

STREAM



Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management

STREAM Journal

Learning and communicating about the livelihoods of fishers and farmers

Published by the STREAM Initiative, Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA), Suraswadi Building, Department of Fisheries Compound, Kasetsart University Campus, Ladyao, Jatujak, Bangkok, Thailand.

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Example citation for a *STREAM Journal* article:

Santos, R 2002 Learning from Each Other about Conflict. *STREAM Journal* 1(1), 1-2.

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Note

Welcome to the fourth volume and year of the *STREAM Journal*! This number of the *SJ* presents a selection of articles which all, in some way, illustrate typical groups of marginalized people:

- in the Philippines, young people just starting their working lives and fisherfolk committed to women’s representation,
- in India, tribal and “low caste” communities gaining access to a water body, and their determination also to involve women,
- in Bangladesh, coastal dwellers who are often blamed for environmental degradation, and
- in Indonesia and the Philippines, ornamental fish collectors compelled to use destructive methods and poor people who perform hard labor in market chains of international trade.

Each of these six articles ends by suggesting innovative ways forward and potentially positive outcomes for people to improve their livelihoods. These range from entrepreneurship as an option for youth, a fisherfolk alliance to reach out to other levels of society, participatory management of ponds and coasts, awareness-raising and dialogue, trust and respect, and even changes in international trade policies and practices.

In some way, all of the authors of *SJ4*(1) are writing about opportunities for people’s voices to be heard. Are we listening?

Happy reading!

Graham Haylor, STREAM Director
William Savage, *STREAM Journal* Editor

Young People Taking Bolder Steps

Josephine P Savaris

Young People in Inopacan

The youth in Inopacan (a fifth-class municipality¹ in Western Leyte, Philippines) have been given less attention compared to farmers, fishers and women. A recent survey showed that many young people, especially girls, are migrating to work as house-helpers. Up to 48% of the youth population (15-21 years old) was not attending school in the villages of Esperanza, Conalum, Tahud, Guadalupe, Jubasan, Macagoco, Linao and Can-angay. Rampant drug addiction and gambling were observed. Some people marry young and continue living with their parents due to economic difficulties. Others who venture out on their own face economic problems as they have limited livelihood options. The natural path for youth is to engage in farming and fishing activities as their start-up livelihood. Engaging in supplementary livelihoods is a practical way to ease out of economic entrapment and other social problems.

A Project

In April 2004 the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA) – together with *Katilingban sa Mag-uuma, Mananagat, Kababayenhan ug Kabatan-onan sa Lungsod sa Inopacan (KASAMMAKA)*² – embarked on a project called “Harnessing Development Entrepreneurship Among the Rural Youth”. The project seeks to engage young people in Inopacan in the development of their municipality by enhancing their individual and collective capacity to implement sustainable rural enterprises that will help stimulate rural production. The project is being piloted in eight of the 20 *barangays*³ of Inopacan where member organizations of KASAMMAKA are based. This is a three-year project supported by the Asian Community Trust, a Japan-based NGO. The second year of implementation started in April 2005.

Preparing Young People for Entrepreneurship

Taking an inventory of youth (14-29 years old) in the eight *barangays* was the first step. A core group composed of five youth members per village was formed. They assisted a community organizer in mobilizing youth to participate in various activities such as meetings and focus group discussions. From among the 40 core group members, 16 were identified as Youth Community Development Facilitators (YCDF). The YCDF were trained in basic community organizing and in doing rapid field appraisal (RFA). The conduct of the RFA began immediately after the training. The data generated became the basis for the *barangay* youth plans that were crafted in the later part of the year.



A youth leader discussing the data generated and the plans with the village LGU (Local Government Unit)

Several other capability-building activities were conducted, including an exposure visit to Cebu City, an orientation on relevant provisions of the Local Government Code with emphasis on

¹ A local government unit with an average annual revenue of less than Pesos 500,000 (US\$ 9,090)

² PhilDHRRA is an NGO and KASAMMAKA is a federation of people's organizations (POs).

³ Smallest government unit in the Philippines, equivalent to a village

barangay governance, leadership training and an orientation on entrepreneurship. The training provided the youth with knowledge on the importance of youth participation in governance, projects and programs, LGU (Local Government Unit) fiscal administration, qualities and values of a good leader and qualities of good entrepreneurs, among others. Team-building was also done during the leadership training. Eight village-level youth organizations were formed in the later part of 2004. A municipal-level federation is being worked out at present. It will eventually become a member of KASAMMAKA.



Simulation exercise on how to operate a business

Two workshops were conducted to prepare the young people to become entrepreneurs. The first was conducted to assess their entrepreneurial qualities and personal economic capacities. A Personal Entrepreneurial Competency (PEC) rating tool was used where ten qualities were evaluated. These include opportunity seeking, persistence, commitment to work, demand for quality and efficiency, risk taking, goal setting, information seeking, systematic planning and monitoring, persuasion and networking, and self confidence. The results revealed that the youth possessed the desired qualities to take on entrepreneurship. Economic capacities were likewise evaluated using the Personal Balance Sheet (PBS). The

PBS examined the type and size of housing, family size, sources of income, and assets and liabilities of the families of the youth. The PBS revealed that in terms of economic capacities the youth are in the "near better off" status, hence are also capable to undertake small enterprises. A total of 127 youth were the target beneficiaries for the initial enterprises.

The second workshop focused on assessing the physical and human resources of the villages where the young people are based. The RFA and secondary data generated were analyzed. A list of enterprises was identified from these data and were further prioritized into ten. This was based on the criteria of availability of market, raw materials, technology and skills; government priority; strategic fit; ease of implementation; risk of exposure; profitability; and cost and benefit. The prioritized enterprises by category were food processing, making local wines and beverages, handicraft, furniture making and small-scale trading. Local materials will be utilized in all the enterprises identified.

Youth Economic Development Plan

A comprehensive village-level Youth Economic Development Plan (YEDP) was formulated that contained: 1) brief profile and maps of the village, 2) present situation of the community with regards to products and commodities, establishments and human resources, 3) needs and problems, 4) economic options, and 5) immediate plans. The outputs of the workshops on PEC, PBS, data analysis and prioritization of enterprises were also highlighted in the YEDP. The plan will be presented to the village and municipal levels of government in Inopacan to solicit commitment and generate financial support to start up the enterprises.

The area of entrepreneurship development has provided the youth with hope to ease out of the economic difficulties they are presently facing. The help and assistance that the LGU and other groups can provide should make them realize their potential and enable them to become productive members of the Inopacan community.

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Providing a Venue for Voices to Be Heard

Elizabeth M Gonzales and Josephine Savaris

A Symposium

NGO efforts to organize and empower fishers in the Philippines have been going on since the 1960s and 70s. However, these efforts are scattered all over the islands and are not sustained. Fishers' own efforts to influence policies, participate and be represented in fisheries development are not well coordinated. The major constraint has been money needed to bring together fisherfolk leaders from different areas to a common venue where they could share experiences, synchronize efforts and plan collectively.

In response to this need, the German Development Service (DED⁴), together with other German partners that have programs in the Philippines, raised funds and collaborated with St Catherine Family Helper Project to host and organize the first Visayas Fisherfolk Symposium in 2000 in Dumaguete City. From then until the recent Fifth Symposium in September 2004, a three- or four-day symposium has been held every September or October. The third, fourth and fifth symposia were organized and hosted by the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA). STREAM Philippines was invited to participate in the last two symposia and had conversations with stakeholders, put up an exhibit in the picture gallery and distributed STREAM publications.



Participants of the Fifth Fisherfolk Symposium and the picture gallery exhibits

Evolving Themes through the Years

Though the symposium theme changes annually, the aims remain to: 1) provide a venue where fisher leaders from different provinces could gather together and share experiences, discuss issues and plan collectively for actions, and 2) support formation, strengthening and institutionalizing of a structure or framework that would sustain efforts towards integrated coastal management (ICM).

The theme of the first symposium was *“One Experience, One Understanding towards One Pursuit: Empowered and Sustainable Coastal Communities”*. It was attended by 78 representatives of people's organizations in DED project areas, NGOs, Local Government Units (LGUs), Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMCs), and national government agencies. Inputs were given on establishments of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and mangrove reforestation, alternative income-generating activities, credit facilities and financing for fishers' associations and cooperatives. Each province identified and prioritized issues and concerns, and gave recommendations on how to address them.

The second symposium was on *“ICZM: Experiences and Challenges”*⁵. The four cases presented focused on issues confronting the sector and recommendations to address them. These were

⁴ Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst

⁵ ICZM is Integrated Coastal Zone Management

sand and gravel extraction, and conflicts around land use, aquaculture and fisheries in ICZM. It was in this symposium where the need to form a lobby group for Visayas fisherfolk surfaced.

The theme of the third symposium was *"United Efforts in ICRM"*⁶. Thirteen Visayan provinces were represented. Workshops were held on the current realities and directions of the fisheries sector focusing on six major concerns: 1) government subsidies to fishers, 2) municipal delineation, 3) politics in CRM, 4) law enforcement, 5) livelihood, and 6) fisherfolk participation in local governance. A resolution containing thirty-four concerns raised during the symposium was formulated and submitted to concerned agencies. Another resolution on FARMC issues and problems was also passed to the Office of the President for appropriate action. A "quick response team" composed of selected representatives from all provinces present was formed to respond to the administrative issues of the previous symposium and take a lead in following up agreed actions (e.g., submission of the resolutions to concerned agencies).

The fourth symposium was on *"ICRM: Institutionalization for Sustainable Coastal Communities"*. There were 150 participants – most of whom attended previous symposia – from the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, Masbate, and Negros Occidental of Region 6 (Western Visayas); Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental and Siquihor of Region 7 (Central Visayas); and Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Samar and Southern Leyte of Region 8 (Eastern Visayas). Major outputs of this symposium were the decision to form an alliance of Visayas fishers headed by a Council of Leaders (COL) and proposed structures for this alliance.



The Iloilo group looking content after discussions on issues to be prioritized and formulation of action plans

The theme of the fifth symposium was *"ICRM: Closing Gaps ... Building Bridges"*. This was a time of transition when the assembly needed to decide on mechanisms that would ensure sustainability of the initiative that had been facilitated for the previous four years. The major output of this symposium was the assembly's approval of the COL organizational structure but with the need recognized to add more women representatives. Committees were assigned to carry on the tasks planned during the symposium. It was also agreed that PhilDHRRA would act as a secretariat while the organization is still young.

Future Plans

In February 2004, the COL conducted a strategic planning session for the sustainability of the symposium and its own operations. The plans were confirmed in the COL meeting during the fifth symposium. The COL will take the lead in getting the support of provincial governments and other cause-oriented groups to provide needed logistical support. The COL will come up with an official list of organizations who will become members of the Visayas Fisherfolk Alliance. The members will be encouraged to contribute financially through payment of dues and membership fees. The funds raised will initially provide the needed logistical requirements to start up the operation of the COL. Three regional consultations will be done to define the alliance's structure, roles, functions, governing policies and a mechanism for local issues to be taken to other levels. The alliance is foreseen to be the vehicle that can unite fishers in the Visayas in validating and supporting issues of national interest.

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⁶ ICRM is Integrated Coastal Resource Management

Rehabilitation of Bundu Pond – STREAM’s Initiative and DoF’s Action

Bhim Nayak and Ashish Kumar

Tasty Bundu Fish – Abundance and Decline

Bundu Bara Bandh is a large pond with a water area of 99 acres (approximately 40 ha). It is situated in Bundu Village, Ranchi District, Jharkhand State, India. Bundu Pond is important because more than 100 fisher families live around it in different hamlets like Fulwar Toli and Manjhi Toli. The families live on the fish harvested from Bundu Pond. Its fish are so tasty and liked by the people in the city that fish from other ponds are also sold as “Bundu fish”.

Twenty years ago – when there were fewer families and the Department of Fisheries (DoF) did composite fish culture in Bundu Pond – the situation was happy. However, when culture practices were stopped, and the size of families increased, it became difficult for fishermen to depend on it. Indian major carp became scarce in the pond and the fishermen had to be content with small weed fish or predator fish. The only source for stocking of major fish was accidental heavy-rain damage to embankments of nearby ponds in neighboring villages, when fingerlings moved into Bundu Pond. Also, because there was no maintenance, water hyacinth and other aquatic weeds started growing and virtually covered the pond from all sides. Not only fishing, but even bathing became difficult for the people of Bundu.



Bundu Bara Bandh – before

The declining number and poor quality of fish caught from the *bandh* (pond) forced the fishermen to adopt alternative livelihoods. Most of them switched over to activities like goat rearing, rickshaw pulling, pig rearing, playing drums in marriage parties, working as laborers and migrating to cities to work. Instead of selling fish from Bundu Bara Bandh, women started bringing fish from Ranchi, the district headquarters 40 kilometers away, and selling them in Bundu.

Little Support, Then Awareness, Action and Success

Bundu is classified as a semi-urban area, which meant that people were deprived of the welfare schemes meant to benefit fishers in rural areas. One can imagine the situation of the poor fishermen and women living around Bundu Bara Bandh as they struggled to sustain their families! The only hope was the pond, which was now full of aquatic weeds and had small catches of weed fishes with low economic value like *Puntius* and *Channa*.

In 2002, fishermen in Bundu were involved with the STREAM Initiative’s DFID⁷-funded project called “Investigating Improved Policy on Aquaculture Service Provision to Poor People”. Through various interactions in the project, they put forth a demand to clean Bundu Bara Bandh as a priority. During various project workshops and meetings, authorities of the Jharkhand State Government and the Government of India were made aware of the situation and the need to

⁷ Natural resources Systems Programme of the Department for International Development, UK

clean the pond for the benefit of the poor fishermen. Finally the fishers' demand was taken up in 2004-05 with a provision of funds and the work started in March 2005.

But the task was not easy. The water hyacinth plants were so interlinked and heavy that removing them was a problem. In many places grass had also grown among the water hyacinths, making the work tougher. The fishermen used saws to cut the plants and barbed wire to pull them towards the dyke, where they were piled up. Bamboo poles were used to carry the weeds away from the pond. Disposal of the weeds was another problem as they were in a huge quantity. Some of the weeds were transported by tractor to paddy fields and agricultural farms to use in making compost manures; the rest were left to dry and later burnt. Even the outlets, which had been silted up, were also excavated and now people can easily bathe in the pond and think of taking up aquaculture on a larger scale. Around 50 fishermen of Fulwar Toli and Manjhi Toli worked continuously for three months to clean the pond successfully. The DoF spent Rupees 500,000 (about US\$ 11, 363) for the whole operation and only fishermen of Fulwar Toli and Manjhi Toli were engaged in the work.

Management Questions

Now the question of management and effective use of the pond has arisen. Mr Bhim Nayak, the leader of the fishermen, is happy and is actively having discussions with his fellow fishermen about how to utilize the pond for maximum benefit. The DoF is considering settling the pond with (or leasing it to) four women's Self-Help Groups working in Fulwar Toli. They would stock the pond with advanced fingerlings so that production from the pond is increased.

Although there was a fishermen's cooperative society registered in the 1950s, only two members of that cooperative are still alive and they are old. If the cooperative could be made functional then it could be a viable alternative for managing the pond and the government would have no difficulty in settling the pond with the cooperative. But the initiative would have to be taken up by all sides: the DoF, the Cooperatives Department and the fishermen of Bundu.



Bundu Bara Bandh – cleaning in process

Another problem in generating revenue from the pond are those fishermen who had been fishing in it for a long time and are opposed to any arrangement in which they have to repay something in lieu of the fish caught. But according to Bhim, unless they keep some money for recurring expenditures in the future, how can they maintain the pond?

The DoF is also thinking to settle the pond through an open auction but the fishermen are opposed to this proposal. The pond is at a crucial point now and it remains to be seen which way destiny will take the Bundu Bara Bandh and the fishermen. Unless the social problems are settled, it will be difficult to manage the harvest and a situation of chaos can be imagined.

Bhim Nayak is a farmer and leader in Fulwar Toli Village, Bundu Block, Ranchi District, Jharkhand State, India. Ashish Kumar is the Deputy Director of Fisheries of the Jharkhand Department of Fisheries. They can both be reached through <ashishkumar_1in@yahoo.com>.

Coastal Resources Utilization and Conservation Issues in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

M K Abu Hena, H Sharifuzzaman, M S Aftabuddin and M N Haque

Introduction

Cox's Bazar district is situated in the southeastern coastal area of Bangladesh. The coastal zone of Cox's Bazar has had great significance since pre-historic times for its wide diversity and abundance of natural flora and fauna. The economy of the coastal dwellers in Cox's Bazar combines salt production, fish and dried fish, aquaculture, agriculture, local tourism, trade and handicrafts.

Sandy, sandy loamy and muddy tidal flats, mangrove vegetation, salt beds, coral reefs, salt marsh, seagrass and algal beds characterize the coastline of Cox's Bazar. These ecosystems play a principal role in supporting local communities, serving as sources of food, cash and energy. However, a rapid increase in population and the destruction of natural habitats have resulted in the loss of coastal and terrestrial biodiversity in Cox's Bazar. The local people still haphazardly utilize these natural resources, destroying some resources (e.g., Chakaria Sunderban mangrove forest) and over-utilizing others (that is, coastal aquaculture, natural shrimp fry and fish stock). A few others remain untouched (e.g., mollusks, seaweeds and off-shore mariculture), thereby highlighting the need for intensified coastal management studies.

Effective management should be focused on various degrees of human intervention that ensure a sustainable yield basis. This requires better data management and understanding of the resources and ecological factors that influence the integrity of an ecosystem. An inventory was conducted to generate information on the importance of coastal resources, their utilization and conservation in Cox's Bazar, as described in the selected highlights below.

Mangrove Resources

The destruction of mangroves in Cox's Bazar and many other parts of the world is mainly due to clearance for shrimp culture, salt production and over-exploitation for firewood and house poles. The clearance of mangroves not only causes the loss of coastal habitat, aquatic resources and biodiversity, but also increases soil erosion, vulnerability to cyclonic storms, tidal bore, tsunami and denudation of the feeding, breeding and nursery grounds of aquatic resources. Evidently, the current management of mangroves is not effective, and management plans are not being followed.



A beautiful and flourishing mangrove forest in 1986 along the bank of the Naf River and Jaliardwip Island in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar

Salt Production

The gray clay soil along the sides of the tidal rivers and creeks in Cox's Bazar are unsuitable for agriculture because of their acidity. As such, areas which were previously cleared for agriculture and large-scale mangroves are now being used for salt production since it is more profitable. This has reduced water and soil quality and disturbed numerous species of aquatic flora and fauna. No study has been conducted about this so far.

Coral Reef

Saint Martin's Island, which is situated in the Teknaf coast of Cox's Bazar, is the only coral reef island in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, it is in danger because of agriculture, destructive fishing methods, beach activities, the extraction of rocks and siltation from the mainland. Local people continuously exploit large quantities of coral and shells for commercial purposes due to lack of awareness, adequate knowledge and proper management of marine living resources.



At present, mangroves cleared for firewood exploitation and aquaculture, at the Naf River in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar

Shrimp Culture

Most of the shrimp farms on the Cox's Bazar coast were established in the late 1980s, after the government leased coastal land. The farms discharge uneaten feed and waste materials into adjacent water bodies, which may trigger eutrophication and increase turbidity in the coastal water. The percentage of mangrove loss and habitat destruction caused by shrimp farming are not well documented.

Local Tourism

Cox's Bazar City attracts local and foreign tourists because of its scenic beauty and winter climate. It is the tourist capital of Bangladesh, with miles of golden sand, towering cliffs, deep green forests, surfing waves and historical places. It has the world's longest (120 km) sandy beach which slopes gently toward the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal. However, poor management and facilities mean that tourism is not a profitable industry and does not provide income opportunities for the people of Cox's Bazar.

Conclusion

The main problems facing Cox's Bazar are ineffective management approaches for mangroves, fisheries and other ecosystems, and the limited capacity to enforce regulations. To halt the destruction of valuable resources, necessary activities include:

- Identification of coastal resources
- Monitoring to understand changes in coastal resources
- Improved management of existing reserves to correspond with their multiple purposes
- Coordinated research projects on conservation, science and ecology of coastal resources
- Creation of public awareness and the promotion of local participation in managing natural coastal resources
- Strengthening and providing the required expertise in management of existing coastal resources
- Participation by public bodies (non-governmental and trade organizations) in the planning of conservation strategies, and
- Research into natural and human threats to coastal resources and implementation of national coastal resources management programs.

Multi-sectoral research and work is therefore needed to generate quality data to provide support to such efforts. Strong protection and conservation policies also need to be incorporated into management plans.

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People, Fish and Reefs – A Livelihoods Learning Curve

Abigail Moore

A Chance Meeting

I am not a social scientist. My background is in engineering and biology, in particular biodiversity, especially coral reef monitoring and conservation. I am also a SCUBA diving instructor. I started working with STREAM through a chance meeting that later resulted in an invitation "out of the blue" to attend a meeting in Bali, with my colleague Samliok Ndobe, an experienced fisheries specialist. All we knew was that it related to a marine program, possibly in Sulawesi; it had a fisheries component and other participants included people well known and respected in the marine field. I was at a turning point, about to leave the Palu-based coral reef conservation and capacity-building project I had been working with for over four years. I knew this was an offer I could not possibly turn down. We soon found out that indeed this was a great opportunity. We would be doing livelihoods analysis with ornamental fishing communities as part of the NACA-STREAM project called "International Seafood Trade: Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods among Poor Aquatic Resource Users in Asia", under the European Community – Poverty Reduction Effectiveness Programme (EC-PREP).

The Case Study and a Dream

The two locations selected for the case study were the Banggai Islands, a major source of ornamental fish (which Samliok had already visited for previous work), and Banyuwangi and Denpasar, major holding and export centers. I had dreamed of going to the Banggai Archipelago since 1997, when I was first promised a (working) trip there. Many subsequent 'promises' had also fallen through. At last here we were, a team of nine, off to the fabled remote Banggai Archipelago! On the two-day journey from Palu to Luwuk and overnight ferry, I kept wondering: What would it be like? Would we succeed in our goal to understand the links between poverty and the ornamental fish trade? And if we did, would we then be able to "make a difference"?

It was the middle of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, and this would really challenge the stamina of the team. However, reduced sea-going and other physical activity should mean the fishers and other community members would be available and, we hoped, willing to spend time with us. Indeed they were and, in addition to accumulating a considerable amount of livelihoods-related data, we all fell for the beautiful Banggai Islands and their diverse and hospitable communities.

What We Learned from the Community

We soon realized several things from our focus group discussions, key informant interviews, observations and other methods. Government awareness and understanding of the ornamental fish trade was poor. Communication among different stakeholder groups was at best limited. Fishers were unorganized, poorly equipped with technical and financial skills, and had poor



Tinakin Laut, a Bajo (Sea Gypsy) village (above) and Bajo children at play in Monsongan (below)



access to information, markets and capital. There were many sources of conflict. The current situation was unsustainable in environmental terms and benefits to local communities and individuals were far from satisfactory.

The main ornamental species collected and traded by local fishers is the endemic Banggai Cardinal Fish (*Pterapogon kauderni*) but a number of other species are caught, both by locals and by fishers from far away (mainly Bali and Java). They often use cyanide to stun the fish (an illegal fishing method which kills corals and many other non-target fish and invertebrates) and other destructive practices. The local fishers and communities generally perceive the (often better equipped) long-distance fishers as thieves but feel powerless. Indeed, in the current situation, they have no effective legal means of limiting access to local resources.

What Stakeholders Said

It was not easy to analyze the data. The livelihoods strategies, trade routes, resources and environmental conditions varied greatly. However, we realized that a number of salient points were common throughout. There was great potential for improvement in the ornamental fishery and trade which should reduce poverty, and perhaps more important, vulnerability, while improving environmental sustainability.



Stakeholder meeting in Banggai

We put the findings and some draft recommendations into a presentation for a stakeholders meeting in Banggai. Participants included fishers, local government decision-makers and technical staff, village and other community leaders, and representatives of the private sector, legal, educational and other professions. All agreed that action was needed and many relevant suggestions were made. Yayasan Palu Hijau (YPH), a conservation and community development NGO, was requested to assist in drawing up plans and in seeking additional resources for implementation. Important points included improved resource management, with

local regulations to empower communities, economic capacity-building (e.g., based on STREAM's self-help group concepts), technical and marketing improvements, and education.

People Are Talking

It is still too early to know how far the "good intentions" will be implemented or how effective they will be. At least awareness has been raised, and bridges have been built among the various stakeholder groups. People are talking to each other! That is a start and now we all need to work hard together to make sure it does not stop there. We need to ensure that things really do change, hopefully improving the livelihoods of all involved, especially the ornamental fisher families and their communities.



Three generations of a Monsongan ornamental fisher family

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Understanding the Marine Ornamental Trade and Its Impact on the Livelihoods of Poor Stakeholders in the Philippines

Elizabeth M Gonzales

The Project

This case study on the marine ornamental trade in the Philippines was one of three in a project called “International Seafood Trade: Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods among Poor Aquatic Resource Users in Asia”. Case studies were also carried out in Indonesia (on marine ornamentals) and Vietnam (on shrimp). The project was supported by the European Community’s Poverty Reduction Effectiveness Program (EC-PREP) and implemented by NACA-STREAM in partnership with researchers from the European consulting firm Poseidon.

The project goal was international seafood trade that contributes to poverty reduction. The purpose was to identify options that improve the effectiveness of poverty reduction in the international seafood trade. Specifically, the Philippines case study set out to 1) map the trade in ornamentals in the Philippines and identify study areas for livelihoods analysis, 2) identify poor people involved in or impacted by the trade and develop an understanding of their livelihoods, and 3) recommend changes to ways of working so that poor people could benefit more.

The Team

The Philippines study team members were selected from the participants of the BFAR/FAO/NACA-STREAM Workshop on Livelihoods Approaches and Analysis held in November 2003. The team included the STREAM Communications Hub Manager, a program coordinator of the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), an NGO secretariat, a field coordinator of the Marine Aquarium Council (MAC), and a training officer from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

The Process

Following several online communications, the team met for a **planning meeting** in March 2004 with the STREAM Director and Senior Program Officer. Contracts were firmed up, action plans drawn up, tasks assigned and a budget allocated. In April 2004, two team members conducted preliminary **secondary data collection** through visits and interviews with relevant agencies and institutions, stakeholders in the trade (e.g., exporters, airlines and shipping lines), and NGO colleagues involved with projects in the potential study sites. They also researched published and web-based resources.

In May 2004, the team met again in a **planning workshop** to make a detailed livelihoods analysis plan. This involved drafting a market chain diagram, identifying stakeholders based on the activities involved in the chain, selecting study sites, detailing activities, scheduling, tasking, deciding on participatory methods and tools to be used, and making other logistical arrangements. The team conducted a pre-testing activity in Barangay Santa Rosa, Olango Island, Lapulapu City, to practice the tools, followed by a reflection session.



Wealth ranking activity with fish collectors during pre-testing at Olango Island

The two sites selected for the **community study** were Batasan Island in Tubigon, Bohol, and Sabang, Olango Island, Lapulapu City. Batasan is a typical community of organized fish collectors with local government support and

third-party certification. Olango is a fish collector community which uses traditional methods and marketing networks with minimal support from local government or NGOs. The community study looked into economic and financial, natural and physical, human, social, natural and political resources; vulnerabilities; livelihoods strategies, and outcomes and aspirations.

The methods used for the **livelihoods analysis** were secondary data collection, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and attendance in meetings of community associations. Observations were also made of the processes involved under each chain of custody from fish collection to packing for export shipment. Participatory tools used included seasonal calendar, Venn diagram, communications issues, mobility map, wealth ranking and historical timeline. The **market chain diagram** drafted at the beginning of the study was then revised based on the findings of the study. The team went back to Batasan Island for **feedback and validation** of the study's findings and recommendations. The community's inputs were then included in the study report.

Some Findings

The Philippines marine ornamentals trade has grown into an industry reaching US\$ 6.4 million and involving 632 metric tons in 2002. Markets for the ornamentals include Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States. The trade involves around 30 export companies and an estimated 7,000 collectors. Of over 75 collection sites, major ones are in the provinces of Batangas, Bohol, Cebu, Quezon, Surigao and Zamboanga. Major direct export passes through international airports in Manila and Cebu.

The major players in the marine ornamentals trade chain are fish collectors, financiers, consignees, coordinators and exporters. The collectors are the primary stakeholders at the beginning of the trade chain. Financiers are middlemen in the communities who provide a credit function to collectors in unorganized communities by funding diving trips and giving cash advances. Consignees are agents who link the financiers to the exporters and are paid on a commission basis. Coordinators operate in communities of MAC-certified collectors. They coordinate activities from receiving orders from certified exporters, relaying orders to fish collectors associations, screening and buying the daily catch, purging the fish, recording, bookkeeping, packing, shipping and following up payments from exporters. Exporters are the dominant stakeholders at the end of the trade chain. They buy marine ornamental fish from suppliers and sell them to importers in other countries. They have direct links with importers and thus have more control over the pricing. Because of restrictions imposed on importation of mono-filament fine mesh nets used for fish collection, it is also only exporters who have better access to these nets and thus create dependency on the part of collectors.

Aside from the collectors, other poor stakeholders are minor packers (aged below 15), women gleaners (mostly members of collectors' households), adult packers at the financiers' and exporters' holding facilities, and monthly-paid utility workers at the financiers' facilities. They are among the poorest in terms of income, much below the national per capita annual poverty threshold of Pesos 13,915 (US\$ 251). The published report will also include influences of the trade on the livelihoods of poor stakeholders and options for poverty reduction.

Lessons Learned

The quality of analysis is dependent on the quality of data and information collected from the field. As development workers, we are aware that it takes years before people in communities open up to outsiders. Earning their trust and respect is essential to their participation in studies conducted in their communities. Having team members who have previous and ongoing engagement and established rapport with such communities helps in gaining community support for the study.

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About the STREAM Journal

Published by STREAM – Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management

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Purpose

The *STREAM Journal* is published quarterly to promote participation, communication and policies that support the livelihoods of poor aquatic resources users in Asia-Pacific, and to build links within the aquatic resources management and other sectors across the region. The *STREAM Journal* covers issues related to people whose livelihoods involve aquatic resources management, especially people with limited resources, and government, non-governmental and international practitioners who work with them in communities. Such issues include learning, conflict management, information and communications technologies, aquatic resources management, legislation, livelihoods, gender, participation, stakeholders, policy and communications.

Another equally important purpose of the *STREAM Journal* is to provide an opportunity for seldom-raised voices to be heard and represented in a professional publication that is practical yet somewhat academic. The contents of the *STREAM Journal* should not be taken as reflecting the views of any particular organization or agency, but as statements by individuals based on their own experience. While authors are responsible for the contents of their articles, STREAM recognizes and takes responsibility for any editorial bias and oversights.

Distribution

The *STREAM Journal* is available in three formats:

- An electronic PDF version which is printed and distributed by the STREAM Communications Hubs in each country
- A version which can be accessed and downloaded in PDF format from the Virtual Library on the STREAM Website at www.streaminitiative.org, and
- A printed version which is distributed by the NACA Secretariat.

Contribution

The *STREAM Journal* encourages the contribution of articles of interest to aquatic resources users and people who work with them. The *STREAM Journal* also supports community-level colleagues to document their own experiences in these pages.

Articles should be written in plain English and no more than 1,000 words long (about two A4 pages of single-spaced text).

Contributions can be made to William Savage, *STREAM Journal* Editor, at <savage@loxinfo.co.th>. For more information, contact Graham Haylor, STREAM Director, at <ghaylor@loxinfo.co.th>.

About STREAM

Support to Regional Aquatic Resources Management (STREAM) is an Initiative designed within the five-year Work Program cycle of the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific (NACA). It aims to support agencies and institutions to:

- Utilize existing and emerging information more effectively
- Better understand poor people's livelihoods, and
- Enable poor people to exert greater influence over policies and processes that impact on their lives.

STREAM will do this by supporting the development of policies and processes of mediating institutions, and building capacity to:

- Identify aquatic resources management issues impacting on the livelihoods of poor people
- Monitor and evaluate different management approaches
- Extend information, and
- Network within and between sectors and countries.

The STREAM Initiative is based around partnerships, involving at the outset a coalition of founding partners (AusAID, DFID, FAO and VSO) supporting NACA. It has adopted an inclusive approach, reaching out to link stakeholders engaged in aquatic resources management and supporting them to influence the Initiative's design, implementation and management.

The partnerships' work is coordinated in each Country Office through a National Coordinator (a senior national colleague agreed with the government) and a Communications Hub Manager (a full-time national colleague supported in the first two years by STREAM), and linking a range of national stakeholders. The Communications Hub is provided with hardware, software, training, information-technology support, and networking and human resources support, and links national stakeholders through an internet-based virtual regional network.

National coordination is guided by an annually-reviewed Country Strategy Paper (CSP) drawn up by the Coordinator and Hub Manager in consultation with stakeholders with whom they regularly network. A CSP identifies key issues, highlights regional linkages, proposes and prioritizes key actions, and seeks funding for these from STREAM and elsewhere (with STREAM support).

The STREAM Regional Office (at the NACA Secretariat in Bangkok) directs the Initiative, provides a regional coordination function, and funds and manages cross-cutting activities dealing with livelihoods, institutions, policy development and communications, the four outcomes-based STREAM themes.

STREAM implementation is an iterative process, initially operating in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Yunnan, China, and expanding within Asia-Pacific where opportunities exist to tackle poverty and promote good governance, as experience is gained, lessons are learned, impact is demonstrated and additional funding is secured. STREAM's communications strategy aims to increase impact by ensuring that existing knowledge and expertise inform ongoing change processes around the region, and that the lessons learned are disseminated throughout Asia-Pacific. The *STREAM Journal* and the STREAM website are components of this strategy.

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