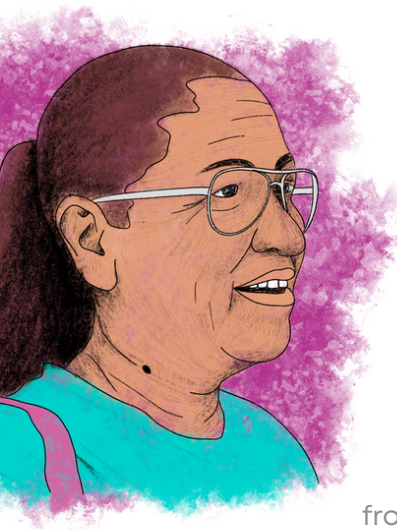


CORAL COAST FISHERWOMEN'S NETWORK

Izabel Chagas learned her trade as a child. From an early age, she used to watch and accompany her family at their daily work which, without her knowing then, would later become her occupation for life.



"I've been fishing with my mother since I was six years old. We would go to the mangroves to harvest shellfish and oysters and sell them at the market, doing a little bit of everything."

- Izabel Cristina Chagas

Today, at the age of 54, Izabel still makes a living from fishing. Fish and shellfish are her family's main source of livelihood.

Born into a family of seven siblings, Natália Santos started fishing with her father at an early age. As a teenager, she started working in a kitchen, but soon realized that what she really liked to do was fishing.

Izabel and Natália are some of the fisherwomen who make a living from various activities related to artisanal fishing in the Costa dos Corais ("Coral Coast") region. Most of these women are engaged in shell fishing, crab harvesting, and rod or net fishing, but also in preparing and selling their catch. In addition, they are responsible for domestic activities and for taking care of their children. Amid so many tasks to ensure the livelihood and well-being of their families, many of these women were not even aware that fishing was their profession.

"I work with oyster farming, and I didn't consider fishing as my profession, nor did I know that there are female fisherwomen. I imagined that there were only men in this job."

- Jaqueline dos Santos

Traditional fisherwomen and fishermen are largely invisible in Brazil and their participation in political decision-making processes is very limited. This especially affects fisherwomen and women who process or sell seafood products.



THE TURNING POINT

In 2018, while attending a seminar on artisanal fishing organized by the Project TerraMar (IKI/GIZ), these women decided to change their destiny. Even though most of the participants were men, the women joined and engaged in group discussions. They soon built a bond and rapport and asked TerraMar to support their journey. That is where the story of the Coral Coast Fisherwomen's Network began.



Coral Coast Fisherwomen's Network Seminar
2019, Tamandaré (PE)
Photo: Natiê Melo - Instituto Yandê/GIZ Brazil

With the support of TerraMar (IKI/GIZ and MMA), about 400 women engaged in a learning process to improve their knowledge of their rights, their appreciation of their identity and culture, and to strengthen their sense of belonging to a traditional community. For six months, they attended seminars, workshops and lectures that not only strengthened their ties, but also left them stronger and prepared, aware of their rights and with a better understanding of their roles in the community. The benefits of this capacity building are already visible. Natália emphasizes that all of this has brought about changes in the entire community.

as well as to implementing other projects that support the organization and capacity building of women's groups. Amongst others, the Coral Coast Fisherwomen's Network has begun developing and implementing initiatives to increase local income through sustainable activities, such as processing organic waste from traditional fisheries (esp. crab shells) to produce organic fertilizer.

The women feel more capable of participating in the local community. They have a better understanding of their importance in artisanal fishing and are positioning themselves. Now, they actively participate in local discussions, not only to support their fishermen husbands, but because they are fisherwomen themselves. They are empowered to speak up in and for their communities.



"The Network has left us more empowered and confident and has improved our knowledge about environmental education in the fishing trade, which will help several families."

- Natália Santos

The creation of the Coral Coast Fisherwomen's Network has also led to several lessons learned about the potential of bringing women together, which can contribute to maintaining and developing the network

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CORAL COAST FISHERWOMEN'S NETWORK, SCAN THE QR CODES OR CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW



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