CLEAN FISHERY COMMUNITY: 3-DOOR KOKER FISHERMEN COOP MARINE AND COASTAL LITTER MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

PROJECT REPORT

Developing Organisational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries
Overview of the Developing Organisational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries (StewardFish) Project

Overview of Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF) - Microgrants Scheme for Caribbean Fisherfolk Organisations

About the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation

Issue addressed by grant

Project goal and objectives

Project activities and outputs

Challenges

Lessons learned and best practices
From September 2019 to July 2021, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) collaborated with the Caribbean ICT Research Programme (CIRP), Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism Secretariat (CRFM), Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies of the University of the West (UWI-CERMES) and the fisheries authorities of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to execute the Developing Organisational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries (StewardFish) project.

The main objective of the StewardFish project was to empower fisherfolk throughout fisheries value-chains to engage in resource management, decision-making processes and sustainable livelihoods with strengthened institutional support at all levels.

StewardFish was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Sub-Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
Under the StewardFish project, CANARI implemented a US$24,000 microgrant facility to provide support to Caribbean fisherfolk organisations to implement practical ecosystem stewardship pilot projects that would enhance their capacity to be ecosystem stewards and contribute to fisheries sustainability.

This microgrant facility formed part of CANARI’s Caribbean Sea Innovation Fund (CarSIF). CarSIF supports innovation and best practices by civil society and community enterprises to address priority needs and actions in the Caribbean on marine and coastal resources governance and management.

In March 2021, the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation (GNFO) was awarded a microgrant US$4,000 from this microgrant facility for their project, “Clean Fishery Community: 3-door Koker Fishermen Cooperative Marine and Coastal Litter Management Initiative”. The project was implemented over a 2-month period from March 3 to April 30, 2021.
The Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation (GNFO) was formed on August 20, 2008 as a Trade Development Organisation under the Friendly Societies Act of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. The GNFO represents all small-scale fishers in Guyana and is a forum to address the concerns of small-scale fishers, and ensure that their voices are heard locally, nationally and regionally.

The GNFO’s roles, according to the organisation’s constitution, are:

- To provide education, training and institutional strengthening awareness for its members
- To advocate at local, national and regional levels the interest of members
- To be involved in the conservation and management of fisheries resources
- To mobilise resources for members
- To provide facilities for processing and marketing of products of members
- To foster affiliation to Caribbean Fisherfolk Organisations
Marine litter affects human populations and marine and coastal ecosystems. It destroys spawning grounds and habitats where many species of fish live. This is most often the case in mangrove areas, upon which many species of fish use for food, shelter, and spawning. Damage to fishing equipment is also quite common. For example, the propeller of fishing vessels may become damaged by marine debris. Fishing lines and nets can also be damaged because of the presence of marine debris.

3-Door Fishermen Cooperative in D’Edward Village located at Rosignol West Coast Berbice, Guyana has been plagued for many years with marine and coastal debris. Litter along the beach and river channel to the sea usually includes plastic waste from industry and food and beverage businesses as well as medical household and fisheries related waste among others.

This situation results in a combination of negative economic, environmental, health, and aesthetic impacts. It causes damage to engines, and reduces water quality and the health of fisheries resources. It also creates a foul odour and breeding ground for mosquitoes leading to health impacts on fisherfolk and neighbouring communities from mosquito-borne diseases.
PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

• Clean and litter free fishing landing site through a sustained education and awareness programme supported by fisherfolk and community volunteerism, and public private partnership.

Objectives

• To encourage volunteerism among fishermen and community members and participation in clean-up of fish landing site beach.
• To ensure a clean fish landing site and community through a sustained education and awareness programme and public and private partnership.
1. AWARENESS RAISED AMONG FISHERFOLK AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF THE IMPACTS OF MARINE AND COASTAL LITTER

At the start of the project a public awareness session was held in collaboration with the GNFO, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Fisheries Department to educate participants about the negative impacts of marine and coastal litter and the role the fishing complexes and communities can play in addressing this situation. In total, 40 persons (including 25 fisherfolk) participated in the information session.

Signs and other communication materials were developed to raise awareness and educate stakeholders.

Key outputs

- Public awareness session conducted to educate participants about the negative impacts of marine and coastal litter
- Brochures and booklets printed and distributed to fisherfolk and members of the community on the impacts of marine and coastal littering.
- 1 banner and 10 “No Littering” and “No Dumping” signs strategically placed around the fishing complex.
Clean-up activities were organised and conducted for the D’Edward Village fish landing site on April 28 and 29, 2021. Persons involved in the clean-up included fisherfolk and representatives of the Fisheries Department, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, Mahaica Mahaicony Abary - Agricultural Development Authority and Neighbourhood Democratic Council. Notices were placed at the landing site prior to the event to encourage fisherfolk to participate in the clean-up activities.

During the two-day clean up exercise all plastic debris and garbage were removed from the beach front as well as in and around the compound of the fishing complex. Approximately 150 large garbage bags were filled.

**Key outputs:**

- 28 persons (including 8 fisherfolk) participated in the clean-up of the D’Edward Village fish landing site.
3. PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE FISH LANDING SITE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE EPA, FISHERIES DEPARTMENT, AND PRIVATE SECTOR

In the implementation of the project partnerships were formed between the GNFO and several key government agencies such as the Fisheries Department, EPA and Ministry of Agriculture.

Representatives of the EPA expressed their willingness to continue working with the Management Committee of the D’Edward Village landing site to develop an action plan for the proper disposal of garbage in the community and reduction of marine litter. The EPA assured the community of regular visits and awareness sessions.

Key outputs:

- Partnerships established and strengthened between GNFO, D’Edward Village fish landing site’s Management Committee, EPA, Fisheries Department, Ministry of Agriculture and other key agencies

Chief Fisheries Officer, Mr. Denzil Roberts, speaks during awareness raising session at D’Edward Village landing site (Photo credit: villagevoice.com)
CHALLENGES

- Inadequate cooperation and participation in project activities by project beneficiaries.
- COVID-19 was the main contributing factor for the delay in project implementation. The Guyana National COVID-19 Task Force had implemented strict measures in the fight against the deadly virus with some of the measures including the non-gathering of persons and limited mobilisation of persons. Due to this a two-week extension was requested and granted.
LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

- The awareness sessions were well delivered by experts in this field and participants were very interactive and eager to learn about the impact of marine litter and how they can contribute to help manage the problem.

- It is important to think through all of the project’s needs during the design phase. During project implementation the project team realised that in order to effectively carry out the project certain basic tools and materials (e.g., cutlass, wheelbarrow, etc.), which were not originally budgeted, were needed. The team had to reallocate funds from other budget lines to accommodate the purchase of these items.

- With the intense workload, short period of time and less than anticipated participation of project beneficiaries, a decision was made to employ seven labourers to assist with the completion of the clean-up activities.

- The full participation and commitment from state agencies like the Fisheries Department, EPA and the Ministry of Agriculture contributed to the success of the project.
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https://canari.org/stewardfish-project