# SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX IN PUNTARENAS:

## a vision of the fishing sector

MARVIVA FOUNDATION
Jaime García Gómez, Latin American Center for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development of INCAE Business School (CLACDS-INCAE)

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Paseo de los Turistas, Puntarenas (© Depositphotos)

MarViva

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## a vision of the fishing sector

**EDITOR** Katherine Arroyo Arce

**AUTHOR** Jaime García Gómez, Latin American Center for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development of INCAE Business School (CLACDS-INCAE)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** Jorge Arturo Jiménez Ramón

**EDITORIAL COORDINATION** Juan M. Posada, Diana Bonilla Bolaños and Melissa Álvarez Barquero

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Fishing is one of the sources of employment in the province. Pág. 9 © MarViva Foundation

Fishing pangas or boats. Costa de Pájaros, Puntarenas. Pág. 12 © MarViva Foundation

Fishing communities depend on fishing for their livelihood. Costa de Pájaros, Puntarenas. Pág. 22 © MarViva Foundation

Panga anchored in the coast. Costa de Pájaros, Puntarenas. Pág. 26 © MarViva Foundation

Departure point for fishers in Isla Chira, Puntarenas. Pág. 30 © MarViva Foundation

Fishing sector in Isla Chira, Puntarenas. Pág. 42 © MarViva Foundation

Isla Chira in Puntarenas is one of the fishing communities in the province. Pág. 44 Back Cover © MarViva Foundation

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In this sense, we also thank the team of the Latin American Center for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development of INCAE Business School (CLACDS-INCAE, for its acronym in Spanish);particularly, to Mr. Jaime García Gómez, researcher senior , coordinator of the application of the SPI in the central canton of Puntarenas and author of this publication, whose support as a strategic partner of the project was essential to achieve one of its fundamental objectives: to promote the adoption of public policies that effectively contribute to achieving comprehensive social well-being in the geographical area of study.

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Finally, MarViva thanks the foundation's team in charge of the implementation and monitoring of this initiative, as well as the consultants who, from their different areas of experience, collaborated proactively to enrich this project.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms



| | |
|---|---|
| **BCCR** | Central Bank of Costa Rica (Banco Central de Costa Rica) |
| **CARSI** | Central America Regional Security Initiative |
| **CCSS** | Costa Rican Social Security Fund (Caja Costarricense del Seguro Social) |
| **ECLAC** | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| **CLACDS-INCAE** | Latin American Center for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development (Centro Latinoamericano para la Competitividad y el Desarrollo Sostenible) |
| **$CO_2$** | carbon dioxide |
| **CRC** | Costa Rican colones |
| **ENAHO** | National Household Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Hogares) |
| **IMF** | International Monetary Fund |
| **ICT** | Costa Rican Tourism Board (Instituto Costarricense de Turismo) |
| **HDI** | Human Development Index |
| **IMAS** | Joint Social Aid Institute (Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social) |
| **INCOPESCA** | Costa Rican Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture (Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura) |
| **INEC** | National Institute of Statistic and Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos) |
| **SPI** | Social Progress Index |
| **MTSS** | Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social) |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organization |
| **GDP** | Gross Domestic Product |
| **PROCOMER** | Costa Rican Foreign Trade Promoter |
| **USD** | US Dollars |

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# Introduction

Costa Rica's development model, based largely on attracting foreign investment and open trade, has been considered successful due to the sustained growth of the national economy since the 1990s. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita grew, on average, by 4.5% between 2000 and 2013, a figure significantly higher than the 3.8% reported in the region. Costa Rica ranks fifth in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 2020 Human Development Index (HDI). Likewise, the country's efforts in terms of sustainability have consolidated Costa Rica as a world leader in reforestation and biodiversity conservation.

Despite how favorable these indicators are, challenges persist for the inclusive development of the population, such as the growing fiscal deficit and social inequity (OECD, 2020). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has noted with concern the crisis of Costa Rican inequality, which has had a sustained increase since 1990 in contrast to other economies in the region. By 2019, Costa Rica was the country with the highest income inequality of the OECD countries, above Chile and Mexico.

These contrasts and inequalities in the distribution of wealth and well-being are closely linked to various regional gaps caused both by the inability of institutions to implement coordinated and decentralized public policies, as well as by the inability of certain productive activities to generate effective and sustainable value and social progress in coastal areas. In this context, MarViva Foundation, with the financial support of the CARSI agency, has promoted since October 2018 the project ***"Puntarenas more prosperous and secure through institutional strengthening"***, with the purpose of facilitating the generation of information by government authorities to make public policy decisions that promote the effective improvement of the quality of life of the coastal population, with emphasis on the population linked to fishing activities in the central canton of Puntarenas.

Fishing is one of the sources of employment in the province
(© MarViva Foundation)

MarViva Foundation, with the financial support of the CARSI agency, has promoted since October 2018 the project *"Safer and more prosperous Puntarenas through institutional strengthening"*

Puntarenas is located in the Central Pacific region, where according to the National Household Survey (ENAHO, for its acronym in Spanish) of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC, for its acronym in Spanish), 34.7% of the population lives in conditions of poverty (INEC, 2020). Unemployment reaches 14.3%, notably higher than the national average of 11.3% (Continuous Employment Survey 1Q2019, INEC).

In this context, the Center for Competitiveness and Sustainable Development of INCAE Business School (CLACDS-INCAE) has become an implementing partner of this project, together with MarViva, in order to generate a socioeconomic baseline to describe the characteristics specific to the fishing sector, identify opportunities for economic development in the project implementation area (Puntarenas, Chacarita, El Roble and Barranca districts, in the central canton of Puntarenas), and generate recommendations to stimulate the inclusion of the fishing sector in new economic and social progress dynamics, contributing to the recovery of marine-coastal resources. In this context, this publication presents the main findings of the first SPI measurement in the country at a district level in Puntarenas and aimed at the area's fishing sector.

# The Index of
# **SOCIAL PROGRESS**

Fishing pangas or boats. Costa de Pájaros, Puntarenas (© MarViva Foundation)

# Objectives and advantages



Recently, a new vision of development has become established, according to which a successful society is not the one that accumulates the most economic achievements, but rather the one that satisfies the basic needs of its individuals. Needs such as the generation of conditions to improve their quality of life, the protection of the environment and opportunities for comprehensive well-being for the majority, begin to assume a leading role in the new paradigm of inclusive economic growth, focused on comprehensively addressing the people's living conditions.

In this context, it is essential to promote political interventions and actions aimed at creating favorable conditions for inclusive growth, based on new indicators that allow the comprehensive well-being of societies to be successfully measured. This is how the SPI arises (Figure 1): a measurement that integrates social and environmental indicators, complementary to GDP and the economic component of development. Its function is to make it easier for societies to measure the results of the actions and policies implemented to improve people's lives, with a view to promoting inclusive growth.

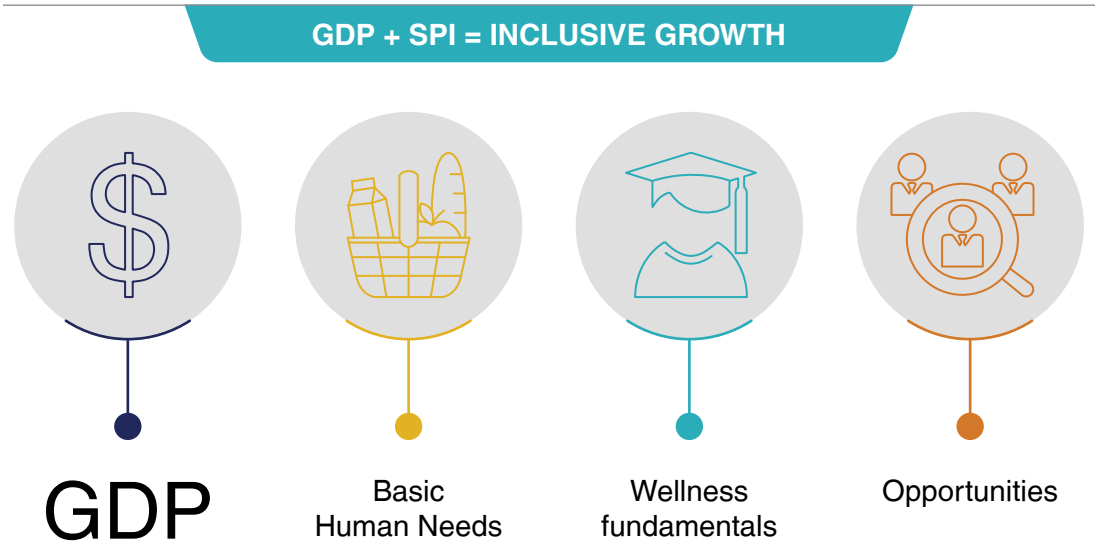



**FIGURE 1** SPI as a complement to economic variables (Source: Social Progress Imperative, 2020).

To fulfill this role, the SPI proposes a robust and holistic measurement model that can be used by leaders in government, business, and civil society to accelerate progress toward a society with a better standard of living. The versatility of its methodology facilitates the formulation of strategic roadmaps adapted to the gaps in social progress identified in the measurement. It could also create consistent sets of measures of social progress applied at different geographic scales and with the most current data available. In other words, the SPI can be measured at the country level and at the cantonal level to facilitate the contextualized identification of deficiencies and weaknesses in society. Thanks to its methodological flexibility, the indicator can be obtained at levels closer to citizens, allowing more precise diagnoses of social and environmental conditions. In this way, the interested stakeholder, be it governments, the private sector or civil society organizations, will be able to focus their resources and efforts on the geographic scale or thematic area in which a greater social and environmental impact can be obtained.

These characteristics differentiate the SPI from other measurements of social or environmental well-being that are already applied in Costa Rica (Table 1), making it the most precise instrument for planning inclusive and sustainable economic growth strategies at the community level.

**CUADRO 1** Comparison of well-being indicators (Source: MarViva Foundation)

| Indicator | Geographical coverage and last year available | Social aspects | Environmental aspects | Scalable and upgradeable | Granularity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Progress Index | • Country (2016)<br>• Regional (2015)<br>• Cantonal (2015)<br>• Communities (2019) | Yes | Yes | Yes | 3 dimensions<br>12 Components<br>40+ indicators |
| Human Development Index | • Country (2015)<br>• Cantonal (2016) | Yes | No | No | 3 dimensions |
| Multidimensional Poverty Index | • Country (2015)<br>• Regional (2015)<br>• District (2015) | Yes | No | No | 5 dimensions<br>20 indicators |
| Social Development Index | • Country (2013)<br>• Regional (2013)<br>• Cantonal (2013) | Yes | No | No | 4 dimensions<br>16 indicators |

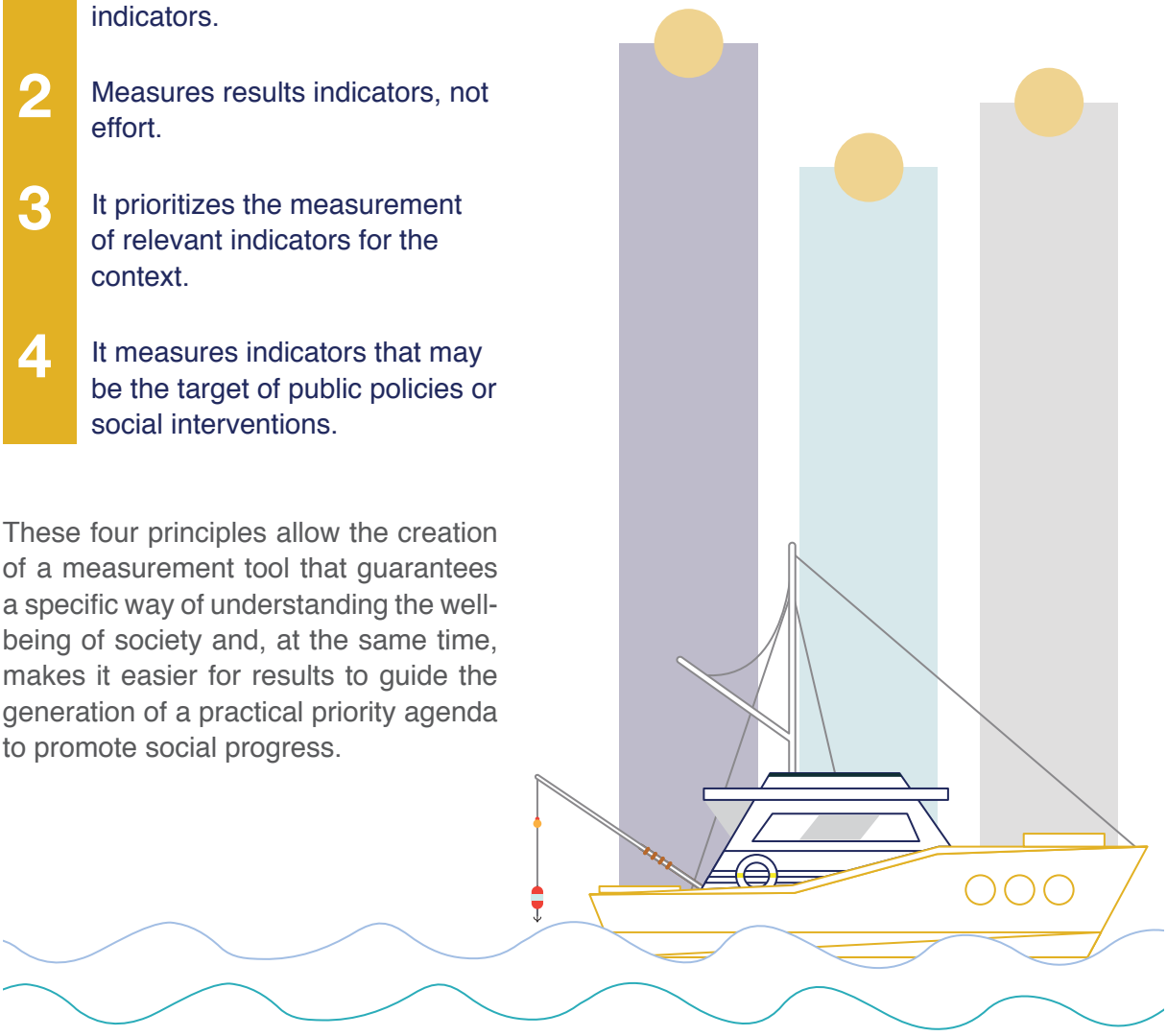
# Methodology



In its methodological design, the SPI is governed by the following basic principles:

1. It only takes in consideration social and environmental indicators.
2. Measures results indicators, not effort.
3. It prioritizes the measurement of relevant indicators for the context.
4. It measures indicators that may be the target of public policies or social interventions.

These four principles allow the creation of a measurement tool that guarantees a specific way of understanding the well-being of society and, at the same time, makes it easier for results to guide the generation of a practical priority agenda to promote social progress.



The SPI measurement is structured around three thematic dimensions: i) basic human needs; ii) wellness fundamentals and iii) opportunities. These dimensions answer three fundamental questions that guide the evaluation of the social progress level of a social group:

1. Are the most essential needs of society satisfied?
2. Are the fundamental elements present for people and communities to increase their well-being?
3. Are there opportunities for all people to achieve their full potential?

To answer these questions, the three thematic dimensions of the SPI are broken down into twelve components, which represent essential well-being concepts in the 21st century, and are measured by more than forty indicators through the application of a survey. These components, as illustrated in Table 2, are distributed in their three thematic dimensions, facilitating a granular and multifaceted vision of well-being.

**TABLE 2** Social Progress Index model: thematic dimensions and components to be measured (Source: Social Progress Imperative, 2020)

| SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX | |
|---|---|
| **Basic Human Needs** | |
| **Nutrition and basic medical care**<br>Do people have enough food and access to basic medical care? | |
| **Water and sanitation**<br>Can people drink water and remain clean without getting sick? | |
| **Housing**<br>Do people have adequate housing with basic services? | |
| **Personal safety**<br>Do people feel safe? | |

**Wellness fundamentals**

### Access to basic knowledge

Do people have the educational foundations to improve their lives?

### Access to information and communications

Do people have free access to ideas and information from anywhere in the world?

### Health and well-being

Do people live long, healthy lives?

### Environmental quality

Is this society using its resources in a way that makes them available to future generations?

**Oportunidades**

### Personal rights

Are people free of restrictions to exercise their rights?

### Personal freedom and choice

Are people free to make their own decisions without restrictions?

### Tolerance and inclusion

Is anyone denied the opportunity to be an active member of society?

### Access to higher education

Do people have the opportunity to achieve high levels of education?

Through findings derived from the measurement of these components of the SPI, it is possible to define the well-being of society, calculate the level of social progress and identify priority areas of intervention according to a set of relevant and actionable indicators for the community.

# SPI Rating Scale



The SPI is scaled from zero to 100. A country, canton or district could achieve a score of 100 if it reaches the highest rating possible on all indicators, while a score of zero is achieved if it obtains the lowest possible across all indicators.

“The levels of social progress associated with these scores are distributed as follows: very high level (between 100 and 85 points), high level (between 84 and 75 points), medium high level (between 74 and 65 points), medium level low (between 64 and 55 points), low level (between 54 and 45 points) and very low level (between 44 and zero points) (Figure 2)”.

In turn, each of the three dimensions and their corresponding components can also be measured on a scale from zero to 100 points. So, in terms of the absolute results, the SPI makes it possible to measure gaps in quality of life that exist in the communities, according to the level of social progress of each one of them.

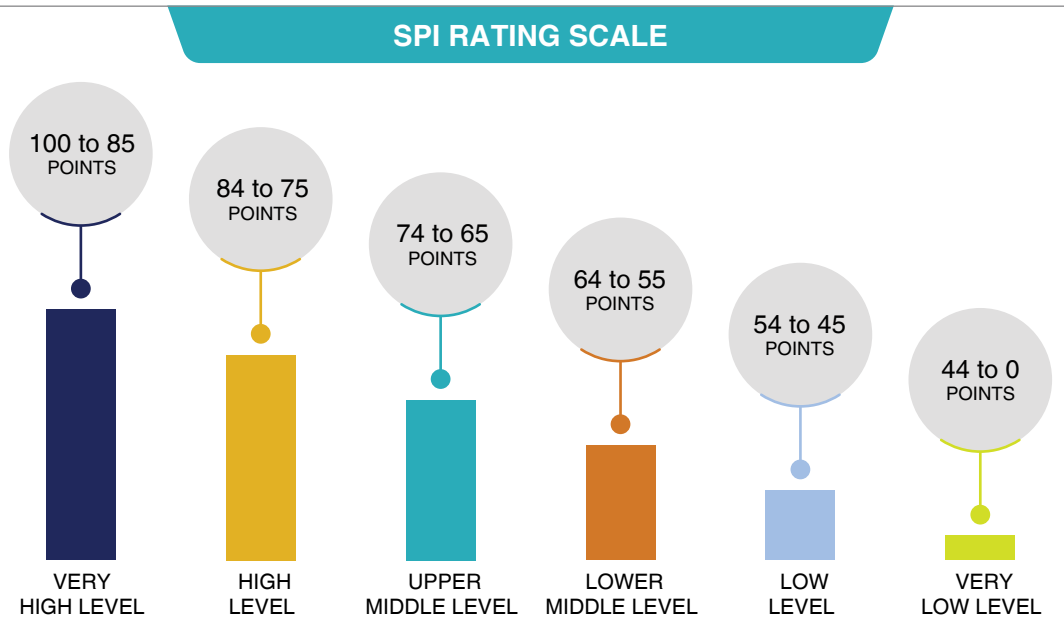



**FIGURE 2** SPI Rating Scale

# Previous SPI measurements in Costa Rica



As mentioned above, the level of social progress is rated on a scale of zero to 100, with 100 being the highest rating and indicative of a very high level of social progress. On a global level, Costa Rica has a score of 83.01 points, which is equivalent to a high level of social progress. It is the country with the second highest score in Latin America, behind Chile, which has 83.34 points (Social Progress Index, 2020). At the local level, according to the cantonal SPI measurement, Puntarenas has a score of 65.91 points, ranking 77th out of 81 cantons in total (CLACDS-INCAE, 2019). This shows that, even though Costa Rica has a high level of social progress as a country, the well-being is not distributed evenly throughout the territory.

The SPI has also been implemented as a tool to generate measurements and to support the adoption of policy decisions at the sectoral level. For example, the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT, for its acronym in Spanish) has incorporated the SPI as one of its indicators of success in the National Tourism Development Plan 2017-2021. In this way, the SPI has been applied in 32 tourism development centers, and the information generated in these measurements has been used in the Comprehensive Management of Tourist Destinations strategy, which seeks to promote the sector as a lever of sustainable development for tourism communities (ICT, 2019).

As will be detailed below (Table 3), in this case the SPI methodology was adapted to generate data at the district level, characterizing both the population in general and the surveyed segment linked to the fishing sector. This SPI application constitutes the largest well-being measurement exercise in recent years in Puntarenas, obtaining information on the standard of living of 1,000 households, located in the districts of Chacarita, El Roble, Barranca and Puntarenas.

**TABLE 3** SPI in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Source: prepared by the author)

## SPI in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

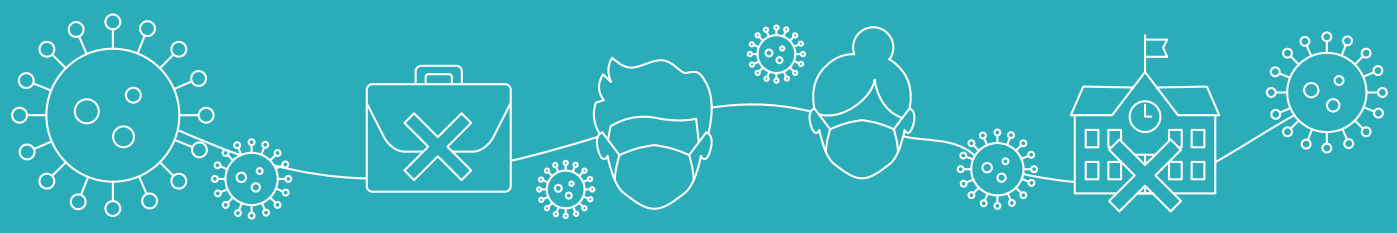
The COVID-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis, as it also has strong impacts on the economic and social development of the countries. Indeed, the economic and social costs are already reaching levels unprecedented in modern Latin American history. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have estimated a drop in GDP of 9.1%, the largest contraction in 100 years. The International Labor Organization (ILO) records an increase of 15 million unemployed; while the World Bank estimates that 53 million people will see their income fall below the regional poverty line (USD 5.50 a day), which represents the biggest setback in the last 20 years.

But the deterioration in these variables does not tell the whole story, since this global crisis is systemic, with impacts in different areas of society that go beyond a drop in income. For this reason, to visualize the multiple impacts that are already affecting the level of well-being in the region, it is recommended to use the SPI model that includes 12 components to measure the collective and sustainable well-being of the countries.

For example, in the “Access to basic knowledge” component, an educational crisis is being experienced, since schools have remained closed and the application of remote education presents technical and implementation challenges, especially in our countries with low connectivity. The World Bank expects not only a learning loss, but also an increase in school dropouts. Another example is the “Environmental Quality” component, which has mixed effects, because although in the short term the confinement has reduced carbon dioxide emissions ($CO_2$), there has also been an increase in plastic waste (masks, gloves, etc.) in the seas. On the other hand, in terms of “Inclusion” there is a negative impact in the short term driven by the increase in violence against women and unemployment among them, since they have been more affected by the closure of activities in which they have more participation.

The pandemic has put at risk our capacity as a society to generate economic and social progress, which in practical terms means that social cohesion, sustainability, and well-being are in danger not only of stagnating, but of worsening and erasing in a few months the advances of the last decade.

Hence the importance of governments, companies, and citizens beginning to work together, not only in containing and mitigating the pandemic, but also in addressing reconstruction and rehabilitation processes with a comprehensive perspective focused and based on data and evidence.



# Application of the SPI in the central canton **OF PUNTARENAS**

Fishing communities depend on the extraction of marine-coastal resources for their livelihood. Costa de Pájaros, Puntarenas (© MarViva Foundation)

# Scope, adaptation, and application of the survey



During the months of September and October 2019, the CLACDS-INCAE team measured the social progress of four districts of the canton of Puntarenas (Chacarita, El Roble, Barranca, and Puntarenas; Figure 3), through the door-to-door application of the SPI survey in 1,000 homes in the area. These surveys were distributed proportionally according to the number of inhabitants per district, based on INEC data.

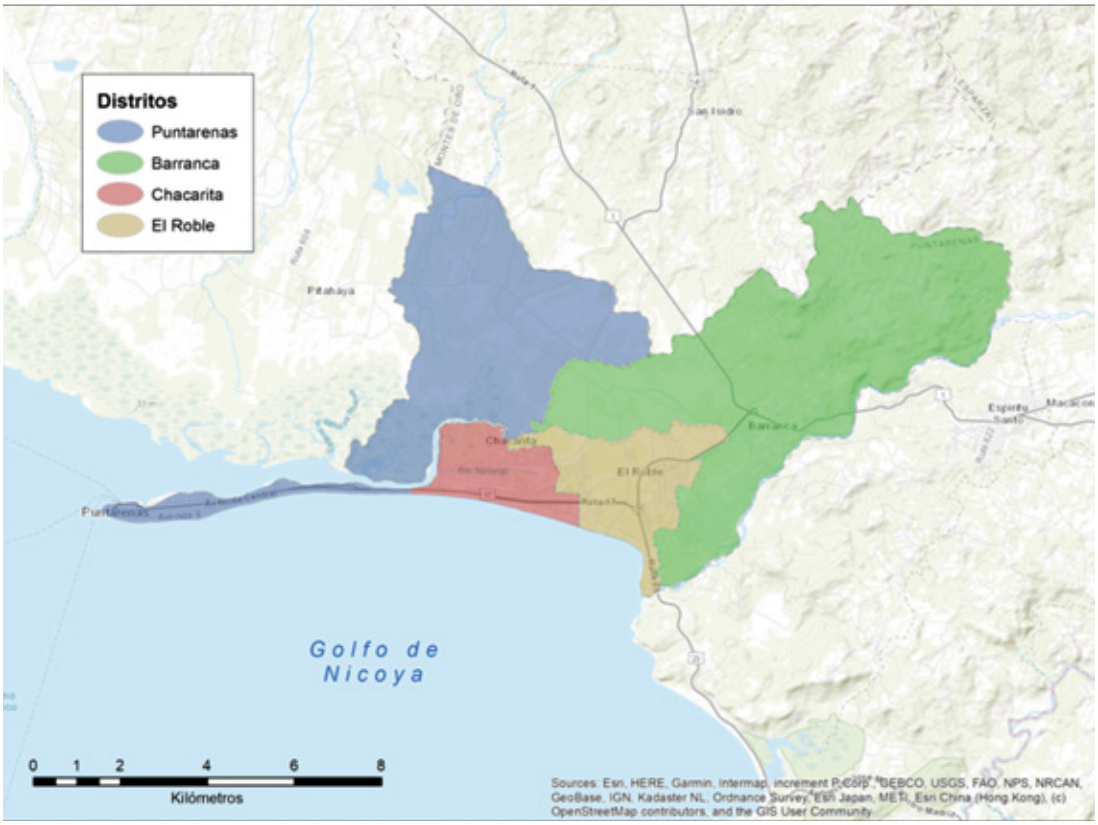



**FIGURE 3** Districts of the canton of Puntarenas where the SPI survey was conducted (Source: MarViva Foundation)

To carry out the measurement, the survey incorporates additional questions applicable particularly to the surveyed population, which maintains a link with the fishing activity. In this way, a survey with 120 coded questions was designed to measure the three dimensions of the SPI (Table 4), as well as complementary indicators of interest to characterize the sector.

Regarding the indicators of the fishing sector, questions are included to measure the family economic income, the type of participation of the respondent in the sector, the type of specific activity carried out, if they own boats, their perception of the future of the sector in the area, the identification of the main problems of the sector, as well as their personal and family aspirations related to their involvement in the fishing activity. This analysis has provided a more detailed vision of the population that has lived off fishing, as a contrast of the general population of the canton that was also surveyed. Likewise, the comparison between the fishing population and the rest of the community has provided a perspective on the employability of those interviewed in the fishing sector, by asking questions related to their skills.

Once the data was processed, the survey adapted and the SPI methodology applied, 60 indicators were obtained for the corresponding measurement.

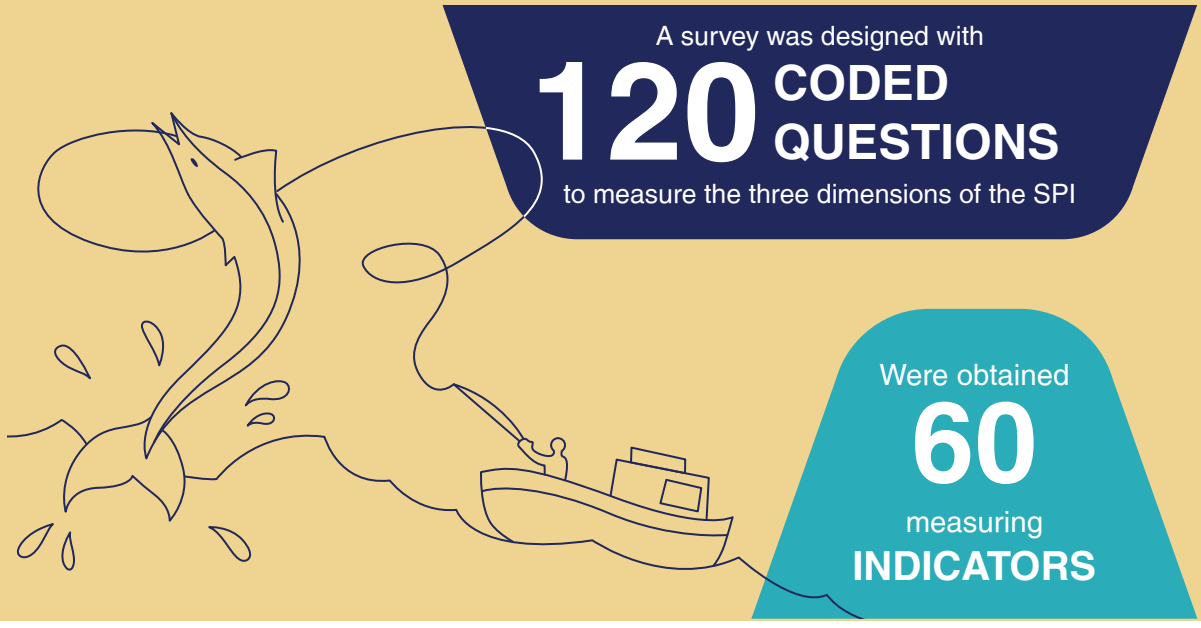


**TABLE 4** Social Progress Index model applied to the districts of Puntarenas: dimensions, components, and indicators (Source: Social Progress Imperative, 2020)

| Social Progress Indexes | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Basic Human Needs** | **Wellness fundamentals** | **Opportunities** |
| **Nutrition and basic medical care**<br>• Access to child health care<br>• Access to emergency medical care<br>• Infant immunization<br>• Access to food | **Access to basic knowledge**<br>• Adults with schooling<br>• Adults without schooling<br>• Primary enrolment<br>• Secondary enrolment | **Personal rights**<br>• Private ownership<br>• Access to information<br>• Voter turnout<br>• Freedom of association<br>• Freedom of transit |
| **Water and sanitation**<br>• Overcrowding<br>• Housing adequacy<br>• Satisfaction with housing<br>• Access to electricity<br>• Continuity of electrical service | **Access to information and communications**<br>• Computer access<br>• Internet users<br>• Mobile phone user<br>• Smartphone penetration | **Personal freedom and choice**<br>• Teen Pregnancy<br>• Freedom to decide on your life<br>• Cultural and recreational activities<br>• Forced labor<br>• Corruption<br>• Women's Leadership |
| **Housing**<br>• Access to drinking water<br>• Continuity of service<br>• Improved access to sanitation | **Health and well-being**<br>• Obesity<br>• Marijuana use<br>• Alcoholism<br>• Respiratory diseases<br>• Chronic diseases<br>• Suicide | **Tolerance and inclusion**<br>• Inclusion of immigrants<br>• Inclusion of LGBT people<br>• Religious Inclusion<br>• Violence against women<br>• Community support networks<br>• Inclusion of people with disabilities |
| **Personal safety**<br>• Gun violence<br>• Home burglary<br>• Street theft<br>• Fights<br>• Perception of insecurity<br>• Frequency of pedestrian impacts<br>• Drug sales on the street | **Environmental quality**<br>• Segregation of waste<br>• Accumulation of garbage<br>• Access to green spaces<br>• Air quality<br>• Quality of water resources | **Access to higher education**<br>• Average education for adult women<br>• Young people with higher education<br>• Adults with higher education<br>• Access of young people to higher education<br>• Access of women to higher education |

# Main findings

As a starting point for the analysis and comparison of results between the population related to the fishing sector and the rest of the inhabitants surveyed in the study area, after the application of the survey, 180 interviewees linked to this productive activity were identified, representing 18% of the total sample.

This number exceeds the calculation of the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS, for its acronym in Spanish) according to which, for 2018, the participation of insured workers in the fishing activity, in the entire canton of Puntarenas, was 3.41% with respect to the economically active population. Likewise, cantonal data extracted from the National Census (INEC, 2011), estimate a proportion of workers in this sector equivalent to 7%, an amount that is not far from the calculations of the Central Bank of Costa Rica (BCCR, for its acronym in Spanish), according to which, in 2018, workers in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing activities represented 11% of the workers in the canton of Puntarenas. Thus, a sample of 18%, like the one obtained in this measurement, is within the values expected according to the references mentioned.

Panga anchored in the coast. Costa de Pájaros, Puntarenas (© MarViva Foundation)

## General results and by dimension of social progress

Once the survey data has been processed, the research team finds that, initially, there is a difference between the social progress scores obtained by the population linked to the fishing sector, and those obtained by the surveyed population not related to the sector (Figure 4).

In the case of the fishing population, the score was 64.34 points, which is equivalent to a medium-low level of social progress. In addition, the interviewees who answered that they were neither fishers nor work in the sector, obtained a score of 67.81 points, which is equivalent to a medium-high level of social progress.

Regarding the scores obtained in the three dimensions of social progress, it is evident that, in all three cases, the population linked to the fishing sector obtained lower scores compared to the population not related to this productive activity:

- In the "Basic Human Needs" dimension, the population related to fishing obtained 72.93 points (medium-high level), while the population that is not related to this activity obtained 79.47 points (high level).
- Regarding "Wellness fundamentals", the fishing sector obtained 62.04 points (medium-low level), but the contrast population or not linked to the sector, obtained 63.94 points (medium-low level).
- On the other hand, in the "Opportunities" dimension, the population linked to fishing obtained 58.04 points (medium-low level), and the contrast population obtained 60.02 points (medium-low level).

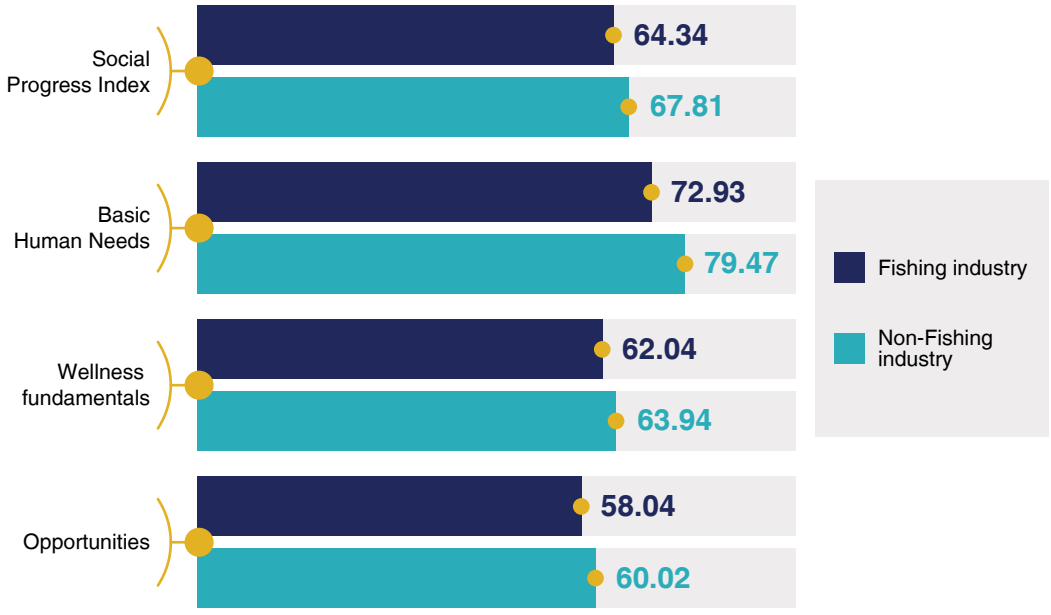



**FIGURE 4** Comparison of SPI results in general and by dimension among populations linked and not linked to the fishing sector (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

# Results of SPI dimension component

The following tables (Table 5, 6 and 7) summarize the results of the scores obtained in relation to the twelve components of the 3 dimensions of the SPI, both for the fishing sector and for the population not linked to fishing.

**TABLE 5** Scores obtained in the components of dimension 1: Basic human needs (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

| Component | Fishing sector score | Non-Fishing sector score |
|---|---|---|
| Nutrition and basic medical care | 80.53 points (high) | 82.15 points (high) |
| Water and sanitation | 88.18 points (very high) | 93,80 points (very high) |
| Housing | 86,08 points (very high) | 87,13 points (very high) |
| Personal safety | 36.93 points (very low) | 54.79 points (low) |

**TABLE 6** Scores obtained in the components of dimension 2: Wellness fundamentals (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

| Component | Fishing sector score | Non-Fishing sector score |
|---|---|---|
| Access to basic knowledge | 71.21 points (medium high) | 75.66 points (high) |
| Access to information and communications | 64.45 points (medium low) | 67,10 points (medium high) |
| Health and well-being | 67.49 points (medium-high) | 68.39 points (medium-high) |
| Environmental quality | 45.01 points (low) | 44.61 points (very low) |

**TABLE 7** Scores obtained in the components of dimension 3: Opportunities (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

| Component | Fishing sector score | Non-Fishing sector score |
|---|---|---|
| Personal rights | 62.11 points (medium-low) | 59.65 points (medium-low) |
| Personal freedom and choice | 50.33 points (low) | 51.97 points (low) |
| Tolerance and inclusion | 62.83 points (medium low) | 66.01 points (medium high) |
| Access to higher education | 56,88 points (medium low) | 62,47 points (medium low) |

# Characterization of the Puntarenas fishing **SECTOR ACCORDING TO THE SPI**

Departure point for fishers in Isla Chira, Puntarenas. (© MarViva Foundation)

# 1. Family income, subsidies, and social security



When adding the salaries and other income of the fishing population surveyed, the result is that 48.85% receive less than 200,000 Costa Rican colones (CRC) per month, while 36.78% receive between CRC 200,000 and CRC 400,000 per month. On the other hand, in the surveyed population not linked to fishing, the income received by 35.47% is in the range between CRC 200,000 and CRC 400,000 per month, and 47.82% receive less than CRC 200,000 per month (Figure 5). On average, the population not related to the fishing sector has higher monthly income than the fishing population.

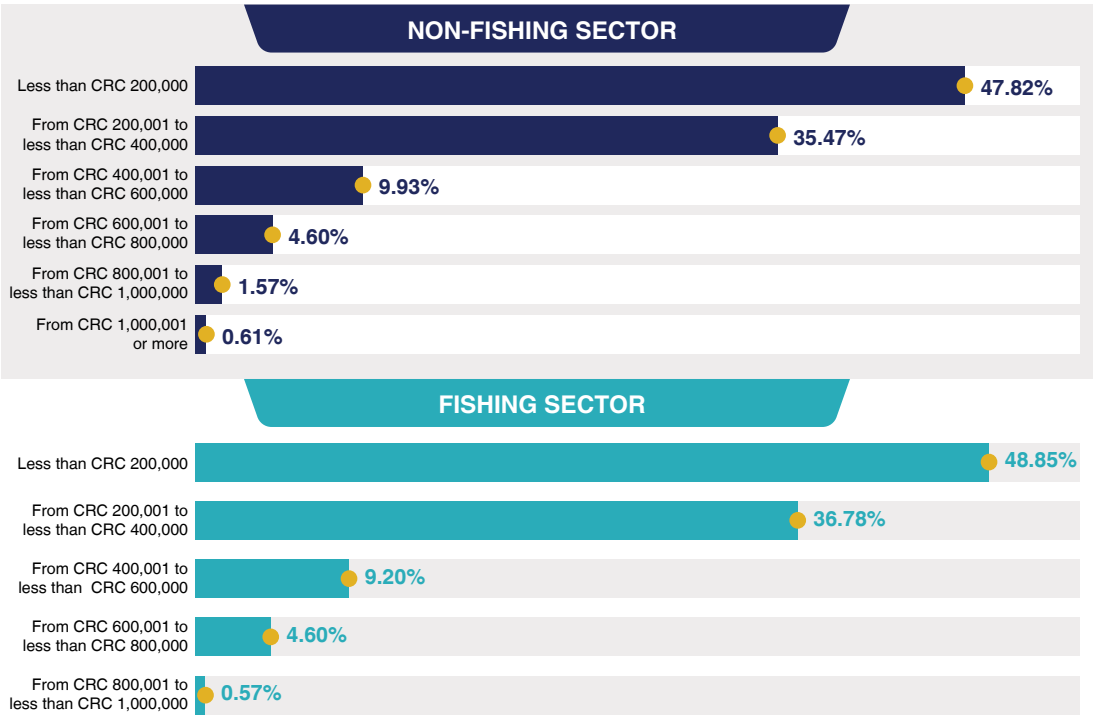



**FIGURE 5** What is approximately the amount available per month when adding your income and that of family members who live with you? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

In terms of state subsidies (Figure 6), 18.97% of the fishing population stated that they received some help or assistance from the Join Social Aid Institute (IMAS, for its acronym in Spanish), while in the non-fishing population it was 13.20%. of those interviewed.

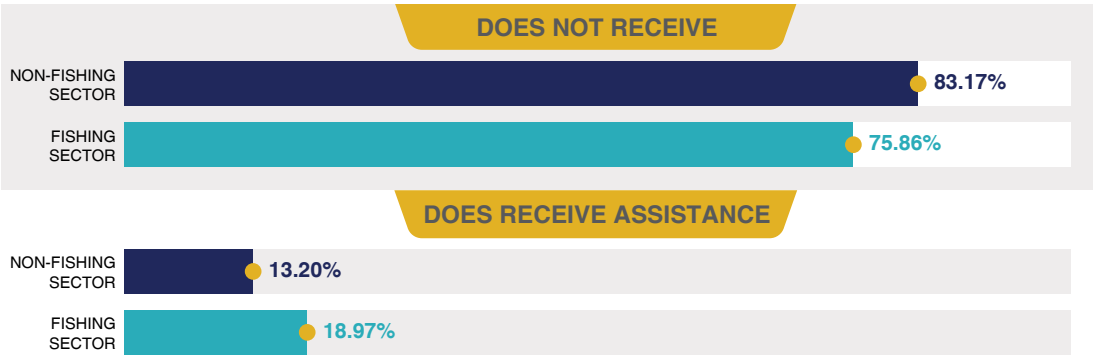



**FIGURE 6** Do you or your family receive any help or assistance from IMAS? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

Regarding social security (Figure 7), both surveyed populations were asked if they had some type of health insurance as part of their occupation. In the case of the fishing population, 79.44% responded that they did have social security. In this case, 15.88% pay their own social security contribution, 18.82% do so through their employer, while 65.29% are insured by other means (the majority through a family member). On the other hand, 76.30% of the population not related to the sector mentioned having health insurance as part of their occupation.

**FIGURE 7** Do you have access to social security (health insurance) as part of your work benefits? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

# 2. Labor activities and organization of the sector



The main work activities or occupations mentioned by the population related to the fishing sector were (Figure 8): fisher (38.33%), artisanal fisher (15%), shrimp peeler (19.44%) and seafarer (7.78%). All responses related to activities in the sector's value chain, such as vessel management, warehouse management, seller, etc., were also included in the other category (18.89%).

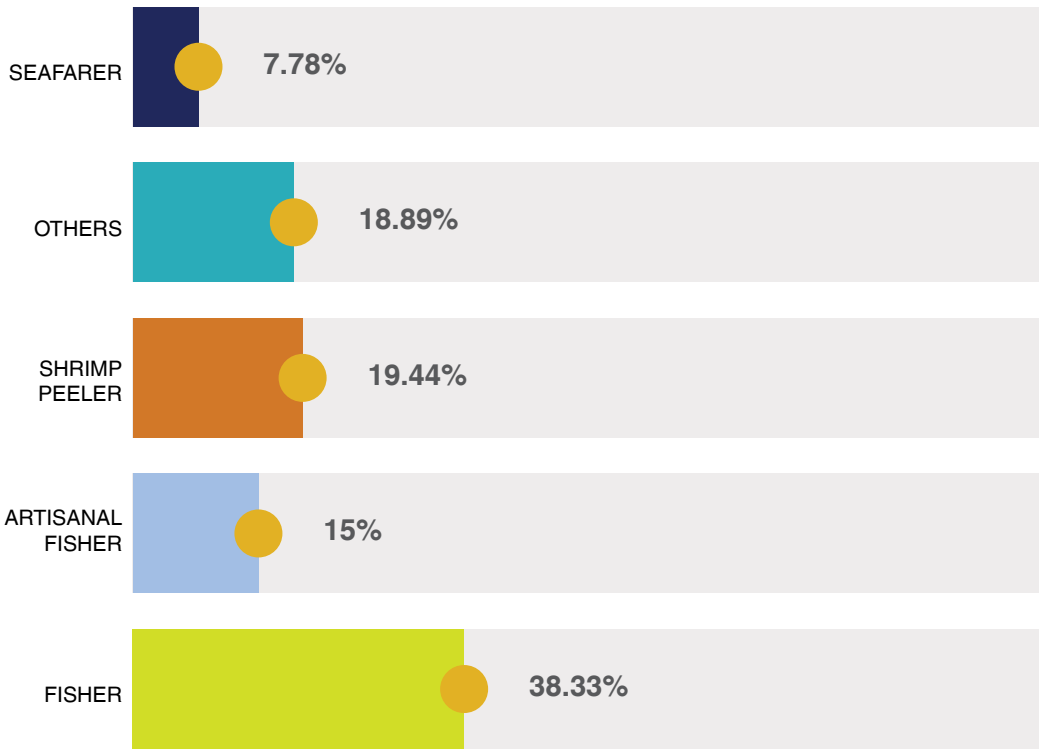



**FIGURE 8** Main activities of the population related to the fishing sector (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

Respondents who identified as fishers or seafarers were also asked if they owned the boat, they used to carry out their activity (Figure 9). Of them, only 13.91% responded affirmatively. Also, they were asked about the type of boat in which they carried out their activities. In this case, 26.03% answered panga, 13.68% barge, 10.95% small boat and 8.9% large boat.

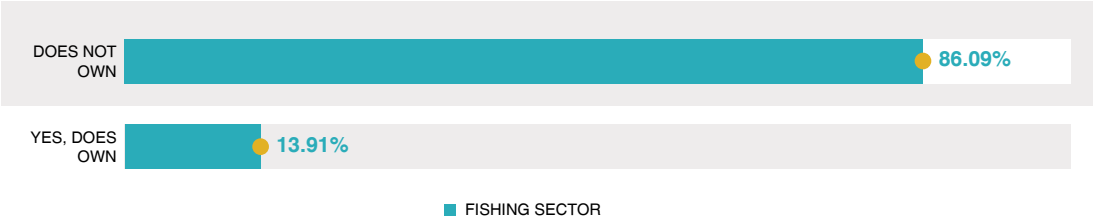



**FIGURE 9** Did you or do you own any type of vessel? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

Also, the fishing population was asked if they have or have had a complementary job to said activity, in which case 84.83% answered no.

Additionally, in relation to the organization of the sector, the population of the fishing sector was asked if they have belonged or belong to any fishing association (Figure 10). Only 23.84% of those surveyed in the sector responded affirmatively.

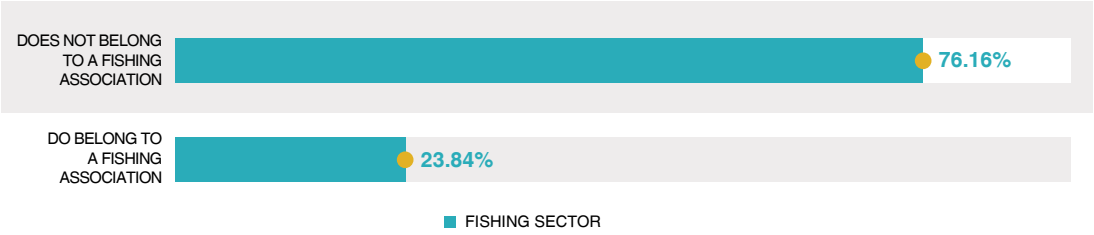



**FIGURE 10** Did you or do you belong to a fishing association? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

# 3. Job aspirations and productive skills



The survey team asked interviewees linked to the fishing sector if they would like to continue linked to this activity (Figure 10). 51.45% of them answered yes, while 48.55% answered no.

**FIGURE 11** Would you like to remain in the fishing sector? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

Additionally, if they had children, they were asked if they would like them to also engage in fishing activities (Figure 12). In this case, 84.44% said no. This question was also applied to the population not linked to fishing, in which case the response of 94.64% was also negative.

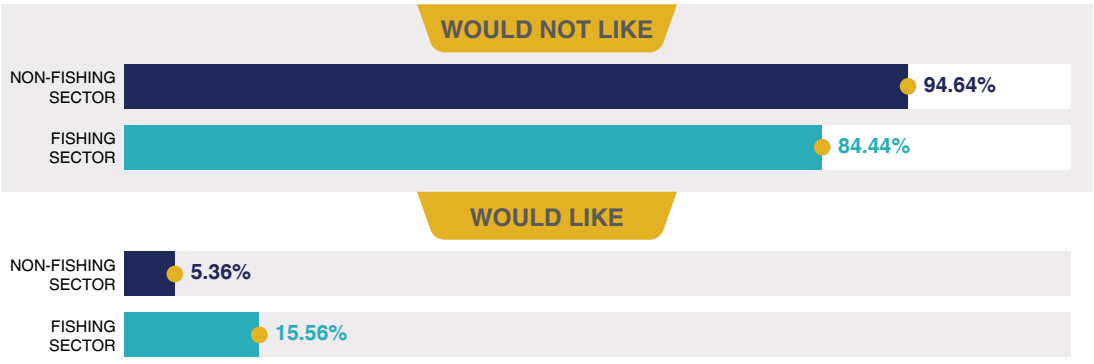



**FIGURE 12** If you have children, would you like your children to engage in fishing activities? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

Additionally, the population related to fishing when asked if they had the possibility of dedicating themselves to any other activity, job or occupation, which activity would they choose. Only 21.11% of the respondents stated that they would choose to remain in the fishing sector. The remaining answers were very different and included: commercial activities, gastronomy, tour guide, administration, sewing, own business, child care, nursing, education, among others.

Regarding the skills of the fishing population, the results show that their set of skills is typical of a profile that performs manual and repetitive activities.

Firstly, 70% of the fishing population reports that they do not need to read or write to carry out their activities, while in the non-fishing population this percentage is 73.37% (Figure 13).

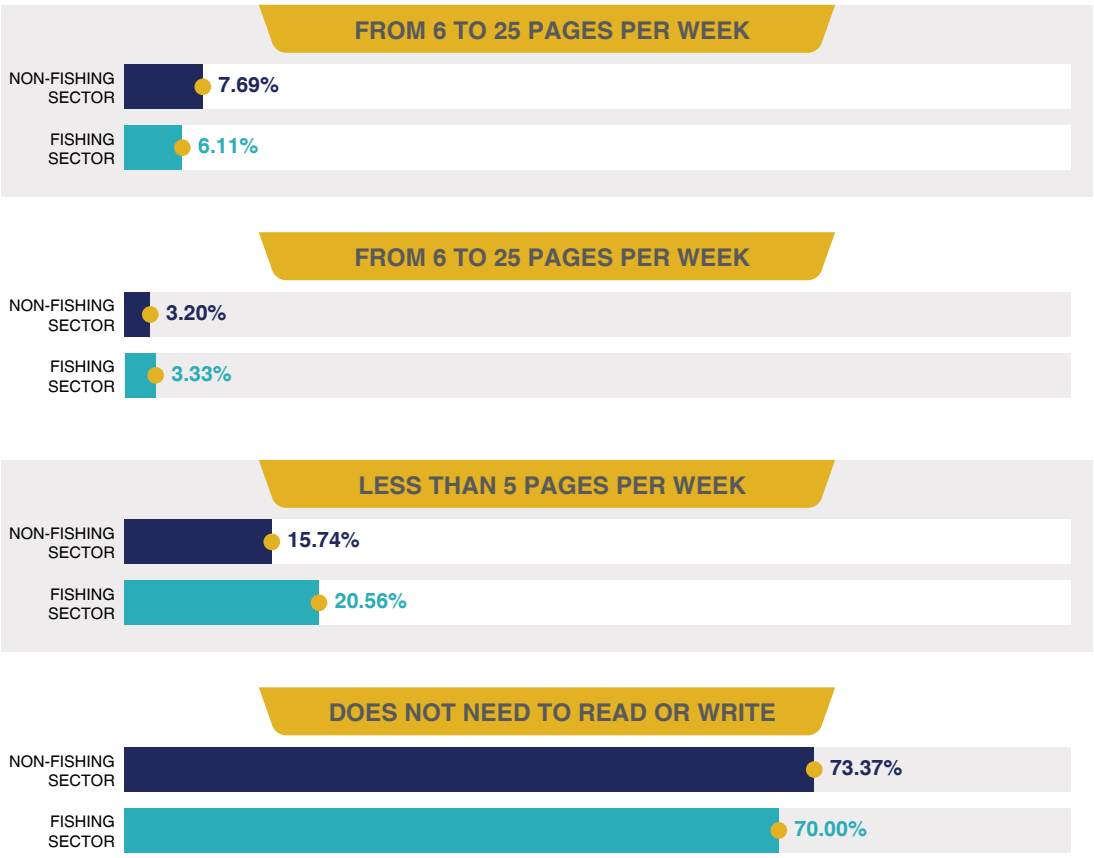



**FIGURE 13** In your work, how much reading or writing do you need to do to fulfill your activities? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

Regarding arithmetic skills (Figure 14), 55.56% of the fishing sector stated that, during their work, they need to measure, weigh, divide, calculate distances, prices and costs. On the other hand, 44.44% of the fishing population indicates that they do not require numerical skills to develop their occupation.



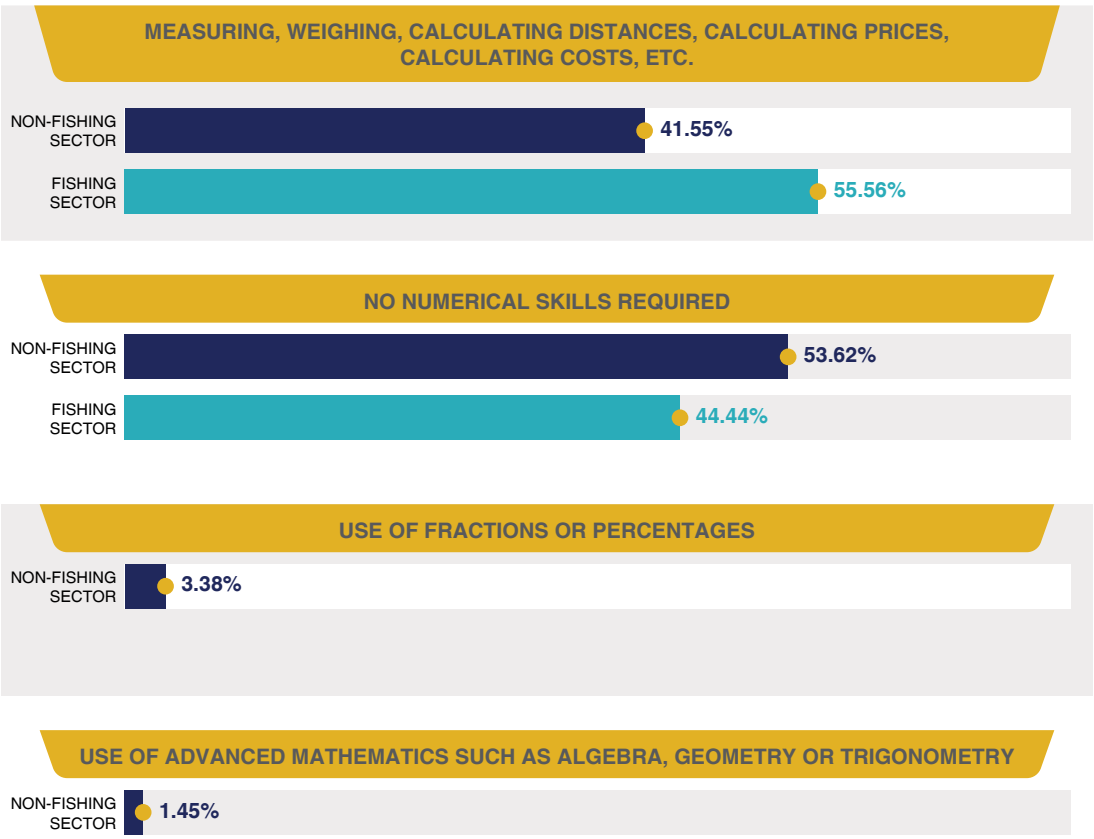



**FIGURE 14** In your work, what kind of number skills (math) do you apply? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

Regarding the use of computer equipment in their activities (Figure 15), 85% of the respondents belonging to the fishing sector answered that they do not require the use of this type of equipment; while in the population not linked to fishing, the response was 78.91%.



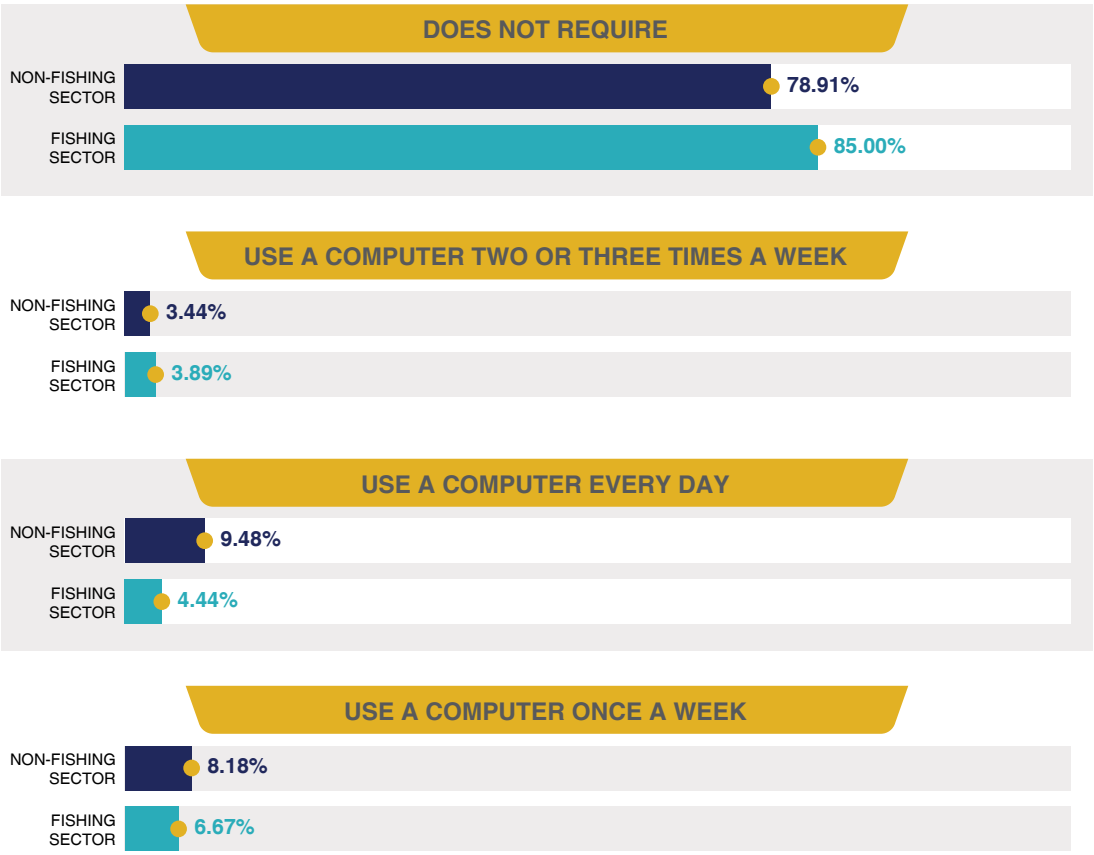



**FIGURE 15** Do you need to use a computer at work? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

In relation to soft and interpersonal skills (Figure 16), they were asked if when they carry out their work they need to be in contact with clients or the public. In the case of the fishing population, 47.22% answered that they have no contact with clients. On the other hand, 30.56% indicated that they do maintain a lot of contact.



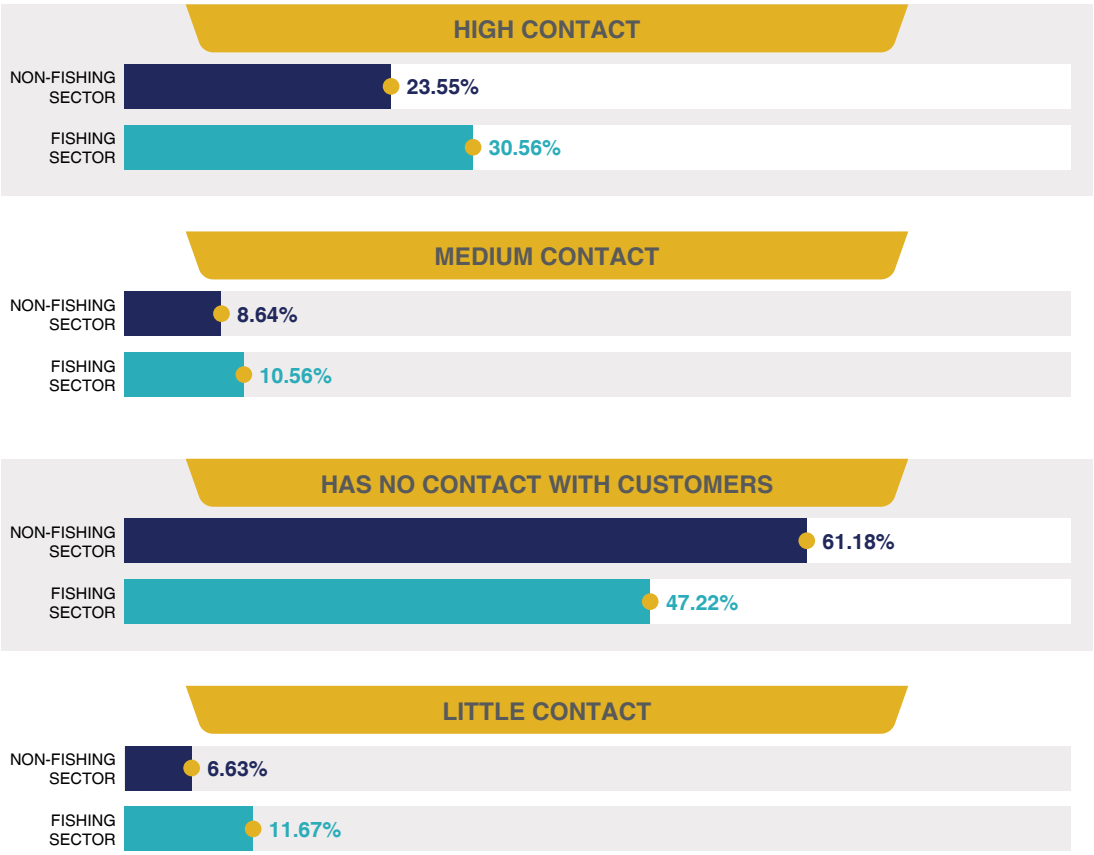



**FIGURE 16** In your work, do you need to be in contact with clients, suppliers, students, or the general public? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

# 4. Conditions of the sector and the canton



The SPI survey asked respondents about their opinion about the condition of the fishing sector in the area. In general terms, 95.53% of those surveyed considered that the sector is worse than it was 5 years ago.

Additionally, they were asked about the main problems of the fishing sector in the area, in which case 61.68% of those surveyed answered that the legal restrictions on fishing are the main limitation, pointing to the government as the main responsible party.

Finally, when asked about the situation of the community in general for the next five years (Figure 17), 63.33% of those surveyed in the sector answered that their community is going to improve, 13.33% said they did not know and 23.33% affirm that their community is not going to improve.

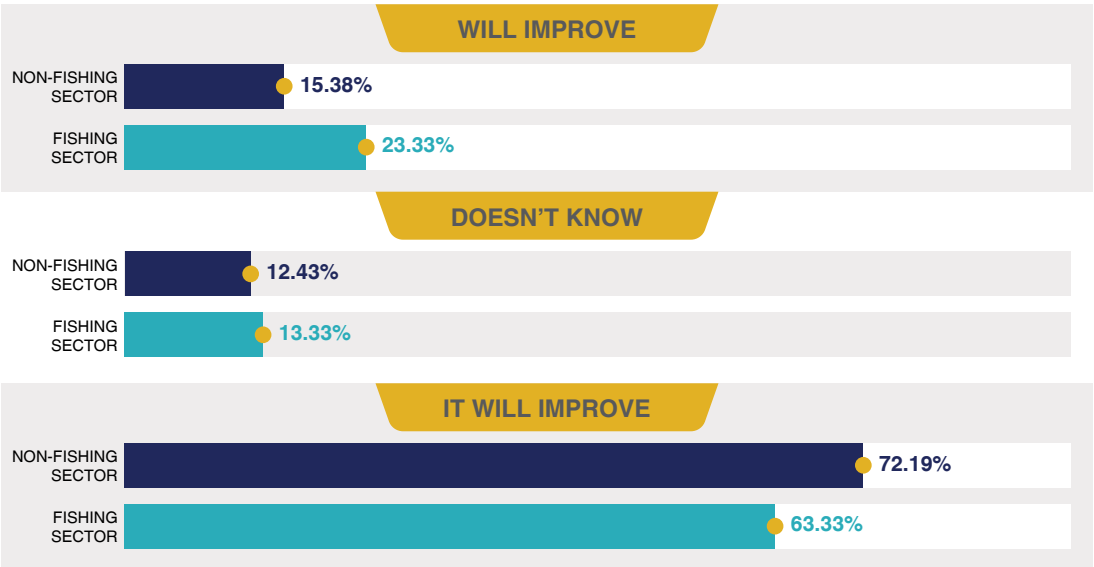



**FIGURE 17** Do you feel that your community will improve in the next 5 years? (Source: SPI survey Puntarenas 2019)

# Conclusions



## How to generate social progress in Puntarenas?

The pragmatic orientation of the SPI makes it essential to complement its findings with processes of socialization and validation of results. In addition to strengthening the application of the tool at the methodological level, feedback spaces with the relevant actors lead up to the decision-making processes required for the effective promotion of social progress.

With the aim of raising awareness among the relevant audience and, above all, identifying consensus that will facilitate the design of a social progress roadmap for the fishing population of this canton, the project team, with the support of INCOPESCA, carried out a findings validation session in September 2020. The pandemic caused by COVID-19 forced the project team to postpone this activity for almost a year after the measurement was made. Although the circumstances forced the validation session to be held in virtual mode, it was possible to have the participation of 33 actors from at least 23 sectors linked to the social progress of the Puntarenas community, including representatives of the local government, government institutions, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

The reflection would no longer revolve solely around the survey findings. It would also be complemented by the experience of the different actors in dealing with the social and economic ravages of a pandemic, which delayed relevant institutional processes to address the socioeconomic crisis in coastal areas, and which tested the resilience of the institutional structure to remain close to the most affected populations and territories.

Certainly, the first consensus reached by the group is that the cantonal crisis corresponds to very diverse factors. Therefore, at the present time, the priority must be to address the following challenges: poverty reduction, crime reduction and generation of qualified employment.

At the same time, institutions with a presence in the area reaffirm that social development must be accompanied by the sustainable management of marine resources. Therefore, the social progress roadmap for Puntarenas must start from the premise of the blue economy as a form of development. Through the conservation of marine natural capital, it is possible to promote the development of jobs in areas such as tourism, complemented by the implementation of productive alternatives such as mariculture, agriculture, logistics operations and manufacturing.

Reorienting the efforts of the fishing sector is vital. Giving priority to the most selective fishing techniques and to fisheries that are not overexploited but offer high value can transform the sector towards more competitive markets, in which the added value derived from fair trade principles will generate better living conditions in the area. In other words, the structure of marine governance must be studied, as well as the way in which it has been interacting in recent years with the stewardship linked to territorial development.

The aspirations of the fishing sector to join other productive areas, evidenced in the SPI, are known by the institutions, and are even recognized as necessary to generate social mobility. Therefore, in addition to significant investments in infrastructure and education, it is important to diversify job opportunities, considering the professional profile and skills already available in the population that requires employment.

Promote inclusion in local linkages articulated with the productive activities of the surrounding cantons or leveraging initiatives such as the National Cluster Platform of the Ministry of Labor (MTSS, for its acronym in Spanish) or the “Discover” initiative of the Costa Rican Foreign Trade Promoter (PROCOMER, for its acronym in Spanish). They are seen as the public-private initiatives with the greatest potential to start addressing the economic development of these areas with a territorial perspective and adjusted to the needs and characteristics of the population.

**Fishing sector in Isla Chira, Puntarenas ( © MarViva Foundation)**

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Isla Chira, in Puntarenas, is one of the fishing communities in the province (© MarViva Foundation)

MarViva

**CONTACT US:**
**COSTA RICA +506 4052-2500**
**PANAMA +507 317-4350**
**COLOMBIA +571 743-5207**

To collaborate with our efforts:
donaciones@marviva.net
www.marviva.net

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