

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF FEMALE
WORKERS IN A RURAL-COMMUNITY TOURIST ACTIVITY OF A SMALL-SCALE FISHING
COOPERATIVE ON THE MID-PACIFIC COAST
OF COSTA RICA**

Carly Silva, Macalester College

Advisor: MS Vivienne Solís

Ecotourism is one of the greatest economic revenues for Costa Rica and it is becoming an increasingly important aspect of social development in small communities. Women working in both tourism and ecotourism often hold very specific roles. The rural-community Tárcoles on the central-Pacific coast of Costa Rica is a community largely focused on fishing and on tourism. The Consorcio PorLaMar R.L., a consortium founded by CoopeSoliDar R.L. and the small-scale fishing cooperative CoopeTárcoles R.L., created an inclusive business that has worked within others in a marine community rural tourism program that has a responsible fishing guided visit program in order to share the values of the community with both the national and international community. These guided visits are unique due to the large number of women who work within the visits in some way. I conducted a research project on the women workers in the guided visits and the Consorcio PorLaMar R.L.. Through a series of interviews with the women workers, I sought to determine the opinions of the women of the guided visits and of the consortium in general. I looked for patterns between the different roles occupied by women in the visits and how their jobs might affect their thoughts. I found that the general opinion of the workers on the visits and the consortium was very positive. The women recognized the economic benefits of the visits to both themselves and the greater Tárcoles community in general. However, the involvement of the women workers within the visits as well as other Consorcio PorLaMar R.L. activities varied greatly between the *lujadoras* workers and the hostesses for students and visitors. Therefore, the *lujadoras* were not as personally invested in the guided visits or in other consortium activities. The hostesses were more likely to speak highly of the visits and the consortium due to the added social benefits received by the women through this unique position as a host. Although some of these differences may be due to varying degrees of willingness to participate more in the visits and consortium, the Consorcio PorLaMar R.L. can use this information to attempt to address these differences of involvement.