



SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Hygienic Fish Handling, New Improved Stove And Consumer Awareness Campaign



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Cover photo: Participants on a procession during the campaign at Moree (Rose Affel).

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ACRONYMS

CCM	Centre for Coastal Management
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
CSLP	Coastal Sustainable Landscape Project
DAA	Development Action Association
DFAS	Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Science
DMFS	Department of Marine Fisheries Sciences
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
FtF	Feed the Future
GIFA	Ghana Inshore Fishermen's Association
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNCFC	Ghana National Canoe Fishermen's Council
HM	Hen Mpoano
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance
MESTI	Ministry of Environment Science and Technology
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SSG	SSG Advisors
STWG	Scientific and Technical Working Group
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARFP	West Africa Regional Fisheries Development Program

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The hygienic fish handling, new improved oven and consumer awareness creation campaigns were organized in the four project target communities in Central and Western regions of Ghana; namely Elmina, Moree, Anlo-Beach and Sekondi/Ngyeresia. Each of the campaigns was climaxed with a grand durbar. In all, 483 people participated comprising chiefs, chief fishermen, canoe owners, elders, market queens, district assembly representatives, Food and Drugs Authority representatives, fishermen and fish processors/mongers. The purpose was to raise awareness on the importance of handling fish under hygienic conditions from net to plate. It was also to educate the people on the new improved oven (Ahotor oven). The durbar ended successfully.

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND

Hygienic fish handling campaign is often organized to create awareness among the people on the need to handle fish under hygienic conditions. The campaign provided the opportunity to re-sensitize consumers on what to look out for when patronizing fish and fish products. This also helps increase awareness level on the new improved fish smoking oven, locally known as Ahotor Oven.

In line with IR 3 of Year 4 work plan of SFMP, CEWEFIA is to organize a hygienic fish handling and new improved oven campaign among the target communities. Consequently, a one-day hygienic fish handling, new improved oven and consumer awareness creation campaign was organized at Elmina, Moree, Anlo-Beach and Sekondi. At Moree and Elmina it was held on 31st January, 2018; on 1st February at Sekondi, and on 8th February at Anlo-Beach.

1.1 Goal

Improvement in the knowledge of fish handling practices and new improved oven among beneficiaries and the community as a whole.

1.2 Campaign Objectives:

The objectives of the campaign were;

- To increase awareness on hygienic handling of fish and fish products.
- To sensitize consumers on what to look out for when patronizing fish and fish products.
- To educate the community on the new improved smoking oven.

1.3 Expected Outcomes

Expected outcomes of the campaign include:

- The campaign will change the old ways fish processors use in handling fish for marketing centers.
- The members will be well equipped to handle fish hygienically in order to produce quality, safe and healthy fish.
- The consumers will be abreast with the quality of fish to purchase.
- The awareness level of the participants on the new improved oven would be increased for its adoption.

SECTION 2 - CONTENT OF THE REPORT

In each of the target communities, the campaign started with a float. The participants accompanied by brass band music and police escort marched through the principal streets with placards bearing fisheries messages such as, “together we can sustain our fisheries”, “let’s fish responsibly”, “irresponsible fishing destroys our fish”, “use the new improved fish smoking oven for improved health and more profit”. After the float, all the participants converged at the durbar grounds where the program was officially held.

2.1 Attendance

A total number of 483 people attended the program comprising chiefs, Council of elders, chief fishermen, women fish processors, fishermen, canoe owners, queen mother (Anlo-Beach), market queens (Konkohen), representatives from Fisheries Commission (Central and Western regions), Ghana Education Service; municipal /district assemblies (KEEA, AAK and Shama), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Food and Drugs Authority (Cape Coast, Sekondi), Albert Bosomtwe Sam fishing harbor representatives, Environmental Health Department, etc.

Details of attendance are provided in the Table below:

Table 1. Detailed attendance of participants at the campaign at Sekondi, Anlo-Beach, Elmina and Moree

Community	Male	Female	Total
Sekondi	18	73	91
Moree	22	140	162
Elmina	2	74	76
Anlo-Beach	32	122	154
Total	74	409	483

2.2 Purpose of Gathering

The purpose of the gathering was given by Nicholas Smith, the Project Officer for Central Region. According to him, the campaign was to create awareness of the need to handle fish under hygienic conditions and for consumers to be aware of safe and healthy fish and fish products. It was further aimed at increasing awareness about the new improved oven (locally called Ahotor oven) and its usage for profit maximization, quality fish and improved health.

SECTION 3 - A MESSAGE FROM OFFICIALS PRESENT

The representatives from the municipal and district assemblies and also the government agencies were given the opportunity to speak at the program. Below is a summary of their messages:

At Elmina, Mr. Benjamin E. Mensah (KEEA Municipal Deputy Coordinating Director) urged all fisher folks to stop incurring avoidable cost in their fishing businesses by making use of the best fishing and fish smoking practices; and education given by CEWEFIA and other NGOs. He further touched on the nutrition and health value of fish, and urged fish processors to consider hygiene in their fish processing activities.

Mr. Kwame Damoah (Acting Regional Director of Fisheries Commission, Central Region) highlighted the closed season which is currently being implemented by the industrialized fishing vessels. He assured the fishermen and fishmongers of the improvement in fish stocks in subsequent years. He cautioned all fisher folks to comply with fisheries rules and regulations which govern fishing business to ensure realization of the replenishment of the fish stocks. He pleaded with fisher folks to support them in executing their duties. He further spoke on the Ahotor oven and emphasized some of its benefits. Some of the benefits were less fuelwood usage, quality fish, more profits and good health. He concluded by urging all and sundry to adopt the new improved oven.

The planning officer for KEEA municipality stressed on good fishing practices. He opined that fishermen should use good methods in fishing and shun illegal fishing methods. He advised fishmongers to use ice to keep their fish fresh and in good condition.

The Elmina market queen urged the women fish processors to use the new improved technology to smoke for quality fish. She added that they should apply the lessons from the education and training given them by CEWEFIA, especially fish handling education.

Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and, Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) in the Central Region emphasized the nutritional value of fish and the need for consumers to consider the health aspects whenever they patronize fish products. At Sekondi, Fisheries Commission representative added that we must respond to positive change especially in our fishing businesses. He said that there were so many diseases that we get from handling fish under unhygienic conditions; and that fishmongers should observe good hygiene to avoid contracting such diseases. He further highlighted some of the bad fishing practices such as light fishing, chemical fishing, fishing with small size net etc., and urged fishermen to desist from these and other bad practices; and rather observe good fishing practices. He encouraged the women to use new improved fish smoking ovens to produce quality fish.

The general manager of Albert Bosomtwe Sam fishing harbor and Ghana Ports and Harbors Authority at Sekondi laid emphasis on the problem of fishmongers not selling their fish under the shed provided at the harbor. He said that fish must be sold under a shade, and not in the sun; and urged consumers to take note whenever buying fish. He advised the fishmongers to desist from pouring fresh fish onto the quay or on the platform while counting it at the shore, and also from selling close to the sea shore.

Another officer also added that women had power to influence change; therefore, women should know that they had the ability to influence fishermen to fish responsibly. She urged the women to make use of their feminine power and ability to effect positive change in the fishing business.

At Anlo-Beach, the chief of Anlo-Beach (Torgbui Tekple Garrikor, I) shared his concern on the need for fishermen and women fish processors to adhere to good fishing practices. The facilitator (Miss Josephine Addo) in her introduction opined that fishermen should maintain the fish fresh always using ice. She further pleaded with the chief fishermen to ensure that other fishermen keep the fish fresh at the highest quality after harvesting.

On the issue of Ahotor oven she explained the financial scheme underlining the purchase of the oven; and the modalities to obtain one. The environmental compliance that one owing the oven must meet prior to the building of the oven was also explained. The environment for the construction of the oven must be clean, devoid of stagnant water bodies, refuse dumps and rodents. There should be provision of hand washing equipment, and the place should be plastered or cemented for easy cleaning.

At Anlo-Beach, the Environmental Health Officer from the Shama District Assembly congratulated SFMP partners on the good work done at the coastal communities towards ensuring replenishment of the marine fish stocks, and general sanity in the fishing business in Ghana. She highlighted the report of a meeting she attended at Takoradi which was organized for fisheries stakeholders from the six coastal districts of the Western Region early this year. Below is the summary of the report of the meeting:

- Registration of Canoes: it was agreed at the meeting that all fishermen should register their canoes with the Fisheries Commission. This according to her will help regulate the number of canoes at sea. Also the data obtained from the registration can guide in planning for any developmental intervention in fisheries.
- Transshipment (popularly called saiko): the fishermen were encouraged to desist from saiko business and that there would be a ban on saiko business.
- Quality fish: the fishermen and fishmongers were encouraged to patronize good quality fish for maximum income.
- Good fishing practices: the fishermen were urged to avoid fishing using small mesh size nets, poisonous chemicals, defying fishing holidays etc.
- Alternative livelihoods: alternative livelihood skills were also promoted among the fisher folks, especially during the lean season. Since fishing is seasonal, the alternative livelihood skills will help the fisher folks to always be in business during the lean season.
- Personal savings: personal savings was encouraged among the fisher folks, especially women fishmongers and processors.

She encouraged fishermen and women to comply with the rules and regulations governing the fisheries sector, especially the ones just mentioned above to ensure sanity in the fishing business. Also the fish processors should adopt the use of the new improved smoking oven for quality fish and improved health; and observe hygiene when handling fish in any form.

3.1 Open Forum

Some of the views shared by the participants were:

- One of the participants (fish processor) from Elmina pleaded with the fishermen to shun illegal fishing because it affects their fish processing businesses. She further encouraged the women to take firm action to avoid buying bad fish.
- Another participant from Sekondi urged fishmongers to make use of the fish markets provided at the landing sites; and desist from selling fish in the sun. The processors should observe sanity in processing their fish.

3.2 Presentation of Insulated Containers

The SFMP Officers from Accra led by Dr. Margaret Atikpo together with the Fisheries Commission representatives presented two insulated containers to Sekondi/Ngyeresia community to be used by the fishmongers. Two insulated containers were presented to the Elmina community and one to the Moree community.

In Sekondi two groups i.e. Ngyeresia-Essikado and European town groups were each presented with an insulated container. Dr. Atikpo pleaded with the leaders of each group to ensure effective handling and use of the insulated containers.

SECTION 4 - CHALLENGES

Challenges encountered during the campaign in all the four communities i.e. Elmina, Moree, Anlo-Beach and Sekondi were:

- Most of the community members, especially fishermen and fish processors who were not CEWEFIA-trained members had the perception that if there was any durbar or campaign program, only the CEWEFIA members were supposed to attend.
- Almost all fish processors purchase fresh fish in trays and bowls which collect oil, water and blood from the fish, there-by facilitating early spoilage.
- The fishmongers who sell fresh fish at the landing site at the Albert Bosomtwe Sam fishing harbor at Essikado do not patronize the shed provided, thereby selling the fresh fish in the sun which leads to spoilage from the heat of the sun.
- Most of the members in all the project communities are crying out for soft loans due to financial difficulties.
- Some of the fish processors who process fish by salting and drying have no raised structures to dry their fish on. Thus they dry the fish on the ground.
- Some of the fish processors still smoke fish under unhygienic conditions despite the hygienic fish handling trainings and education.
- At Sekondi, misinformation on the use of the new improved oven was preventing many fish processors from adopting it.
- Some of the members demanded for items such as T-shirts and money before they would participate in any fisheries programs.
- The poor security network at Elmina fish market poses a threat to the fishmongers, fishermen and the market queens.

SECTION 5 - RECOMMENDATIONS

- More fish smoking demonstrations on the Ahotor oven should be organized to convince the fish processors to adopt it.
- At Sekondi, more of CEWEFIA activities, events and durbars should be organized at the Albert Bosomtwe Sam fishing harbor to yield maximum results, since most of the fisher folks from far and near converge there.
- The chief fisherman at Moree recommended to the fish processors to use wooden or plastic crates to buy the fresh fish to minimize fresh fish spoilage.
- The fishermen and fishmongers/processors should use ice to keep the fish fresh all the time to reduce post-harvest losses. The market queens (Konkohenmaa) must ensure quality fresh fish is provided to the fishmongers at the landing sites.
- The Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly assured the fish processors at the European Town of Sekondi that more smoking sheds would be constructed by the municipality to supplement the existing ones. This has been factored into the Metropolitan Assembly's 2018 - 2021 Medium Term Development Plan.
- The General Manager of Albert Bosomtwe Sam fishing harbor and Ghana Ports and Harbors Authority assured all the women who patronized the harbor of maximum security.
- At Elmina landing site, the KEEA Municipal Assembly promised the fisher folks that all the broken gates and doors would be repaired and locks provided with keys to ensure security. Urinal and toilet facilities would be provided at the fish market.



Figure 1. Participants in procession during the campaign at Moree

Table 2. Number of attendees

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SECTION 6 - LESSONS LEARNT

- More fish smoking demonstrations when organized will convince most of the fish processors to adopt the use of the Ahotor oven.
- At Sekondi/Ngyeresia, more CEWEFIA's intervention activities when organized at the Essikado fishing harbor would yield the maximum results since most of the fishers from far and near converge there to do their fish business.
- The problem of fish spoilage can be minimized if fish processors/mongers would adopt the use of either wooden/plastic crates or raffia/plastic baskets to store the fish at the landing sites before buying and sending it to be processed.
- A lot of fish processors and fish mongers will participate fully in CEWEFIA's planned activities if it finds the need to provide them with soft loans since in every community the women crave for it.

SECTION 7 - CONCLUSION

The campaign was very successful. All the fish processors in the target communities appreciated the efforts by CEWEFIA to enlighten them on the best practices of handling fish from net to plate to maximize profits. Amongst the project's targeted communities where the program was organized, almost all the fish processors, fishermen and fisher folks who participated in the placard procession and the durbar appreciated the efforts in implementing various activities under the USAID/SFM Project to sustain the fishing industry. Moreover, the participants stated that they would complement CEWEFIA's efforts by adhering to the dictates of hygienic fish handling practices, and adopt the use of Ahotor oven to increase their profits and provide their customers with safe and healthy fish. It is anticipated that these campaigns, if regularly organized will change the old ways of processing fish and adopt modern methods of handling fish hygienically, packaging and branding for hotels, supermarkets, malls, other mini markets emerging; and especially for export to earn foreign currency.

In his closing remarks, the chairman said that fishmongers should ensure proper use of the insulated containers provided them, to enable achieve the purpose for which the boxes were given. The women must influence the men to fish responsibly. He further threw more light on good packaging of fish and marketing. He also urged all and sundry to adhere to the education given by CEWEFIA.

He congratulated some fishmongers and processors who had already been observing hygienic practices in handling their fish products. He gave an appeal to the Fisheries

Commission, SFMP officers from Accra, and CEWEFIA to support the fish mongers financially.

The durbar ended at 2:45pm in Sekondi; Anlo-Beach and Moree at 2:00pm, and Elmina at 4:00pm.

The campaign ended successfully with participants well-informed on the hygienic ways of fish handling and use of improved ovens.

Moree recorded the highest participants followed by Anlo-Beach, Sekondi and then Elmina.

APPENDIX



Figure 2. A cross section of participants at the durbar grounds at Moree with Nicholas Smith (arrowed), project officer for Western Region addressing the audience.



Figure 3. Participants in procession at Elmina (left) and Sekondi (right)



Figure 4. Presentation of fish at Sekondi.