Aquaculture in Society: Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development

Concept Note and Session Plan

World Aquaculture 2026 / Aquaculture Africa 2026 (AFRAQ26), Tanzania

Session	Aquaculture in Society: Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development
Conference	World Aquaculture 2026 / Aquaculture Africa 2026 (AFRAQ26), Tanzania
Organiser	World Aquaculture Society (WAS)
Session Chair	Dr. Foluke Areola (foareola@gmail.com)
Format	90 minutes: panel discussion followed by moderated stakeholder dialogue
Status	Approved thematic session (date, time and room to be confirmed in the conference programme)
Abstracts and expressions of interest	https://was.org/meeting/code/afraq26
Session motto	Stronger Communities. Better Livelihoods. Sustainable Aquaculture.

1. Background

Across Africa, aquaculture is now widely seen as an important route to food and nutrition security, jobs, poverty reduction and community development. The sector holds real promise for young people looking for work, for women building their own businesses, and for rural agribusiness more generally.

Growth in production, however, does not automatically improve people's lives. When success is counted only in tonnes harvested or in national economic returns, the people doing the work are easily forgotten. Many small-scale farmers, processors and traders still face the same old problems: credit they cannot afford, too little practical training, unreliable supplies of feed and fingerlings, weak links to markets, and unequal access to land and water.

Women and young people feel these problems most. Women do much of the processing, trading and day-to-day farm management, yet they are often shut out of finance, decision-making and ownership of productive assets. Young people who want to go into fish farming are frequently put off by the cost of getting started, insecure land tenure and the lack of mentors.

The World Aquaculture Society set up the Aquaculture in Society session at Aquaculture Africa 2026 to deal with these realities directly. It brings together researchers, farmers,

entrepreneurs, policymakers, investors, development agencies and civil society. The aim is to look past production figures and ask how aquaculture can deliver growth that is fair, responsible and lasting for the communities that depend on it.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The session will look at practical, field-tested ways of turning aquaculture growth into real social and economic gains: better household incomes, decent work, food security, opportunities for women and youth, and stronger communities.

Specifically, the session will:

a) examine how aquaculture contributes to household food security, nutrition, poverty reduction and rural employment;

b) highlight workable pathways for women and young people to access resources, run enterprises and earn a fair share of value along the chain;

c) showcase community-based business models, small enterprises and technologies that make it easier for smallholders to get started;

d) discuss ways of widening access to affordable finance, skills, inputs and fair markets for underserved communities;

e) consider how responsible aquaculture can support local climate resilience, care for the environment and sustainable consumption; and

f) produce recommendations that help governments, investors, researchers and development partners build social considerations into sector policy.

3. Expected Outputs

We want the session to end with concrete outcomes rather than general statements. By the close of the 90 minutes, we expect to have:

- **Recommendations:** a short list of five to seven priority recommendations for policymakers, industry, research institutions and development agencies.
- **Follow-up actions:** clear next steps, each linked to a type of lead organisation (government, NGO, private sector or academia), so that someone is accountable.
- **A collaboration network:** contact details of participants who choose to work together on finance, youth entrepreneurship, market access and gender.
- **A record of working models:** practical examples shared during the session that show smallholders and communities being successfully included.
- **A reporting plan:** a simple schedule for getting the session's findings to decision-makers soon after the conference.

Reporting schedule after the session

Output	Contents	Responsibility	Due
One-page summary	Top five to seven recommendations, follow-up actions and main poll results	Rapporteur and Session Chair	Within 48 hours
Full session report	Account of the discussion, detailed recommendations, case examples and SDG links	Rapporteur and Session Chair	Within 2 weeks
Collaboration list	Participants who opted in, their contacts and areas of interest	Session Chair	Within 2 weeks
Policy note to WAS	Suggestions for including social impact themes in future WAS regional and global meetings	Session Chair and WAS Committee	After the conference

4. The Panel

The panel has five seats, each representing a different part of the aquaculture value chain. Opening remarks are kept to about five minutes per speaker so that time goes to evidence, field experience and discussion rather than long slide presentations.

Seat	Speaker profile	Focus	Guiding question
1. Research and academia	Researcher or academic working on livelihoods, social impact or food systems	Evidence on incomes, jobs and nutrition; gaps in socio-economic research	What does the evidence tell us about who benefits from aquaculture growth, and who is left out?
2. Youth and enterprise	Young fish farmer, agribusiness leader or youth development worker	What it takes to start and grow a business as a young person; new technologies and business models	What is the biggest obstacle for a young person going into fish farming, and what practical step would remove it?
3. Women in the value chain	Woman entrepreneur, processors' association leader or women's network representative	Women's work in farming, processing and trade; access to land, credit and decision-making	Where in the value chain do women face the greatest barriers, and what has actually worked?
4. Policy and development	Government official, development agency representative or policymaker	Enabling policies, public funding and institutions that support small-scale producers	Which one policy or regulatory change would most help smallholders in the next two years?

Seat	Speaker profile	Focus	Guiding question
5. Farmers, communities and markets	Fish farmer, processor, trader or private-sector operator in local value chains	Daily operations, production costs, supply bottlenecks and getting fish to market	What would help smallholders get fair prices while keeping fish affordable for local families?

5. Session Programme (90 Minutes)

The programme is built around participation. Live polling, written question cards and roving microphones will make sure that farmers, students and practitioners in the room are heard alongside the panel.

Time	Segment	What happens	Audience input
0–10 min	Opening	The Chair welcomes participants, introduces the theme, sets out the objectives and explains what the session hopes to achieve.	Opening poll (Slido or show of hands): "What is the biggest barrier to inclusive growth in your area?"
10–40 min	Panel remarks	Each panellist speaks for about five minutes on their guiding question, with short follow-up questions from the moderator.	Question cards handed out for written questions; rapporteur notes key points from each speaker.
40–65 min	Moderated discussion	The moderator leads discussion across the panel, drawing on audience cards on finance, youth, gender and policy.	Cards sorted by theme; draft recommendations shown on screen as they emerge.
65–80 min	Open floor	Participants make short contributions (one to two minutes) sharing practical solutions and local experience.	Roving microphones; second poll to rank draft recommendations; collaboration sign-up sheet and QR form circulated.
80–90 min	Summary and close	The Chair reads back the main recommendations, names who will lead follow-up, and invites people to stay in touch.	Rapporteur confirms final list; poll results saved for the 48-hour summary.

6. Questions for Discussion

These questions will guide both the panel and the open discussion. They are deliberately practical, focusing on solutions, access to resources and what different groups can commit to.

a) How can higher national production be turned into better household incomes, fair wages and decent jobs for local workers?

b) What practical arrangements, business models and policies will help more women and young people enter, succeed and lead in aquaculture?

c) How can banks, microfinance providers and development partners improve smallholder access to credit, affordable feed, good-quality seed and modern technology?

d) How do we make sure that local production improves household nutrition and keeps fish affordable for poorer rural and urban communities?

e) What specific commitments should government, industry and research institutions make to remove these barriers over the next 24 months?

f) How can community-based aquaculture build climate resilience and good environmental practice without raising costs for smallholders?

7. Logistics and Reporting

Briefing the speakers

At least two weeks before the conference, each panellist will receive a one-page brief setting out their seat, guiding question and timing. A 30-minute online call with the Chair and moderator will then be held to agree the flow of discussion and the interactive arrangements. Slides are optional; anyone who uses them is asked to keep to three slides with concrete field examples.

Venue and equipment

- **Sound:** at least two wireless microphones, one of them a roving microphone for the audience.
- **Projection:** a projector and screen for live poll results and the occasional panellist slide.
- **Cards and polling:** index cards and pens on every seat, and a working Slido or QR polling link.
- **Sign-up:** paper sign-up sheets and a QR form for people who want to join the working networks.

The rapporteur

A rapporteur will be present throughout to record the main points, summarise the audience cards, capture poll results and keep track of follow-up commitments. The Chair will also compile the oral and poster abstracts accepted under the Aquaculture in Society track so that their findings feed into the panel discussion.

8. Link to the Sustainable Development Goals

Because the session focuses on the social and economic side of aquaculture, it contributes directly to the UN 2030 Agenda, and in particular to the following seven goals.

Goal	How the session contributes
SDG 1: No Poverty	Better incomes and more secure livelihoods for smallholder and rural households.
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	Wider access to affordable, nutritious fish to tackle malnutrition and food insecurity.
SDG 5: Gender Equality	Greater leadership, economic opportunity, resource access and fair pay for women across the value chain.
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Youth enterprise, safe working conditions and new jobs in agribusiness.
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	Removing barriers that keep small-scale producers and vulnerable groups out of markets.
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Environmentally sound farming, fewer post-harvest losses and responsible trade.
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	Working partnerships between research, policy, industry and local communities.

9. Closing Remarks

By putting people, livelihoods and communities at the centre of aquaculture growth, the Aquaculture in Society session offers something distinctive at AFRAQ26. It moves the conversation beyond production figures towards practical policy, real opportunities for women and young people, and partnerships that will last beyond the conference, in Africa and further afield.

We warmly invite researchers, practitioners and partners to submit abstracts and to join us in Tanzania.

Session Chair: Dr. Foluke Areola

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