

Too Big To Ignore Report

Number 04.1/2015



## Student Forum

Sunday, September 21st, 2014

2nd World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress, Mérida Mexico

toobigtoignore.net

RESEARCH

POLICY

MOBILIZATION

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## Summary

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The Student Forum was held during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress (2WSFC) in Merida, Mexico, 2014. The workshop was organized by students of the *Too Big To Ignore* (TBTI) project, a global research network aimed to elevate the profile of small-scale fisheries.

The forum was organized by students from six different universities located in Barbados, Canada, Mexico and the USA. The main objectives of the workshop were to provide students and recent graduates with the chance to discuss issues relevant to their research and career goals in small-scale fisheries. The forum was composed of two workshops and a career panel discussion, which allowed participants to connect to a larger network and explore career opportunities in the field of small-scale fisheries. A number of approximately 40 young scientists, dedicated to small-scale fisheries research within the social sciences, economics and natural sciences, participated actively from a variety of countries. Discussions were lively and a comfortable atmosphere allowed for an exchange of existing knowledge and creation of new ideas. Outcomes from each group discussion were presented enthusiastically after each workshop section.

## Agenda

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Schedule Time	Topic & Activity
9:30 – 9:30	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Workshop 1:</b> Learning to effectively communicate in interdisciplinary research
10:30 – 11:00	BREAK
11:00 – 12:00	<b>Workshop 1</b> (continued) Questions and discussions
12:00 – 12:30	<b>Workshop 2:</b> “Better together” – student-focused groups and networks
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	<b>Workshop 2</b> (continued)
15:00 – 15:30	BREAK
15:30 – 16:30	<b>Workshop 3:</b> Career Panel
16:30 – 17:00	<b>Workshop reflection and closing</b>

## Workshop 1 – learning to effectively communicate in interdisciplinary research

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The purpose of this workshop was to help students and recent graduates think about strategies to overcome communication barriers when undertaking and discussing interdisciplinary research. We started with a brief presentation on approaches to effectively communicate research and then moved into practical exercises which allowed participants to explore multiple ways of talking and thinking about small-scale fisheries. The inspiration for the exercises was drawn from a community essay “Tools for Enhancing Interdisciplinary Communication”, written by Winowiecki et al. (2011).

We divided students into groups according to whether their background was in the natural or social sciences (eight groups in total). This was important as the main goal of the exercises was to get the participants aware of and question the underlying assumptions in their preferred ways of approaching and solving problems. Each of the eight groups was given a case study and two exercises to accomplish as a group. The case studies were brief descriptions of scenarios in small-scale fisheries (SSF) that would require creative thinking and interdisciplinary collaboration to solve: Food Security and SSF, Conservation and SSF, Tourism and Fisheries as Conflicting Commodities, and Management of Aboriginal Fisheries. For each case study, one group undertook a **mind-mapping** exercise (a free-form brainstorming of the factors and drivers that influence their scenario), and a **cross-impact analysis** in order to map how the different components identified in the mind-mapping influence one another (i.e., what are the drivers of the situation and the interactions between the different components). The second group was also responsible for completing two exercises: **imagining their ideal** solution to the case study conflict, and **backcasting** the steps that their group would take in order to achieve their ideal.

The groups were given 40 minutes to complete these exercises, and then each group presented the results of their discussions, including comments on the process. Surprisingly, the discussions revealed that students from diverse disciplines did not run into major difficulties communicating with each other, highlighting that interdisciplinary thinking in research among students who work with SSF is not uncommon. Another interesting observation was that almost all students preferred to apply some sort of framework to guide their brainstorming (for example, categorizing ideas according to whether they fit under a social, political, economic, or ecological function). In some cases, there was a debate within the groups about whether or not to apply a framework, but all groups were successful in coming up with very elaborate brainstorms and creative solutions that touched on a wide range of factors. All groups found that using problem-based case studies was a very good way to get people working collaboratively, and using the specific tools (i.e., mind-mapping/backcasting tools) provided an effective platform for interdisciplinary communication.

## Workshop 2 - “Better together” – student-focused groups and networks

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In this workshop, we focused on (1) sharing advice, resources, and details on activities and outputs from existing student-focused groups, (2) building and enhancing student-focused research groups, and (3) fostering links across student groups, as well as other research entities. Information of students who have created effective networks between students, researchers, staff, and faculty of multiple institutions were previously surveyed and their experiences and successes presented, which was followed by group discussions.

This part of the workshop started with presenting a summary of information that was provided by each student group. We had previously collected information from five different student groups through emails and surveys of the participants who had signed up for the student forum. It was very inspiring to see how these groups had formed, what their activities are and how they presented themselves to the world. Some of the main activities included the organization of workshops for method development, communication and sharing information on best practices. Furthermore, common challenges of the groups are: lack of funding, high turnover rate due to students graduating and keeping the momentum and excitement going. After the presentation, participants were divided into groups. Based on prepared question sheets each group was given some time to brainstorm and discuss how we could move forward, how the different student groups could be connected, what the main challenges would be and how they could be overcome. Each group then presented the outcomes of their discussions, which included forming a google group to stay connected, assisting to form new student groups, providing resources to SSF students globally and creating a platform where information and knowledge can be exchanged.

The next part of our discussion within this part of the workshop was finding out what information already existed for best practices guidance in the field of SSF, where it is available and what is missing to which we could contribute. For this exercise the already formed groups stayed at the same table and a prepared form with questions was handed out. Questions were target to find out more about:

- a. Designing a research project
- b. General social science methods
- c. Navigating local politics and culture
- d. Interacting with fishing communities
- e. Suggestions for collecting and sharing “best practices” tips and resources

Based on the very productive discussions held within each group, main outcomes included the creation of a living document that would be hosted online where students could both contribute to and draw from. This document would be a platform for sharing experiences and resources, e.g., experiences in fishing communities based on the cultural

and political context. Furthermore, it would be used to compile best practices for small-scale fisheries research.

## Workshop 3 – Career Panel

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This panel aimed to explore options and opportunities for careers in SSF. Four young career scientists were invited as featured speakers who represented different career stages and sectors of SSF research. Panelists presented their background and current position, followed by a moderated question and answer session. Panel speakers were:

**Christina Hicks**

Research Fellow, Center for Ocean Solutions, Stanford | [hicksc@stanford.edu](mailto:hicksc@stanford.edu)

**Nathan Bennett**

SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow, UBC | [nathan.bennett@ubc.ca](mailto:nathan.bennett@ubc.ca) / <http://nathanbennett.ca>

**Carlos Fuentesvilla**

Fisheries Officer, FAO | [carlos.fuentesvilla@fao.org](mailto:carlos.fuentesvilla@fao.org)

**Prateep Nayak**

Assistant Professor, University of Waterloo | [pnayak@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:pnayak@uwaterloo.ca)

Discussions based on the panel revealed how different a successful career can look like in SSF research. We were advised to keep applying for many different grants, papers and jobs even after getting rejected many times, as usually everybody gets rejected. We learned that there is some flexibility and mobility between academic and non-academic careers. Furthermore, the importance of practical experiences combined with rigorous academic skills was pointed out. For more detailed information, a video of the career panel will be published online soon.



## Acknowledgement

Too Big To Ignore

Christina Hicks, Nathan Bennett, Carlos Fuentesvilla and Prateep Nayak

SAFRN (Small-scale and Artisanal Fisheries Research Network)

## Student Groups

### **SAFRN (Small-scale and Artisanal Fisheries Research Network)**

Website | <http://artisanalfisheries.ucsd.edu/>

Blog | <https://safrnblog.wordpress.com/>

List Serve | <https://siomail.ucsd.edu/mailman/listinfo/artisanalfisheries>

Twitter | [twitter.com/SAFRNatCMBC](https://twitter.com/SAFRNatCMBC)

Facebook | [www.facebook.com/safrnaticmbc](https://www.facebook.com/safrnaticmbc)

Instagram | [instagram.com/safrn\\_images](https://www.instagram.com/safrn_images)

### **FINET (Fisheries Research Network)**

Website & Blog | <http://finetwork.wordpress.com/>

Facebook | [http://www.facebook.com/pages/FINET-Fisheries-Research-Network/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/FINET-Fisheries-Research-Network/)

### **SESS (Social Ecological Systems Scholars)**

Google group | [social-ecological-systems-scholars+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:social-ecological-systems-scholars+subscribe@googlegroups.com)

### **FIMAR (Fisheries at the Margins)**

Website & Blog | <https://fimarnetwork.wordpress.com/>

## General small-scale fisheries resources

### **Research Methods in Anthropology** (Bernard)

<http://www.antropocaos.com.ar/Russel-Research-Method-in-Anthropology.pdf>

### **SocMon Manual**

[www.socmon.org/pdf/GCRMN\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.socmon.org/pdf/GCRMN_Manual.pdf)

### **FAO Fishery Surveys**

[www.fao.org/docrep/004/y2790e/y2790e00.htm](http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/y2790e/y2790e00.htm)

### **SnAP Protocol**

[www.safrnblog.wordpress.com/snapshot-assessment-protocol-trial-version-2013/](http://www.safrnblog.wordpress.com/snapshot-assessment-protocol-trial-version-2013/)

### **Winowiecki et al. 2011.** Tools for Enhancing Interdisciplinary Communication.

*Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy.* 7(1), 74-80.

### **Igenbrode et al. 2007** Employing Philosophical Dialogue in Collaborative Science.

*Bioscience.* 57(1), 55-64.

see also: <http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/toolbox/workshops.htm>

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