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Success Story

District Toolkits/Ghana



LUCIA RYBAROVA

A villager in Fort San Sebastian, Shama District, Western Region of Ghana.

Local people drive creation of practical tools turned national models

It would be hard to find a more tangible and practical indicator of the accomplishments of the Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance (ICFG) initiative in Ghana than the district toolkits produced for the nation’s Western Region.

ICFG, known locally as Hen Mpoano (Our Coast), was a four-year United States Agency for International Development-funded initiative implemented by the Coastal Resources Center at the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island. The project ended in January 2014.

The toolkits serve as a catalog summarizing each district’s marine and coastal information. Hen Mpoano produced five toolkits, one for each of the Western Region Districts. “That

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COASTAL RESOURCES CENTER



Above, an aerial view of Princes Town coastline in the Shama District. **Right**, a fisherman at sunset in the Ahanta West District.



was one of the highlights of our project closeout,” said Don Robadue, CRC project manager for Ghana. “Everybody was very excited to get their hands on them.”

That excitement was part of the toolkits endeavor from the start thanks to the early and active involvement of local people in their creation. The idea for the toolkits developed from participatory mapping work that began in the Western Region’s Shama District. Participatory mapping brings together a broad group of stakeholders from all walks of society to literally write down on large plastic overlays what they see as the critical issues confronting their community and ways to address them.

The process helps project leaders and local people learn while honing both the process and the outcomes for successful integrated coastal management that is tailored to the local environment and conditions. Recognizing cultural traditions, the

Ahanta West

Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance Initiative

Integrated Coastal Management Toolkit

Hen Mpoano

Read the Toolkits

To see the ICFG toolkits visit the CRC website: www.crc.uri.edu and search “toolkit.”

mapping sessions were separated by gender: only men in one group and only women and youths in another. “It got a lot of people talking about the issues and what their hopes were,” Don said.

This bottom-up approach was successfully applied throughout the Hen Mpoano project. In the case of the toolkits the sessions led directly to the crafting of the nation’s first floodplain ordinance in the Shama District and to the mapping of wetlands in the Ahanta West District. Such pioneering made the Districts and the toolkits national models that are driving the inclusion of coastal management in plans at the national level. The toolkits had a big impact,” Don noted.

In addition to summarizing local information, each toolkit provides easy-to-follow links to source material, case studies, detailed technical information and suggestions for projects that incorporate integrated coastal management in the planning processes and practices of each District Assembly.

And their design makes them replicable in coastal communities far beyond Ghana’s Western Region.