

GENDER INEQUALITIES IN ACCESS TO AND BENEFITS DERIVED
FROM NATURAL FISHERIES IN THE BAROTSE FLOODPLAIN,
WESTERN PROVINCE, ZAMBIA

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People living in and around the Barotse Floodplain are some of the poorest in Zambia. They are poor due to a number of political, economic, social, institutional, and climate-related factors that impact their abilities to engage in activities to secure food and cash. Women are especially constrained given strong gender norms and power relations that prohibit them from accessing and benefiting from the natural fisheries, among other ecosystem services. As such, women typically rely on other, less remunerative means to secure their livelihoods that simply sustain their impoverished conditions. This paper employs a social relations framework (Kabeer 1994) to guide the analysis of qualitative data collected in late 2013 in a number of communities situated in and along the floodplain and investigate the role social institutions play in producing and reinforcing gender inequalities. The communities are part of the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural System (AAS) that aims to help design and implement gender transformative approaches with partners, and in particular, the Department of Fisheries. Gender transformative approaches fundamentally differ from other gender integration approaches in that they aim to address the underlying causes of inequalities between women and men. This paper suggests ways to begin operationalizing such approaches to not only enhance women's access to and benefits derived from the natural fisheries, but also to improve gender relations and ensure better and more sustainable development outcomes.