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**FISH4ACP**

Unlocking the potential  
of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture  
in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific

Building the Professional Capacities of the Seabob Working Group (SWG) and the  
Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation (GNFO)

# Report of the Communication and Advocacy Training Workshop for the GNFO

March 16-17, 2026

Regency Suites Hotel, Georgetown, Guyana

**Acknowledgement:** The “Building the Professional Capacities of the Seabob Working Group (SWG) and the Guyana National Fisherfolk Organization (GNFO)” is a sub-project of the “Sustainable Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture Value Chains in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (FISH4ACP)” project. FISH4ACP is an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations with funding from the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

**Disclaimer:** This workshop report is an output of the *Building the Professional Capacities of the SWG and GNFO* sub-project, implemented by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) under the FISH4ACP project. The views expressed in this report are those of CANARI and do not necessarily reflect the views of FAO, the EU, OACPS, or BMZ.

# Background

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has been engaged by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), under the FISH4ACP initiative, to implement the sub-project [Building the Professional Capacities of the Seabob Working Group \(SWG\)](#) and the [Guyana National Fisherfolk Organisation \(GNFO\)](#).

This initiative supports industrial fishers, artisanal fisherfolk organisations, government, and civil-society stakeholders in Guyana to strengthen governance, management capacity, and inclusive participation in fisheries decision-making. It addresses the need for more effective, representative, and sustainable management of the seabob value chain, especially as artisanal fisherfolk assume a greater role in shaping the sector's future.

The project provides targeted capacity-building for the SWG and GNFO and promotes collaborative, democratic structures within both bodies so they can jointly lead efforts to advance sustainable fisheries management and resilience in Guyana.



Photo credit: Guyana Fisheries Department

# Rationale for the workshop

Guyana's seabob (*Xiphopenaeus kroyeri*) fishery is a vital contributor to livelihoods and the national economy, supporting both artisanal and industrial operators. The SWG, established in 2012, brings together government, industry, and civil society stakeholders to support sustainable management of the fishery, which achieved Marine Stewardship Council certification in 2018. In 2023, the GNFO, representing artisanal fishers, formally joined the SWG, strengthening its role as a national multi-stakeholder platform.

To further strengthen the effectiveness of the SWG and GNFO, CANARI facilitated a roadmap development and capacity needs assessment workshop in Guyana with the Executive members of the GNFO from December 2–3, 2025. Through this process, participants identified **communication and advocacy** as key capacity development priorities to support more effective stakeholder engagement and participation in fisheries governance.

This workshop was therefore been designed in response to those identified needs, with the aim of strengthening participants' understanding and practical skills in communication and advocacy to support more effective engagement of the GNFO within the SWG and the broader governance of Guyana's small-scale fisheries sector.

# Workshop overview

**Workshop title:** Communication and Advocacy Capacity Building Workshop for the GNFO

**Workshop dates:** March 16 – 17, 2026

**Location:** Regency Suites Hotel, Georgetown Guyana.

**Participants:** The workshop brought together seven (7) Executive Members of the GNFO (*See participants list at Appendix 1*).

**Facilitators:**

- Melanie Andrews-Bacchus, CANARI
- Kathryn Jones-Douglas, CANARI
- Kerresha Khan, CANARI
- Neil Marks, Media Engagement Consultant



**Group photo of workshop participants and facilitators**

**Photo credit: CANARI**

# Workshop Objectives

The workshop aimed to:

- **Strengthen participants' understanding of communication and advocacy** and how these can be used to support the work of the GNFO.
- **Identify key issues, desired changes, and stakeholders relevant to the GNFO**, and explore how communication and advocacy can be used to advance fisherfolk interests within the SWG and the wider fisheries sector.
- **Build participants' skills in developing strong and effective key messages** to communicate fisherfolk perspectives and priorities.
- **Improve participants' capacity to engage with the media**, including understanding how to present messages clearly and confidently in media interactions.



# Methodology and Approach

The workshop used a participatory and interactive approach, combining:

- Facilitated discussions and plenary exchanges
- Scenario-based group exercises
- Practical message development exercises
- Media training and mock interviews

This approach enabled participants to apply concepts in real-time and reflect on their relevance to GNFO's operational context.



# Workshop Agenda

## Day 1

| Time               | Topic                                                                  |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30 - 10:00 a.m.  | Registration                                                           |
| 10:00 - 10:30 a.m. | Welcome, introductions, workshop overview                              |
| 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | Review and validation of GNFO roadmap and workplan and standing orders |
| 11:30-11:40 a.m.   | Break                                                                  |
| 11:40 - 12:30 p.m. | Understanding Communication and Advocacy                               |
| 12:30 - 1:20 p.m.  | Lunch (and group photo)                                                |
| 1:30 - 2:15 p.m.   | Contextualising Communication for GNFO                                 |
| 2:15 - 3:00 p.m.   | Identifying GNFO's Key Stakeholders                                    |
| 3:00 - 3:15 p.m.   | Break                                                                  |
| 3:15 - 4:15 p.m.   | Crafting Key Messages                                                  |
| 4:15 - 4:45 p.m.   | Refining GNFO Key Messages                                             |
| 4:45 - 5:00 p.m.   | Wrap up and review of Day 2                                            |

## Day 2

| Time               | Topic                                     |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.   | Registration                              |
| 9:00 - 9:15 a.m.   | Recap and Reflections from Day 1          |
| 9:15 - 9:45 a.m.   | Understanding Media Engagement            |
| 9:45 - 10:30 a.m.  | Preparing for Media Interviews            |
| 10:30 - 10:45 a.m. | Break                                     |
| 10:45 - 11:45 a.m. | Mock Media Interviews                     |
| 11:45 - 12:15 p.m. | Feedback and Reflection                   |
| 12:15 - 12:30 p.m. | Workshop evaluation, Next Steps and Close |
| 12:30 - 1:00 p.m.  | Lunch (End of Day 2)                      |

# Session: Understanding Communication & Advocacy

This session aimed to build a shared understanding of communication and advocacy among participants. It began with an interactive discussion where participants reflected on their own definitions of communication and advocacy, followed by a review of standard definitions. Key distinctions were clarified, particularly that **advocacy is a form of communication that seeks to influence decisions, policies, or behaviour.**

A short [video](#) was then used to illustrate advocacy in practice, prompting participants to identify key elements such as target audiences, calls to action, and the use of evidence to support messaging.

Participants engaged in a scenario-based group exercise to apply their understanding, analysing real-world examples of communication and advocacy and presenting their reflections in plenary.

The session concluded with a discussion on common advocacy methods used in Guyana, drawing on participants' experiences.



Photo credit: CANARI

# Difference between communication and advocacy

## Definitions: Communication versus Advocacy

Advocacy is a form of communication, but not all communication is advocacy.

| Communication                                                                                                          | Advocacy                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Focuses on <b>sharing information, increasing visibility, and raising awareness</b> about an issue.                    | Uses <b>information and evidence</b> to influence <b>policies, decisions, or actions</b> .             |
| May also aim to <b>encourage behaviour change</b> among individuals or communities.                                    | Aims to <b>persuade decision-makers or institutions to take action</b> .                               |
| Usually targets a <b>broad audience</b> such as communities, stakeholders, or the public.                              | Usually targets <b>specific decision-makers</b> such as government agencies or policymakers.           |
| <b>Example:</b> Raising awareness about how plastic pollution affects fisheries and encouraging proper waste disposal. | <b>Example:</b> Calling on government to improve waste management systems to reduce plastic pollution. |

# Ways to advocate



**Meetings with decision-makers** – engaging directly with authorities or policymakers



**Policy recommendations and written submissions** – providing proposals or evidence-based recommendations



**Media engagement** – using radio, TV, newspapers, or social media to highlight issues



**Public awareness campaigns** – building support among communities and stakeholders



**Partnerships and coalitions** – working with others to strengthen your voice



**Public actions (e.g., marches or protests)** – drawing attention to an issue and demonstrating public concern

**Advocacy** can take many forms. Some approaches focus on **collaboration and dialogue**, while others aim to publicly highlight issues and put pressure on decision-makers.

Through plenary discussion, participants identified common advocacy approaches used by GNFO, including:

- Direct engagement with government officials
- Written communication (letters and formal requests)
- Community outreach
- Media engagement, particularly around urgent issues (e.g. piracy, missing vessels)

# Session: How Should Communication & Advocacy be used in GNFO?

This session focused on applying communication and advocacy concepts to the work of the GNFO. Participants first reflected on GNFO's role in supporting sustainable fisheries management, with responses discussed and validated as a group.

Participants then identified key issues for which GNFO may need to communicate or advocate, including challenges affecting fisherfolk, fisheries governance, and GNFO's role within the sector. These were prioritised through a voting exercise, with four key issues selected.

In groups, participants analysed the priority issues using a structured matrix to identify the type of response required (communication and/or advocacy), desired changes, target audiences, and key messages. Group presentations and discussions helped to refine these ideas.

The session concluded by noting that the outputs would inform the development of key messages in the following session.

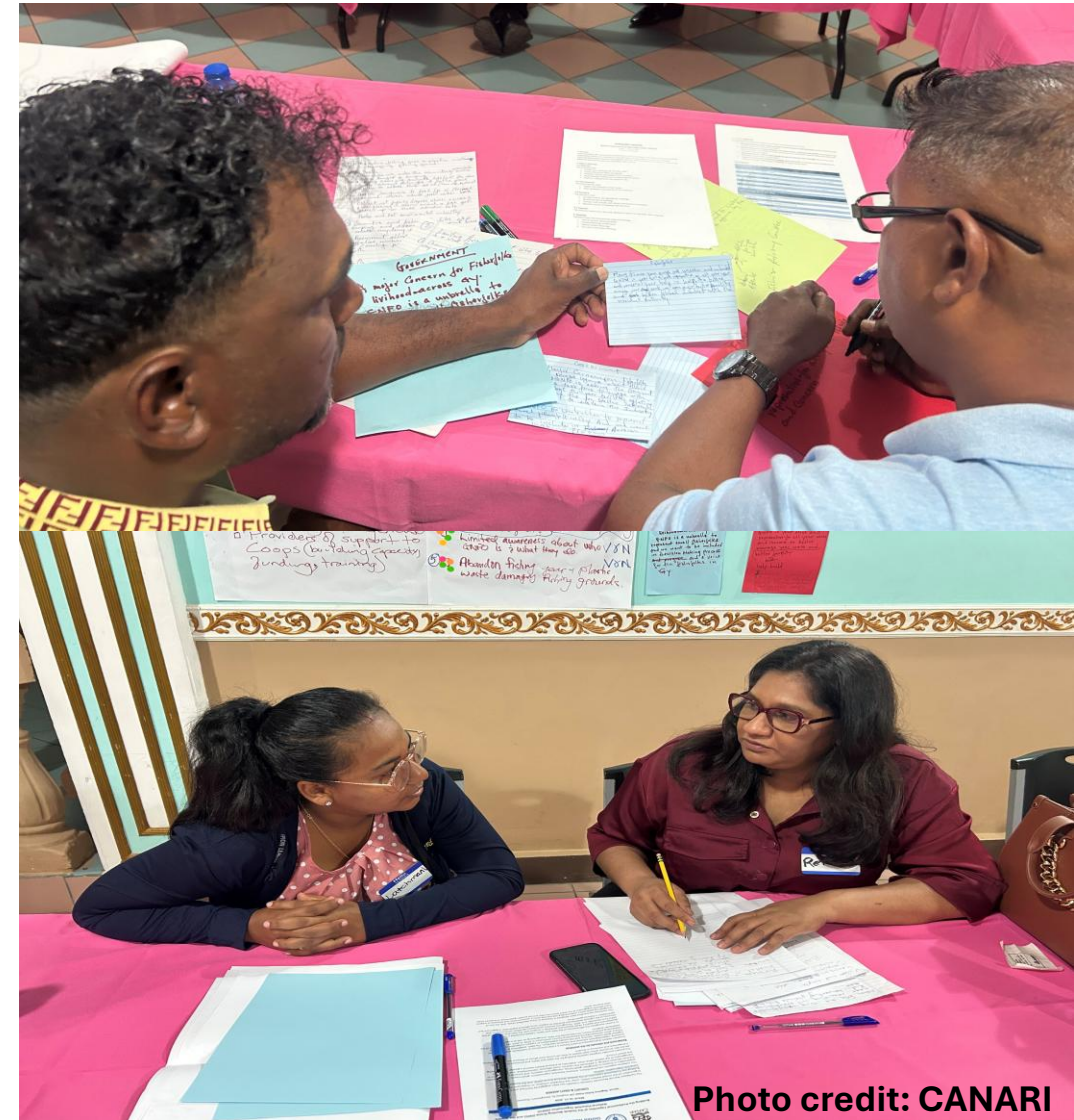
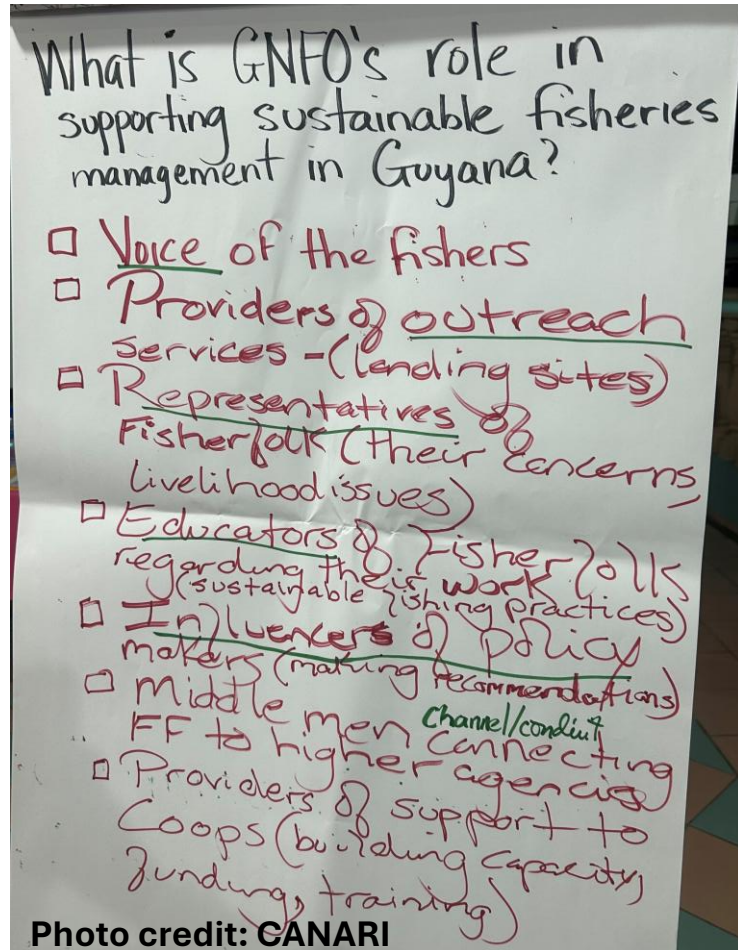


Photo credit: CANARI

# GNFO's Role in supporting sustainable fisheries management in Guyana

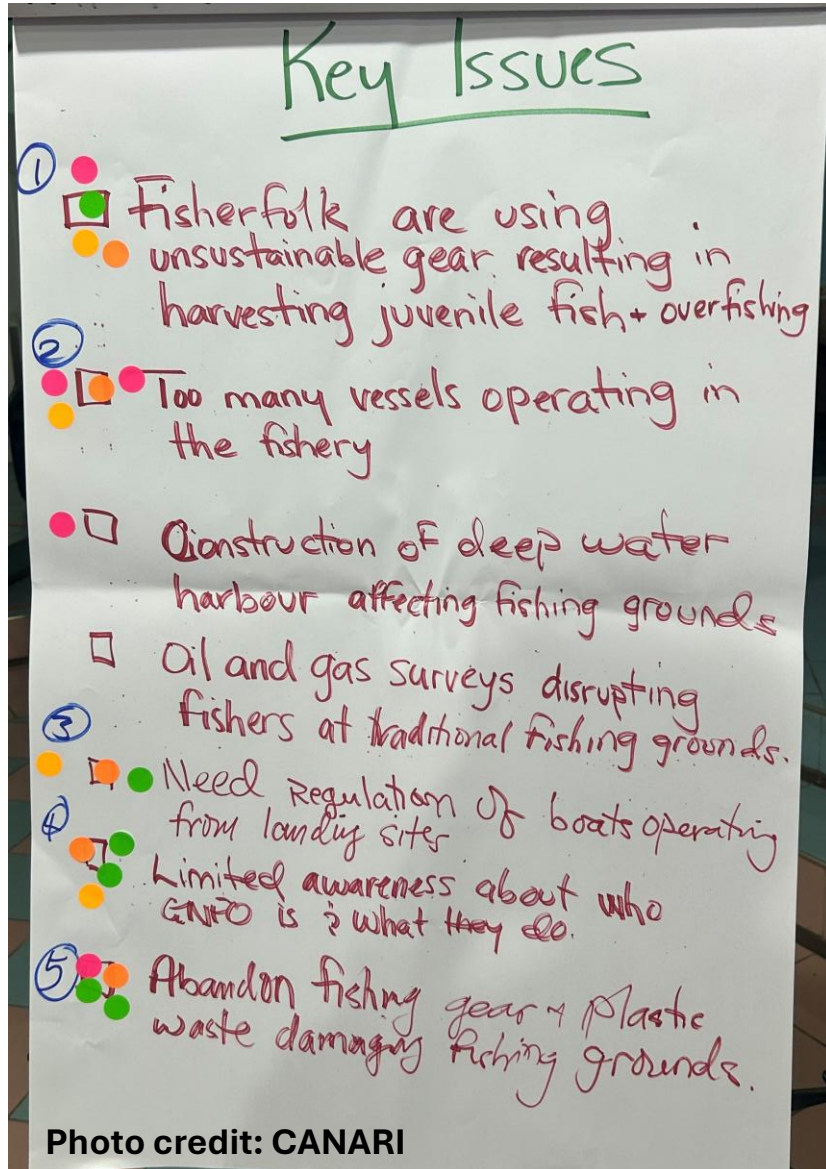


Participants reflected on GNFO's role in supporting sustainable fisheries management. Key roles identified included:

- Representing fisherfolk interests and concerns
- Conducting outreach across landing sites
- Educating fisherfolk on sustainable practices
- Influencing policy and decision-making
- Acting as a bridge connecting fisherfolk to other national/regional institutions

Overall, participants noted that GNFO's role is strongly centred on communication and advocacy.

# Identifying key issues for communication/advocacy



Participants identified key issues affecting the fisheries sector in Guyana that require stronger communication and advocacy (see flipchart image), including:

- Use of inappropriate fishing gear and harvesting of juvenile fish
- Overcrowding and lack of regulation at landing sites
- Increasing number of vessels contributing to overfishing
- Displacement of fisherfolk due to infrastructure development and oil and gas activities
- Limited awareness and visibility of GNFO
- Marine pollution and abandoned fishing gear

Through a voting process, participants then prioritised four key issues for the development of targeted messages:

1. Unsustainable fishing practices
2. Overcapacity and access to fishing areas
3. Limited awareness of GNFO
4. Marine pollution and waste

# Session: Crafting Key Messages

In this session, participants were introduced to the importance of clear, simple, and audience-focused key messages for effective communication and advocacy. Strong messages were highlighted as concise, focused on one idea, relevant to the target audience, and, where appropriate, action-oriented.

Participants worked in small groups to develop key messages based on the four priority issues identified in the previous session, tailoring them to different stakeholder groups (e.g. government agencies, fisherfolk, and the wider public). They considered whether messages were aimed at raising awareness or advocating for change, and what specific action or understanding was desired.

Groups then shared their messages in plenary, where a participatory review was undertaken to refine and provide feedback to strengthen them.



Photo credit: CANARI

# Elements of a strong key message

## What is a key message?

Key messages are short, clear statements that communicate the main point GNFO wants others to understand or act on.

A strong key message should be:

- ✓ Clear and simple
- ✓ Focused on one main idea
- ✓ Relevant to the audience
- ✓ Action-oriented (for advocacy messages)

What do you want people to remember from your talk or interaction?

## Strong versus Weak Key Messages

Weak key message: **(Vague and generic)**

*"Fishing is important to communities."*

Strong key message: **(Specific to fisherfolk and Guyana)**

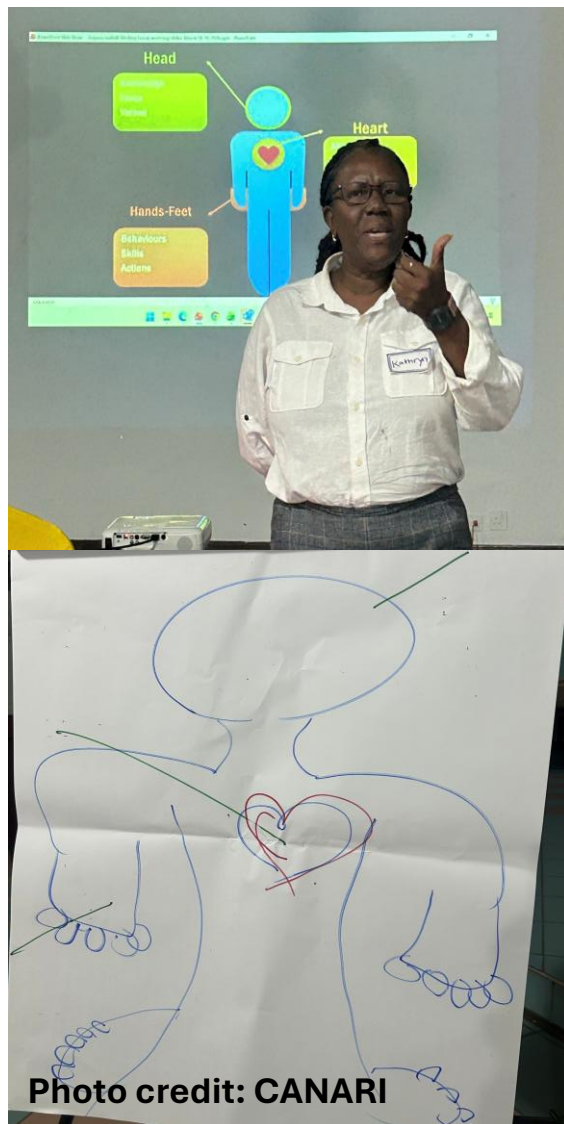
*"Supporting small-scale fisherfolk is essential for sustaining coastal livelihoods and food security in Guyana."*

Stronger (advocacy) key message: **(Adds specific solutions and urgency)**

*"Guyana must strengthen support for small-scale fisherfolk through improved infrastructure, fair policies, and inclusive fisheries management to protect coastal livelihoods and national food security."*



# Elements of a strong key message



The **Head-Heart-Hands framework** was also introduced to guide key message development:

**Head:** What people need to know (facts, evidence, and key information)

**Heart:** Why it matters (emotional connection and relevance to people's lives)

**Hands:** What to do (the action or change being encouraged)

Facilitators emphasised the importance of tailoring messages to different audiences and ensuring clarity, relevance, and impact.

# Key messages developed by participants

Fisherfolks.

① Many Times you guys are unseen and unheard. GNFO is your voice and representative for all your issues and concerns to better manage your works and better facilities.

help build

look for and make a stake about representative bodies and better outcome

GOVERNMENT

Major Concern for Fisherfolks livelihood across Guy. GNFO is a umbrella to represent small fisherfolks and we want to be included in Decision Making process and program and a voice for the fisherfolks in Guy.

Participants worked in groups to develop key messages tailored to different stakeholders. The exercise emphasised:

- Clearly identifying target audiences (e.g. fisherfolk, government, suppliers)
- Using evidence to support messages
- Defining the desired change and actions
- Using clear and purposeful language to emphasise importance and urgency

Facilitators noted that crafting strong key messages takes time and refinement to get them right, and that these messages will feed into the next session on media engagement.

The current wide spread use of the unsustainable fishing gears such as, the 7" nets has been causing significant decrease in the fish stock. The continuous use of this gear can cause the sector to collapse.

The GNFO is calling on the Ministry of Agriculture to put policies in place to stop the importation of this type of fishing gear.

The GNFO is asking boat owners to co-operate with the relevant authorities and management of the landing sites to prohibit the use of unsustainable fishing gears such as current use of 7" nets. These nets are targeting juveniles and the continuous use of this type of gear can cause the collapse of the snapper fishery because the fish is not being allowed to reach maturity to reproduce.

What is GNFO's role in supporting sustainable fisheries management in Guyana?

- Voice of the fishers
- Providers of outreach services - (landing sites)
- Representatives of Fisherfolk (their concerns livelihood issues)
- Educators & Fisherfolk regarding sustainable fishing practices
- Influencers of policy makers (making recommendations)
- Middle men channel/connecting FF to higher agencies
- Providers of support to Coops (building capacity, Zundung, training)

Key Issues

1. Fisherfolk are using unsustainable gear resulting in harvesting juvenile fish + overfishing the fishery
2. Too many vessels operating in the fishery
3. Construction of deep water harbour affecting fishing grounds
4. Oil and gas surveys disrupting fishers at traditional fishing grounds.
5. Need regulation of boats operating from landing sites
6. Limited awareness about who V&N GNFO is & what they do.
7. Abandon fishing gear & plastic waste damaging fishing grounds.

Key Messages

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Major Concern for Fisherfolks livelihood across Guy. GNFO is a umbrella to represent small fisherfolks and we want to be included in Decision Making process and program and a voice for the fisherfolks in Guy.

Photo credit: CANARI

# Session: Understanding Media Engagement

A dedicated session on media engagement was facilitated by Mr. Neil Marks, Journalist and Media Engagement Consultant, focusing on:

- The importance of media for visibility and advocacy
- Opportunities and risks of public communication
- Understanding how news is structured (Who, What, When, Where, Why)

Participants learned that effective media engagement requires messages that are:

- Clear and concise
- Relevant and engaging
- Supported by facts

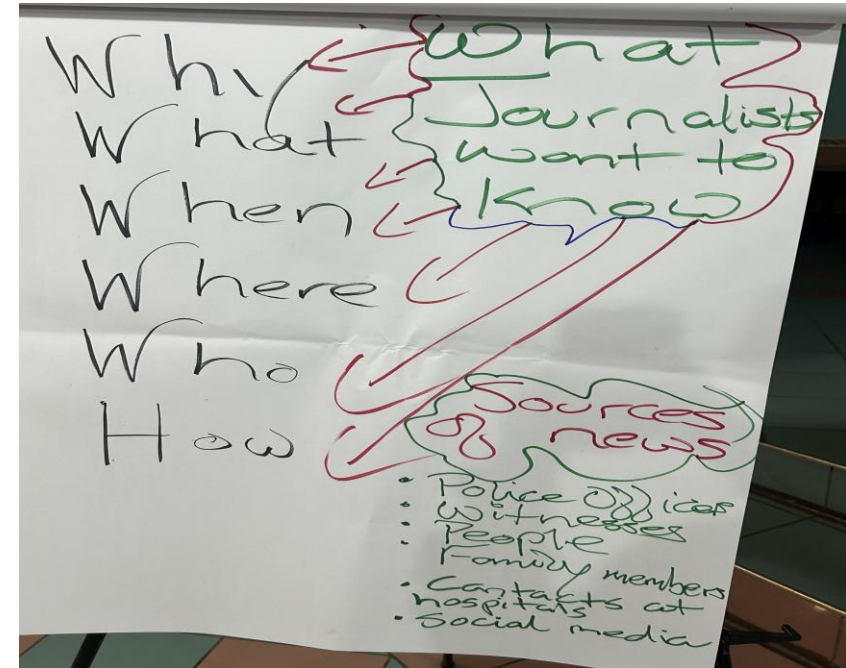


Photo credit: CANARI

# Session: Preparing for Media Interviews

Participants were given key questions to prepare for a mock interview exercise, which was conducted on camera. Through mock interviews, participants responded to questions such as:

- What is GNFO?
- Why does GNFO exist?
- What are its priorities?

Participants were guided to structure their responses around: **Problem → Impact → Solution** approach - clearly identifying the issue (*problem*), explaining why it matters and who it affects (*impact*), and outlining the actions or changes needed (*solution*).

The facilitator, supported by a camera operator/editor, also developed short news-style stories using footage from the mock interviews. These were reviewed with participants, reinforcing key communication techniques and the importance of clear, concise messaging.



Photo credit: CANARI

# Session: Feedback and Reflection

During the feedback and reflection session, participants engaged in discussion on how to respond to difficult or contentious questions.

They were introduced to techniques for managing challenging interview situations, including:

- Staying calm and composed
- Avoiding defensive or accusatory language
- Redirecting questions to key messages
- Maintaining focus on core issues

Overall, participants performed well during the on-camera sessions and, through reviewing their recordings, were able to see their strengths and recognise that they performed better than expected.



Photo credit: CANARI

# Participants' reflections and workshop evaluation

All participants (**100%**) felt that the workshop met its objectives and that overall, the workshop was helpful to them.

When asked how was the overall workshop facilitation:

**14%** responded **good**; **29%** responded **very good**; **57%** responded **excellent**

Participants were asked: What is one key takeaway from this workshop that you plan to apply?

Responses

Understanding the difference between communication and advocacy in doing the work of GNFO. The session on media engagement and training was also very useful for me.

Communicating- clear and precise.

I have learnt about the media and how to respond to questions.

How to interchange and be mindful when speaking to the media. Problem, Impact, Solution.

When being interviewed always remember to speak clearly and slowly and never become defensive.

That communication is very important and the way forward to do it.

I learned how to be better prepared to do and respond to media interviews.

# Main Conclusions and Next Steps

## Main Conclusions

The Communication and Advocacy Capacity Building Workshop for the GNFO was well received by participants and successfully met its objectives, with all participants indicating that the sessions were useful and relevant to their roles.

The workshop strengthened participants' understanding of communication and advocacy, enhanced their ability to develop clear and targeted key messages, and improved their confidence in engaging with the media. The participatory approach allowed participants to reflect on GNFO's role, identify priority issues, and begin articulating messages to support more effective representation of fisherfolk interests.

Importantly, the sessions also highlighted the need for more structured and consistent internal and external communication processes within GNFO. As such, the workshop has laid a strong foundation for the development of communication Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide information flow, stakeholder engagement, and advocacy efforts.

## Next Steps

Building on the outcomes of this workshop, the next phase will focus on developing and institutionalising communication SOPs for GNFO under a subsequent Letter of Agreement (LoA) between CANARI and FAO.

This will include facilitating the co-development of communication SOPs for the GNFO to strengthen internal coordination, stakeholder engagement and advocacy.

# Appendix 1: Participants list

| No. | Representative Name  | Occupation                                                    | Telephone<br><i>(withheld for privacy)</i> | Email<br><i>(withheld for privacy)</i> | Day 1 | Day 2 |
|-----|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1   | Deonarine Singh      | GNFO member; Fisher/Boat Owner                                | -                                          | -                                      | -     | ✓     |
| 2   | Latchmanie Singh     | GNFO member; Boat Owner/Vendor                                | -                                          | -                                      | -     | ✓     |
| 3   | Noresh Jairam        | GNFO member; Chairman 3 Door Fishermen Cooperative            | -                                          | -                                      | ✓     | ✓     |
| 4   | Parmeshwar Jainarine | GNFO Chairman/President                                       | -                                          | -                                      | ✓     | ✓     |
| 5   | Renita Joseph        | GNFO Secretary; Processor                                     | -                                          | -                                      | ✓     | ✓     |
| 6   | Vishnu Persad        | GNFO member; Secretary 3 Door Fishermen Cooperative           | -                                          | -                                      | ✓     | ✓     |
| 7   | Neil Marks           | Journalist, Media Engagement Consultant                       | -                                          | -                                      | ✓     | ✓     |
| 8   | Hemawatie Mahabir    | Guest member of GNFO (she assists the GNFO with social media) | -                                          | -                                      | -     | ✓     |