

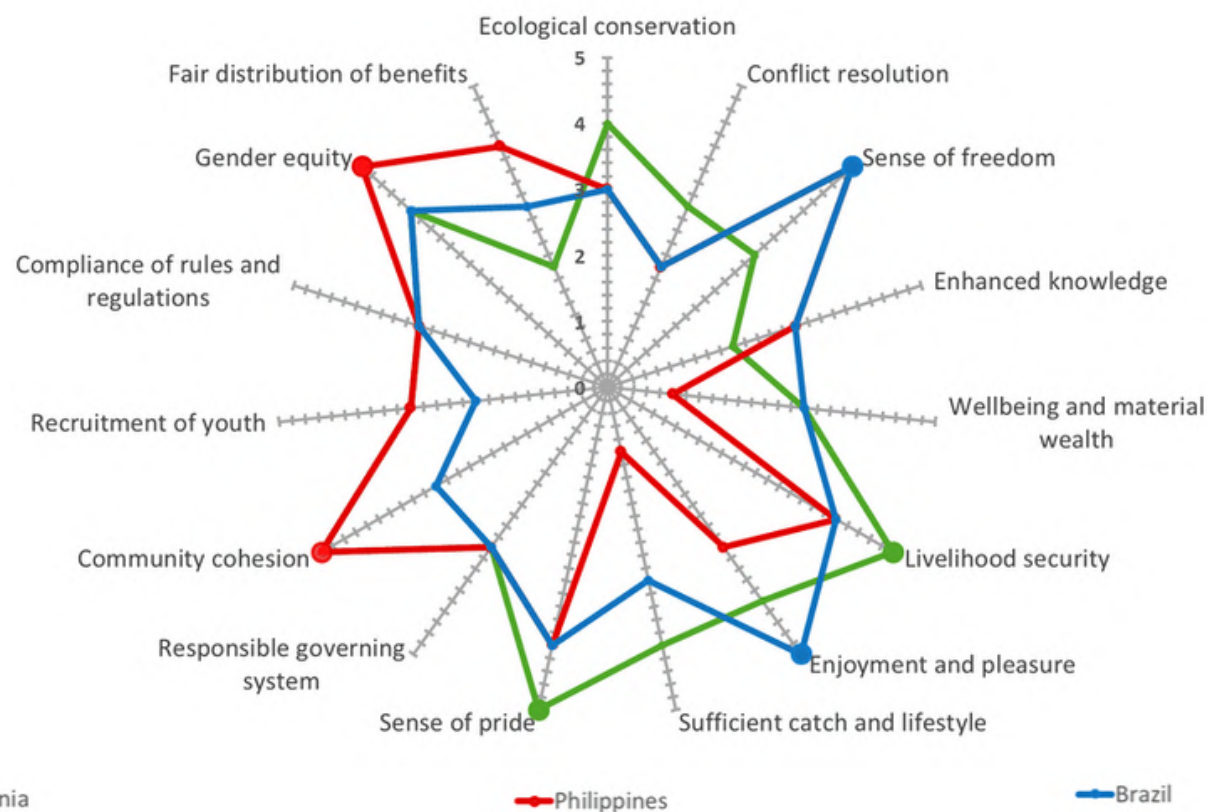
Too Big To Ignore, Too Important To Fail



Why focus on Small-Scale Fisheries?

Small-scale fisheries play an important role in communities across the globe. Although small in scale, they are big in number and employ 90% of the people working in fisheries along the value chain, contribute significantly to food security, and support livelihoods of millions of people. Widespread in distribution and diverse in their characters, small-scale fisheries are hard to define, and they can be referred to by many terms such as **commercial, subsistence, artisanal, coastal** or **inshore**. Rather than boiling small-scale fisheries down to a name, it is most useful to highlight a range of values, reflected partly by how they are referred to but also by what they do and who they are. What they all have in common is the connection to place, community, and their environment, as well as a strong sense of identity, expressed clearly with statements like 'fishing is a way of life'.

The Meaning of Small



Small-Scale Fisheries Values are Global Values

The research done by TBTI, including the publication of more than 300 case studies from 80 countries around the world, show that small-scale fisheries are 'socially and culturally important.' But what exactly does this mean? Small-scale fisheries are immensely important for their economic contributions to fishing and coastal communities, contributions that can be expressed as values representing *wellbeing and material wealth and livelihood security*. TBTI research also show that small-scale fisheries values are global values, in line with ecological goal (*ecological conservation*) and sustainable development agenda (*responsible governing system*), which increasingly take into account the societal factors that can contribute to building a more sustainable world (*fair distribution of benefits, gender equality, community cohesion*).

Whether through the terms used to describe them, or the values that are anchored within them, small-scale fisheries have shown their importance for supporting livelihoods globally. By highlighting the diverse values of small-scale fisheries, we can help guide the ocean development agenda in becoming equitable, inclusive, and most importantly, sustainable.

**Dagaa fishery
in Lake Victoria, Tanzania**

Contributor: J. Luomba

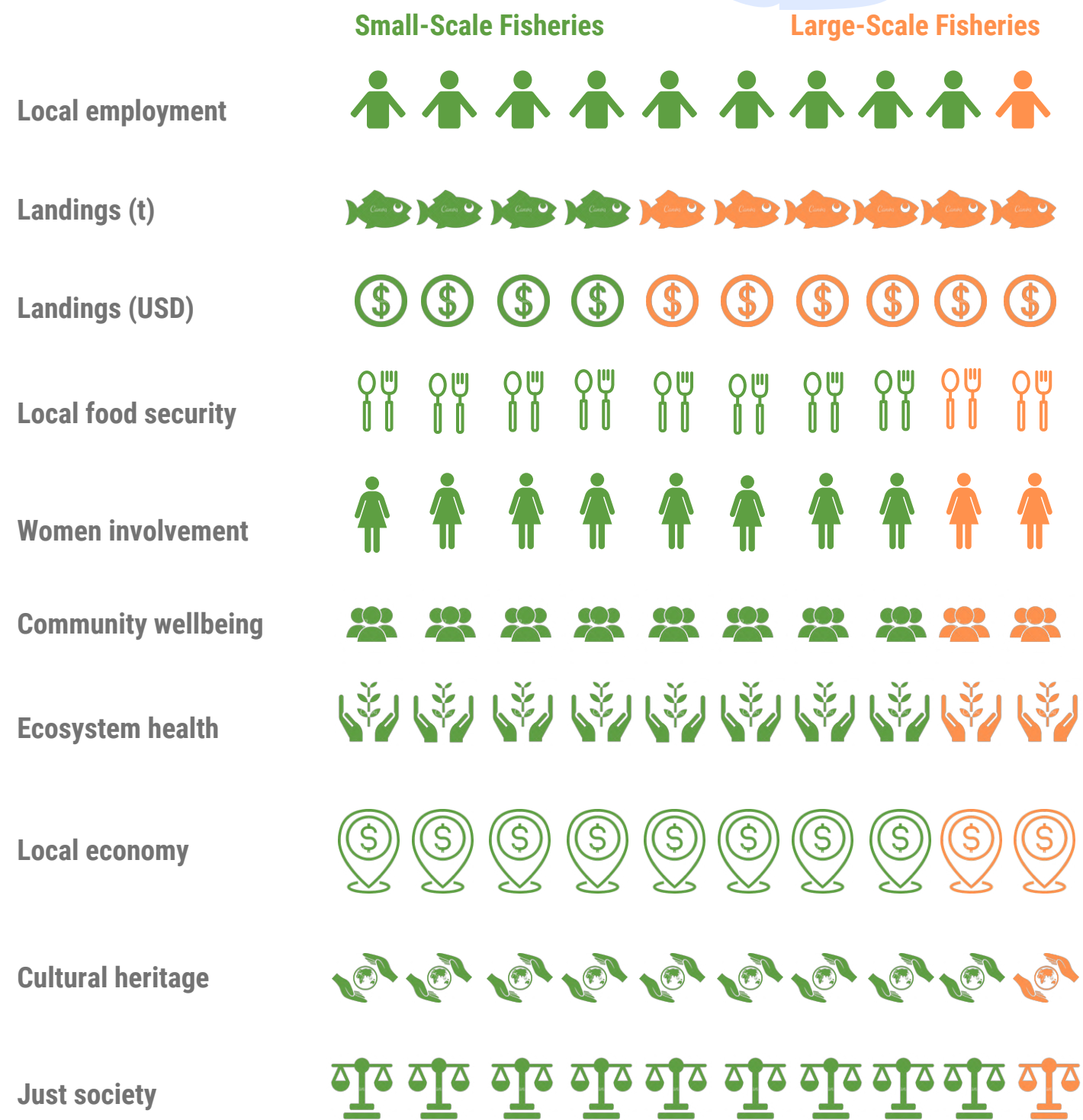
**Artisanal fishing
in Batan Estuary, Philippines**

Contributors: A.J. Ferrer, L. Araneta, G. Defiesta, C. Parcon, H.J. Mediodia, J. Hopanda & S. Ishikawa

**Caiçara multi-gear SSF
in Ubatuba, Brazil**

Contributors: M. Leite & D. Johnson

Small in Scale, Big in Contribution



What are the contributions of small-scale fisheries?

The contributions from small-scale fisheries range from provision of viable livelihoods, community wellbeing to bolstering food security. At the global scale, small-scale fisheries employ over one hundred million people, catch over one hundred million tons of fish, and contribute to local economies, in some cases through subsistence fishing but can also be through engaging with high-value fish chains. What adds to the importance of small-scale fisheries is that their benefits are not only shown in dollars and cents. Small-scale fisheries play a major role in food and nutrition security, with the majority of fish caught destined for direct human consumption (FAO SSF Guidelines 2017).

Small-scale fisheries, if appropriately supported and adequately invested, can aid in achieving real sustainable development. Small-scale fisheries can deliver what the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim at, by contributing to no poverty (SDG1), zero hunger (SDG2), good health and wellbeing (SDG3), gender equality (SDG5), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), reduced inequalities (SDG10), life below water (SDG14), and peace and justice (SDG16). Ultimately, the vision for “healthy, viable and strong small-scale fisheries” needs to be integrated in the new narrative for the global fisheries sustainability.

The majority of small-scale fisheries are governed through centralized mechanisms that limit local capacity for building strong organizations and inhibit their ability to promote environmental stewardship. Putting the power back in the hands of small-scale fishing people, which can happen through **participatory** governance and devolution of power, will enable them not only to continue to food security and poverty alleviation on their own terms, and in ways that align with their own values.

Blue Justice for Small-Scale Fisheries



Small-scale fisheries in Sisal, Yucatan, Mexico

Contributor: A. Saldaña

Type of justice: *Social, economic, market, infrastructure/wellbeing, regulatory, procedural*

In Sisal, the local governing system creates conditions in which fishers are dealing with a **poor bargaining power and a lack of access to markets** or market monopolization on a daily basis. At the post-harvest level, there is a **lack of support & recognition of women**, since capacity building incentives focus mostly on fishers at sea. Furthermore, a **weak capacity of the governing system and the poor quality of interactions among actors and institutions** can also be found, which further exacerbate marginalization of fishing people.



Kinme Boss Facing Double Trouble, Shizuoka, Japan

Contributors: Y. Li & K. Suzuki

Type of justice: *Regulatory*

The Kinme fishermen, known as "The Boss of Kinme", have always taken pride in their efforts on maintaining the resource through adopting a line of formal and informal rules among fishermen. However, there has been increasing numbers of pleasure-boat owners fishing the Kinme in recent years. Though the amount of the catch by pleasure-boat owners hasn't been fully grasped, in Kinme fishermen's sense it's quite huge. Hence, a strong **sense of unfairness and injustice** has been growing among fishermen, especially since the Kinme fish stock has declined and is still not in a stable condition.



Conflicts of Small-scale Fisheries in the Saint Martin's Island, Bangladesh

Contributors: Md. R. Miah & Md. M. Islam

Type of justice: *Distributive, social, economic, market, infrastructure/wellbeing, regulatory, procedural*

Small-scale fishing is the dominant livelihood strategy for the people of Saint Martin's Island. However, small-scale fishers are often undervalued by other actors and sectors such as large-scale fishers, middleman/Aratdar, local administration, cruise ship, and tourism. Hence, conflicts arise between them and small-scale fishers, **a situation which is further exacerbated** by reduced fish population, weak governance structure, illegal fishing practices, maritime crime, political marginalization, unlawful entry by foreign fishing vessels, and tourism.



Since small-scale fisheries face several types of justice, be they procedural, distributive, environmental, or social, it is essential that their rights and their aspirations be properly considered in the formation and execution of the Blue Economy/Blue Growth initiatives.



Highlighted in this brief is the immense importance of small-scale fisheries. Therefore, **it is essential that small-scale fisheries are respectfully considered in the discussion about sustainable development of the oceans**, currently taking shape through the Blue Growth/Blue Economy agenda, which seeks to utilize oceans, lakes, rivers, and sea resources to improve the lives of people globally. The "Blue Justice for Small-Scale Fisheries" initiative calls for a holistic vision for the ocean and a transdisciplinary process that considers the injustices faced by small-scale fisheries in the past, and the disadvantaged position that some of them are currently in, to ensure a just transition to the future.

As the Our Common Future (Brundtland Commission 1987) report stated over 30 years ago, "the relative neglect of economic and social justice within and amongst nations" hampers the ability to promote a common interest in sustainable development. Blue Justice for Small-Scale Fisheries therefore calls for the rights, values and contributions of small-scale fisheries to ensure that ocean development is not only sustainable, but also inclusive, equitable, and just.

TBTI has been promoting the notion of 'Blue Justice' through various platforms, most prominently through the registration of Blue Justice for Small-Scale Fisheries as a voluntary commitment to the UN Ocean Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG14. The commitment calls for social justice of small-scale fisheries to be recognized, not only as a basic right, but also an important condition for the realization of the SDGs and the implementation of the SSF Guidelines. Join our Blue Justice platform and be part of the efforts to illustrate the role that sustainable small-scale fisheries can play in achieving SDG 14, and beyond!