition and have never reacted negatively toward him because of his perceived or actual sexual orientation and/or gender identity:

whenever I'm not here, people will always come asking for the fa'afāfine that normally sits here because this is my spot. They know that I always have good fish and sometimes, when I'm not around, customers ask for me specifically.

Illustrating the fluidity of fa'afāfine identity and embodied gender liminality, this seller explained, 'the ladies just do the selling. Not like me, I can do the ladies work and also the men's heavy work' - a fact so well known that Ms Tiitii at the Samoan Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries also explained this to us in our first interview. Ms Tiitii felt that fa'afāfine were not treated any differently to others in the sector. Participants at training sessions for fishermen and women, which fa'afāfine also attended, were open to everyone and no one was denied access on account of their diverse sexual orientation or gender identity.

It is important to note that while there was little overt discrimination identified, only one of 21 sellers identified as fa'afāfine. No other seller identified as non-cis heterosexual.

Of the 21 roadside and market vendors interviewed only one was fa'afāfine. In a majority of these interviews, respondents were ambivalent about whether fa'afāfine were able to work in the sector, responding with an inconclusive shrug of the shoulders, or an emphatic no. Locating individuals of diverse SOGIE working in fisheries supply chains was also challenging. This was due to three key factors:

1. the lack of knowledge either in the academic or policy literature mapping SOGIE populations, or their participation in these activities;
2. the strong cultural understanding among Samoans that fisheries roles and activities are always divided between the binary gender identities of men and women; and
3. the social and cultural invisibility of non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations in Samoan society.

Our discussion with the representative from **FAO, Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands**, Ms Mele Tauati, also identified structural issues which may affect the participation of people of diverse SOGIE within fisheries supply chains. Individual village dynamics will be constant and important influences on any change in the treatment of people of diverse SOGIE who wish to participate in fisheries training and/or consultations (or in other aspects of village life).

Participants in FAO trainings are identified locally by village fono (councils), which themselves are highly gendered and hierarchical spaces. Ms Tauati also noted that training needs to be provided to fisheries staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of issues facing people of diverse SOGIE in fisheries supply chains. She also recognised the need to understand and identify social and cultural dynamics within training sessions that may silence or marginalise particular individuals, so that the experiences and speech of people of diverse SOGIE who may be in attendance are heard and respected.



## Fa'afāfine fish sellers

Fa'afāfine fish sellers emphasised their adherence to gendered roles and confirm the observations of their fellow fish sellers as well as policy makers. Of the five fa'afāfine involved in fish selling who were interviewed, all stated that the roles they perform in the supply chain were because of their lifelong exposure to the feminine aspects of fishing related tasks. All fa'afāfine respondents indicated that their association with the fishing industry was through their family, and for subsistence purposes, noting that the roles and responsibilities they currently perform within fisheries supply chains directly correlates with their exposure to fishing through their senior female family members, such as mothers, grandmothers, or aunts. Similarly, fa'afāfine reported that their skill in fishing in the lagoon area and techniques required for collecting marine invertebrates in the foreshore area was the result of the intergenerational, indigenous knowledge passed on to them through their female relatives. It was also shared that they were encouraged to perform domestic chores associated with fishing. For example, from a very young age, they were involved with cooking and the preparation of food for the men who went fishing for their families. Significantly, there was a genuine acceptance of their female/feminine coded roles and chores by both their families and the interviewees themselves.

At present, there are significant labour shortages in the subsistence fishing supply chain caused by Samoan men taking up seasonal workers' schemes in Australia and New Zealand - a phenomenon confirmed in discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. When asked about whether they were keen to explore male-oriented fishing tasks in light of this gap, all fa'afāfine respondents replied with a unanimous no, explaining that their lifelong training in, and acceptance of feminine domestic roles and income generation strategies, as well as their inexperience with masculine tasks associated with reef and ocean fishing would prevent such a decision.

The data strongly indicates that fa'afāfine are not interested in the fishing value supply chain for economic sustainability: i their involvement in the sector is either for leisure or supplemental to their economic endeavours. Of all six participants, only one depends on the sector for full-time employment. All others have alternative means of supporting themselves and their families. Nor is there any indication from fa'afāfine participants that they are denied access to the sector, given they are not interested in participating in more lucrative, masculine-coded roles. As fa'afāfine remain men in their families for certain cultural purposes, fa'afāfine have access to communal lands and are incorporated in family structures in various ways. Although some have shared stories of marginalisation and indifference from the church and family because of their effeminate behaviour, there is agreement among focus group participants that they are satisfied with the ways in which they have access to, and participate in, fishing.



Even with this relatively high level of acceptance and ease of engagement in fisheries supply chains reported by fa'afāfine interlocutors, we encountered erasure and invisibility of fa'afāfine and other people of diverse SOGIE at a regional policy and government level. ”

Importantly, fa'afāfine are a visible and culturally understood group within Samoan society, and the ways this group participate in fisheries reflects their affirmation of their gendered roles, and the acceptance of those roles by the wider community. This cannot be said for other people of diverse sexuality, gender identity and/or expression in Samoa.

## Focus group discussions with lesbian and bisexual women, fa'atama and fa'afāfine

In keeping with talanoa, where participants share their 'time, interest [and] information [as well as] wholistically intermingle[ing] researcher's and participants' emotions, knowledge, experiences and spirits' (Otsuka 2005, 4), we have presented the fieldwork data here to capture as much of the complex and conversational nature of the work as possible. This presentation also offers insights from the groups in context, and demonstrates the ways in which decisions about role performance are imbricated with financial, social and cultural considerations.

**Fa'afāfine focus group:** Three fa'afāfine working in various parts of the fisheries supply chain were interviewed together in a focus group. Two participated in subsistence fishing, and one of these is fully employed in government; while a third participant owns and operates a business selling fish in addition to other income-generating activities.

**Fa'atama focus group:** This focus group comprised seven participants, six identified as fa'atama, and one was cis-woman who was married to a fa'atama person. This woman also participated in the lesbian/bisexual focus group.

**Lesbian/bisexual women's focus group:** Of the eight participants in this focus group, five identified as lesbian, two as bisexual, and one as a cisgendered woman (married to a transman).

### Current and intergenerational fishing practices

Participants across all three focus groups reported collecting a variety of fish, marine invertebrates and seaweed for many years to support their families, and to diversify their protein intake. Learning to fish and glean almost always begins in early childhood, and extends into late teens. As adults, where the opportunity presents itself, all interviewees are keen to continue the fishing and gleaning practices they were taught as children. Significantly, no one reported changing gender roles in the fishing supply chain they were taught as children.

Lesbian and bisexual women generally reported learning women's roles and tasks with their aunts and grandmothers:

I've always collected tugane (mud clams) from the mangroves from behind our village. We always went digging for clams with family members - cousins, aunties and uncles - it was always fun. When I was younger we went more often than we do now, weekly at least, but now, probably once a month if lucky. We used to follow our aunts and then they taught us how to know where they are. [LM, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

I grew up in a fishing family and we live near the sea. I've always gone to dig for ipo and tugane clams and also gather sisi and we trap crabs in the special traps that we made ... and our village always used to dig for clams because its cheap and saves lots of money ... and its fun to go and do ... and families used to all gather at the mangroves foreshore area and it was a wonderful experience. [PT, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

in our village, the sea is just behind our home ... we're surrounded by the sea and I've always grown up either fishing or collecting different marine invertebrates. We get little fish in the lagoon with our lines or collect sea grapes, alualu, kio, dig for clams, we get crabs, pipi clams, we also get octopus. I know how to catch octopus because I learnt it from my aunts ... as a young girl I watched with cousins and learnt because that's our everyday life in the village. [SS, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

In addition, two women in the lesbian/bisexual focus group noted that they learned to fish with their fathers, and continued to do so as adults:

there's a fresh water pond behind our home and we always get prawns/eels from there. My father sells them to the Chinese shops. I help my father with the fishing and it's always plentiful. We sell 5 fresh water eels for \$40 to the Chinese and they love it. There are many creeks in our area and those are where we fish. My father makes the traps and we've been doing this for years now. My dad is an alcoholic and my mum doesn't give him money for alcohol so that's what his fishing supports and plus, it helps our family with our church contributions...we attend [a] ... Catholic church. [MB, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

I love eating seafood and my father fishes a lot. We own a boat. Our traditional village is on the island of Manono and we visit there often and my dad always goes fishing. I just normally gather sea grapes but I never participate in the fishing. The grapes are plentiful near the island, mostly what we fish is for subsistence purposes. My family doesn't depend on fishing for our livelihood. My father owns his own business. [BA, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

Even in these earliest experiences, participants reported firm, gendered roles which dictated the kinds of catch women's and men's groups pursued and who performed supporting roles including cleaning fish, making tea and food for fishermen returning from reef or ocean fishing. For instance, one woman noted that in her village,

the little boys in the family always caught crabs ... not us girls, but it seemed like the boys liked the thrill of catching the crabs...and this skill we all each still continue doing it today... sometimes my male cousins catch crabs and sell them on the road or to nearby families. [LM, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

I'm from the island of Manono and men of my family go deep sea fishing all the time, every week, it's for our family meals and we also depend on this for our livelihood. But I never participate in fishing although I've always just played on the sea. At times I'll help clean fish but I've never been a part of the selling as my dad and uncles sell to the markets and that part of the business doesn't include us. [NM, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

Fa'afāfine participants reported they all learned to catch and/or sell fish as children fishing with their female relatives, and took on feminine roles within the supply chain as soon as they could participate in it as small children:

When I was very young, I used to follow my grandmother who has now passed away. I used to watch her and she used to teach us what to do. We used to know when our grandmother would return. She went fishing three times a week. When she got older and couldn't do it herself, we used to do all the fishing and we loved it. Our foreshore area behind our house had many marine invertebrates and we always collected them for our food and also to sell. We used to always collect 'alualu' (jelly fish) and it was always so good to eat raw and cooked. ...

We also learnt how to gather the sea slug (gau) and clean it. ... My uncles used to love seafood and would tell us kids to go and collect stuff and we'd happily do this. [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

One respondent explained that from a very young age her father, a fisherman, recognized that she was better suited to 'girl-like chores'. As a child, she would make 'the tea and [wait] for the fishermen to return to shore.' Her role in fishing was 'really hospitality oriented. But as a child I sold fish and also played the hostess and did girl-like chores. I was told fa'afāfine made cuppa tea better. So I think at a young age, my father could see that I was like a girl so he just made me help out with the cuppa tea preparations etc and never with the act of fishing itself. But I did also help out with some fishing later.' As an adult she sells fish and prepares food for the fishermen. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

The respondent explained between the ages of 5 and 15 years old, twice a week she would dig for clams in the foreshore area:

we used to trod on the sand feeling around for sea cucumber like invertebrates called loli, we used to fill the bottles with the innards of the sea cucumbers and sell them to nearby families. I used to watch my mother do fishing and this skill was also taught to me by my grandmother. She used to fish. When we were young, we'd go with our bowls (sieves) and we'd wait by the rocks for her to return. Behind our house, because we lived by the sea, there were plenty of sea foods found in the sea ... there was lots of pipi and loli and it was easy work...at least it was something to do to help the family [LF, Fa'afāfine FG].

Another respondent explained that as a child she would

help out my grandmother prepare for my grandfather's fishing trip. Sometimes, I went with my grandmother and aunties to collect gau, sea and other fish and sea urchins. My grandfather had a canoe. My mother used to help her dad and my grandmother used to take me with her and I saw all that was done. When I was younger, I was the one who had the kili (cast net) and ola (bag) which is what they used to put the fish in... It was the culture of our family to be in fishing. [K, Fa'afāfine FG]

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In keeping with these strict gender roles, several of the fa'atama participants reported they learned to fish with male relatives as children:

I fish using lama [fishing at night] and matau [spear]. I've always helped my uncles. And we catch good fish. I don't collect invertebrates [like women]. I go with the boys and we fish for big fish. ... like serious fishing. [DL, Fa'atama FG]

I haven't fished in a while but I learnt to fish from my father. I don't really fish much anymore because I'm busy with sports, but I've always sold fish for my family who are fishers. [RL, Fa'atama FG]

I come from a family that enjoys fishing, but we live inland and above the Magiagi valley and the river... we've always fished with my dad and uncles, but we fish in the river. We always get shrimps and fresh water eels. Lots of them. But our fishing is always subsistence and for leisure. I learnt how to fish from my father and the techniques of how to catch the eels and prawns. I used to always help to mount the eels on the sticks for transportation from the river to our home ... We have to travel quite a long way along the river so we have to make sure that the eels are mounted properly. We only fish on Saturdays though ... every Saturday, my brother, dad and uncles, we all go ... but not much lately because I've been busy but they still go. [AF, Fa'atama FG]

While one fa'atama respondent reported fishing using feminine techniques – gleaning along the foreshore and line fishing:

I love fishing, line fishing or even just sit by the seawall at our village and throw a fishing line. I've always fished for our family. I would search for kuikui (sea urchins) for my parents, fugafuga, sea (sea cucumbers innards) etc for my parents. I would walk to the reef and just gather these for my parents. Sometimes, I go to [my favourite place] and sit by the rocks there and throw my fishing line. I could sit there all day just by myself and fish. For me it is a leisure activity and also for subsistence.

I'd also drive out [another spot] – and using my fishing line I'd catch twenty fish. I buy bait from the fish market. They're sold at \$15 a box. The bait is fish innards and they're really effective. My great grandparents were fishers. Well, our village is ... right by the sea but my interest in fishing is my own interest and what I love doing. ... As a child I remember that our relatives had turtles and they reared them in the sea opposite Namu'a island...so I guess I've always been a part of the fishing chain [MA, Fa'atama FG]

### **Shame associated with fishing**

Similarly to the market vendors and roadside sellers, several participants across the three focus groups identified shame associated with subsistence fishing and selling of catch. A woman from the lesbian/bisexual focus group explained explicit feelings of shame:

I used to enjoy digging for clams ... and even though it's something that people are ashamed to do because they think only poor people with no jobs go and collect shellfish [and] sell fish ... but I'll always walk past the people in the village with my shovel and bucket and head for the shore. ... When I grew up I always sold fish ... my family would fish and us kids used to do the selling ... and that's something that's looked down on here in Samoa for some reason ... like it's low life kinda work ... but I'm not ashamed because it's money. Money we use for our church offerings and village contributions and those are all really important things.' [PT, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

While others described more subtle ways that subsistence fishing activities were dismissed. One respondent explained that no one fished anymore: 'Because our village is in town and considered part of the urban area, no one... well, not many people go fishing anymore. It's funny, people buy fish although they live on the sea. Maybe because everyone has money I guess... and people in our village are all mostly employed in town and have money, no one wants to fish or maybe don't have time to fish or maybe don't know how to fish anymore...I don't know.' [MA, Fa'atama FG].

While another explained that subsistence fishing was associated with other markers of second class status: 'fishing is a good leisurely activity ... but the only thing is I get really dark after a day in the sea ... and it's always according to the tide and I can spend 4-5hours fishing but I only fish during the day ... it's my uncles and the men who fish at night not us ladies.' [SS, Lesbian/Bisexual FG].

Some participants agreed there was a perception that subsistence fishing was shameful, but refuted these community messages:

I don't think there's any shame in selling. People who sell are earning an honest living'; and owned their identity as fishers: 'Selling fish and fishing, that's me...I don't deny it. I'm not ashamed to be a fisher. It's a source of livelihood and I'll do it. [MA, Fa'atama FG]

In spite of this messaging, the overwhelming majority of participants across all focus groups asserted they actively enjoyed fishing, and sought out opportunities to fish as adults – they enjoyed the time spent fishing as children with their families, carried that enjoyment and pleasure into adulthood, and appreciated that these skills learned in childhood could offer money and free, delicious meals as adults: 'I still love it and everyone in the village knows I like doing this'.

Two fa'afāfine respondents described discrimination and teasing they experienced as fa'afāfine children selling fish: 'There was ... a stigma associated with being a fish seller, as if it was a sign of weakness to sell fish and I was a fa'afāfine boy ... but, not anymore now that I'm an adult.' [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]. While another fa'afāfine participant explained that when she was younger, she 'definitely' experienced discrimination. 'Kids used to make fun of me as the 'fish seller fa'afāfine'.' For her, the low status of fish seller was compounded by her status as fa'afāfine and feminine: 'When we were younger, my older brothers used to make fun of me too and say that I was just like a girl and only did 'girlie' chores like making the cup of tea but I never helped with the real stuff like getting the nets etc that boys do for fishing'. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG] This dismissal of feminine or women's work is pervasive in the data. This respondent also explained that it was not until she had won an award for her sewing that her family took her talent seriously:

Last year I won the fashion competition in Falealupo. I was asked to do the sewing and creative wear for a contestant at the competition and I won it. My family were shocked to see everything that I won when the pastor from the catholic church in Falealupo brought me back home after I won. Normally, my family kind of make fun of my creations and always wonder where I go and what I'm up to ... but when I won that and brought lots of things home after it, they now take my work more seriously because they know that my talents also feed the family. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

Women's work frequently goes underpaid, unpaid and underrecognized. The devaluing of women's work across the fisheries supply chain, including the absence of study of women's contribution at a policy and academic level is indicative of the depth of the dismissal of women's vital work and its contribution to cultural life and the economic stability of their households and extended families.

## Business

One woman noted she would like to own her own fishing business, in addition to her current flower growing and selling business:

I plant my own flowers at home and those are for my market stall, but at the same time, if I had the chance, I'd own my own fishing business because it's good money too just like my flowers. I earn \$300-400 weekly from my flowers, people always need flowers for church or graves etc. and I'd continue to be my own boss. [SS, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

I also had a food stall at the market, but because I'm about to depart for seasonal work in NZ soon, I've sold the stall to a relative. If not for the ban in our village, ... I think we'd still be fishing there, it was only a few years now since the ban. For crabs, we go at low tide and I used to spend hours at sea...if I get a lot I sell them and they used to go fast...if not, I just cook them for our family meal. Maybe if we had a project for our Rogers group, boy we'd make a killing because we could do a small business and we're really industrious and hard working. [PT, Lesbian/Bisexual FG].

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Some participants explained that they had been involved in selling fish as children:

as kids we'd clean the fish and marine invertebrates... we'd also select the fish to string for selling and then we'd sell the fish. When I was younger I used to sell only to people that I knew wanted to buy. People from our village. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG].

Fa'afāfine sellers described their manner, friendliness as important factors in their success at selling fish. It is implicit here in their descriptions of their manner that these respondents are careful to perform a palatable and accessible form of femininity, emphasising hospitality, approachability, an asexual or celibate affect, and a non-threatening demeanour:

my sales approach was always important. People used to always like me because I was a little fa'afāfine and used to be quite friendly and people would buy fish just because of my friendliness. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

Fa'afāfine are often expected to care for their parents and other elderly relatives, and to provide for their material needs. One respondent explained she was the fulltime carer for her parents and two uncles who are elderly bachelors. As a result of this high caring load, she is 'always looking for opportunities to make money and generate income for our family and myself'. [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

No fa'atama participants owned businesses involved in fisheries, but for fa'atama who did not have other means of formal employment, the idea of building their skills and recreation into a business was very appealing:

No, I don't own a fishing business, but I wish we had the chance to participate in the sector. It's fast money and good money and because I love fishing, I could do it. I also love plumbing work, I have taught myself to do tiles work and I have cooking skills. If I had money I would do a restaurant/café but I don't have the funds to start up a business...starting up a business requires a bit of money. [MA, Fa'atama FG]

No, it's not a business. Our family just loves fishing. but we can do the heavy work and I'm very boyish ... but, if I could do a fishing business or participate in the fishing sector, I'd be very happy to because I know I can do it. [AF, Fa'atama FG]

I don't fish, and we don't fish in our family. We buy our fish. But if I had the opportunity, I'm sure I'd love to. Because I'm interested in fishing. In New Zealand I went fishing with my uncle and he taught me how to fish and I'm so interested in this activity and I want to learn the skill more. [GP Fa'atama FG]

Many participants expressed interest in pursuing businesses or jobs in fisheries supply chains, but noted that the experiences of complex social exclusion fa'atama face often materially affect their life chances. One participant also noted that in the wider fa'atama community there is a great deal of interest in fishing opportunities, but that a variety of factors hindered the participation of fa'atama in these industries and roles.

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never have there been opportunities to see if fa'atama are interested in this field in a serious way, they only involve themselves in subsistence fishing ... my own [fa'atama] husband loves fishing ... too bad he's not here to comment because he's in NZ ... he left because he needed to go and work. I know lots are interested in line fishing.”

[MH, Fa'atama FG]

The partner of a Fa'atama described the group as 'very entrepreneurial and industrious individuals. ...But whatever opportunities are available, I tell you, they'll do it.' [MH, Fa'atama FG] She went on to explain that in American Samoa, for instance, fa'afāfine are able to work on fishing vessels and have access to the financial opportunities associated with deep sea fishing:

But for us here, there's little financial support. There are no opportunities for long haul fishing vessels here and there's no interest I guess because it's never been made available. Yet, in Pago, the fa'afāfines are involved because the opportunities are there, but not here. [MH, Fa'atama FG]

Discussion with the senior officer for Fisheries at the Ministry for Fisheries and Agriculture noted she would be happy to organise a fact-finding visit to American Samoa to investigate these claims that fa'afāfine were crewing long haul boats, but noted that she had not heard of this phenomenon.

Many people of diverse SOGIE, particularly those living in communities which are more hostile to non-heteronormative forms of gender expression and sexual orientation, trade labour and the financial support of family members for community acceptance and safety in their homes. The labour offers a way to stay within community, which is safer and less harmful than being excluded. Fa'atama expressed a strong desire to become involved in fishing to support themselves, and this income may also offer a way into a negotiated relationship with members of their families.

Two fa'afāfine respondents reported in addition to her fish selling business, they had diversified. For example, one explained she was selling flower arrangements, 'I will do flowers for events and that is good money to live on for a week' as well as running a micro-credit and loan scheme in her village:

[Fish selling] used to be [my main source of income], but it isn't anymore. Now I'm a business woman. I also am the leader of our fa'afāfine association in the village and I have some business ventures for the association in the village that I'm involved in. Our micro-credit loan scheme makes lots of money because we charge interest. And people cannot run away because we know where they live so people always pay up. I have to be resourceful so that I can help with my family financially. [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

The other participant reported a variety of income-generating activities all related to their feminine gender role. She explained she was the main income generator at home, while her brothers were in New Zealand working for the seasonal worker scheme, and also send money home to support their parents. The fa'afāfine participant explained she does sewing for her family, and also sells her work, 'I never learnt to sew formally but it was always my interest.

Even my decorating business, I just learnt to do these things naturally because I always liked doing it. And my talents now support our family financially. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

No respondent reported any financial or technical support received from government to help them develop their business or enhance their income. When pressed, interviewees were unsure about what kinds of support would assist them. One participant explained that 'we just cook [making tea] on an open hearth outside but today there are electrical goods [kettles] that speed up the process'. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

While for others fishing activities supplemented their other income-raising ventures: 'We have our own plantations, I plant bananas and other staple crops for family use...and if we want to sell a good bunch, we just sell it by the side of the road but it's mostly for subsistence.' [MH]

One fa'atama participant pursuing training and higher education reported explained, 'I'm a student at the local university in marine school learning to be a sailor. I'm still doing 1st year sailing and I like that work and no one gives me a hard time at uni.' [AF]

## Environmental degradation and COVID

Several participants noted the effects of environmental degradation, overfishing and COVID on fishing practices, yields and profits.

Today we don't do it anymore because the government has said we're not allowed to...we've been banned because of the rubbish dump that's in our area...and now, our village don't really depend on the marine resources much...except of course if we buy it from the market. ... If not for the ban in our village, because people discard rubbish in those isolated uninhabited areas of our village and also people mine the sand and that's why the government has stopped it I think...we'd still be fishing there...it was only a few years now since the ban. [PT, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

Where we live, there isn't much gau anymore. Also, no more jelly fish. [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

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## Discrimination in the fishing/farming sectors

In spite of the complexities of working in the fisheries sector as fa'afāfine, participants did not **report discrimination in access to fishing rights, or to land for farming**, but this view was strongly mediated through understandings of the gendered roles men and women take up in the fisheries supply chain, and the roles respondents understood they should occupy.

Well, men do all the fishing work and they are the ones who have been seen as the main players in this sector. Now that my brothers are gone and no one fishes in our family anymore we just buy fish. I don't feel the desire to go and do the fishing because that's not my role as a fa'afāfine. I'm a woman! And so, even though there are no boys in our family to fish, we still get fish for my parents, but we buy it now. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

[No, I haven't been denied access to fishing or land] because if I want to fish I can do it but it's just that I can't do the men's kind of fishing because I'm a fa'afāfine. And I never did it in my life. And I can farm if I want to. We have lots of family land and as a male of the family, fa'afāfine, I have rights to land and if I want to use it, I can. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

Fa'afāfine benefit from being able to perform women's roles, but women themselves are often confined to subsistence and market selling, rather than being able to access the full range of fisheries activities. While fa'atama do not have access to men's spaces and very limited access to women's spaces because they do not want to identify as women, and communities often reject people assigned female at birth (AFAB) who perform masculine gender roles.

One participant observed that the sector 'is a real man's world', while another explained that 'women are given the chance to be in the sector and do what they can do. If I was given money I'd definitely have a fishing business'. It is important to note that all participants reported accepting or being happy with their roles within fisheries supply chains, and no one even raised the possibility of moving outside their gendered roles in these activities: 'Men are treated with respect ... Women are also able to do what they want to do in fisheries I think ... mostly I see them selling.' [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

One participant in the Fa'atama focus group observed, however, that there are significant barriers for fa'atama people in Samoa accessing employment. Principally, that many fa'atama have criminal records which precludes them from even applying for overseas worker schemes:

There are seasonal workers jobs available here but our fa'atama community cannot participate – police records issues hinder them from taking up these job opportunities overseas. These guys mostly all have police records ... and that's the life they live though, always getting into brawls because of something or other ... just having to defend themselves or else domestic violence situations that always happens a lot in the same sex relationships here in Samoa especially the TM/lesbian relationships, lots of issues and always a lot of dramas. [MH, Fa'atama FG]

Data on the rates at which people of diverse SOGIE/LGBT+ come into contact with law enforcement or are incarcerated is generally lacking at a global level, and even more so for those who are lesbian or bisexual, trans or gender diverse. A study from the US found that 16% of trans people there will spend time in prison at some point in their lives, as compared with approximately 2% of the general population (Grant et al 2011). Botha (2021) found that people with diverse gender expression (regardless of sexual orientation) tend to be a main target of arrest and harassment by law enforcement around the world, even though the majority of countries do not have laws prohibiting any form of gender expression per se.

Despite the cultural acceptance of fa'afāfine in Samoa – and even they experience a disproportionate degree of discrimination – evidence suggests that the otherwise binary nature of Samoan society means that other forms of diverse gender expression, particularly by those who identify as lesbian or trans/gender diverse, are especially vulnerable to stigma, marginalisation and potential trouble with law enforcement.

Although the percentage of female prisoners in Samoa's total prison population declined from 8.1% in 2000 to 6% in 2016 (the most recent statistics we were able to find), the female prison population rate per 100,000 of national population increased from 8 to 15.4 in the same period. This compares with Fiji at a female prisoner rate of 5.1, Tonga at 7.5 and New Zealand at 12.4 (World Prison Brief, n.d.).



As stated above, more research is needed, but our fieldwork suggests that many of these detainees may identify as lesbian or trans (absence of laws protecting gender identity suggest that tomboys, masculine presenting women or trans men would be recorded as female). Factors such as low income or unemployment, social marginalisation, along with other negative social factors that disproportionately affect these populations, would render them especially vulnerable. Those who are less likely to be able to afford bail, for example, or have a support network to help them, are more likely to be incarcerated for longer periods of time, and thus more likely to be exposed to more violence, humiliation, and rights violations (Botha 2021, 28).

### **Religious, social, cultural and familial discrimination, violence and marginalisation**

In the course of these focus groups, participants explained the complexities of navigating their lives living as people of diverse SOGIE. These discussions reveal the physical and emotional abuse people of diverse SOGIE face from members of their families, and village and church communities. It is imperative that these experiences are included here as they provide critical context to any recommendations or future action this report might generate.

It is critical to remember that treatment people of diverse SOGIE experience from the great majority of Samoans extends to Samoans who hold positions of power and authority, in a culture which is already highly structured and hierarchical. It is not the intention of this report to encourage direct government interaction with people of diverse SOGIE for this reason. Significant, long term and culturally grounded education of all levels of government as well as local village fono will need to take place in order to make these interactions safer and productive. Indeed, staff attitudes have already been identified as barriers in the progress of gender mainstreaming in fisheries, Mangubhai and Lawless explain that 'staff brought into the workplace their own values, beliefs, biases and prejudices on the importance of gender inclusion, or why gender equality matters in the fisheries sector.' (2021) Our recommendations reflect these complexities and offer some strategies for moving forward in this environment.

Living with these extraordinary levels of abuse and marginalisation also affect the mental health and wellbeing, which in turn may affect a person's ability to take up particular opportunities. For example, if a fa'atama person is homeless, their ability to attend a job interview, which requires not only looking professional, but would also require feminine attire would be logistically very difficult, and psychologically impossible.

For context and in the absence of national or regional level statistics on the experiences of people of diverse SOGIE, a comprehensive 2020 report from Australia (Private Lives 3), where social acceptance and legal protections for people of diverse SOGIE/LGBTQ+ people are relatively high, especially compared with Pacific countries, found significantly higher levels of physical and verbal abuse, social exclusion and rejection by family, homelessness, lack of access to or inadequate/inappropriate health care services, poor mental health, intimate partner and family violence, substance abuse, along with other poor outcomes. In many cases, these statistics were doubled or more for trans, gender diverse and intersex people. For example, 50-60% reported experiencing social exclusion within the last twelve months as a result of their LGBT+ status, 45-56% reported verbal abuse, 35% had experienced homelessness, 57% reported 'very high' levels of psychological distress, 75% had experienced suicidal ideation, 30% had attempted suicide, and 65% reported experiencing family violence. Though there is relatively little data on the situation for these cohorts in the Pacific region, what does exist (including the results of our focus groups) suggests that the statistics are no better, and, given the lack of social acceptance and legal protections, are most likely significantly worse.

All the women in the lesbian/bisexual focus group reported serious and ongoing emotional, verbal and at times physical violence and abuse. Women who reported less overt abuse explained this was because they were strategically presenting as cis-gendered, which was also inferred by community to mean that these women were also heterosexual.

I've gone undetected by others because I just look like a girl and act like a girl and no one knows that I like tomboys. [LM, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

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[My] family don't know that I'm lesbian. All my friends from childhood are tombies though... but I guess my family don't suspect anything because I just look like a normal woman and there's nothing different about me so I don't really face discrimination, but I hear it said about my tombie friends because they're more obvious than me... but when I'm drunk that's when I cannot control myself and I feel that I really want women and that's when I get involved with tombies. It's a struggle, when I'm sober but I'm able to carry on and pretend that I'm not into girls... I'm able to control the urge but when I'm drunk I just cannot. [TP, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

Many participants reported they faced violence from family members once their sexual orientation and gender identity as a tombie and/or a lesbian or bisexual woman was known:

[M]aybe some people have bad siblings, because I know some who have been beaten up by their own sisters ... and some fa'afāfine who've been beaten up by their brothers to stop them from trying to be like a girl ... so maybe it depends. [PT, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

[My] family look down on my tombie cousin ... they say she'd be better off dead because she's a waste of time...and I think about my relatives and don't pursue my feelings. I have a boyfriend but when I'm drunk I'm bisexual. [SS, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

I'm in a relationship with a tombie right now. My parents know about it. People say that we should commit suicide ... kill ourselves ... they say that we'd be better off dead ... he's 22 years old and he's lovely to me ... but people are mean ... for me, it's better to dress like a girl than to face people and their comments. [NM, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

The persistent physical and verbal abuse these women experience throughout their lives affects their employment and educational opportunities: 'I came out because someone snitched on me to my mum and told her that they saw me kissing a girl at the market...and I got a really good hiding from my mum and I was kicked out of the house...in 2018 I was at uni but I dropped out. You know people make biblical comments to make me feel bad...they say that God made Adam and Eve and that what I'm doing is disgusting...I was really suicidal at one stage... I felt so small because people don't accept the fact that I am who I am.' [MB, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

These experiences are borne out in the literature. Idris (2021, 9) reports UN DP and OHCHR information detailing serious harm and abuse experienced by people of diverse SOGIE in the Pacific: 'the punitive rape of women perceived to be lesbian. Homophobic bullying in schools denies young people safe access to education and often leads to students dropping out of schools. A disproportionate number of LGBT youth commit suicide due to physical and psychological abuse.'

Abuse and rejection are identified as causes of serious, and sometimes fatal, self-harm and mental illness:



I'm my family's biggest disappointment. My cousin committed suicide in 2020 because they found out that she was dating a tombie from Lefaga. They think that I'll commit suicide too but my mum didn't raise a weak kid. ”

[MB, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

[Being] bisexual or lesbian in Samoa causes depression. I've had depression and mental issues I'm so lucky I'm better now ... with the help of friends ... the love of my little son ... I cannot live without him ... if my dad kicks me out when I come out to him on New Year's I don't know what I'll do because I know they'll never let me take my son ... and I don't know how to handle that. People keep saying you're not worth it etc. and I'm fine with not communicating with my brothers anymore. I love them but I'll cut them off to save myself the pain... it's just better to move on. [MB Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

In addition to the violence women experience from family members, and the wider community, many participants reported high levels of intimate partner violence:

[B]ut same sex relationships are hurtful and very jealous and so much violence too...I left my same sex relationship between I saw he [tomboy] was with someone else and I just wanted out...but then I got into another same sex relationship with [redacted]...it wasn't for long but it was long enough...and there was a lot of violence too. ... I just couldn't stand it any longer. I am single now and I want to stay this way for a while, ...

I just need to get my stuff together and can't wait to go...start a new life [in New Zealand]. [PT, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

Participants explained that the gender performance and identity were indivisible in Samoan society:

When a lesbian gets pregnant, OMG, that's like the worst...you should hear what people say ... and then especially if after giving birth, we return to being gay... especially too if a tomboe gets pregnant ... well, people just go to town talking about that situation ... it's really, really shameful and people say nasty things. And its because of the Samoan understanding of what a woman/female is ... and that's just to do one thing ... give birth ...and if she is to wanna be male as in tomboe and give birth, well that's just a huge no-no in the Samoan mind. [MH, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

Church and family were identified as key areas of rejection or acceptance, where reception of their fa'atama or fa'afāfine status varied significantly between churches and pastors, and different family members.

Some respondents sought acceptance at church through performing a kind of exemplary morality. The violence of respectability politics encourages LGBT people to navigate these spaces by enacting a hierarchy of propriety where they out-perform other queer/LGBT people. For example, as one respondent explained, she was not 'promiscuous' like other fa'afāfine 'who make it difficult for others':

I go to the Full Gospel church and I work for the church. I'm a ministry leader for the church cleaning and decorations. Our pastor doesn't treat me [any differently] because I'm fa'afāfine. Other pastors who visit our church I feel may have this attitude but not our pastor. In fact, fa'afāfine who are promiscuous etc make it difficult for others of us. Sometimes, they don't dress appropriately for church...like they're given the opportunity to dress like women, but the dresses they wear are 'sexy' and it's made it difficult. [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

Women in the lesbian/bisexual focus group also explained that they felt that bisexual and lesbian women face more discrimination than fa'afāfine because fa'afāfine identity is located within Samoan cultural practice:

Being B/L – we face so much more stigma and many more consequences than fa'afāfine ... people are so mean toward us. They say things like 'you should just die and not live because your life is wasted anyways'. [MB, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

Samoan tradition/culture makes it difficult for people to accept us. My fa'afāfine cousin is more accepted than I would ever be by society. [PF, Lesbian/Bisexual FG]

It is important to remember that while fa'afāfine enjoy considerably more visibility and some social and cultural capital, this acceptance is conditional and fragile, even among close family:

My brother lives in New Zealand and he's become fundamentalist and he talks to me about appropriate behaviour and always tries to advise me against being a fa'afāfine and going to heaven etc... I don't question my brothers love for me, I know he loves me... when it comes to family stuff, they accept me as a fa'afāfine. [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

Conversely, this participant's extended family are not as welcoming:

But my dad's family in the village ... they are Catholic, and I don't like going there. It's like a prison sentence. They don't approve of my SOGIE. My aunt would physically hit me and they didn't like my effeminate nature. They were ashamed of me being fa'afāfine. In Falelatai I wouldn't be myself so I just sat still or she'd smack me. Now that I'm older and have resources and money, my family are more accepting. And now I'm even accepted to participate in female roles traditionally. If I wasn't independent and resourceful they wouldn't accept me I don't think. I can even drink now with my uncles and male cousins. And when they're drunk they turn to me for sexual favours. [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

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This ambivalent family acceptance is reflected in her experiences with her church where, although she had contributed cleaning and flower decorating services, she has

stopped going to church because I was called to the pastors house the other week and the pastor told me that he appreciates all I do to clean the church and beautify it with flowers. But he said that I have to wear a man's pocket lavalava to church and dress like a man when I come to church that I'm not allowed to wear women's clothes like a puletasi to church anymore. So, I've decided to stop going to church and don't do flowers for my church anymore. ... And church is important to me. I'm Mormon. Gendered roles as taught by the church, I understand, and I accept. And I decorate the church because I know they wouldn't use me for church ministry because I'm fa'afāfine, so I thought, decorating the church is a good way to still be useful. But when the bishop asked me to dress like a man to church, I told him I won't come to church anymore. And it's been 3 years now. I won't change and go to another church. ... Sometimes I question God's plan for me. Church teaching says I won't reunite with my family in heaven because of the way that I am. My feelings are at loggerheads with teachings of the church. Why has God blessed me with these talents if the church says that I won't be in the next life with my family?  
[LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

While another fa'afāfine respondent explained that her contributions to the family finances, and to the education of her nieces help her to feel accepted by her family:

And my talents now support our family financially. I support 3 of my sister's children I pay for their school fees etc because I don't have children of my own. And my contributions to my family I feel have been accepted because my brother in New Zealand just had a baby and he's named his daughter Lenny (the female version of my name Taleni) and this is a beautiful thing.  
[LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

Two respondents described sexual relationships and dynamics which existed on the shoreline:

Well, I know that as children there were sexual experiences associated with fishing on the foreshore. Kids in the neighbourhood would experience sex on the foreshore. As teenagers, the young boys, we could tell they needed sexual favours so we'd go under the trees and have sex with them or perform oral sex on them. Or sometimes, when we played in the sea, we'd fondle boys in the sea. Well, sometimes when fishermen come to shore and they're cold, we wait around and perform sexual favours for them. Sometimes, uncles stay for a week for fishing trips etc and boys...and there was this particular boy that I had an affair with. [VL, Fa'afāfine FG]

While another respondent explained:

[T]wo years ago during palolo season, I had sex with a man that I hadn't seen in a long time, since high school... so while we were all waiting for the palolo<sup>2</sup>[Eunice viridis palolo worm (Caspers, 1984)] to rise, and we were in the cold water, I had sex with this guy that I had a crush on in high school. I knew him...and I had always wanted him, and this was my opportunity...the cold water made it easier to have sex in the water. [LF Fa'afāfine FG]

Gender presentation and the performance of gendered chores and familial and cultural responsibilities vary significantly between participants. Some explain that they have never embraced feminine chores, attire or identity:

I'm like a boy, my family have always treated me like a boy ... I do boys work in the house and for my family and my family makes me do male chores ... I've never been treated like a girl all my life ... even the way I dress, I've never worn a dress except the school uniform that I had to wear...but that's a different story. [AF, Fa'atama FG]

I'm interested in [fishing] ... sometimes, people make fun of me but I don't care, they say things like I wanna be male, ...and I don't have testicles and I should act like I have a vagina ... and I don't care. I'll just go and do male related work and chores because that's how I feel

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<sup>2</sup> Palolo is a delicacy in Samoa and is only available for a few days each year. 'Hunting for palolo has to be done in darkness in the early hours of the morning as the palolo melts in sunlight. The palolo is the edible portion of a polychaete worm, and the mating season of the palolo follows the lunar cycle — typically on the seventh night after the October full moon.' (ABC 2020)

... in my family, I do chores that are male related only ... I don't do any female chores ... I have brothers and older sisters so my parents depend on me to do the chores. As a transman and my trans life, I'm a bit lazy at times, but I always work hard... in fact, I have a brother who is a fa'afāfine, and he is okay ... and our family are okay with us being the way that we are, but others say that we are a cursed family ... well, that's what I hear ... but, me and my fa'afāfine brother, we are loved in our home ... he does girl chores, and I am a boy so I do boy chores. [GP, Fa'atama FG]

All my life I've always been like a male ... I have 2 brothers and me, there are 3 children in my family ... and although I was born female, I've never been treated like a girl and my family are very accepting ... my brothers and I we do chores together in the home ... and I've never felt discriminated in my family ... our fishing experiences have always been for us boys and our dad and uncle and we never sold fish. I'm an uso (same sex sibling) to my brothers ... at home, mum does the girl chores not us boys. [AF, Fa'atama FG]

While others navigate a complex path between their own sense of gendered identity and sexual orientation, and the expectations of their family and Samoan culture:

[I]n my transman experience, I know I'm a woman ... I know that ... but I really want to be a man/boy and in my mind I'm male and I feel like I'm a male. If I had to sell fish, I'm not embarrassed to do so ... I'll do it because men also sell fish and I believe I'm a man, I'll sell fish to earn a living. I do all the chores in my family and I perform both male and female related chores. I can do the umu (outdoor hearth for cooking) alone, I can do plumbing, I clean toilets etc. you name it, I will do it. ...In fact, I'm very active and love working. In my family we're all different ... and they understand that I'm both male and female. [MA, Fa'atama FG]

Non-heteronormative people in hostile environments frequently move fluidly between gender roles in order to avoid discrimination and as a shield against censure, as a fa'atama person explains here:

One thing about me, I'm very respectful and I don't demand my rights and insist that I'm a man ... I know that I'm also a sister to my brothers and if I have to go to church and sing in the choir, I'll wear a puletasi (women's attire) and I'll also wear a hat. And when I'm with the transmen community, I'm dressed like this with shorts and tee shirt and a cap. I'm also a titled person in my family, I have a matai title<sup>3</sup>... and even though my family know that I'm like this ... they're okay because they know that I don't disrespect our culture... I know my place in the family as a female and sister and daughter and my relationship with my male relatives and parents... I mean, I don't have a live in lover or anything, I don't live with anyone because I know that it'll hurt my family ... they don't see me doing things with women that will offend them ... but I'm seeing a woman, and we enjoy each other... [MA, Fa'atama FG]

These strategies deployed here – hiding their intimate partner/s, 'they don't see anything that will offend them', agreeing with their family members that they are a sister to their brothers, are strategies which silence and erase queer experience and identity.

I've always had a boys identity. In our youth group, I participate as a boy. In our dance for Christmas I'm in the boys part. And everyone knows I'm a boy. The women of the church are gossipy ... they say all females should wear puletasi and dress like girls but I don't care ... I don't listen to them...I just do what I want (RL nodding in agreeance because they both attend the same youth group at church).' [AF Fa'atama FG]

The violence of religious patriarchy and the centrality of cis-heterosexuality is oppressive.

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<sup>3</sup>Matai are chiefly title holders. The titles are common property of a lineage consisting of all those who are connected to the titles. Matai or chiefs are selected by extended family through consensus (Samoa Law Reform Commission, 2017).

## Government, academic, and civil society consultation

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Dr Tapu-Qiliho met with Sapeti Tiitii, Senior Fisheries Officer, **Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture**. Ms Tiitii assisted with networking and was instrumental in providing information about the sector and women's experiences. We held a follow up interview with Ms Tiitii Friday 28 January 2022, once fieldwork analysis was completed to discuss recommendations, and the role government might play in supporting the inclusion of people of diverse SOGIE within fisheries supply chains. These discussions are reported in the Discussion section below and reflected in the recommendations.

Upon consultation with Ms Tiitii, interviews with the **Samoa Women's Association of Growers (SWAG) and Women in Business Development Incorporated** did not eventuate, as she advised that women's participation in fishing activities in Samoa were not well represented in these forums.

Contributors to the 2019 **FAO** report on Gender Assessment in Samoa were contacted. However, three of the four had since left the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries for other ministries. The two that were contacted expressed that they did not have anything else to contribute outside of the report.

It was hoped that the **Samoa Scientific Research Organisation** could contribute to the fieldwork. However, they admitted to not having a focus on fisheries and gender in their current work.

Responses from the two universities were not forthcoming. Academics contacted regarding gender and fisheries admitted that there was not much they could contribute to the conversation as they did not have any information.

Lessons derived from the fieldwork experience based on the inaccessibility of experts further reinforces the marginalisation that exists. The assumption that intellectual communities, bureaucracies, and international bodies with specialised knowledge in a particular field are key informants was disproved by the fieldwork experience in this research. It was very clear from this research that knowledge of this community's experiences within this industry did not fall within the purview of its experts. Attempts at consultations with academics and industry experts did not eventuate because of an admitted lack of expertise in this area. Overt references to and queries about knowledge of sexual minorities participation in mainstream industries are possibly an impediment. A segue into such expert groups requires the initial discussion of broader industry related matters.

The non-existence of an association of Samoan women fishers and the underrepresentation of subsistence fishing by the Samoa Women's Association of Growers (SWAG), Women in Business Development Inc. as well as the lack of information available through consultations with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries indicates that sensitisation and training of staff is required which alerts policy makers and trainers in the field of the experiences and needs of people of diverse SOGIE who may attend their trainings and meetings (whether these populations are 'out' at these meetings or not).

# Meeting the objectives

## **1. Mapping the participation and perceptions of people and communities of diverse SOGIE engaged in fisheries in Samoa, as a scoping study for a planned ACIAR project that would work across other parts of the Pacific**

The experiences of people of diverse SOGIE in the formal and informal fisheries supply chains in Samoa is primarily affected by their experiences of fishing as a child with their parents and extended families, and village communities, as well as by their experiences as adults navigating social and cultural environments which are almost uniformly hostile to gender presentations and affects which lie outside strict masculine/feminine norms, and the cultural and religious requirement of compulsory heterosexuality.

Many respondents who identified outside the cis-heteronormative categories of Samoan cultural and religious life reported that as children, their latent gender non-conformity was acknowledged by their parents, and the children were assigned tasks befitting their gender expression. It is in these contexts that respondents explained they learned the fishing skills they have taken into adulthood. For instance, a fa'atama person explained 'I always help my uncles. And we catch good fish. I don't collect invertebrates. I go with the boys and we fish for big fish. ... like serious fishing.' [DL, Fa'atama FG] While a fa'afāfine respondent explained that: 'My father was a fisherman. I made the tea and waited for the fishermen to return to shore. My role in fishing was really hospitality oriented. But as a child I sold fish and also played the hostess and did girl-like chores. I was told fa'afāfine made cuppa tea better. So I think at a young age, my father could see that I was like a girl so he just made me help out with the cuppa tea preparations etc and never with the act of fishing itself. But I did also help out with some fishing later.' [LF, Fa'afāfine FG]

All participants enjoyed the fishing practices they engaged in, and many noted they would take up funding opportunities to run their own businesses. An interviewee who was a fulltime sportsperson and admitted to not having much time to fish anymore states that if he were given the opportunity today, he would engage in a childhood activity that he loved. And another who grew up in an urban area and did not have the childhood experience of fishing with their families admitted to having enjoyed fishing as an adult and expressed much interest in pursuing it further given the chance.

## **2. Understanding the economic and social contribution, experiences and treatment of SOGIE individuals in this sector**

Owing to the unavailability of information on the experiences of SOGIE individuals in the sector regionally, understanding their economic and social contribution, experiences, and treatment in the fishing sector in Samoa needed empirical research that prioritised the voices of SOGIE communities. Such research required trans-affirmative, ethical and contextual methodologies suitable for Pacific contexts that utilised Pacific knowledge and approaches.

## **3. Place based approaches to research and interventions**

Fundamental to ethical place based approaches in navigating the sensitivities within which diverse SOGIE communities exist is the understanding of the sacredness of relationships in a Samoan worldview. Va tapuia is the covenantal relationship between people and their environment which is deemed sacred and '...as researcher, it is paramount that one knows oneself first in one's relationship with others within the va tapuia' (Amitunai-Toloa 2007, 203). This traditional Samoan concept informed all fieldwork approaches and practices. Institutional ethical standards alone are not sufficient when navigating spaces between in indigenous communities and especially with regards to hard to access sexual minority groups.

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### **a) Reciprocity**

Reciprocity is highly valued in Samoan culture traditionally and despite increased urbanisation and the impact of modernisation on society remains a cornerstone of Samoan life. This knowledge was incorporated into fieldwork research and undergirded approaches to communities. All aspects of the fieldwork must operate from the perspective that relationships are sacred and as such, are to be respected at all cost. Working in closed communities such as SOGIE requires the researcher to truly assess the meaning of relationships and reciprocity. It should inform fieldwork budgets, fieldwork protocol and researcher demeanour in engaging with such communities. Lesson learnt here is to not be frugal with monetary resources because people's stories and contributions without which the research would fail are far more valuable than most researchers' budget for.

### **b) Appropriateness of recognition**

Appropriate recognition of participants' contributions and the acknowledgement of this to ensure that *va fealoaloa'i* (mutual respect in social relationships) was fundamental to fieldwork encounters. The difficulty in trying to locate these communities spoke volumes of the stigma they faced. Networks utilised and required to organise meetings with such underclass groupings are extensive. Acknowledging one's privilege to being granted access into such spaces must manifest itself appropriately. Upon having gained entry into such closeted groups, one's ability to gauge the appropriateness of responses in respect of community members' time and willingness is paramount. Their approval of the final report is also important. In recognition of this, reciprocal approaches that acknowledged their key contributions were evident in the seeking of their approval on the final recommendations of this report. As such, fieldwork budgeting must be generous in the allocation of financial resources that would indicate respect for people's time and candour.

### **c) Refreshments**

Food is valued as a marker of hospitality and important in relationship formation and as such was utilised in the research. Samoans place high value on hospitality. Its prioritisation in the relationships between people is significant of the sacredness of the social space between. Deliberate attempts to ensure that the fieldwork exhibited practices conducive to harmonious communal relationships were evident in the hospitality provided. Critical conversations that shed insights on the insider worldviews of diverse SOGIE individuals were shared over refreshments. Refreshments were not extravagant but sufficient to reciprocate the generosity of participants' time given and express the gratitude of the research team.

### **d) Safe venue hire**

The need for safe spaces in research undertaken in LGBTQI communities is good practice and ethical. Given the communal nature of Samoan society and the sensitivity of diverse SOGIE issues, the consideration for meeting locations that were neutral and free of prejudice was a priority. This espoused values of the *va tapuia* process and ensured the creation of space for *va fealoaloa'i* (mutual respect in social relationships) which was essential to conversations within these communities.

### **e) Utilising local networks (snowball strategy)**

Inaccessible communities such as those central to this research required snowballing as a strategy for access. Connections with the various diverse SOGIE groups were difficult to establish because of the nature of such group formation and membership. Through the assistance of insiders to these communities, successful introductions were achieved enabling the recruitment of potential participants. It was important that trust was established in the recruitment of participants and the snowball effect was instrumental as it allowed insider agency.



#### **f) Paid community/peer facilitators**

Tokenistic approaches to research with diverse SOGIE communities are sadly the reality. Samoan communities value relationships and payment in all manner of ways acknowledging peoples time and as a symbol of the va tapuia was factored into the fieldwork. Gifting is a valued cultural practice in Samoa. It is not uncommon in Samoa to gift money to indicate and consolidate relationship building. This was reflected in the fieldwork through the adequate gifting of money to community members who participated in the research at all levels. Peer facilitators and participants were gifted financial gifts in recognition of their participation and as place based responsive reciprocity. Gifting in this situation is granted vis-à-vis the va tapuia and mindful that monetary gifting while important and ethical contextually, could never adequately compensate people considering the lasting relationships that will exist beyond the life of the research. This contextual understanding of what is valued and how such relationships are factored into fieldwork budgets is crucial to research within such hard to access communities.

#### **g) Curated focus group members to encourage maximum depth**

The sensitivity pertaining to diverse SOGIE community issues required the careful curation of focus groups to allow for depth of discussion. Peer facilitators with expertise in focus group facilitation were utilised to foster trust and create an environment conducive to open sharing. This was an essential entry point for a cis-gendered lead researcher attempting to gain depth and delve into the inner workings of a community for whom cisgendered frames of reference have little value. Talanoa style conversations that meandered purposefully around the interview questions were most suited to the discussions surrounding the experiences of individuals with diverse SOGIE. It was also evident that there was comfort and ease as the participants' shared as a group. This issue was discussed ahead of time with the key contact into the community and the focus group was set up to ensure that safety in numbers and peer-enforced security was guaranteed.

### **4. Identifying any barriers to their full participation including access to land, investment opportunities, training and capacity building opportunities (eg. agricultural extension), and contribution to value supply chains.**

None of the individuals regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation that we interviewed indicated that inaccessibility to land was an issue. All respondents agreed that they were able to participate in fishing and agriculture and a good number indicated that they actively farmed for subsistence purposes.

However, there was an indication that training and capacity building opportunities were needed in order for them to fully participate in the sector.

#### **Employment**

While all of the lesbian/bisexual focus group were employed, none of the fa'atama interviewed were formally employed in any capacity. A huge barrier to employment was regulated attire expected of females. All fa'atama interviewed indicated that while they desired gainful employment, the cost to them individually was too high because of the expectation that they should conform to a dress code which disregarded a foundational expression of their gender identity. Opportunities for employment in the seasonal worker scheme overseas where they could be afforded freedom of expression through their chosen attire were not possible. All fa'atama present were precluded from participating in the employment scheme because of their police records.

#### **Climate Change, Environment, COVID-19**

Opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for individuals with diverse SOGIE in this sector are limited also because of changes in the environment. As their roles and experiences in the value chain is predominantly associated with marine invertebrates' collection in the foreshore areas, the decreasing gleaning stock further reduces their already limited participation. Stories of inaccessible fishing grounds because of bans caused by environmental hazards also adds to a further reduction in their ability to contribute productively in the value supply chain.

# Appendices

## Appendix I

### Data collection

The data collection period began following Human Ethics approval through the University of New England Human Ethics Research Committee, Friday 5th November 2021 and concluded 23 December 2021.

Date	Data Collection Method	Type	Gender	Location
10/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Female	Apia market
10/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Female	Apia market
10/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Female	Apia market
11/11/21	Interview	Senior Fisheries Officer	Female	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
11/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Male (faafāfine)	Apia market
12/11/21	Interview	Market owner operator	Female	Vaigaga market
15/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Faleula, Upolu
15/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Fasitoo, Upolu
15/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Male	Puipaa, Upolu
16/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Toamua, Upolu
19/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Faga, Savaii
19/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Male	Sapapalii, Savaii
20/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Male	Salelologa market
20/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Male	Salelologa market
20/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Female	Salelologa market
20/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Female	Salelologa market
20/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Female	Salelologa market
20/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Market vendor	Female	Salelologa market
20/11/21	Focused Group Discussion	SOGIE fishers (3)	Male (Faafāfine)	Amoa resort, Savaii
22/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Faleapuna, Upolu
22/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Salani, Upolu
23/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Vailoa, Upolu
23/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	Roadside vendor	Female	Nofoalii, Upolu
29/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	SOGIE fisher	Male (Faafāfine)	Siumu, Upolu
29/11/21	Interview Questionnaire	SOGIE fisher	Male (faafāfine)	Lefaga, Upolu
2/12/21	ZOOM Interview	FAO rep	Female	FAO

## Appendix II

### Focus group discussion questions

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- 1 What do you do in the fishing chain?

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  - 2 Is it your own business?

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  - 3 Does anyone assist you?

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  - 4 How long have you been doing this?

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  - 5 Why do you do this work?

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  - 6 How much of your working week is involved in this work?

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  - 7 Where did you learn this skill?

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  - 8 Is this your main income?

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  - 9 Are you the main income earner for your family?

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  - 10 What else do you do to support yourself/family?

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  - 11 Is there much demand for fish?

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  - 12 Are there any other products you are involved in manufacturing from marine resources?

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  - 13 Have you received any financial or technical support for your business? Or for the work you do?

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  - 14 What types of financial/technical support would you need to enhance your ability to participate in this industry/sector?

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  - 15 Have you experienced any discrimination in the work that you do?

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  - 16 How are men treated in this sector?

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  - 17 How are women treated in this sector?

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  - 18 Has your SOGIE been the cause of any discrimination/marginalization you've experienced?

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  - 19 Do you think you have been denied access to fishing or land?

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## Appendix III

### Survey for Market Vendors and roadside sellers

Name:	Age:
Village:	Gender:
Market Location:	Years selling:
Do you own a fishing vessel:	How do you get your fish:
Do you work alone:	Who else helps:
What work do others do to help you:	
Hours daily:	Work week:
Cost of market stall:	Earnings daily/weekly:
What other costs are there:	
Types of fish sold:	
Is this your own business:	
If yes, how did you get started:	
If no, who owns it, working conditions:	
Is there much demand for fish:	
Is the market competitive:	
If no, why:	
If yes, how:	
Techniques for diversification/competitive edge:	
Did covid-19 restrictions affect your work:	
Does gender affect your work:	
If no, why:	
If yes, how:	
What do you think of men sellers:	
What do you think of women sellers or women with men's strength and do heavy work:	
Are there any fa'afāfine or fa'afatama sellers:	
What makes a successful seller:	
Do customers have gender preference for sellers:	
Do customers bargain:	
Do you like what you do:	
Does the govt assist you:	
Do market vendors assist each other:	

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