

## GlobalSeaweedSTAR Capacity Building Fund Completion Report

### Awardee Details

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Grant reference ID</b> | GSS/CBF/001                                   |
| <b>Full name/title</b>    | Francis Okalo                                 |
| <b>Position held</b>      | Associate Research Officer                    |
| <b>Organisation</b>       | Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute |



### Details of Capacity-Building Activity

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Name of activity</b>   | Registration to the 12th International Phycological Congress (IPC2021) |
| <b>Date held</b>          | 22-26 March 2021   |
| <b>Organiser/provider</b> | International Phycological Congress                                    |

### Biography

I have a background in Coastal and Marine Resource Management with focus conservation sciences, coastal aquaculture, and enhancing community development through promotion of ocean-related enterprises. Particular focus for the past 10 years has been on promoting seaweed farming as an important economic activity for coastal dwellers in Kenya. Over the years, I have

been involved in experimental studies in different sites, optimizing culture techniques and carrying out scientific research on ecological roles of seaweed aquaculture beds and developing seaweed-based value-added products. Product diversification has been a core area of focus aiming at improving income of seaweed farmers considering that they solely depended on selling dried seaweed to exporting companies. The prices are not always reflective of the labour and time invested and efforts to get other high value products from seaweed has been at the centre of attention and has formed part of my work in the recent years. This include inclusion of seaweed in fishmeal and exploring its fish disease control potential. Besides this, future focus is on ecological roles, especially the potential of seaweed beds as carbon sequestrers.

## **Report on Capacity-Building Activity**

The 12<sup>th</sup> international Phycological Congress (IPC21) was held virtually between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 bringing together global seaweed experts, researchers and professional organizations. IPC2021 included Plenary lectures, Symposium speakers, and oral and e-poster presentations within the frame of 15 Symposia that covered all aspects of phycology.

With support from GlobalSeaweedStar capacity building fund, participation to the congress was through Oral Presentation entitled “Screening Antibacterial properties of *Eucheuma denticulatum* Extracts Against *Vibrio harveyi*”. This being the first international congress to participate in, it was a good opportunity to interact with various global experts in the phycology sector. Sharing the research findings and comments from other participants provided new angles to the next steps in the research line. Learning from what is happening in other parts of the world and other field such as genetic plasticity, taxonomy and evolutionary ecology highlighted the approach that ought to be taken in future research. This builds my career and the contacts exchanged during the congress opens new avenues for future collaborations in bigger projects in the seaweed sector.

The virtual experience was amazing and proved helpful especially the different thematic rooms that allowed concrete discussions for specific areas