



Lilia Briones is a fisherwoman. She is also a community leader, in the forefront of the struggles of her community in Barra del Colorado, a small-scale artisanal fishing in Costa Rica's Northern Caribbean coast. Her partner, Jesús Chavés, is a fisherman and the couple has three children.

Lilia Briones acquired her extensive fishing skills at a young age by watching the elders in Barra del Colorado catch fish. She

She became the association's first president, after a vote of confidence from her fellow fisherwomen, who trusted her clear vision on the need to obtain support from the Government and its institutional partners to resume trawler fisheries in the Northern Caribbean coast. The ultimate goal was to protect women's rights to decent work, health and work safety, as well as to be fully recognized as fishworkers.

Lilia dreams of the day when her community will have the necessary infrastructure to develop their fishing activities and to market safer products. In her dream, every community member is involved and is making a contribution towards responsible and sustainable fisheries. Lilia's dream is no mere fancy. In fact if it does not come true, it is likely that fishworkers' incomes will plunge and their livelihoods will deteriorate, leaving them with no choice but to abandon the community.

Currently, Doña Lilia lives in a Protected Wildlife Area, where economic activities are restricted. Barra del Colorado contains both a Responsible Fisheries Marine Area (co-managed with INCOPECA, which is Costa Rica's Fisheries and Aquaculture Institute) and a Management Marine Area (under state governance through the Ministry for Energy and Environment, MINAE). In her opinion, both models for fisheries conservation and development require the participation of women in decision-making in order to reach the necessary balance between protection and development. At the moment, the community has no license to catch shrimp, and, since all land is owned by the State, land tenure remains an issue.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties, Lilia is passionate about her work and feels proud of her achievements. **M**

PROFILE

Proud and passionate : Despite several challenges, Lilia Briones Bermúdez, a community leader in Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica, remains steadfastly committed to the struggles of her community

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Lilia Briones Bermúdez

learnt a lot from her own father, who started off as a fisherman but later took to catching shrimp in 1997, the year this activity began in their community.

In 2013, however the Supreme Court in Costa Rica ordered the State to stop granting shrimp fishing licenses until it could provide scientific studies demonstrating the activity to be sustainable. Against this background, Lilia, alongside other women and men in her community, felt the need to stand up for their rights. She was pivotal in the establishment of the Women's Association of Shrimp Handlers and Processors of Responsible Fisheries Marine Area of Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica, an association of fisherwomen that, together with the fishermen, started claiming the right of this small Caribbean community to catch shrimp and prawn.