



PROFILE

Charmaine Daniels: Coping with the challenges of a fishing life

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Based in Ocean View, South Africa, Charmaine Daniels was introduced to fishing in the late 1980s by her then boyfriend, who is now her husband. She started off as a recreational fisher, but by the year 2000, Charmaine became a full-time fisher with an interim permit for west-coast rock lobster and snoek. At the same time, she also became involved in activism for Small-scale fishing rights and through, the non-governmental organization, the

Masifundise Trust, she became involved in the 2006 Equality Court initiative for the establishment of a fishing rights policy.

From early on in her fishing career, Charmaine noticed the gender differentiation in the fishing industry. In 2005, both she and her husband appealed for fishing permits. Her application was rejected, and it was only

after she filed an appeal, that she received the permit. In the next round, in 2013, however, only she obtained the right and not her husband. For Charmaine, this was a very challenging period because it meant providing for the family and supporting her husband with his appeal process.

The fisheries are a male dominated arena in which fisherwomen face many challenges on account of physical vulnerabilities. Charmaine, despite being a fisher for 35 years, still struggles to be taken seriously by her male peers who continue to see her value only in terms of the social reproductive activities that she contributes to her family and community.

Currently Charmaine is battling several challenges. In 2022, she lost her line fishing rights after failing to catch the full 18 tonne quota that was allocated to her. Having invested so much in terms of time and gear and other resources into her career, Charmaine is angry and worried about her family and disappointed that Government policies are depriving fisher women of their dignity and ability to provide for their families as fishers. ❏