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Small Scale Fisheries Management: Lessons from Cockle Harvesters in Nicaragua and Tanzania

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Small Scale Fisheries Management: Lessons from Cockle Harvesters in Nicaragua and Tanzania

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Abstract

The role of women in gleaning fisheries tends to be underestimated and poorly documented although they play an important role in coastal food security and income generation. This article describes two initiatives for co-management of women dominated cockle (*Anadara* spp.) fisheries implemented in Zanzibar Island of Tanzania and in Nicaragua that were based on a Fiji model. In each case, significant progress was made at the pilot scale but required adaptation to the community and national context. The Nicaragua case resulted in increasing densities of cockles inside and outside small scale no-take zones in a small estuary after a two-year period of implementation. In Zanzibar, out of several no-take sites established on reef flats, only one showed similar results. Other sites' poor performance is likely due to poor site selection, small size, and non-compliance. Varying degrees of poaching affected both locations and continues to be an issue. In Zanzibar, local and national government played highly supporting roles whereas in Nicaragua, local government was supportive but national government continues to exhibit top-down decision-making, while still evaluating the alternative co-management approach. In both cases, university extension initiatives were influential in building community capacity for management and playing an advocacy role with national government. Both locations are poised for scaling up to more geographic sites as well as fostering policy change that can lead to more integrated and ecosystem-scale approaches to sustainable fisheries management.

Keywords: Community-based; Fisheries management; Gender; Gleaning; Nicaragua; Zanzibar