



## FISH PROCESSORS ADOPT HYGIENIC PRACTICES TO IMPROVE QUALITY FISH CONSUMPTION

“Thanks to the training my business has improved and I can take care of my family needs.”



Photo Credit: Nii Odenkey Abbey, SFMP

Juliana Kuranu, Fish processor at Elmina, Central Region

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- **Josephine Opare Addo**  
Program Officer, CEWEFIA

Small-scale fish processing in Ghana contributes directly to the livelihoods of more than 30,000 women in 340 coastal communities. It provides income to meet basic household needs including food, health care, and school fees for children. However, most fish processors produce poor quality products due to limited knowledge about good hygiene. Fish receiving, washing, processing and packaging is often done in the same area which increases the potential for cross-contamination between freshly delivered raw fish and finished products. Juliana Kuranu, a 42 year-old mother of three at Elmina in the Central Region, personally knows how poor hygienic practices affect fish processing businesses in her area. “Over the years I have seen how our practices not only affect us, but also traders and consumers of the fish that we process. It effects the whole community.”

To address this problem, the USAID Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) partnered with the Ghana Fisheries Commission’s (GFC) to develop programs that introduce fish processors to hygienic practices that boost business, improve livelihoods, and result in a safer finished product for consumers. To reach processors at the ground level, SFMP and the GFC engaged the Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA) and the Development Action Association (DAA), two local organizations that focus on developing capacity for women in the Central and Greater Accra regions of the country. To date, over 1,195 fish processors were trained on hygienic fish handling, processing and storage that results in higher market values for processed fish, decreased loss of processed products, and increased quality of product for consumers.

To ensure these practices continue to spread, the project supported a team including the Fisheries Commission’s Post-Harvest Unit, Ghana Standards Authority, Ghana Food and Drug Board, the Food Research Institute, University of Cape Coast, University of Ghana and the National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA) to develop a certification scheme for fish processors. Called the ‘Class 1 Certification Scheme’, it lays out minimum standards for hygienic processing and provides the Fisheries Commission with a platform for continued training and certification of small-scale processors. Auditors certify small-scale processing operations that achieve minimum standards and provide guidance to processors that have not yet reached those standards. Thirteen fish processing facilities are already certified with many more requesting audits.

“We are happy to work with the fish processors on hygienic fish handling techniques”, says Josephine Opare Addo, a program officer with CEWEFIA. “We see that we are improving the supply of good quality, hygienic fish products for local consumers while improving the livelihoods of fish processors.”

Like other processors that have been trained, Juliana is optimistic about her future. “Thanks to my training my business has improved and I can take care of my family needs.”

USAID’s Sustainable Fisheries Management Project works in Ghana to improve the livelihoods of women processors and supports adoption of sustainable fisheries management approaches to rebuild targeted fish stocks on which people most depend.