Enhancing capacities of fishing communities for resource management

Preparatory Meeting

Date: 6-7 May, 2013
Venue: Sukumvit, Bangkok, Thailand.

The Meeting
International Collective Support of fishworkers (ICSF) is going organize a capacity building program for the coastal fisher of the Bay of Bengal area. The program will be organized in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia. In Bangladesh COAST Trust will organized the program in Cox’s Bazar with the support of ICSF.

During 6-7 May a planning meeting was held in Bangkok. All the implementing organizations’ representatives along with ICSF representatives were present. The main objectives of that meeting were to develop appropriate training modules for the programme and to plan for its implementation. Major outputs of that meeting were e Inception Report, details of work plan, identification of participating groups, partners and locations, and proposals for training modules, training material and methodologies.

Background of the Program
From ICSF a concept note on the program were presented. According to that note, fishing communities, including in the Bay of Bengal region, have depended for generations on coastal and marine resources for their lives and livelihoods. Over time they have developed ecosystem- and fisheries-related knowledge and skills, and have evolved institutions that regulate their interactions with each other, with the resource base and with the outside world. In a context where natural resources, including fisheries resources, are under pressure, the need to work closely with local communities, enabling them to play an integral role in resource management is increasingly evident. Also evident is
the need to enhance efforts towards training and capacity building of local communities to take on such roles. 
To date, however, efforts in this direction have been limited at best. The proposed activity will seek to work with fishing community representatives, including youth and women, to enhance their capacity to engage with issues related to management and sustainable use of coastal and marine fisheries resources and habitats. It will also seek strengthen their organizations and enhance their linkages and working relationships with local level functionaries responsible for fisheries and coastal resources management.

The main objectives of this capacity building training:
- Drawing on the traditional and experiential knowledge and institutions of fishing communities, to enhance the capacity of participating fishing community members to:
- Relate their knowledge systems with an ecosystem approach to fisheries
- Understand ways of enhancing sustainable and equitable resource use, and the role that communities can play (should include dimensions of gender, labour, safety at sea)
- Explore appropriate institutional arrangements for ecosystem management
- Monitor issues related to marine pollution and habitat degradation, and the impacts on fisheries resources and livelihoods.

**COAST Presentation**
From COAST I have made a presentation on the tentative plan of action on the program. It was just a plan. We will have to send a detail program plan to ICSF soon.

Key excerpt from presentation are as follows:

1. **The targeted participants:**
   - Fishers (labour, boat owners and traders)
   - Community representatives/ CBOs
   - Local Elected Bodies’ representatives
   - Government Officials
   - Policy Makers
   - NGOs, activists

2. **Key Outputs**
   - 3 Regional level Training Session with 20 participants in each session
   - 3 Regional level local mobilization
   - 1 National level workshop with 50 participants

3. **Key Methodologies of the Training**
   - Participatory
   - Problem Posing /Coding
   - Mind Management Approach (MMA)
   - Role play
• Group exercises
• Case studies presentation

4. Key Techniques
• Getting information from the community
• Let them identify relate their knowledge with ecosystem
• Let them identify key factors affecting their lives and livelihoods
• Try to identify the changes: compare the existing situation
• Identifying the consequences of the changes
• Let recommendations to be come from community
• Identify the resources, what and where, How to get?
• Sharing information found from various literature/research
• SWOT Analysis:
  • Prepare an Action Plan
  • Session(s) on raising voices/local mobilization and campaign

5. Key contents
  – Should be mainly based on local/national circumstances
  – Need suggestion from ICSF
  – Some common regional issues

Final Plan of Action
ICSF has suggested us to implement the program in Cox’s Bazar region. With the budget of 19000 USD we will have to prepare a final plan of action. I have already started to the work. To do the final plan I will have to get some information from the field and I will have to sit with some resource persons.

I am pretty much confident that, if we can be able to implement the program successfully, COAST will be able set an example to building capacity of the coastal fishing community in the field of resource management.

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