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A Report for

# PROJECT ORATSIMBA

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Community Cross-visit Learnings

Jessica Savage

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Between November 2019 and February 2020, 63 representatives from Elodrato, Itapera and Sainte Luce, all part of SEED Madagascar's Project Oratsimba a community-based fisheries management project, took part in one or more cross-visits. One cross-visit was hosted per community and representatives that attended included fishers, community leaders, Fisheries Management Committee Members and intermediaries. The visits followed the establishment of the Elodrato Fisheries Management Committee (July 2019) and the re-election of the Sainte Luce Fisheries Management Committee (August 2019). The visits were held to improve communication and cooperation between communities with adjacent fishing grounds and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs). 31 participants were surveyed on their perceptions of cooperation between communities and Fisheries Management Committees (Elodrato and Sainte Luce only) before (November 2019) and after the cross-visits (August and September 2020). 13 participants were from Sainte Luce, nine from Elodrato and nine from Itapera. 22 participants were members of a Fisheries Management Committee and three participants were female. 18 participants participated in all three cross-visits, seven in two cross-visits and six in one cross-visit. This report is a short summary of perceptions of levels of cooperation between communities and Fisheries Management Committees.

## Cooperation Between Communities

Just over half of participants reported at the endline that the three communities currently work together to manage the lobster fishery. Whilst low this is an increase of four participants since the baseline (Table 1). Only eight participants reported that communities had worked together more since the visits whilst 12 participants reported that communities worked together the same and five reported that communities had worked together less (Fig. 1). Reported experiences of communities working together since the visits included: communication between communities if regulations contained in the *dina* (local law legally ratified in Sainte Luce and in the process of design in Elodrato) were broken by a fisher in another communities fishing ground, meetings and representatives from Sainte Luce visiting other communities to encourage them to establish a *dina* and a periodic no take zone (NTZ).

*“Representatives from Sainte Luce came here to inspire us to establish a dina.”*

Fisheries Management Committee Member, Elodrato

*“We call the other community if someone breaks the fishing rules in the Sainte Luce or Elodrato fishing grounds.”*

Fisheries Management Committee Member, Sainte Luce

Table 1. Participants that answered yes to questions about cooperation between communities (n=31).

	Baseline	Endline	Change
Do the communities work together to manage the lobster fishery?	13	17	4
Should the communities work together more in the future to manage the lobster fishery?	31	30	-1

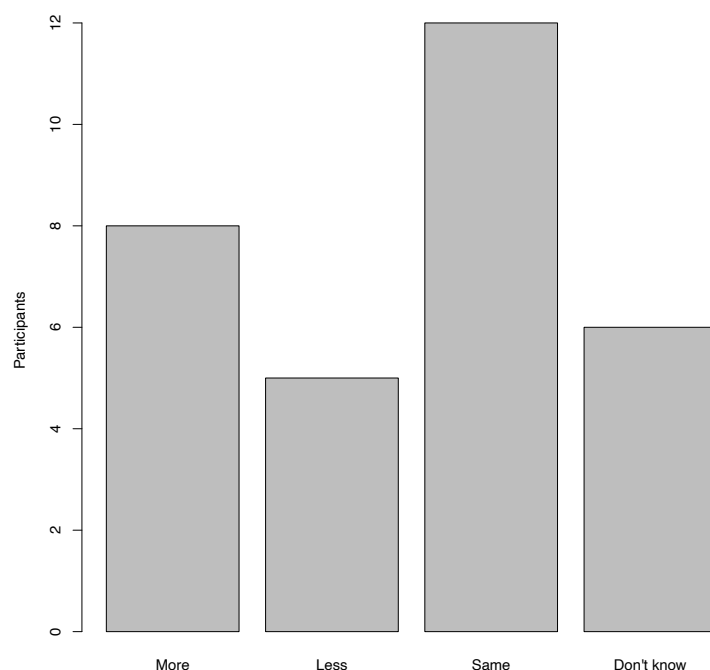


Figure 1. Reported level of cooperation between communities following three cross-visits (n=31).

The number of participants reporting that the three communities should work together more in the future to manage the lobster fishery remained high, reported by all participants except one. The remaining participant, a Fisheries Management Committee member from Sainte Luce, was unsure. This was a decrease of one participant since the baseline (Table 1). Reported reasons why communities should continue working together included: increased compliance with national fisheries regulations and the *dina*, prevention of further lobster stock decline and to exchange ideas between communities.

***“Because in all communities the lobsters are the source of our livelihoods and we need to cooperate for fisheries management”***

Female from fishing household, Itapera

***“Working together is essential to avoid the extinction of the lobsters”***

Fisher, Itapera

***“To discuss and share experiences to find out things which happen in all communities”***

Fisher, Itapera

27 participants reported having ideas for how communities could work together in the future. Ideas included: coordinating NTZ closure timings between Sainte Luce and Elodrato, support on *dina* establishment and enforcement and meetings between communities.



## Cooperation Between Fisheries Management Committees (Elodrato and Sainte Luce)

The baseline was conducted before the Fisheries Management Committees interacted in their official capacity following the establishment of the Elodrato committee. During the baseline all 22 participants reported that the two committees should work together to manage the lobster fishery. At the endline, 19 participants reported that the committees worked together following the visits. Three participants who reported that the two committees should work together at the baseline did not report that the committees had actually worked together at the endline. Reported examples of how committees have worked together included: monitoring compliance with national fisheries regulations and *dina*, reporting *dina* infractions and support on *dina* and NTZ establishment.

***“We communicate with each other if someone does something wrong in our fishing ground”***

Fisheries Management Committee Member, Sainte Luce

***“The committee in Elodrato gives a call to the committee in Sainte Luce if someone uses a net for fishing”***

Fisheries Management Committee Member, Sainte Luce

***“We monitor together people who do not respect the dina and national regulations”***

Fisheries Management Committee Member, Sainte Luce

The number of participants reporting that the committees had worked together more or the same since the cross-visits was equal, 10, whilst two participants were unsure. No participant reported that the committees had worked together less since the cross-visits. However, this would not have been possible given the lack of interaction between the committees prior to the cross-visits (Fig. 2). All participants reported at the endline that the committees should work together more in the future to manage the lobster fishery. Reported reasons why committees should continue to work together included: improved NTZ management, adjacent fishing grounds and to exchange ideas.

***“We depend on each other, we share a fishing ground border”***

Community Leader, Sainte Luce

***“We share the same perspectives about the protected area”***

Fisheries Management Committee Member, Elodrato

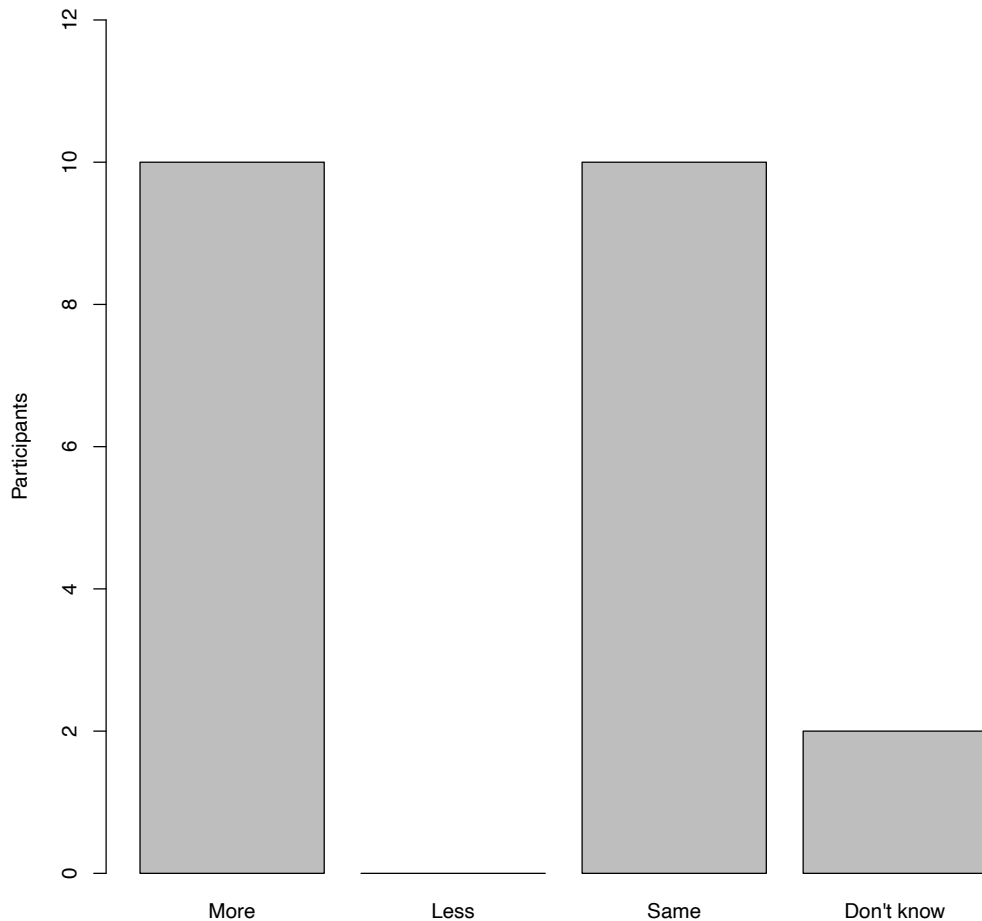


Figure 2. Reported level of cooperation between Fisheries Management Committees following three cross-visits (n=22).

17 participants reported ideas for how committees should work together in the future. Ideas included: ongoing meetings and discussions and, supporting *dina* implementation and monitoring.

### Cross-visit Learnings

Reported cross-visit learnings included: the role of Fisheries Management Committees, NTZ operation and benefits and, the importance of fisheries *dina*. 29 participants reported sharing their cross-visit learnings with members of their community who did not attend the visits: 20 participants shared their learnings through informal everyday conversations and seven shared during community meetings.

### Conclusion

The cross-visits provided an opportunity for the three communities to come together and share their experiences about sustainable fisheries management and to learn more about improving fisheries management with their communities. Overall, it was a positive experience for all participants and improved co-operation between the communities and Fisheries Management Committees. These cross-visits were conducted as part of Phase III of Project Oratsimba funded by the Darwin Initiative.