

An illustration featuring a large, stylized yellow figure in the upper half, looking through a telescope. The figure's hand is visible holding the telescope. A bright beam of light from the telescope's lens illuminates the ocean below. In the background, there are white clouds. The foreground shows a sandy beach with several people: one person is pulling a net on the sand, another is bending over near the water's edge, and a group of three people is wading in the shallow water carrying a long pole. A small boat with three people is also in the water. Fish are visible swimming in the ocean. The overall style is flat and illustrative.

Ocean Stewards

Coastal youth leading the
future of the oceans

Small-scale fishing communities have long been custodians of our oceans. Securing their livelihoods, rights, and knowledge is key to sustaining fisheries and saving the oceans.

However, **limited access to scientific resources, innovation, and institutions** has prevented coastal youth from actively applying their intimate knowledge of the sea to fisheries management and marine conservation.

Centring grassroots leadership for marine sustainability and conservation, Dakshin Foundation's **Ocean Stewards initiative** aims to foster a sense of stewardship among coastal youth by enabling them to:



build evidence and knowledge from the grassroots



actively participate in natural resource management



champion issues and priorities that matter for their communities



The Ocean Stewards Curriculum

Develop transferable skills

in leadership,
scientific tools, and
community action



Participate in research

on marine
conservation, coastal
issues, and fisheries
management



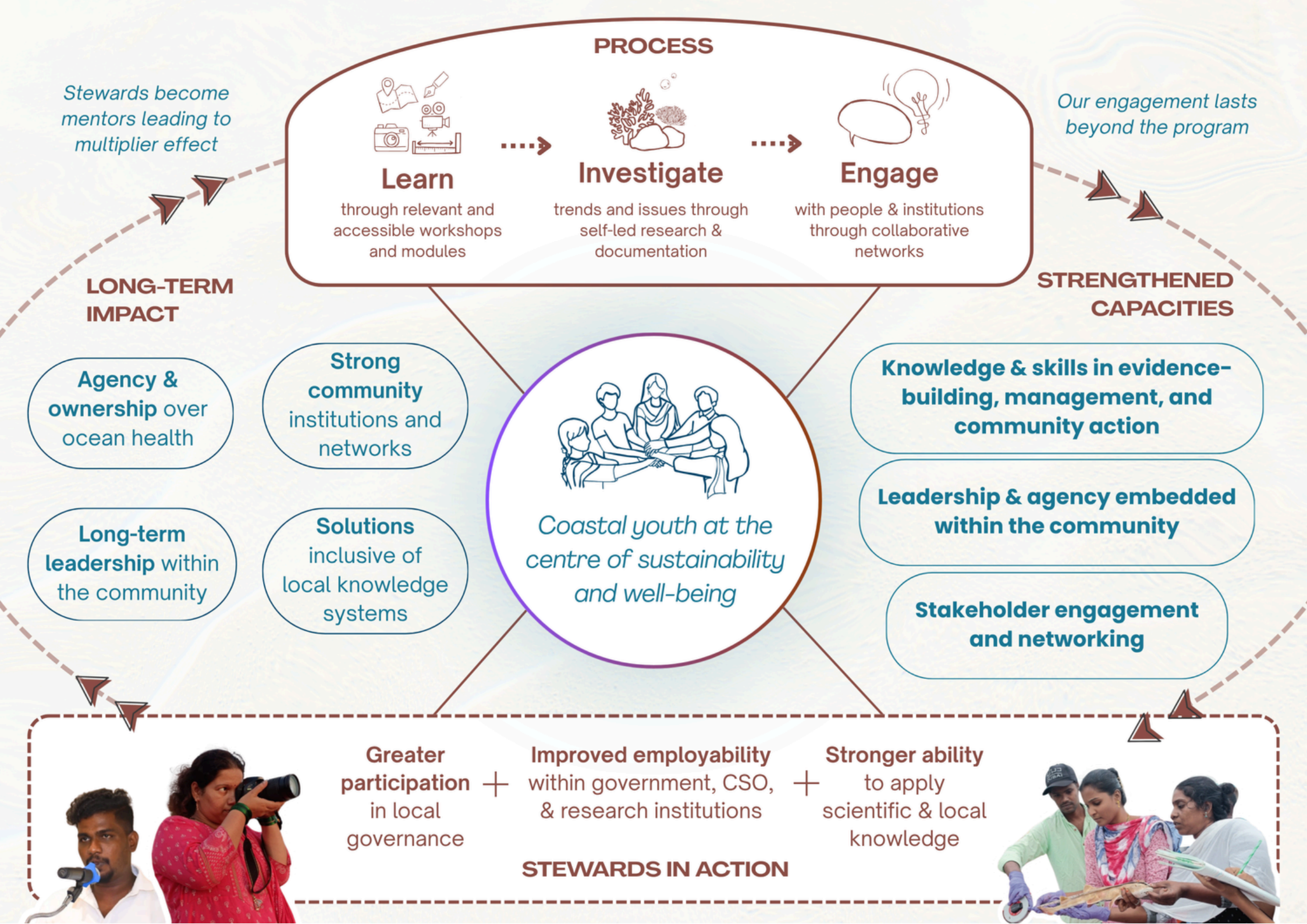
Lead capstone projects

to document local
ecological knowledge,
fisheries trends, and
coastal issues

fostering marine stewardship



By fostering **a sense of confidence, agency, and hope** among coastal youth, the initiative aims to strengthen youth engagement in resource governance and nurture the next generation of community-led ocean stewards.



The first cohort involved ten Ocean Stewards from two regions in the east and west coasts of India:

Sindhudurg, Maharashtra

With a focus on fisheries and bycatch monitoring, sharks and rays, and coastal issues like plastic pollution and ecotourism.



Meet Purva Paradkar



“Coming from a fishing community, I have long held a deep interest and curiosity regarding marine life and the ocean. The Ocean Stewards program has given direction to this curiosity and strengthened my bond with the sea, inspiring me to work towards the conservation of marine life. Currently, I am part of research projects on sharks, guitarfish, and bycatch monitoring.”

Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

With a focus on blue swimmer crab fisheries, coral reef and seagrass ecosystems, bycatch monitoring, sharks and rays, and traditional fishing practices.

“Coming from a small-scale fishing family, sampling on mechanised boats as an Ocean Steward was a novel experience for me. I also learned about the harbour's ecosystem involving traders, auctioneers, and middlemen, and how marine resources are transported to various towns to be utilised.” - Santhy Mary Ruth



“Instead of simply listening to fishermen’s experiences, I learned how to systematically document their issues and communicate them to the wider public. This has been one of the most important changes in my personal learning journey as an Ocean Steward.” - Maria Hotlin

**Meet
Santhy
Mary Ruth**



**Maria
Hotlin**

Through this year-long journey, each Ocean Steward has undergone significant personal and professional growth and now leads multiple sustainability initiatives in their community.

Key Milestones

①

Stewards spearheaded capstone research projects on critical coastal issues that were featured in local newspapers.

②

Our alumni secured employment within government departments, leading research institutions, and community radio stations.

③

Some of the graduates continue to lead pivotal marine and fisheries interventions alongside Dakshin and partner CSOs.

Dakshin aims to scale this successful model across India's coastal states and its islands.

Support Us!

To know more about our initiative or explore ways to support our work, please get in touch with us at sustainablefisheries@dakshin.org.



Supported by



Venture
Philanthropy

