

ALTERING ALTERNATIVES: A RE-LOOK AT ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

As fish stocks continue to deplete around the world, already vulnerable and typically impoverished communities will be the most at risk. As this issue continues we must consider options for said communities to stably reorient themselves in a way that allows them to still sustain social well-being. Alternative Livelihood Projects have been a common held solution to this problem, but the current state of such ALPs needs a major revision.

WHY RE-EVALUATE?

Alternative livelihoods have been seen as a solution to overfishing and tackling poverty in fishing communities that rely on the fish that is depleting. The idea is that if we can find alternate ways of living through implemented job opportunity we can both halt overexploitation of our ocean resources and maintain economic stability in these communities. On paper this idea sounds effective and damage deficient, but more often than not these projects lack true understanding of community needs and do not see long standing success within the communities.

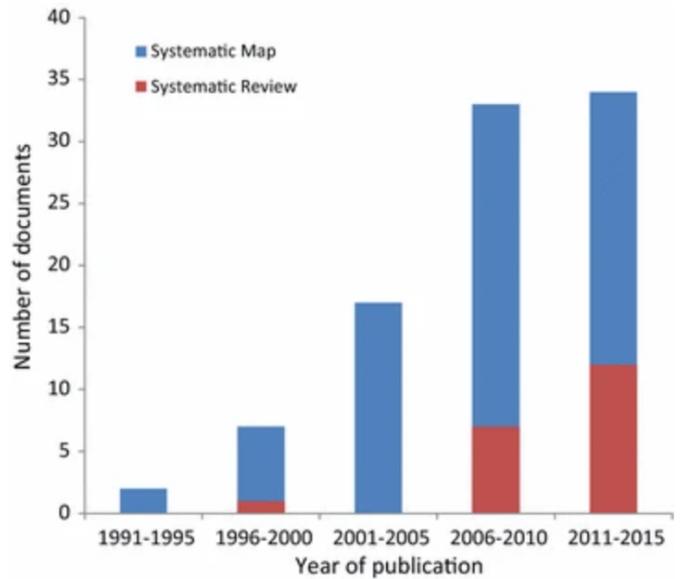


Fig 1: graph taken from Roe et al showing the number of ALPs described by Systemic maps or reviews from 1991 to 2015. The number has greatly increased in this time.

ASSUMPTIONS VS. REALTIES (as told by Amanda Vincent)

01

OTHER INCOME OPTIONS CAN BE FOUND THAT ARE VIABLE

A number of different job options have been used for alternates; bee-keeping, tourism, agriculture, etc.

02

AS OTHER INCOME OPTIONS BECOME AVAILABLE, PEOPLE WILL FIND THEM ATTRACTIVE

The idea assumes people would drop fishing if they could do something else, as fishing is not seen as especially lucrative

03

AS FISHERS ADOPT OTHER LIVELIHOODS, FEWER PEOPLE WILL FISH

This assumes that fishing community will empty and stay empty as fishers leave

04

AS THE FISHERS DECREASE, SO DOES THE PRESSURE

If there are no people fishing, wild populations will have nothing in there way and will restore to fruition

01

MOST INCOME EARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOT ECONOMICALLY VIABLE

Fishing provide some financial security for the people doing it, and many projects that have been put in place do not actually offer an equal or greater transition to security.

02

FISHERS MAY ADD LIVELIHOODS WITHOUT REDUCING PRESSURES

If fishing is till an option it may be more in peoples interests to use an ALP a another source of income rather than choose between the 2.

03

MANY PEOPLE HAVE NO EMPLOYMENT, AND MIGHT WELL FILL THAT GAP LEFT BY FISHERS LEAVING FISHING

Most places where ALPs are implemented are impoverished and there are many without work; if jobs open up in the fishing sector it is likely people will take that opportunity to work

04

IF FEWER PEOPLE FISH BUT DEMAND REMAINS HIGH, THEN THE PRICE PAID FOR THAT MARINE PRODUCTS WILL INCREASE

If the price increases this means that there will still be a demand and exploitation of these ocean resources so there needs to be better protections put in place that extend past community projects; like MPAs or management change.

Downfall of Yellow Croaker

Due to depletion of wild stock from overfishing of the yellow croaker in China PR, the government moved towards mariculture of croaker as an opportunity for fishers to stay in the fisheries while also taking the pressure off wild populations. For some years the project served a a growing fishery for these fishers to revert to as well as other failing fisheries fishers. But the mariculture program had a growth limit that had not been projected correctly leaving the fishery lacking in profits and fishers without jobs; as well as this, the switch from wild to mariculture had not been properly made and the wild stocks did not recover and actually were left in a more depleted state by the early 2000's. (Liu & Mitcheson 2008)

Fig 2: Mariculture plots of Yellow Croaker in Ningde City, China. taken from http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-07/24/c_139237355.htm



HOW TO GET IT RIGHT

- Understand that communities are complex and each situation needs thorough research into what will work for those communities' needs and continue to work past implementation
 - Too often a size one fits all approach has been taken to implement ALPs and more often than not this approach the specific necessities of singular communities
 - Any organization must understand the demographic they are working with and its history to truly understand what intervention substitutes the importance of fishing.
 - 'When we think of intervention only in turns of monetary terms we lose the complexity of the community' ?
- Voices from the communities at risk need to be part of the conversation.
 - Within these communities are vast amounts of knowledge about the area, the people, culture, and other pieces of information that would take years of studying to truly understand.
 - In order for projects to be sustainable they need to be created by the people for the people, in that way knowledge of said projects will be more easily adaptable to other issues in the future for said communities work with
- Ensure longevity of the projects that are being implemented
 - This can be done through proper training of individuals in the community about the implementation of projects
 - Having adequate funding would prolong the period in which projects can be implemented and be safe from fallbacks
- From the beginning of the project and onward have a steady relationship with service providers and stakeholders
 - to ensure security of any project you must have known outlets for business opportunity

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