

# Report of the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) Fisheries Forum: Financing Fisherfolk- Success Stories

68<sup>th</sup> Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI)  
Panama City, Panama  
9-13 November 2015



2015

# Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the support received from the following sponsors of the 2015 Fishers Forum as well as assistance from many individuals on the GMA Committee. Among the local organisers we wish to especially thank Juan Posada of MarViva and his colleagues who arranged sponsorship and logistics in Panama. We also thank the several other organisations who sponsored fisherfolk (men and women with livelihoods in harvest and postharvest sectors) to participate in GCFI.



For further information on the Fishers Forum, the GMA and the 68<sup>th</sup> GCFI visit: [www.gcfi.org](http://www.gcfi.org)

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# 1. Introduction

***Financing fisherfolk — success stories*** was the theme for this year's Fishers Forum. The aim was to get success stories of how fisherfolk organisations have achieved financial sustainability while following their own agendas and plans to serve their members. Fisherfolk organisations need not be entirely self-financing. However, they should not need to "follow the money" as a matter of survival to the detriment of their own ideals and objectives. The complementary requirement is that their financial partners respect and support the beneficiary fisherfolk organisations rather than seek to co-opt or coerce them through tied assistance. The goal of this forum was to examine and learn from successful examples of partnerships between fisher organizations and their funders.

The 2015 Fishers Forum brought together leaders from fisherfolk organizations and from funding organizations to (a) exchange information on financing fisherfolk, (b) better understand how financial partnerships work, and (c) disseminate the success secrets of sustainable financing. This will assist the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) initiative to contribute to sustainable financing throughout the Gulf and Caribbean. The Forum consisted of a session in the main conference, presentation of the Gladding Memorial Award (GMA), a fishers' field trip, and a planning session for F4F.

## 2. Process

As in previous years the 2015 process was developed and implemented through broad participation of collaboration of fishers, scientists and NGO supporters. This year the process for nominating and selecting the GMA winner was improved by use of a standard nomination form that was widely distributed, and a selection committee system that used criteria and scoring for ranking the nominees. As a result of these improvements six excellent nominees were put forward and two outstanding fisherfolk were selected as regional level GMA winners (national GMA having been discontinued). Both winners were sponsored to attend the Forum and receive their awards as described later.

As usual GMA Committee members were in touch with potential travel sponsors to get participation by the largest possible contingent of fisherfolk from around the Wider Caribbean. The Food and Agriculture Organization was a major sponsor this year. NGOs such as The Nature Conservancy, Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, and others sponsored fisher travel. There was new sponsorship for Dutch fishers also. The local organisers did an excellent job of ensuring all went well on site, and their hospitality was much appreciated.

### 3. Conference Session

#### 3.1 The Association of Artisanal Fishers of Hicaco: an example of sustainable fishing and trade in the Area of Managed Resource Wetland Gulf of Montijo

Abel Ruíz presented on the Association of Fishermen of Hicaco that was founded in 2010. In 2012 an agreement was signed with MarViva to train fishers in responsible fisheries. As a result there has been a reduction in the catch of sharks and rays.



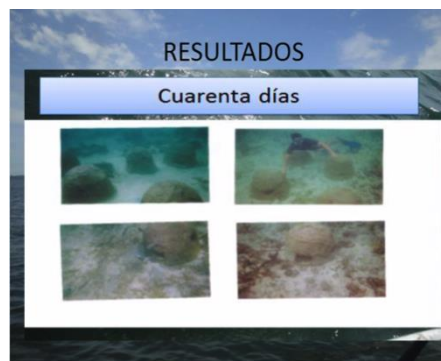
#### 3.2 The role of fisherfolk in marine resource monitoring and conservation: the case of Punta Allen, Mexico

Magdiel Naal Kumul explained that the Vigia Chica cooperative have been given a lobster fishing concessions with a biosphere reserve in return for assisting in its management. Within the concession, each fishermen has his own area to harvest and maintain. The cooperative is very productive but also very sustainable. Rules are strictly enforced and members can be expelled from the Coop for rule breaking, eg. fishing in someone else's area. Members participate in all decision-making within the assembly. The coop is monitoring a spawning area and is recommending full closure to fishing.



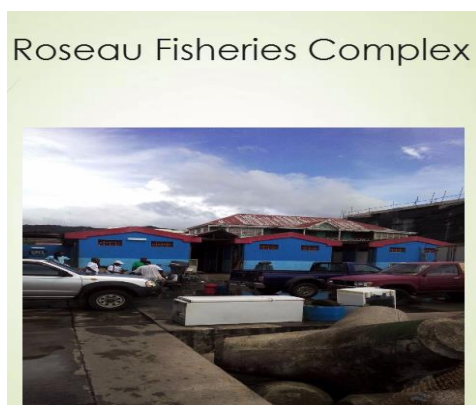
### **3.3 The Association of United Artisanal Fishers of Bocas del Toro: A group that evolves adapting to changes in a sustainable way**

Martha Machazeck explained that the Union of Artisanal Fishermen Bocatoreños was founded in 1999 as a result of the needs facing the fisheries sector and the lack of attention from the national authorities in the Bocas del Toro Province, Panama. With its own resources obtained legal status and began to take steps to develop a strategy sustainable and productive use of marine resources, thereby achieving a better quality of life for its members.



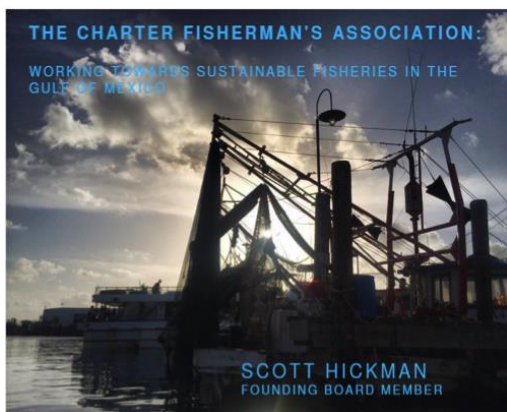
### **3.4 Financing National Association of Fisherfolk Cooperative in Dominica**

Earl George president of NAFCOOP spoke about the NGO being registered in 2008 and maintaining finance through a tackle shop, sales of fuel and other services.



### **3.5 The Charter Fishermens Association Working towards sustainable fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico**

Scott Hickman founding member of CFA stated that “if you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu”. Though Mr. Hickman was not able to attend, his abstract illustrated how the Charter Fishermens Assocaiton is making fundamental changes in the management of recreational fisheries.



### **4. Gladding Memorial Award**

The Fishers Forum gave special recognition to Peter Gladding in the form of the Gladding Memorial Award (GMA). This year’s ceremony celebrated two responsible fishers Mr. Edwin Font from Puerto Rico and Mr. Abel Ruiz from Panama.



*L-R , Mr. Edwin Font, Dr. Graciela Garcia-Moliner (photograph GCFI facebook page)*

Dr. Graciela Garcia-Moliner, Chairperson of the GCFI presented the GMA award to Mr. Edwin Font of Puerto Rico, for his constant concern for sustainability in the use

of fishery resources. He has been fishing from 1952 to present. Mr. Font founded the Fisherman's Association of Rinçon, Puerto Rico.



*L-R Abel Ruiz, Dr. Graciela Garcia-Moliner (photograph GCFI facebook page)*

The second winner, Mr. Abel Ruiz was awarded a GMA by Dr. Graciela Garcia-Moliner. Mr. Ruiz is the President of the Association of Fishermen of Hicaco in Panama. He has been fishing from the age of 20 and has been a member of the Association of Artisanal Fishers from Hicaco since 2010. The association signed a five year agreement on responsible fishing with MARVIVA.

## **5. Puerto Caimito Fishers Field Trip**



Field Trip Participants group picture



- Juan Posada from Marviva introduced everyone. He gave thanks to FAO Panama who funded the participation of a total of 14 fisherfolk, 12 of whom were from Panama. FAO Panama also funded the field trip as an effort to join fishing and scientific communities.
- John Jorgensen, FAO representative on the field trip, stated that FAO saw fisheries as vital for food security; therefore they were happy to fund the field trip. He welcomed everyone.
- Gabriel Caballero gave a welcome speech saying that he has been a fisherman since he was 13 when he began to work on industrial boats. When he got older he went on to work with artisanal fisheries. The community of El Caimito has had the help of Mariano Rivera a person that was born there and was a fisherperson before being drafted for big league baseball in the USA. He was a pitcher for the New York Yankees. Mariano helped the community build a health center and a school. He also gave an interest free loan to the fishing cooperative which they are currently still paying off. They have 500 boats all of which are active. He stated that fisherfolk are strong and very much committed to their work. In response to a question he stated that the government has not support them unless you count the national regulations that help protect the resources.



Pictures above taken from GCFI 2015 selfie challenge

After introductions and lunch the participants were taken on a walk through the processing plant.

- The plant has an oil treatment facility to avoid contaminating the shore. They are proud of this as it was set up before it became a required measure for all plants.
- Field trip participants were shown the different pieces of machinery of the plant and their role in processing the sardines into flour and oil (raw material).
- Flour can be used in feed for pigs, cattle, fowls and aquaculture.
- The product is exported as raw material to Japan, UK, Spain, Korea, China.
- The main buyers are Japan and Spain as experts from these countries came to help set up the processing plant.
- 1 ton of sardines = 25 sacks (100 lb. each). Each sack cost US\$120.00
- During the open season, which runs from 12 April to September, the average amount of sardines caught is 80 thousand tons. Close season is from October to April 11.
- During close season the markets and restaurants are inspected by the Fisheries Division to make a head count of the products, a stamp is put on the freezer indicating date and number of product. Usually there is a follow-up inspection to verify that all is as it should be. If not then there is a hefty fine.
- A well-equipped boat can cost approximately US\$300,000. They use approved size gear for fishing otherwise they will be fined. Depending on the type of nets they are required to have TEDs. Seine nets are used to capture sardines and for these fishermen are required to ensure that turtles and dolphin are herded out of the net before lifting it.
- There are 9 men per boat. That is the maximum approved by regulation. A boat usually brings in no less than 132 tons.
- Boats work in shifts. Some go out all day and others go out all night.
- The women role in this plant is that of office workers.
- During the close season fisherfolks do odd jobs such as construction, artisanal fishing, repair nets and boats.
- Bycatch is minimal and it must be for household consumption. It cannot be processed at the plant nor can it be sold at the market.
- The Processing plant company is owned by 4 different companies. It does not belong to the artisanal fisherfolks.
- They are currently in a good position to negotiate price as Peru, where there is a processing plant, has a 1 year ban on the capture of sardines and therefore they will not be putting any product into the market.



Field trip participants being introduced to Puerto Caimito

## 6. F4F Planning

The F4F planning meeting was held on November 11, 2015 at 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. The six participants completed a work plan which included a fishers exchange to Belize for a GMA winner (ambassador). This activity is expected to be in collaboration with a fisher's exchange the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) is planning in May-June 2016 under the Eastern Caribbean Marine Managed Areas Network (ECMMAN) Project.

Nadine Nembhard administrative assistant of the CNFO committed to assisting with strengthening communication channels to engage with those GMA winners who wish to be involved.

The group created a budget for 2016 and confirm that Mr. Read Hendon of the University of Southern Mississippi commitment of USD\$2500.00 per year stands.

## Appendix 1: Program



**Fishers Forum 2015: *Financing fisherfolk — success stories***  
68<sup>th</sup> Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, Panama City, Panama, 9-13 November 2015

### Background

The theme of the 2015 Fishers Forum, “Financing fisherfolk” seeks success stories of how fisherfolk organisations have achieved financial sustainability while following their own agendas and plans to serve their members. This contrasts with being highly dependent on external financing tied to aims that are not shared by the fisherfolk organisations. Fisherfolk organisations need not be entirely self-financing. However, they should not need to “follow the money” as a matter of survival to the detriment of their own ideals and objectives. The complementary requirement is that their financial partners respect and support the beneficiary fisherfolk organisations rather than seek to co-opt or coerce them through tied assistance. We need to examine and learn from the success stories generated by such partnerships.

The 2015 Fishers Forum brings together fisherfolk leaders and sources of financing to (a) exchange information on financing fisherfolk, (b) better understand how financial partnerships work, and (c) disseminate the success secrets of sustainable financing. This will assist the Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) initiative to contribute to sustainable financing throughout the Gulf and Caribbean. The Forum consists of a session in the main conference, presentation of the Gladding Memorial Award, a fishers’ field trip, and a planning session for F4F. Forum outputs include a report and other GCFI communications.

### Programme

#### Monday 9 November, 1630-1800

<b>Fishers Forum: Financing Fisherfolk – Success Stories</b> <i>Moderator: Will Heyman</i>		
16:30	Heyman, Will	Introduction to Fisheries for Fishers (F4F) initiative, the Gladding Memorial Award (GMA) and the 2015 Fishers Forum Theme
16:40	Ruiz, Abel	The Association of Artisanal Fishers of Hicaco: an example of sustainable fishing and trade in the Area of Managed Resource Wetland Gulf of Montijo
16:50	Naal Kumul, Magdiel	The role of fisherfolk in marine resource monitoring and conservation: the case of Punta Allen, Mexico
17:00	Machazack, Martha	The Association of United Artisanal Fishers of Bocas del Toro: A group that evolves adapting to changes in a sustainable way
17:10	George, Earl	Financing National Association of Fisherfolk Cooperative in Dominica
17:20	Hickman, Scott	The Charter Fishermen’s Association – Working towards sustainable fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico
17:30	Gallardo, Neil	Financing fishers’ initiatives in Columbia: the role of public private partnerships
17:40	Lay, Mitchell	Presentation of the 2015 Gladding Memorial Award
18:00	Close	

**Tuesday 10 November, 1230 – 1700: Fishers Field Trip to Puerto Caimito**

Hosted by FAO, ANDELAIPP and FUNAPESCA, fisherfolk and specially invited GCFI members will tour by bus to visit fishery activities in Puerto Caimito. The field trip emphasis is on fisheries livelihoods and their relationships with other economic sectors. The field trip is an opportunity for participants to informally interact with fisherfolk from Panama.



**Wednesday 11 November, 0830-1000: F4F session**

Leading fisherfolk will discuss and decide on aspects of the GCFI's F4F Initiative for the upcoming year.

**Sponsors**



For further information on the Fishers Forum, the GMA and the 68<sup>th</sup> GCFI visit: [www.qcfi.org](http://www.qcfi.org)

## Appendix 2: GMA winners

### Abel Ruiz

#### Abel's career

- Fishing (shrimps and lines) from age 20
- Training
  - Business Administration and operations (5)
  - Organizational leadership (2)
  - Environmental courses (4)
  - Fish processing (3)
  - Health and Safety during fish processing (4)
  - GPS (2)

#### Abel's career

- Association of artisanal fishers from Hicaco in 2010.
- Project management (processing facility +)
- Fisheries management
  - Gillnet ban, Sustainable gear (Suripera net)
- Sign 5 year agreement on responsible fishing (MARVIVA)
- Fisher exchanges, networks

## Edwin Font

### Edwin's career

- Fishing – 1952 to present
  - Seine
  - Spearfishing
  - Longlining
  - Aquarium fish
  - Traps
  - Handlines
  - Deepwater snappers

### Edwin's career

- Participated in the process to establish fisheries regulations (2000-2004)
- Tres Palmas Marine Reserve in Rincón, Puerto Rico, designation, mgt Plan, mgt Board
- Coral reef conservation
- Video and Documentaries

### Edwin's career

- President of the Nautical Club of Rincón
- Founded the Fishermen's Association of Rincón, Puerto Rico
- Member of the Fisherman's Congress of Puerto Rico (2005 to present)
- Member of Deep-water Snapper Special Permit Committee.