ENGAGING MEMBERS AND FISHERS IN THE QUEST TO ENGENDER A MORE PRO-ACTIVE APPROACH TO GARBAGE DISPOSAL AND MANAGEMENT

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

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OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY FOR ECOSYSTEM STEWARDSHIP AND LIVELIHOODS IN CARIBBEAN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (STEWARDFISH) PROJECT

- 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 April 2021, the Saint Lucia Fisherfolk Cooperative Society Limited (SLFCSL) was awarded a microgrant of US$4,000 from this microgrant facility for their project, “Engaging members and fishers in the quest to engender a more pro-active approach to garbage disposal and management”. The project was implemented over a 3-month period from April to July 2021.
The Saint Lucia Fisherfolk Cooperative Society Ltd. (SLFCSL) is an umbrella organisation that serves as the representative body of all primary fisherfolk cooperatives in Saint Lucia. The Society plays an important role in the fishing industry in all communities on island.

With a membership of nine primary fisherfolk cooperatives, representing over 1,400 fisherfolk, the SLFCSL continues to grow due to the benefits many fisherfolk can derive from being part of the Society.

Throughout its existence, the SLFCSL has maintained close relationships and works collaboratively with the Department of Fisheries and Ministry of Agriculture, to gain support for fisherfolk in the various cooperatives. The SLFCSL also pursues small grant funding with regional entities to implement projects and programmes to empower fisherfolk island wide. The Society also facilitates education and training programmes to equip its members with knowledge of fishing gear, methods of basic navigation and safety at sea.
There is extensive littering on the landing sites in Saint Lucia. This litter pollutes fishing habitats creating an unclean environment for fish to live in.

While it is generally believed that the persons who use the landing sites should be aware of how to properly dispose of garbage, they are sometimes negligent. The problem of littering occurs in some cases due to the following reasons:

• Not all of the landing sites have appropriate garbage receptacles
• For landing sites that do have garbage receptacles, these receptacles are not properly contained to prevent interference from stray animals
• Some users of the landing site are not aware that improper garbage disposal poses negative implications for sea life or do not care as they do not see a direct correlation as to how it affects them personally
PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

• To improve the ecosystem by reducing the negative impact of improper garbage disposal on the fish landing sites in Saint Lucia

Objectives

• To encourage fisherfolk to be better stewards by engaging them in a one-day clean-up of their respective landing site
• To raise awareness among fisherfolk and the general public of the effects of littering on the environment both on land and marine life
• To create avenues for the proper disposal of garbage at the fish landing sites
Clean-up activities were conducted at three landing sites under the project. These were the landing sites in Soufriere, Castries and Choiseul. In total, approximately 55 fisherfolk participated in the clean-up activities. Participants in the clean-up exercise included fishers, vendors, community members, and volunteers.

This cleaner environment will reduce the incidence of rodents and pests at the landing sites which can affect fishing livelihoods. The outflow of plastics into the ocean is also reduced thereby improving water quality for healthier fisheries.

**Key outputs:**
- 3 fish landing sites cleaned up
- 55 fisherfolk engaged in stewardship activities to clean-up their respective landing sites
Two fisherfolk leaders, Ms. Kaygianna Toussaint Charlery, Operations Manager of the Goodwill Fishermen’s Co-operative and Administrative Assistant of the SLFCSL and Mr. Christopher Lamontagne, Board Member of the Castries Fishermen’s Co-operative Society Limited, participated in a national radio programme on MBC Television’s programme ‘Zafe Nous with Yardie and Jaheim’ to raise awareness about the clean-up campaign and its objective. Additionally, an electronic flyer promoting the clean-up was designed and shared directly with the fisherfolk cooperatives to disseminate via their WhatsApp networks and Facebook pages.

Signs (3 feet x 4 feet) encouraging persons to dump of their waste appropriately were also designed for 7 fish landing sites. These will be installed by the respective cooperatives.

Key outputs:

- Fisherfolk leaders raised awareness about the clean-up campaign and its objective on a national television programme and social media
- 7 signs encouraging persons to dump of their waste appropriately designed and to be installed a 7 fish landing sites.
Fifteen new garbage bins were procured and placed at strategic points at the landing sites in Soufriere (3), Castries (2), Choiseul (2), Vieux- Fort (3), Dennery (2), East Coast Fishers (1), Gros Islet (1) and Laborie (1) to encourage all users of the landing site to dispose of their waste in a sanitary manner. The message to “Keep Clean, Keep Safe” has raised the level of awareness in each fishing community of the need to adhere to the basics of good sanitation and garbage disposal not only at the landing sites but throughout the community.

**Key outputs:**

- 15 new garbage bins procured and installed at 8 fish landing sites.
The implementation of the project was very dependent on the cooperation of and coordination among the primary fisherfolk cooperatives. In some cases, it was difficult to get a schedule that worked for most of the cooperatives to finalise activities for the clean-up.

Given the impacts of COVID-19 on the economy, it was difficult to get the usual support of some of our local businesses to donate or discount goods and services and thus get more yield. In some instances, it meant settling for less or having to reallocate funds from other budget lines.
LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

- As the project was being implemented at different locations, but coordinated by the SLFCSL, there was need to depend on the Managers and personnel of the primary fisherfolk cooperatives to provide feedback/input on the design of the project.

- During the design phase of the project, it was challenging to balance resource allocation to the various project beneficiaries since the various landing sites had differing issues in terms of scope and need. However, the common thread that binds the cooperative societies (i.e. a co-operative among co-operatives) allowed us to successfully design and implement in a very equitable way.
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Visit the project webpage:
https://canari.org/stewardfish-project