



Figure 8: Fisher in Guyana. (Credit: Fisheries Department, Guyana)

Participatory evaluations would include direct feedback and assessment of outcomes by target beneficiaries (i.e. fisherfolk) to understand the lessons and experiences from their perspective. Longer-term evaluation in the years after the PPI has ended should also be considered.

Based on the lessons learned from the PPIs analysed, the following actions are recommended to improve the success of sustainable fisheries livelihood PPIs in the Caribbean.

- Involve fisherfolk in the design, implementation and evaluation of sustainable fisheries livelihood PPIs.

- Prioritise capacity building of fisherfolk organisations alongside technical capacity building and the development of partnerships.
- Consider the preferences, existing skillsets and knowledge of the target fisherfolk when designing alternative livelihood PPIs.
- Design sustainable livelihood PPIs with long-term sustainability in mind.
- Improve evaluation of sustainable livelihood PPIs by documenting and communicating lessons learned.

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional technical non-profit organisation which has been working to promote and facilitate stakeholder participation in the stewardship of natural resources in the Caribbean for over 30 years.

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CANARI POLICY BRIEF No.26

Designing for success: lessons learned from sustainable fisheries livelihoods initiatives in the Caribbean

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Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Introduction

Applying good practices is important when designing and implementing programmes, projects and initiatives (PPIs) targeted at small-scale fisherfolk, whose livelihoods and food security will be directly affected. A key part of identifying good practices is looking at what has already been done and understanding to what degree it was successful and why. In the Caribbean, inadequate evaluation of PPIs and sharing of experiences and lessons has meant that good practices are often not identified and fed into the design and implementation of future initiatives. Sharing past experiences and lessons would help the design of future PPIs to be more effective, and support scaling out of past PPIs to other parts of the region and scaling up to influence policy.

To learn from past experiences, CANARI undertook a rapid analysis of 18 previous regional and national level PPIs that focused on sustainable fisheries livelihoods in the Caribbean. For the purpose of this analysis, sustainable fisheries livelihoods PPIs aim to maintain or improve fishing-based livelihoods in fisheries-dependent communities and can focus on areas such as climate change adaptation, protected area management and alternative livelihoods. To identify lessons learned and good practices from the PPIs, project documents were reviewed and fisherfolk, government representatives and members of civil society organisations who either led, participated in or benefitted from these PPIs, were interviewed.

This policy brief highlights five key lessons learned and recommendations coming out of the 18 PPIs examined (see Table 1).

Key messages

- **More needs to be done to evaluate the results and lessons of sustainable fisheries livelihoods initiatives in the Caribbean.**
- **Innovative approaches, good practices and lessons, including successes and failures, from sustainable fisheries livelihoods initiatives need to be documented and shared with all relevant stakeholders.**
- **The lessons and good practices from past sustainable fisheries livelihoods initiatives need to be incorporated into future projects and programmes to increase the likelihood of success.**

Lessons learned from national and regional sustainable livelihoods PPIs targeting Caribbean fisherfolk

1. Sustainable fisheries livelihood PPIs are more likely to succeed when fisherfolk effectively participate in every stage of the process

Many of the PPIs benefited from using a participatory approach and those that did not weren't as successful. In Jamaica, for example, continued consultation and involvement of stakeholders contributed to the success and sustainability of many projects. In the case of the on-going Jamaica Fish Sanctuaries Programme, a community-based approach was utilised from inception. Through the Programme, fisherfolk were able to request the establishment of fish sanctuaries in their communities. This approach allowed fisherfolk



Table 1: List of PPIs reviewed and key lessons learned

PPI	Lessons Learned				
	Sustainable fisheries livelihoods PPIs are more likely to succeed when fisherfolk effectively participate in every stage of the process	Stronger fisherfolk organisations, with effective partnerships, are able to provide more meaningful contributions to delivery of PPIs and sustainability of results	Developing technical skills of fisherfolk enhances their understanding, buy-in and ability to contribute to implementation and sustainability	Alternative livelihood projects should be designed based on their suitability for fisherfolk	Long-term financial and technical support mechanisms are needed to achieve sustainability in delivering sustainable fisheries livelihoods
Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (CC4Fish)		✓	✓		
Belize Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Initiative				✓	
Enhancing the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector and Coastal Areas to Protect Livelihoods and Improve Food Security			✓		
Powering Innovations in Civil Society and Enterprises for Sustainability in the Caribbean (PISCES) Project		✓	✓		
Strengthening Caribbean Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance		✓	✓		
Food for the Poor Fisheries Programme (Jamaica)			✓		
Improving Jamaica Agriculture Project			✓		
Coral Restoration for Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihood Opportunities (CORRELLO)			✓	✓	
Monitoring, Compliance and Public Education Programme (Jamaica)			✓		
Providing an Alternative Livelihood for Fishermen in Sarteneja, Belize				✓	
Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT): Seaweed Farming Project				✓	

5. Long-term financial and technical support mechanisms are needed to achieve sustainability in delivering sustainable fisheries livelihoods

One of the key points highlighted in the interviews with government and civil society stakeholders was the need for sustainability to be considered. For example, it was noted that when PPIs ended and funds were no longer available, they tended to fall apart and become unsuccessful. Therefore PPIs, particularly those seeking to support long-term livelihood development, should be designed with long-term sustainability in mind. This might include fostering the building of strategic partnerships between fisherfolk organisations and other high capacity stakeholders with an interest in supporting the long-term development of fisherfolk’s livelihoods and developing or facilitating access to sustainable financing initiatives. Building the capacity of fisherfolk organisations to access grants and other types of funding beyond the life of the PPI would also contribute to long-term financial sustainability.

Under the Caribbean Fish Sanctuary Partnership Initiative (C-Fish), a sustainable funding mechanism was established for the Sandy Island Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area (SIOBMPA) in Carriacou, Grenada. This was achieved through the implementation of user fees, which is one of the most common means of sustainable financing for marine protected areas

(MPAs). Yacht mooring systems were restored at the SIOBMPA and five new moorings were installed. To access the new and updated facilities, yacht and catamaran visitors are required to pay a mooring fee based on the size of their vessel; the funds are used to cover the costs of the moorings and the MPA management. Additionally, the wardens were trained in the use and maintenance of the moorings to ensure the success and effective management of the SIOBMPA. Carriacou is primarily a fishing community and effective management of the MPAs is especially important in supporting sustainable fisheries livelihoods.

How to improve the success of sustainable livelihood and socio-economic PPIs targeting Caribbean fisherfolk

Understanding what does and does not work when designing sustainable livelihood PPIs for fisherfolk in the Caribbean can be challenging since thorough (and participatory) evaluations of PPIs are usually not conducted. Documenting and sharing the challenges and lessons learned would allow for improved design and application of similar initiatives in other fishing communities to deliver more successful outcomes. Evaluators should not shy away from documenting and sharing information on successes as well as failures.



Figure 7: Fisherfolk leaders, mentors and project partners at the StewardFish Caribbean Fisherfolk Mentors Training workshop in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, October 2019. (Credit: CANARI)



Figure 5: Fostering the building of strategic partnerships between fisherfolk organisations and other high capacity stakeholders with an interest in supporting the long-term development of fisherfolk’s livelihoods is important. (Credit: CANARI)

it resulted in positive changes to the community, including an increase in tourism in the area from visitors interested in purchasing dried seaweed to take back to their home countries. The Placencia Producers Cooperative Society also began exporting seaweed to Los Angeles in the United States of America. Overall,



Figure 6: Fisher St. Vincent and the Grenadines. (Credit: Winsbert Harry)

this project resulted in a 6% decline in the number of fisherfolk relying on the endangered Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System. One of the key reasons for its success, according to a representative from the Belize Fisheries Department, was that the alternative livelihood activity selected still allowed fisherfolk to interact with the marine environment where they feel most comfortable and have related skills and knowledge. Seaweed farming has also been picked up by fisherfolk in other communities around the Caribbean. On the other hand, a pig farming initiative which was intended to be an alternative livelihood for artisanal fishers in Belize was not sustainable in the long run, as many fisherfolk who made the transition from fishing to pig rearing have since returned to fishing.

Alternative livelihood PPIs are sometimes implemented that are not suitable for persons who have spent most of their lives in fishing communities. A mismatch of skillsets and interests can lead to PPI failure, as fisherfolk feel unfulfilled and eventually lose interest in participating. To avoid this, the identification of alternative livelihood opportunities should take a bottom-up approach and should include input from fisherfolk to understand their interests, motivations and applicable transferrable skills and knowledge. It is also important to ensure that market opportunities for alternative livelihoods exist and that target beneficiaries have the right entrepreneurial attitudes and capacities to sustain new non-fishing livelihood ventures.

Table 1 (continued): **List of PPIs reviewed and key lessons learned**

PPI	Lessons Learned				
	Sustainable fisheries livelihoods PPIs are more likely to succeed when fisherfolk effectively participate in every stage of the process	Stronger fisherfolk organisations, with effective partnerships, are able to provide more meaningful contributions to delivery of PPIs and sustainability of results	Developing technical skills of fisherfolk enhances their understanding, buy-in and ability to contribute to implementation and sustainability	Alternative livelihood projects should be designed based on their suitability for fisherfolk	Long-term financial and technical support mechanisms are needed to achieve sustainability in delivering sustainable fisheries livelihoods
Oyster Culture Project (Jamaica)			✓	✓	
OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAL) Project	✓			✓	
Caribbean Fish Sanctuary Partnership Initiative (C-Fish)	✓	✓		✓	✓
Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network (ECMMAN) Project	✓			✓	✓
Jamaica Fish Sanctuaries Programme	✓				
Enhancing Stakeholder Participation in Sub-regional Management of Flyingfish Fisheries	✓				
Jamaica Fisherfolk Group Formation	✓				

to participate from the beginning of the process. Since there is buy-in from the community, enforcement and monitoring of the fish sanctuaries are consistent and effective.

This kind of community engagement is important at all stages of the PPI as it improves the likelihood of successful implementation. The target beneficiaries should be involved in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable fisheries livelihood PPIs. This ensures that local knowledge is considered, which can lead to more effective decision-making. Additionally, the results of the PPI are more likely to be carried forward as a sense of ownership and stewardship is fostered through the process.



Figure 1: Fisherfolk need to be given the opportunity to participate at every stage of project development and implementation. (Credit: CANARI)

2. Stronger fisherfolk organisations, with effective partnerships, are able to provide more meaningful contributions to delivery of PPIs and sustainability of results

The PPIs reviewed revealed that to achieve long-term changes, PPIs should include activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of fisherfolk organisations and community enterprises. This may include, for example, strengthening governance, financial management, communication systems, or partnerships between fisherfolk and other stakeholder organisations to enable fisherfolk organisations to better participate in decision-making processes.

As the target beneficiaries of livelihood development initiatives, fisherfolk organisations and community enterprises often do not have the capacity to meaningfully participate in or sustain the benefits of these initiatives. Building strong organisations is therefore key to ensure that they can play a significant role. Although this is widely recognised, many PPIs frame capacity building efforts as one-off technical training events that target individuals and do not address the need to have strong organisations that can support long-term livelihood development for fisherfolk. PPIs should therefore make deliberate efforts to strengthen the capacity of fisherfolk organisations, based on identified capacity needs, using a combination of methods (e.g. training, coaching, mentoring, peer exchanges).

One project that focused on organisational strengthening was the *Strengthening Caribbean Fisherfolk to Participate in Governance* project. The project's objective was to improve the contribution of the small-scale fisheries sector in the Caribbean by building the capacity of regional and national fisherfolk organisation networks to participate in governance. Through a mentorship programme and small grant fund under the project, beneficiary fisherfolk organisations were able to legally register their organisations, strengthen their boards, improve their administrative and financial management systems and develop strategic plans.

Focusing on strengthening fisherfolk organisations delivers long-term impact and sustainability. The President of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Fisherfolk Cooperative Limited stated that fisherfolk who participated in this project were now in leadership roles within their respective cooperatives. Since the project's implementation, fisherfolk organisations are participating and more effectively representing fisherfolk in decision-making processes at the national and regional levels and they are being consulted more often on policy and other fisheries matters related to their livelihoods. The relationships built under the project also continue to deliver results. At the regional level, fisherfolk leaders who participated in this project recently collaborated on advocacy for the inclusion of a Protocol on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries



Figure 2: Building capacity is essential for the strengthening of fisherfolk organisations which allows them to contribute meaningfully to PPIs. (Credit: CANARI)



Figure 3: With proper technical training, fisherfolk have improved capacity to implement projects and sustain results. (Credit: Owen Day)

for Caribbean Community (CARICOM) fisherfolk into the CARICOM Common Fisheries Policy.

3. Developing technical skills of fisherfolk enhances their understanding, buy-in and ability to contribute to implementation and sustainability

A common approach in the PPIs reviewed was building capacity in fisherfolk communities by providing technical support and training to support their engagement. An example of this was in Saint Lucia, where the Coral

Restoration for Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihood Opportunities (CORRELLO) project was carried out in the Soufriere Marine Managed Area (SMMA). The goal of this project was to build fisherfolk's skills in the establishment and restoration of community-managed coral nurseries. Stakeholders from the target communities were trained so they would have the skillset required to properly tend to the nurseries. Trainees received certification in coral husbandry and standards for the training were developed so the project could be replicated. Having had the technical training, community members understood how coral restoration could contribute to the sustainability of their livelihoods and increase their income generating potential.

4. Alternative livelihood projects should be designed based on their suitability for fisherfolk

Many PPIs sought to promote development of alternative livelihoods to reduce fishing pressure on marine resources. This gives fish stocks an opportunity to recover from overfishing and can be a successful adaptive measure to mitigate the effects of climate change on fisheries livelihoods. Experiences in the PPIs revealed that it is, however, important to tailor these types of initiatives to the target stakeholder group.

For example, in Placencia, Belize a seaweed farming initiative targeted at fisherfolk was implemented in 2010. This initiative was considered a success as



Figure 4: Seaweed farming can be a suitable alternative livelihood activity, as it allows fishers to interact with the marine environment and utilise their skills and knowledge while also reducing the demand on fish stock. (Credit: Indian Castle Fisherfolk Association, St. Kitts and Nevis)