STRENGTHENING OF FISHERFOLK ORGANISATIONS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

National Diagnostic of the Functionality of Fisherfolk Organisations in Trinidad and Tobago
Fisherfolk organisations are important to the development of the fisheries sector in Trinidad and Tobago
Fisherfolk organisations provide socio-economic support to their members, their families and the wider community.

Fisherfolk organisations are dynamic groups based around the country and involve fisherfolk and other fisheries-related individuals with a common goal and vision.

Fisherfolk organisations can be stewards for the fishing industry and the resources they utilise, by building capacity of their members to adopt, and lobby for, sustainable fishing practices and management.
The National Diagnostic Study

A project developed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

Aimed at understanding the capacity needs of local and national-level fisherfolk organisations in the small-scale fisheries sector

Supported the Project on the Sustainable Management of Bycatch in Latin America and Caribbean Bottom Trawl Fisheries (REBYC-II LAC)

Project took place in Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname with the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) leading the project locally (May 2019 – February 2020)

Supported implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Reduction

Project partners: Duke University, the University of the West Indies Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (UWI-CERMES), Fisheries Division of Trinidad and Tobago, Future Fishers and Trinidad and Tobago United Fisherfolk (TTUF)
CANARI worked closely with national and regional partners to understand the self-governance capacity of small-scale fisheries organisations around Trinidad.
Why was the study done?

To collect and create data that can be used by fisherfolk organisations, the Fisheries Division, other state agencies and civil society organisations

To build trust with and among fisherfolk, the Fisheries Division and other stakeholders and to form/strengthen relationships

To strengthen the capacity of in-country partners to do similar studies and ongoing work with fisherfolk organisations
Learning in the field with fisherfolk

- Fisherfolk want to be heard and respected
- Fisherfolk need assistance in managing the issues they face such as:
  - maintenance, repair and development of landing sites
  - irregular meetings, low attendance and uninterested members
  - limited participation of fisherfolk in decision-making
  - decreased collaboration and contribution to and from the national fisherfolk organisation
- Among fisherfolk organisations, some have a bigger vision and clearer direction for their organisation than others
- Even though some organisations have a strong vision, there are issues with implementation
- Many organisations have good business ideas but cannot execute them or have achieved little implementation
- Most fisherfolk organisations have a dependency on government support
- Fisherfolk are willing to cooperate and share ideas for a unified vision for their organisations and the industry at large
Building and maintaining relationships among local partners and stakeholders is important to the success of the fishing industry.
What are important features of a successful fisherfolk organisation?

As part of the study, features of successful fisherfolk organisations were investigated. Three key features were highlighted.
A successful fisherfolk organisation has strong governance systems and leadership.
A successful fisherfolk organisation has a strong organisational structure.

- Regards fishing as a business
- Helps members to develop their business, access markets and generate employment
- Creates and accesses opportunities for members to learn and develop
- Ensures members follow fishery laws and regulations and set up access to social benefits
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A successful fisherfolk organisation continuously builds capacity of its members and has a strong network.

- Inclusion of other community members who are willing and bring knowledge and expertise.
- Leads in the protection and conservation of their facilities and fishery resources.
- Demonstrates leadership in their communities.
- Strong collective voice to lobby for and support the needs of fisherfolk and the industry.
Strong leadership and support by membership are key to the success of fisherfolk organisations!
There are immediate steps you can take to start strengthening your organisation or fishing community:

 ✓ Get registered-as an organisation and as a fisher
 ✓ Attend your organisation’s general assembly meetings
 ✓ Work with your Fisheries Officer to develop or update your organisation’s constitution or by-laws
 ✓ Build relationships with local organisations like Future Fishers and CANARI who can provide expertise and share knowledge
 ✓ If you are not currently a member of your local fisherfolk organisation, JOIN!
For more information:

- Contact the Fisheries Division of Trinidad and Tobago to find out more about the local fisherfolk organisations in your area at (868) 623-6028/8525.

- Visit CANARI’s website to learn more about the project and other fisheries-related work that we do: www.canari.org.