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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP) Field Trip To Model Processing Businesses At Ankobra



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Development
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For more information on the Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project, contact:

USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project

Coastal Resources Center

Graduate School of Oceanography

University of Rhode Island

220 South Ferry Rd.

Narragansett, RI 02882 USA

Tel: 401-874-6224 Fax: 401-874-6920 Email: info@crc.uri.edu

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Cover photo: Selected MSME's Visit Model Processing. **Credit:** Development Action Association

Detailed Partner Contact Information:

USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP)
10 Obodai St., Mempeasem, East Legon, Accra, Ghana

Telephone: +233 0302 542497 Fax: +233 0302 542498

Maurice Knight	Chief of Party maurice@crc.uri.edu
Kofi Agbogah	Senior Fisheries Advisor kagbogah@henmpoano.org
Nii Odenkey Abbey	Communications Officer nii.sfmp@crcuri.org
Bakari Nyari	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist hardinyari.sfmp@crcuri.org
Brian Crawford	Project Manager, CRC brian@crc.uri.edu
Ellis Ekekpi	USAID AOR (acting) eekekpi@usaid.gov

Kofi.Agbogah
kagbogah@henmpoano.org

Stephen Kankam
skankam@henmpoano.org
Hen Mpoano
38 J. Cross Cole St. Windy Ridge
Takoradi, Ghana
233 312 020 701

Andre de Jager
adejager@snvworld.org
SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
#161, 10 Maseru Road,
E. Legon, Accra, Ghana
233 30 701 2440

Donkris Mevuta
Kyei Yamoah
info@fonghana.org
Friends of the Nation
Parks and Gardens
Adiembra-Sekondi, Ghana
233 312 046 180

Thomas Buck
tom@ssg-advisors.com
SSG Advisors
182 Main Street
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 735-1162

Victoria C. Koomson
cewefia@gmail.com
CEWEFIA
B342 Bronyibima Estate
Elmina, Ghana
233 024 427 8377

Lydia Sasu
daawomen@daawomen.org
DAA
Darkuman Junction, Kaneshie Odokor
Highway
Accra, Ghana
233 302 315894

For additional information on partner activities:

CRC/URI: <http://www.crc.uri.edu>
CEWEFIA: <http://cewefia.weebly.com/>
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ACRONYMS

DAA	Development Action Association
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS.....	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	II
LIST OF FIGURES	II
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Objectives.....	2
1.2 Expected Outcomes.....	2
SECTION 2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXCHANGE VISIT	2
SECTION 3. LESSONS LEARNT AND GENERAL OBSERVATION.....	5
SECTION 4. CONCLUSION.....	6

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Madam Akosua interacting with SMEs at Ankobra.....	3
Figure 2 Running Water for improved sanitation at the Processing Centre	3
Figure 3 Fish Processing Area with Ahotor oven.....	4
Figure 4 Storage Area for Preserving Fresh Fish.....	4
Figure 5 Mercy Frimpong sharing her experiences at Ankobra with the SMEs	5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fish processing is the main source of livelihood for many women along the coast of Ghana. These women battle to process quality and hygienic fish to meet both local and international standards. To help fish processors from Winneba, Apam and Mumford to upgrade their processing sites and learn from model processors, DAA organized a study tour for 30 SMEs from Apam, Winneba and Mumford to a model fish processing site at Ankobra in the Western Region. The study tour was organized on 30th June, 2017 through the support and sponsorship of USAID, under the SFMP. There was knowledge gain from the study tour where the processors learned modern ways of processing; and also exchanged skills and experiences.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The role of women in fishing and fish processing is enormous in supporting household income and livelihoods. However, the fishing industry is confronted with many challenges. Central among them is the management of the fishing business itself as a means of generating sustainable income to better their lives. Apart from fishing from the sea; which is predominantly male activity, all other fishing related businesses are mostly undertaken by women. These women in their daily business activities continue to battle with standard processed fish for both local and international markets. The challenges lead to low income for women fish processors in Ghana and hence poor profit margins. Thus efforts to sensitize fish processors and promote hygienic fish for Ghanaian and international markets. The Development Action Association organized an exchange visit to Ankobra in the Western Region where model processing activities with compliance was used for the women to learn from.

1.1 Objectives

- To sensitize the fish processors on hygienic fish processing.
- To enable women, explore other fish processing methods in different parts of the country.
- To enable women, know and appreciate the differences between available stoves for fish processing i.e. Ahotor oven, Chorkor smoker and Morison stove.

1.2 Expected Outcomes

- For fish processors to process to meet both local and international standards.
- For them to adopt new methods and technology in their processing business.
- To enable them maximize profits to improve upon their standards of living.

SECTION 2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXCHANGE VISIT

The 14 hours long journey commenced from Accra was led by DAA project officer, Mr. Nii Adamafo. The group proceeded to Winneba and Apam junction where fish processors boarded the vehicle to continue the journey toward its destination. At Ankobra, Madam Victoria led the group where she gave her welcome address and briefed participants on fishing activities in the town as the main occupation.



Figure 1 Madam Akosua interacting with SMEs at Ankobra

She took the group to the Daasgift training center where Morrison stove and Chorkor smoker were available under a hygienic shed. Fish processing was on-going then for observation. The group collectively concluded that both processing stoves produced a lot of smoke that make working under such environment unbearable. They also observed that the Morrison stove used less fuelwood as compared to the Chorkor smoker.



Figure 2 Running Water for improved sanitation at the Processing Centre



Figure 3 Fish Processing Area with Ahotor oven



Figure 4 Storage Area for Preserving Fresh Fish

Madam Victoria took the group to the second training center of Daasgift where the Ahotor and Chorkor ovens were available. This was a well-furnished processing center that contained a processing room where storage containers for fish received directly from landing sites were available to avoid contamination and spoilage. A personal kitchen, sanitation section for hand washing were also well demarcated. The center also had running water, soap and other items to prevent potential contamination of the stored fish. Also a storage room for processed fish meant for transportation to the market was observed.

Miss Victoria who is the fish processor at the center demonstrated to the group how activities are carried out. She concluded that the demonstration depicts the processing cycle at the Model fish processing center at Ankobra. She called the center the “Compliance Facility for fish processing”.

SECTION 3. LESSONS LEARNT AND GENERAL OBSERVATION

Grace Bondzie shared her lessons learnt, that the trip to Ankobra enabled her to realize how hygienic other people in the occupation practice their trade at the processing center which enhances fish quality and good taste compared to how she processed fish back home. She was impressed with the hand washing, storage of the fish before and after processing which she said will help her conform to standards.

Sister Mercy said that on the contrary at the old site of Daasgift processing center at Ankobra, she realized that a processor did not wash the fish before processing which worried her about why some processors do not apply the skills acquired through the various trainings on hygienic fish handling. She recommended the hygienic setting and well organized fish processing center at Daasgift’s new site; and said, "This really impressed me." She added that she also realized a change in the color of the sea at Ankobra as a result of the illegal mining activities (galamsey) in the Ankobra river. She said, "that made me understand how bad fish can affect human health in Ghana.



Figure 5 Mercy Frimpong sharing her experiences at Ankobra with the SMEs

Auntie Mercy Frimpong of Winneba also added that at Ankobra, she realized there were no canoes sailing on the river nor on the sea which made her wonder. She was therefore told that the chief fisherman and the fisher folk have all agreed to close the fishing season, which really impressed her as it was geared towards promoting good fishing practices and food security. Discussions and observations by SMEs during the exchange visit at the fish processing site at Ankobra (Western Region) were very productive.

SECTION 4. CONCLUSION

The exchange visit to Ankobra had helped the SMEs to gain new knowledge and other ways of processing fish more hygienically. Participants shared their observations and advised others to put into practice all the trainings they have had through DAA to help them meet the required standards for maximization of profit.