



PROFILE

Defending a way of life—Sara García Fisherwoman from Costa Rica

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A fisherwoman from Cabuya in Costa Rica, Sara García, is the first to admit that fishing is hard work. But she says: “I like the work. I like working with fish. I know how to prepare and sell it, and other women admire what I do.”

Sara García’s family, traditionally a small-scale fishing family, migrated to Costa Rica from their home country, Nicaragua, when she was little. She and her siblings spent their early years in Guanacaste in northern Costa Rica, but the family moved to Cabuya in search of work when Sara was about 15. The constant search for work meant that

knack for empathy and solving problems, being in fishing for Sara also means lending a sympathetic ear to her comrades. “I help the fishers when they are upset and they listen to me. I can really support the fishers’ organization because they listen to me. I am like a balance for them. More women need to get involved,” she adds.

Sara’s family is closely knit; her brother, also a fisherman, and her sisters, married to fishermen, live close by and are always there for each other.

The year 2015 has been a special one for Sara. She was able to make a trip to Honduras—her first trip out of her hometown. Another feather in her cap has been completing two courses with the National Women’s Institution (INAMU).

Today Sara is both pleased with and astonished at herself: “I took a trip out of the country. I developed myself as a woman. And to think that earlier I could hardly say my name out loud!”

Known for her simplicity and straightforwardness, Sara enjoys the respect and trust of her community. Truly an inspiring person, she has many plans for the future. Recently, Sara invested in a shrimp packaging machine and did a trial sales run of *mariscadas* (assorted seafood) and shrimp packages at the local market, which went off very well. Boosted by this success, Sara says with all the simplicity and determination that are the hallmark of her personality, “My goal is to have my own business and I know that I will be successful very soon!” ■

Sara did not have formal schooling but that was hardly a handicap since Cabuya readily offered work to those who needed it. Not just work, but as it turned out, romance too!

“I met Olivier, my husband, also a fisher, in the first ten days of coming to Cabuya. He was 18 then. We married a year later and I had my first son when I was 17 years old,” Sara reminisces.

Today, a mother of three sons, who have all turned to fishing to support themselves, Sara cleans, prepares and sells the daily catch but, just as readily, she goes to the sea to fish whenever the need arises. “I pull the nets and it is a very nice experience,” she says.

Fishing has meant everything to Sara and her family. Rather than just a source of livelihood, it is a way of life. Blessed with a