

A gap between small-scale community mariculture and mariculture as a business: can KCDP bridge the gap?

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Mariculture in Kenya is dependent on wild seed supply, is underdeveloped and can be traced back to the earlier 1980s. Community based small-scale mariculture was initiated about two decades ago along the coast of Kenya and organised community groups (OCGs) formed the entry point for the interventions. The OCGs were either formed by NGOs to specifically implement funded projects or were developed by communities out of influence from neighbour colleagues benefiting from group formation or just change of community merry go-round self-help groups. Most OCGs currently or previously involved in mariculture were originally conservation or environmental groups and only a few developed with core business being mariculture. The number of OCGs involved in small-scale mariculture increased by 360% between 2007 and 2013 while the area under pond culture increased by 404%, crab cages by 204%, while fish cages were also introduced during the same period. The period covered was before any major intervention by KCDP. The target species have been mainly milkfish, mullets, mud crab, prawns, seaweeds and *Artemia*, however, productions have inclined to mainly culture of milkfish, mud crab and prawns either under polyculture in ponds or monoculture in cages. Production capacity has varied between 0.06–0.2kg fish/m², 0.02–0.03kg prawn/m² and 5–20kg crab/month in 2007 and 0.08–0.44kg fish/m², 0.02–0.05kg prawns/m² and 15–40kg crab/month in 2013. Despite that, mariculture has been characterised with low and inconsistent annual production regimes that has been associated to a number of factors. However, through KCDP intervention over the last one and a half years, the fish culture and seaweed farming areas have doubled with more communities being introduced into mariculture. Therefore the issues of KCDP and income, production and sustainability will be discussed in this presentation.