



RACKS OYSTER CULTURE

PRESENTATION OF THE EXPERIENCE

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| THE TOOL | This tool is a sustainable method for oyster collection. Racks of wood, imbedded in the ground either sub-tidally or inter-tidally, are used to hold vertically or horizontally oysters which are on trays or strings or sticks. It allows to avoid the cutting of mangrove roots which can seriously harm trees |
| STRUCTURE | Tool proposed by KART , collective 5 Deltas. |
| LOCATION | Village of Kartong Kombo South district of West Coast Region, Gambia . |
| DATE & DURATION | The project was started in 2015 |

CONTEXT

Women along the borderlines of Kartong in the Gambia and Karbadio, Nyafrang, Katak Ndombondir in the Casamance region of Senegal are engaged small scale but unskilled oyster culture and harvest to make a living and generate income for the family. The Halahine bolong, a tributary that disect and form the boundary between the Gambia and Casamance is highly populated with oyster. The women in these communities are engaged in the harvest using indigenous knowledge with bare skills and management. This has warranted the formation of an organised group in the livelihood venture so that they can properly manage the their available but natural resources on a sustainable basis.

Alongside the intervention the groups will explore the opportunity to reinforce the mangrove population, concerve and protect them. This will generate double impact :

- It will provide a conducive environment for fish breeding.
- It will support the processes involved in racks culture and will contribute in reversing the trend of environmental pollution by providing clean air around the areas planted with mangroves.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

The project targets various livelihoods intervention strategies for women Oyster farmers. Since the women have problems of management including conservation and management of mangroves and Oyster, the project will address capacity gaps especially for women, protect the environment, address issues of poverty, the family's household food insecurity, sustainable environmental protection and management, attract movement of certain fish species into the bolong as well positively contribute to peace building in the Casamance region and strengthen family relationships across borders.

OBJECTIVES

1. Poverty reduction for women by having a means of income generation to contribute to family household food insecurity.
2. To facilitate accessibility to Oyster areas without having to travel long distances.
3. Management of our natural resources at a sustainable levels.

MAINS STAKEHOLDERS

- **Village heads (Alkalolus).** Decisions are made at communities levels and those decisions are to be respected by every community in the adhoc but organised group of Oyster women in this delta.
- **Local partners in development:** This cadre of development agencies are very important as no individual organisation, local or otherwise can do it alone thus the need to collaborate and form partnership or aliances in addressing development issues/initiatives.
- **KART:** mostly is engaged in resource mobilisation and building capacities of women themselves as well as pulling up the synergy among varies actors including TARUD to make the project successful.
- **TARUD ;** This agency is also involved in similar interventions in other areas of the country such as parts of the Fognys and along the fringes of the bolong at Jeswang and Kombo North districts. TARUD is also dealing with the Kartong Women Oyster group at lower levels and supporting some of their initiatives.
- **Africa Muslim Agency ;** Oyster activities are dome in the rivers, sometimes fairly deep and at other time the water is shallow. The Africa Muslim Agency provided the Oyster group with canues to facilitate travelling to harvest sites.
- **Banafaa project ;** The banafaa project supported by the US Embassy provided two toilet facilities
- **Concern Universal now United Purpose ;** Provided stalls for drying Oyster after harvest and processing.
- **Community structures and individuals:** The community of Kartong and the surroundings are providing moral support to the women while some individuals have provided materials such as boats.

STRATEGY / APPROACH

The approach was centered on protection of the environment and engagement in livelihood ventures focusing on poverty reduction and household food security for women.

- **FORMATION OF AN ADHOC GROUP:** Considering the fact that there are various actors in various communities in multiple countries such as the Gambia and the Casamance region of Senegal. The formation of locally organised groups to assist in the production/generation of an agreed constution and bylaws and to monitor the implementation of the bylaws and the constution for effectiveness.
- **CAPACITY BUILDING:** Provide conservation training for the women groups so they are able to plant, conserve and protect the mangrove population. Capacity building will also enable the women to develop their own constitution and formulate bylaws and promulgate their implementation at all local levels because the Gambia has put in place a national law that recognises customary laws. In addition capacity building will support the initiative of Oyster culture, management and the mamangement of terestorial integrity and governance structures.
- **SEA BLOCKAGE:** Seasonal veriances are key in the observation of Oyster production and management. At certain times of the year, especially during the rainy season Oyester can be poisonous and not fit for human consumption therefore there is need to block the sea or keep it out of active production exercise thereby allowing the Oyster to grow bigger and reproduce to maximise harvest thus income generated.

COMPONENTS

1. COMMUNICATION

Use of radio, social media and the traditional communicators to create awareness among the local actors in the Oyester value chain.

2. SOCIAL MOBILISATION

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) at all levels of the community aiming at the formation of the target group to protect the environment to culture and conserve the Oyster to maximise production and income levels for women.
- Group formation.
- Development, validation and adoption of a constitution and bylaws

2. CAPACITY BUILDING

- **Governance Training;** This to build the skills and competences of the group executives in the running of the affairs of the group in the attainment of its development objectives.
- **Skills training;** The activity is intended to transfer knowledge and skills to the local beneficiaries
- Monitoring and evaluation training

| DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE | | | | | |
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| COMPONENTS | ACTIVITIES | TECHNICAL PROCESSES / ORGANIZATIONAL | RESULTS / ACHIEVEMENTS | DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED | UNEXPECTED EFFECTS |
| 1. COMMUNICATION | Use of radio, social media and the traditional communicators to create awareness among the local actors in the Oyster value chain. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community sensitisation through radio • Establishment of a face book page. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members are adequately informed of the existing environmental issues • One interest group established | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of diverse Oyster culture • Not many people are conversant with the use of social media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach promoted village unity and cohesiveness. • Cross boarder information sharing is enhanced • Beneficiaries are motivated to learn to engage social media |
| 2. SOCIAL MOBILISATION | Development, validation and adoption of a constitution and bylaws ; This is a basic necessity for effective and efficient governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group discussion on the preparation of governance tools • Community meeting to validate draft constitution and bylaws • Adoption and signing of constitution by group executives. • Registration of the group to enhance legality and legitimacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A legal and legitimate community group instituted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy levels of community to interpret constitution limited | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village unity and cohesiveness. • Cross boarder information sharing is enhanced • Increase awareness level of the community members and the local beneficiaries increased |
| | A2.1. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) at all levels of the community aiming at the formation of the target group to protect the environment to culture and conserve the Oyster to maximise production and income levels for women. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussions to provide key information and identify salient issues of concern about Oyster and mangroves situations. • Include all cadres of society in the decision making processes including the women who are the main beneficiaries and the youths. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key intervention strategies identified; • Better understanding about the intervention strategy and various actors concerned. • Build stronger relationship between various actors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in bringing together various actors on the Oyster value chain at the initial stage as they are living in different communities and countries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional and bylaws abuse • High income levels for women • Self-employment opportunities • Women becoming more independent and participate in the household decision making process. |

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| | <p>A2.2: Group formation ; This is necessary to reinforce the economics of scale thereby creating a conducive environment in working with organised groups rather than individuals.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries taking the lead in group formation. • Guide the process and suggest the nature of the organogram of the group. • Stress on equal representation especially in the executive. • Transparency in the group formation process. | <p>Same as above.</p> | <p>Many ambitious group ideas</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of marginalisation by some members especially the poorest therefore not actively contributing ideas to the group formation. • High level gossip among members. |
| <p>3. CAPACITY BUILDING</p> | <p>A3.1 Governance Training ; This to build the skills and competences of the group executives in the running of the affairs of the group in the attainment of it's development objectives.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level consultation and partnership building among various institutions. • Consolidated group and relationships built. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper management structure in place. • Mutual respect among members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited training durations • Limited funds for follow up trainings. | <p>Succession for the already trained executives.</p> |
| | <p>A3.2 Skills training ; The activity is intended to transfer knowledge and skills to the local beneficiaries in the appropriate environmentally friendly Oyster farming and the conservation and protection of the environment including the mangrove ecology.</p> | <p>New skills learned and transferred to group members.</p> | <p>Skills and experiences transferred to members and other beneficiaries.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated activities in other areas along the Halahine river. • More training required. | <p>Succession can be a threat in regions far apart.</p> |

ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE

CRITERIA 1 : Replicability

| INDICATORS | POSITIVES ASPECTS | NEGATIVES ASPECTS | NON-CONTROLLED ASPECTS |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LIMITED RESOURCES | Relies more on locally available resources as well as explore other avenues for effectiveness and efficient operations of the intervention strategy. | Indigenous knowledge alone cannot support the entire process of management and protection of the mangrove. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abuse of the situation in areas not frequented; Expansion into other areas and communities but skills and technologies can filter at lower levels. |
| TOTAL INCLUSION | Trigger spontaneous and active participation by all for sustainable livelihoods and environmental enhancement and management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some operations can be detrimental to the cause | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flout river blockages New members may join the group yet they have not got a proper understanding of the structures |

CRITERIA 2 : Sustainability

| INDICATORS | POSITIVES ASPECTS | NEGATIVES ASPECTS | NON-CONTROLLED ASPECTS |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OWNERSHIP | The group members and the fishermen supporting and strengthening their observation along the mangrove ecology and open and possible isolated areas for action by defaulters. | Other communities and some members may feel marginalised or adversely controlled. | |
| MANAGEMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise profitability and increased income levels for the farm family. Respect of customary laws put in place by the community. | Loss of certain key data | Since most members are local, they may not fully respect issues of records and book keeping. |

CRITERIA 3 : Degree of participation

| INDICATORS | POSITIVES ASPECTS | NEGATIVES ASPECTS | NON-CONTROLLED ASPECTS |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| SOCIAL COHESION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering of peace and strengthening of relationship among communities Participating in each other's programmes and activities, social or otherwise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse ethnicity and language thus the difficulty to quickly understand each other in their communication. Long duration training: need for translation. | Diversity in views and acceptance of various ethnic groups. |

This tool sheet is the result of field experience, and didn't benefit from scientific or technical evaluation. It will be improved and strengthened over time.

