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## RESTORE HER RIGHTS

### Participatory Systematisation: Experiences from the Restoration Process in Chomes, Costa Rica



#### About Chomes

- About 38% of Chomes' coast is covered by mangroves, which are crucial habitats for mollusks and support small-scale artisanal fishing.
- Industrial shrimp farming and unsustainable practices caused large-scale mangrove destruction.
- Red tide outbreaks poisoned marine life, leading to a sharp drop in mollusk populations and economic insecurity for local communities.
- Women, who traditionally harvested mollusks with their families, were most affected by these losses.
- CoopeMoluscosChomes R.L., with support from CoopeSolidaR R.L. and the Network of Responsible Fishing Areas, used participatory ecosystem restoration to protect Chomes' mangroves and mollusk habitats.



This case study spotlights the significance of women's rights advocacy in mangrove restoration, community empowerment and gender equity, and links local efforts with international processes.

#### Challenges and Risk Mitigation

- Promotion of meaningful participation with free, prior and informed consent of CoopeMoluscosChomes R.L.
- Institutional barriers.
- Lack of recognition of small-scale artisanal fishing, role of women in this sector, women's rights, and land tenure issues.
- Threats from private industries like pollution, deforestation and harassment.
- Continued impact of Climate Change.



#### Before Restoration: Self-strengthening as a stepping stone towards transformation

- Development of Participatory Management Plan.
- Traditional knowledge of mollusk women used in the process of developing the management plan before restoration.
- Development of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) to be used in the participatory process.

### **During Restoration: *Integrating ecosystem restoration to larger self-determination processes***

- Sub-group of 15 mollusk gatherer women and select male members helped to plant 6,000 Red Mangroves with a 100 percent survival rate.
- Addition of other endangered species of plants to the area.
- Initiation of larger number of young people into the cooperative.
- Collective learning.
- Dynamic commercialisation and marketing of mollusks.
- Cross-cultural and knowledge exchanges and strengthening regional narratives of mollusk gathering women.



### **Sustaining Restoration: *Actions and reflections towards transformative process***

- Acknowledgement of traditional knowledge in safeguarding mangrove ecosystem and the sustainable harvesting of mollusks.
- Implementation of the Participatory Management Plan.
- Building solidarity within the mollusk gatherer women within Chomes and other communities.
- Recognition of the cooperative's activities at both national and global level, through their representation at Lisbon and COP15.
- Creation and expansion of spaces for dialogue and advocacy.
- Increased opportunities for local tourism – guided visits to the Mangrove, sea and nearby islands.
- El Mercado del Mar (Sea Market) directly purchases a wide variety of products from CoopeMoluscosChomes R.L., contributing to improved livelihoods.



### **Recommendations**

- Restoration work must consider and integrate values of human rights, equality, equity and collective action.
- Address gaps in access to land tenure, adoption of traditional knowledge and inter-generational dialogues related to restoration to achieve sustained efforts, and participation of women in decision making.
- Strengthening advocacy in policy frameworks to ensure better recognition of women's work in mangrove conservation at national and global arenas.



Read the full story by CoopeMoluscosChomes R.L. with support from CoopeSoliDar R.L. in English and Spanish

### **For further information:**

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