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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Technical Assistance Consultancy Report, TRY Oyster Women's Association



FEBRUARY 2017

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF OCEANOGRAPHY



TRY
Oyster Women's Association,
The Gambia

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Cover photo: Multi-stakeholder Consultation for Community-based Co-management Planning during the Participatory Rural Appraisal at DAA (Credit: Mariama Ashcroft, TRY)

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|--|
| CEWEFIA | Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association |
| CRC | Coastal Resources Center |
| CSO | Civil society organization |
| DAA | Development Action Association |
| DQF | Daasgift Quality Foundation |
| FC | Fisheries Commission |
| HM | Hen Mpoano |
| MOFAD | Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development |
| NAFPTA | National Fish Processors and Traders Association |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| SFMP | Sustainable Fisheries Management Project |
| SNV | Netherlands Development Organization |
| TRY | TRY Oyster Women's Association |
| UCC | University of Cape Coast |
| URI | University of Rhode Island |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| ACRONYMS..... | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | v |
| LIST OF FIGURES | vii |
| 1. BACKGROUND..... | 1 |
| 2. GOALS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CONSULTANCY | 2 |
| 2.1 Objectives of the Consultancy | 2 |
| 2.2 Description of the Consultancy | 2 |
| 2.3 Organization of the Consultancy | 2 |
| 3. SUMMARY OF THEMES AND ISSUES..... | 5 |
| 3.1 Post-Harvest Management..... | 5 |
| 3.2 Ecosystem Management | 6 |
| 3.3 Leadership and Capacity Building..... | 7 |
| 3.4 Livelihood Diversification..... | 7 |
| 3.5 NAFPTA Governance and Relevance | 8 |
| 3.6 Gender Mainstreaming in Fisheries Sector..... | 8 |
| 4. SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS..... | 9 |
| 4.1 Monday January 23rd, 2017 | 9 |
| 4.2 Tuesday January 24 to Wednesday 25th | 9 |
| 4.3 Thursday January 26 th and Friday 27 th | 10 |
| 4.4 Monday January 30 th and Tuesday 31 st | 10 |
| 4.5 Wednesday February 1 st | 10 |
| 4.6 Thursday February 2 nd | 11 |
| 4.7 Friday February 3 rd | 11 |
| 5. RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 12 |
| CEWEFIA | 12 |
| DAA..... | 12 |
| DQF | 12 |
| NAFPTA..... | 12 |
| Fisheries Commission..... | 12 |
| General Recommendations for the Group of Partner Organizations | 12 |
| 6. CONCLUSION | 14 |

| | |
|---|----|
| APPENDIX 1: REPORT OF ONE DAY WORKSHOP..... | 15 |
| List of Participating Organizations and Individuals | 16 |
| CEWEFIA | 16 |
| National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA) | 16 |
| SFMP-Ghana | 16 |
| Workshop Facilitators..... | 16 |
| Workshop Rapporteur..... | 16 |
| Background..... | 16 |
| One Day Follow-up Workshop..... | 17 |
| Objectives of the Workshop | 17 |
| Organization of the Workshop | 17 |
| Session 1: Plenary..... | 17 |
| Actions and Accomplishments | 17 |
| Share lessons learned, study tour video, and publications at stakeholders’ events and with the media..... | 17 |
| Create a platform for study tour participants to continue communication. | 18 |
| Sensitize fish processors on raised platform for drying fish and work with Fisheries Commission and other partners on improved stove development..... | 18 |
| Communicate and enforce closed season/areas for specific species, 2 days a week for artisanal fishing and 3 months for trawlers. | 19 |
| Gender mainstreaming..... | 19 |
| Develop capacity of Associations for governance, organization, a unified voice, advocacy, and sustainability of their structures..... | 19 |
| Lessons Learned in the Implementation of Study Tour Action Plans..... | 20 |
| Session II: Small Group Session | 20 |
| Achievements | 21 |
| Challenges | 21 |
| Recommendations to solve some of the above challenges..... | 21 |
| Networking opportunities | 22 |
| Recommended Top 3 Priority Actions for Collaboration among SFMP Partners | 22 |
| Conclusion..... | 22 |
| APPENDIX 2: Workshop Agenda | 23 |
| APPENDIX 3: Questions for Small Group Discussion..... | 24 |
| APPENDIX 4: Oyster Business Booming in Ghana..... | 25 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Sessions with CEWEFIA management and community leaders at Elmina..... | 3 |
| Figure 2. Additional sessions with CEWEFIA management and community leaders at Elmina .. | 3 |
| Figure 3. Sample Ahotor oven showing smoking trays and slots for fuelwood..... | 5 |
| Figure 4. Boats docked on a Tuesday (no fishing day) at Elmina Beach..... | 6 |
| Figure 5. Small fish caught at Anlo Beach using dragnet | 7 |
| Figure 6. CEWEFIA member Gifty Dorkenu Deku’s processed fish products | 9 |
| Figure 7. DQF members at Shama with consultants and Hannah Antwi | 10 |
| Figure 8. Workshop participants | 15 |
| Figure 9. CEWEFIA promotional parade at Moree | 15 |
| Figure 10. Stacked trays of fish smoked on Ahotor oven by CEWEFIA members | 19 |
| Figure 11. Participants working in small groups | 20 |

1. BACKGROUND

In the fisheries sector in Ghana, women play an influential but often invisible role in value chain management as financiers, fishers, processors, and marketers. As in many economic activities where women participate, the contributions of Ghanaian women in small scale fisheries are under-reported and their access to productive resources to improve their efficacy is limited. They are underrepresented in fisheries sector leadership positions. Their concerns and issues are also not adequately reflected in national policies and programs.

The USAID-funded Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) in Ghana was established in part to raise the visibility of women fisher folk, support their capacity building, promote livelihood diversification strategies, and advocate issues that affect them and their communities. SFMP works in partnership with local and international non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, and government agencies in Ghana to promote ecosystem-based as well as adaptive management approaches, and improved practices in the fisheries value chain.

2. GOALS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CONSULTANCY

In January 2017, SFMP contracted the services of TRY Oyster Women's Association (TRY) as consultants to provide technical assistance in the promotion of improved post-harvest management and livelihood diversification strategies for low income women fisher folk in Ghana. TRY is a local association of women oyster harvesting communities in The Gambia. It was established in 2007 to support women oyster harvesters who are the primary breadwinners of their families, yet are often poor, uneducated, widowed, and lacked access to improved conservation and post-harvest management techniques. TRY negotiated and obtained exclusive use rights for its 500 plus members to the oyster and cockle fishery in the Tanbi Wetlands National Park – a Ramsar protected area – through a Co-Management Plan with the Gambia Government. TRY was also one of the winners of the 2012 UNDP Equator Award for sustainable coastal resource management.

The Consultancy followed a study tour to The Gambia and Senegal conducted by a group of women fish processors and leaders from women's organizations in fishery post-harvest management in Ghana, as well as officials from the Fisheries Commission of Ghana. The study tour, sponsored by SFMP, aimed to expose participants to peer organizations that have developed successful community-based strategies for sustainable fisheries management and post-harvest value chain improvements and successful strategies for civil society organization (CSO)/Government collaboration for sustainable fisheries value chain management. TRY was one of the hosts of the study tour.

2.1 Objectives of the Consultancy

The objectives of the consultancy were to:

- Further develop the enabling environment for and capacity of CSOs representing small scale actors in the fisheries value chain (especially women) to take a leadership role in sustainable fisheries management in Ghana.
- Demonstrate an applied case of community-based fisheries management planning in Ghana led by women.

2.2 Description of the Consultancy

The Consultants were tasked to undertake the following activities over a 12-day period from January 23rd to February 3rd, 2017:

- Follow up with Ghanaian women-led and oriented membership CSOs in the fisheries sector (CEWEFIA, DAA, DQF, NAFPTA) and Fisheries Commission Post Harvest Unit and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) to implement lessons learned from the FY16 Regional Gambia and Senegal Study Tour.
- Support DAA to lead development of a Community-based Fishery Management Plan for the oyster fishery in the village of Tsokomey where oysters are harvested from the estuary/mouth of the Densu River as an alternative livelihood.

2.3 Organization of the Consultancy

The Consultants held consultation sessions with the management and leaders of SFMP and partner organizations and visited project sites where they had discussion with women and men fisher folk and local leaders in the communities served by partner organizations. They facilitated a Participatory Rural Appraisal on oyster harvesting with the DAA community at Bortianor/Tsokomey.

The Consultancy mission concluded with a one-day workshop that brought together partner organizations which participated in the 2016 regional study tour in Gambia and Senegal to review their achievements and challenges.

2.4 List of Groups and Individuals Met during Field Visits to Partner Organizations

CEWEFIA



Figure 1. Sessions with CEWEFIA management and community leaders at Elmina



Figure 2. Additional sessions with CEWEFIA management and community leaders at Elmina

- Mrs. Victoria Koomson, Founder and Executive Director.
- Management Team and Staff.
- Mr. Nana Kwesi Duncan 1, Chief Fisherman, Elmina Bridge House.
- Mr. Anthony Mensah, Secretary of Chief Fisherman Duncan.
- Group of 7 Elmina fishermen in the company of Chief Fisherman Duncan.
- Mrs. Gifty Dorkenu Deku, Food processing Small business owner.
- Women's Group and Community Leaders of Moree.
- Mr. John Kennedy Atikpo, Anlo Beach.
- Ms. Elizabeth Kpowudo, Anlo Beach

DAA

- Mrs. Lydia Sasu, Executive Director.
- Mrs. Grace Quaye, DAA President.
- Management Team and Staff.
- Nii Adama Tettey, Chief Fisherman, Bortianor.
- Mr. Joseph Armah Boye, Secretary to Bortianor Chief Fisherman.
- Numo Ogbamey Commey, River Priest, Bortianor.
- Mr. Okyeame Lankwei Osei, Chief Linguist.
- Mr. Peter Oblitey Amui, Sakumo family representative.
- Mr. Yawli Adjei, Tsokomey Elder.
- Mrs. Cecilia Agbeshie, Leader of Tsokomey Fish Processors.
- Women and Men Oyster Harvesters

DQF

- Mrs. Gifty Baaba Asmah, Founder and Executive Director.
- Women's Microfinance Group of Shama Fisheries Commission of Ghana.
- Mr. Samuel Manu, Head of Post-Harvest Unit

NAFPTA

- Mrs. Regina Solomon, President.
- Mrs. Rebecca Eshun, National and Central Region Branch Treasurer.
- Mrs. Mary Drah, Greater Accra Executive member.
- Mrs. Doris Ahadzi, Greater Accra Executive member.
- Mrs. Beatrice Aquaye, Greater Accra Executive member.
- Mrs. Cynthia Commey, Greater Accra Executive member

SNV

- Mrs. Sarah Naa Dedei Agbey, Senior Associate Advisor.

3. SUMMARY OF THEMES AND ISSUES

The visits to SFMP partners and their project sites revealed several themes and issues which reflect or were inspired by lessons from the 2016 Study Tour to The Gambia and Senegal.

Partner organizations and their communities consistently credited their exposure to the study tour and materials shared from it in helping them appreciate the power of peer learning. It helped to raise their awareness about the implications and practical solutions to some of the problems experienced in the Ghanaian fisheries sector. It also helped them improve their approach on some initiatives that had already started, launch new initiatives or advance more intentionally on projects that had stalled prior to the study tour.

3.1 Post-Harvest Management.

Partner organizations are using a multi-pronged strategy to tackle this problem. They are using different media to advocate improved post-harvest fish handling, including community campaigns, banners, radio and television. They are training their members on improved post-harvest techniques and the importance of hygienic fish handling. They are constructing training and processing centers that meet basic health, hygiene and certification standards.

The Ahotor Oven has been developed in partnership with SNV and Fisheries Commission as an improved smoking oven that serves the multiple goals of conservation management through efficiency in fuelwood, consumer preference in taste and appearance of smoked fish, and reduced health risks for women through reduced smoke emission and inhalation. There may be the need to review the design of the Ahotor Oven to minimize labor entailed in the frequent rotation of smoking trays. Some local NGOs also report that the cost of owning the oven may be unaffordable for most women on an individual basis.



Figure 3. Sample Ahotor oven showing smoking trays and slots for fuelwood

3.2 Ecosystem Management

SFMP partner organizations are actively engaged with their communities to introduce measures to address overfishing and degradation of coastal and species habitat. Actions and dialogue are underway to introduce new conservation measures based on lessons from the Gambia-Senegal study tour. These include the extension of the weekly “No fishing day” from one day to two and the introduction of closed seasons for trawlers and small scale artisanal fishers.

Dialogue about closed seasons for small scale fishermen has started, but the process is slow because of concerns about alternative livelihood strategies for this group which is more vulnerable to poverty. Partner organizations and community leaders are also concerned that political interference is restricting their capacity to enforce conservation management measures such as closed days and seasons, and restrictions on the size of fish to catch.

During the visit to Anlo Beach with CEWEFIA, the team witnessed the landing of a dragnet filled with small fish (see photo below). While discussing with the fishermen why dragnet fishing is hazardous to ecosystem management, the team learned how the fisher folk manage this form of fishing through communal resource sharing. A member of the community owns the net and organizes a group of men, women and children to be

“If we stop fishing even for one day, what are we going to eat? Besides, this fish is never going to increase in size; it has been the same size since Nkrumah came into power in 1957 so closed season will not make it grow bigger” (Anlo Beach dragnet fisherman.

“Ghanaians love small fish and nothing will stop them from catching them” NAFPTA member.

“What will we do if we don’t cut mangroves for the brush parks?” DAA PRA participant.



Figure 4. Boats docked on a Tuesday (no fishing day) at Elmina Beach

responsible for casting the net and dragging it back unto shore when filled. The catch is shared with the owner taking half and group members sharing the rest for consumption and for smoking. The women in the

group take care of storing the net after every catch. At the end of every season, the net owner pays the group on a share basis. This experience illustrates that community management is being practiced at local level and may be applicable to community-based ecosystem management.



Figure 5. Small fish caught at Anlo Beach using dragnet

Credit: TRY

3.3 Leadership and Capacity Building

Local NGOs are building the capacity of women and men in small scale fisheries value chain to implement improved conservation and community-based management approaches. They are advocating women's participation in leadership and building women's capacity to assume leadership roles. SNV is training Fisheries Zonal staff to improve their extension capacity and support for community building. However, cultural norms persist that hinder women's willingness to accept leadership roles, challenge perennial leaders and hold leaders accountable. There is need to build the capacity for local grassroots groups to enforce conservation measures through a participatory self-regulatory process.

3.4 Livelihood Diversification

One of the biggest challenges to successful ecosystem and adaptive management approaches as conceived in Ghana is the establishment of sustainable livelihood diversification strategies, especially for artisanal and small scale fisher folk. As alluded to under ecosystem management above, many fisher communities depend on fishing for their livelihood and cannot conceive of any other activities that would not involve fishing.

Local NGOs and associations will need to be innovative and adopt a long-term perspective in their efforts toward behavioral change. They will also need to adopt more collaborative strategies built around common messages and peer learning between communities. Initiatives worth studying include NAFPTA's introduction of vegetable gardening with some of its groups and village savings and loans schemes being promoted by SFMP. DAA is also exploring prospects for development of a community based management plan for oyster harvesting as a sustainable livelihood and food security venture in Bortianor along the Densu River estuary.

3.5 NAFPTA Governance and Relevance

SNV and Fisheries Commission have taken significant steps in collaboration with NAFPTA members to depoliticize the association, create a new vision and set in motion actions to improve its governance. NAFPTA members are undergoing training in governance and leadership. However, most NAFPTA members are at the same time members of other local NGOs in the sector, thus raising concerns about the relevance of the association and its risk for competition with or duplication of programs provided by local NGOs. There is evidence to suggest that NAFPTA was originally conceived as an association of local organizations, not as a retail level association, and that it would be more relevant as an umbrella association.

3.6 Gender Mainstreaming in Fisheries Sector

Women in the fisheries sector are marginalized. As mentioned before, they are reluctant to take on leadership responsibilities, particularly in associations and groups where men dominate. Their issues and concerns tend to be overlooked in national policies and programs. It is expected that the National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Fisheries Sector, which was the result of the collaborative efforts of SNV, Fisheries Commission, SFMP and local NGOs, will help to bring the plight of these women into the forefront of public discourse on the development of the fisheries sector in Ghana. Although SNV has developed a training manual on gender mainstreaming, it is important that the Strategy be disseminated broadly and resources be made available to implement and monitor key actions and impact.

4. SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 Monday January 23rd, 2017

The Consultants held discussions with SFMP leadership team to clarify expectations and identify resources to support the program. They participated in the Monday morning staff meeting during which the objectives of the technical assistance were presented and they learned more about SFMP's activities in Ghana.

The team met with SNV and Fisheries Commission staff to discuss actions and issues following the 2016 study tour to The Gambia and Senegal.

4.2 Tuesday January 24 to Wednesday 25th

The team traveled to Central Region and held consultations with the staff and members of CEWEFIA and community leaders in Elmina, Cape Coast, Moree and Anlo Beach. They held discussions with the Chief Fisherman of Elmina Beach and 8 other fishermen, learning about the progress being made in instituting closed seasons as well as challenges faced by women in the fishery sector. The team next visited one of CEWEFIA members, Gifty Dorkenu Deku, who owns a small-scale post-harvest processing business in which she packages smoked fish for export, produces ground smoke fish and shrimps for export. Gifty also trains other women in improved post-harvest management.



Figure 6. CEWEFIA member Gifty Dorkenu Deku's processed fish products

Credit: TRY

On Wednesday, the team participated in CEWEFIA's campaign parade at Moree to promote the Ahotor oven, improved post-harvest management, the role of women in the fisheries sector and importance of conservation management. They also visited Anlo Beach where they witnessed the landing of two dragnet fishing loads being pulled to shore. This was a new experience for the team because dragnet fishing is not practiced in The Gambia. The team next visited DQF's microfinance and fish processing activities at Shama where they had discussions with women microfinance participants.



Figure 7. DQF members at Shama with consultants and Hannah Antwi

Credit: TRY

4.3 Thursday January 26th and Friday 27th

The team met with the executive committee, management and staff of DAA at their head office in Accra. They participated in DAA's action planning for its post-harvest management program including the promotion of oyster harvesting. This was followed by a visit to Tsokomey to prepare for the PRA planned for January 29th and 30th. During the preparatory visit to Tsokomey, the team took a canoe ride to the oyster harvesting site accompanied by a group of women harvesters who demonstrated how they harvest oysters. The team also paid a courtesy call to Bortianor community leaders to share information about the planned PRA and invite their participation.

4.4 Monday January 30th and Tuesday 31st

More than 100 women and men oyster harvesters, community leaders, and officials from the Fisheries Commission and District Agricultural Office participated in the PRA organized at the DAA interim Training Center at Bortianor/Tsokomey. A separate PRA report is available for more information.

4.5 Wednesday February 1st

A meeting scheduled with NAFPTA leaders did not materialize due to a misunderstanding about the purpose and format of the meeting. NAFPTA wanted to organize a drama event with 150 of their members throughout the country, which did not meet conditions for a leadership session to discuss actions and challenges. The consultants attended a meeting of the Trawlers Association expecting to convene a session with the NAFPTA leaders in attendance but this failed. It was agreed that the team meet with the leaders during the workshop on February 1st.

4.6 Thursday February 2nd

SFMP partner organizations met for a one-day workshop to discuss their follow up actions, achievements and challenges during the period following the Gambia-Senegal Study Tour in January 2016. They also agreed on collective actions and networking opportunities that will advance their agenda for change in the sector. A separate workshop report is attached to this report. The consultants used the opportunity to meet and discuss with NAFPTA leaders.

4.7 Friday February 3rd

The Consultants held a debriefing session with SFMP during which the draft PRA report was discussed and plans laid for the completion of other deliverables of the Technical Assistance Consultancy as defined in the Service Contract. The meeting explored potential follow up activities, including a sub-regional study tour involving other countries in West Africa.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

CEWEFIA

- Train women on sustainable diversified activities and value creation.
- Facilitate the training of women in processed fish value addition by Gifty Denkonu Darko to create new markets.
- Facilitate women's financial literacy and access to credit for business expansion and improved livelihood.
- Partner with UCC on aquaculture development for fish processors at Anlo Beach.
- Continue advocacy on women's empowerment, post-harvest management, conservation management, and livelihood diversification strategies.

DAA

- Continue organizing the women and men oyster harvesters into a formal, legal entity in accordance with Ghanaian laws.
- Provide leadership and group management training for executive committee members of oyster harvesters' association.
- Provide training in improved post-harvest handling and processing of oysters.
- Conduct market studies to assess market opportunities for oysters.
- Organize exchange visit to oyster harvesting sites in the Volta Region.

DQF

- Ensure that the proposed association of fish processors being facilitated by DQF evolves into an independent organization with its own governance and leadership structure.
- Expand microfinance services and membership in the association to youth in the community.

NAFPTA

- Organize leadership training for members.
- Continue transformation of the association into a more viable, relevant and professional organization.
- Build a governance structure that is inclusive, participatory and accountable with members having a voice in decision-making.

Fisheries Commission

- Establish a consultative, participatory process that engages all fisheries stakeholders in planning and decision-making on matters affecting the sector, including small scale and artisanal fisher folk regardless of gender and economic status.
- Develop a process to enable NAFPTA become an independent, viable and sustainable organization free from political interference.

General Recommendations for the Group of Partner Organizations

- Engage UCC and other research institutions more actively to assist in providing science-based evidence to support program development, implementation and evaluation.
- Facilitate group ownership of the Ahotor oven financed through credit from savings and loans companies so that more women have access. This will minimize the financial burden associated with individual owners.

- Strengthen networking opportunities and joint planning and programming to promote effectiveness and minimize duplication. Such opportunities may include sharing of resources and expertise, for example, shared use of training and processing centers where they exist, and joint national/regional advocacy campaigns targeting common messages.

6. CONCLUSION

SFMP partner organizations and their communities are taking the lead in building the enabling environment required for sustainable community-based ecosystem management. They are building organizational and leadership capacity and applying behavioral change paradigms to develop good practices among the different stakeholders in the fisheries sector, with gender considerations playing a central role in the process. They are facilitating livelihood diversification strategies that will help to accelerate the goals of sustainable conservation management.

The 2016 Regional Gambia-Senegal Study Tour has demonstrated that peer learning works when applied in the right context, with constituents who share similar circumstances and perceive a mutual benefit from the learning experience. The success of the 2016 study tour has motivated the Fisheries Commission of Ghana to propose a study tour with policy staff of the Fisheries Commission, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, local canoe fishermen and other value chain operators to return to The Gambia for lessons on the implementation of community-based fisheries governance and management systems.

APPENDIX 1: REPORT OF ONE DAY WORKSHOP

Women's Civil Society Organizations Championing Best Practices in the Fisheries Sector
One Day Follow-up Workshop, 2ND FEBRUARY, 2017, SFMP Office, East Legon.



Figure 8. Workshop participants



Figure 9. CEWEFIA promotional parade at Moree

Credit: TRY

List of Participating Organizations and Individuals

CEWEFIA

- Ms. Hannah Antwi, Communications Officer.
- Mrs. Diana Otuteye, Moree Community Women's Group Leader DaasGift Quality Foundation.
- Ms. Gifty Baaba Asmah, Founder and Executive Director Development Action Association (DAA).
- Ms. Nancy Ayesua Out, Finance, Administration and Communication Officer.
- Mrs. Grace Bondzie, DAA/SFMP Community Liaison Officer for APAM Fisheries Commission, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development.
- Mr. Samuel Duodu Manu, Head of Post-Harvest Unit.
- Ms. Matilda Quist.
- Ms. Frieda Oduro Hen Mpoano.
- Ms. Adiza Ama Owuzu.

National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA)

- Mrs. Regina Solomon, President.
- Mrs. Rebecca Eshun, National and Central Region Branch Treasurer SNV Netherlands Development Organization.
- Mr. Emmanuel Kwarteng.

SFMP-Ghana

- Mrs. Margaret Ottah Atikpo, SFMP Fisheries Specialist for Post-Harvest, Gender and Capacity Development.
- Mrs. Elin Torell, Director, International Programs URI, CRC, SFMP Gender Specialist.

Workshop Facilitators

Fatou Janha, Director, TRY Oyster Women's Association, The Gambia

Mariam Ashcroft, Senior Advisor, TRY Oyster Women's Association, The Gambia

Workshop Rapporteur

Sheila Fynn-Korsah, University of Cape Coast Doctoral Student/SFMP Extension Agent

Background

In January 2016, a group of women fish processors and leaders from women's organizations in fishery post-harvest management in Ghana, as well as officials from the Fisheries Commission of Ghana participated in a 10-day Regional Study Tour to The Gambia and Senegal. These organizations are championing women's empowerment in fisheries management and post-harvest value chain improvements. The study tour, sponsored by the USAID-funded Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) in Ghana, aimed to expose participants to peer organizations that have developed successful community-based strategies for sustainable fisheries management and post-harvest value chain improvements, and successful strategies for civil society organization (CSO)/Government collaboration for sustainable fisheries value chain management.

One Day Follow-up Workshop

The workshop brought together 15 participants, including the women fish processors and leaders of SFMP partner organizations who participated in the Gambia-Senegal Study Tour on Women's Empowerment and Post-Harvest Improvements in 2016 and staff of SFMP- Ghana. Mrs. Fatou Janha, Director of TRY-Gambia, and Mrs. Mariama Ashcroft, Senior Advisor of TRY-Gambia, facilitated the workshop.

Objectives of the Workshop

- Review progress made and lessons learned since the Gambia-Senegal study tour
- Identify priority collective actions going forward to further empower women CSO leaders and champions of change in the sector.

Organization of the Workshop

Mrs. Margaret Ottah Atikpo, called for the opening of the workshop with opening prayer by Hannah Antwi, the Communication officer for CEWEFIA. Dr. Brian Crawford, SFMP Chief of Party, gave a welcome address which was followed by opening remarks from Mrs. Fatou Janha and Mrs. Mariama Ashcroft. Mr. Samuel Manu of the Fisheries Commission Post Harvest Unit also gave welcoming remarks stating that the visit to Gambia was an eye opener for the Fisheries Commission of Ghana.

Participants worked in plenary and small group sessions to share actions implemented and lessons learned in implementing the post Gambia-Senegal Study Tour action plans proposed for their organizations. They also identified priority collective actions that would advance the agenda for change for women in fisheries.

Session 1: Plenary

Participants conducted a general review of lessons learned from the Gambia-Senegal Study Tour to remind participants of the follow up actions they had developed. A brief discussion ensued indicating that Ghana introduced a one month closed season for industrial fishing in November 2016 and plans were underway to start a second season from February to March 2017. The introduction of the closed season has apparently led to complaints from trawler owners who report of paying dock levies during the closed season when they are not fishing and do not earn an income.

Participants presented the actions implemented by their organizations related to the plans from the study tour, their achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. The presentations indicated a deep sense of commitment and motivation to improving the lives and livelihoods of fisher folk especially women, to women's empowerment, and to promoting good conservation management practices.

Actions and Accomplishments

Highlights of the actions implemented are outlined below. Participants have attributed these actions and accomplishments entirely or partially to the lessons they learned and exposure to good practices gained during the study tour. In some cases, the study tour reinforced and provided valuable perspective on approaches and actions already being implemented by SFMP partners with project support.

Share lessons learned, study tour video, and publications at stakeholders' events and with the media.

- CEWEFIA, DAA, and NAFPTA presented the materials, pictures, and video from the study tour to their staff, members, at community meetings, workshops, and through

local radio programs. This has resulted in increased awareness about best practices in post-harvest management and community-based conservation management. News media have published articles about the experiences from the study tour and implications for the Ghanaian artisanal fisheries sector, food security and the national economy.

- Men and women fisher folk are motivated to change bad practices after learning what their peers in other African countries are doing. Some fishing communities have started discussions about the practices that promote sustainable management of fishery resources and are negotiating to establish closed seasons and/or fishing holidays.
- DAA has organized a group of women and men in Tsokomey to form an association of oyster harvesters. SFMP has sponsored a Participatory Rural Appraisal for the group to share knowledge and experiences in oyster harvesting. This is the first step toward building a community-based management and conservation plan for oyster harvesting as a sustainable livelihood and food security activity.

Create a platform for study tour participants to continue communication.

- Study tour participants have organized joint meetings to discuss issues and agree on collective action. One such meeting was held at the FC offices in Accra with staff from CEWEFIA, DAA, SNV, and NAFPTA participating. The participants plan to continue these joint forums which will contribute to building synergy and coherence in their programs.
- They visited the former Minister of Fisheries during the National Dialogue Day to debrief on their Gambia-Senegal Study Tour experiences and lessons learned. The participants plan to continue these joint forums which will contribute to building synergy and coherence in their programs.
- DAA and CEWEFIA organized an exchange visit to explore opportunities for lateral learning.

Sensitize fish processors on raised platform for drying fish and work with Fisheries Commission and other partners on improved stove development.

CEWEFIA, NAFPTA, and DAA have collaborated with FC and SNV to design the Ahotor fish smoking oven which uses less fuel wood and gives off less smoke. The partners have also carried out promotion campaigns for the Ahotor. CEWEFIA organized a parade with banners and drumming, followed by skits illustrating messages related to improved post-harvest processes, hygienic handling, and health hazards of smoking fish. There was also a demonstration of fish smoking on the Ahotor oven.



Figure 10. Stacked trays of fish smoked on Ahotor oven by CEWEFIA members

Credit: TRY

Communicate and enforce closed season/areas for specific species, 2 days a week for artisanal fishing and 3 months for trawlers.

FC in collaboration with other SFMP partners has introduced 2 closed seasons for trawlers, the first in November 2016, and the next one planned for February/March 2017. NAFPTA and CEWEFIA are promoting this practice with their members.

Gender mainstreaming.

SFMP, SNV, FC and other partners collaborated with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development to formulate a National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Fisheries Sector. The Minister has signed the document, thus making it operational.

SNV has conducted a study on women in leadership and decision-making which revealed that: male dominated associations do not consult women or engage them in decision-making; when consulted, their ideas did not factor into the decision-making process; and female dominated associations seek men's views in decision-making. SNV aims to increase its women in leadership positions to 40% by 2017.

Develop capacity of Associations for governance, organization, a unified voice, advocacy, and sustainability of their structures.

SNV and FC conducted an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) with NAFPTA to identify its organizational challenges and design strategies to depoliticize and professionalize the association. A new governance culture is emerging that devolves authority and responsibility to members rather than one individual.

NAFPTA has revised its Constitution and introduced membership subscriptions as a means to reduce dependence on government assistance. It is training its members to become active participants in decision-making and to take up leadership responsibilities in the Association.

CEWEFIA and DAA have trained their members in group dynamics and management which has contributed to improved communication and decision-making. This is helping in the fight against illegal fishing (IUU) and child labor and trafficking. The women are empowered to focus more on their own self-help efforts rather than waiting for assistance from government.

DaasGift has mobilized 400 women to form a self-governing association separate from the microfinance NGO and has trained the women on communication and advocacy.

Develop a model fish processing facility that meets international sanitary standards

CEWEFIA, DAA, DQF are building compliant processing facilities and training centers for post-harvest technology. NAFPTA also is planning to build a training and processing center in every district where it has members.

Lessons Learned in the Implementation of Study Tour Action Plans

1. Not all initiatives are replicable. For example, fisher folk at Anlo Beach in Central Region believed they could harvest oysters in their mangrove wetlands. However, preliminary research by UCC indicated that the extensive mangrove depletion and heavy pollution in the lagoon makes oyster cultivation unfeasible. Friends of The Nation has conducted some mangrove rehabilitation. CEWEFIA has planted a woodlot as alternative fuelwood in place of mangroves and is conducting a sensitization campaign on the importance of mangrove rehabilitation.
2. Community characterization is important for success in program implementation. This requires an understanding of cultural practices, values, power relations, and affiliations in order to deploy resources effectively to achieve optimal outcomes. For example, women in The Gambia seem to enjoy working in groups whereas most women in Ghana generally prefer operating as individuals to avoid conflict.
3. Trust is important in making quality decisions and engaging communities to effect change.

Session II: Small Group Session

Participants worked in three groups to discuss outcomes and challenges of their organizations, recommend what their organizations can contribute to solving challenges in the fisheries sector, and propose networking opportunities among partner organizations. A summary of the results from the small groups is outlined below.

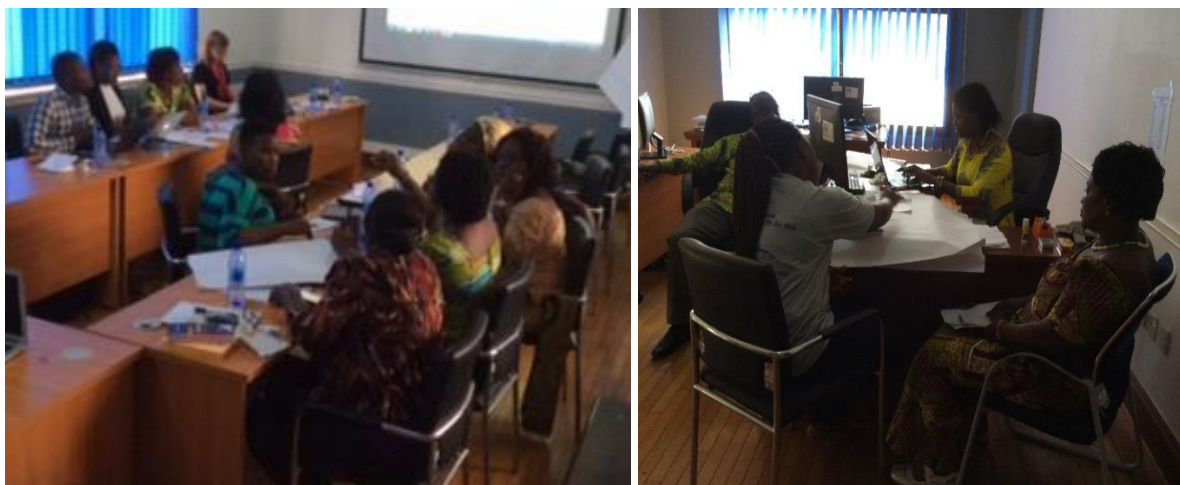


Figure 11. Participants working in small groups

Credit: TRY

Achievements

These achievements are in addition to those outlined earlier in this report.

- Women fisher folk are speaking out and making their voices heard. They are becoming more deliberate in organizing for change. They are being consulted more widely and their views taken into consideration in decision-making in male-dominated organizations. Men and women are collaborating more and taking up joint responsibilities in the governance and management of local groups. The National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Fisheries Sector will help to further advance this initiative.
- Fisher folk have improved their knowledge about their work and its value addition to the national economy. They are improving their leadership skills and engaging more in advocacy and conflict management.
- Collaboration between FC, NAFPTA, and local NGOs has improved. SFMP partners are building platforms for collaboration, consultation, and peer learning which will result in a stronger voice and representation for fisher folk and their families.

Challenges

Members of local NGOs and Associations lack leadership skills to participate in decision-making and take on leadership roles. This results in leadership positions being restricted to a few individuals and limited conditions for accountability and good governance.

Political interference is making it difficult to enforce compliance and implement management plans. Politically affiliated groups and individuals fail to adhere to rules, while political figures bestow favors to their associates and supporters at the expense of others. Associations should make every effort to operate free of partisan political interference so that they can serve the needs and interests of all their members equally.

Over dependence on government and donor subsidies stifles initiative and self-help. This has adverse effects on capacity development, community-based management, and sustainability.

Some communities have limited opportunities for diversification of livelihoods. This makes it difficult to introduce conservation management measures that restrict access to the resources on which they depend for their livelihood.

Fisheries extension staff are not adequately trained, resulting in their inability to provide support to fisher folk. They operate mainly at the landing sites collecting data on fish catch. They seem underutilized and could possibly take on more of a formal extension role if their job duties were revised and training provided.

Members of NAFPTA who are also members of other local NGOs and groups are experiencing an identity crisis. Membership in multiple associations has resource implications for the women when they are required to make material or financial contributions to each for identical services. They are also affected when their participation is required for various activities including training and capacity development. NAFPTA and other associations and groups should develop a strategy that will address this problem, while recognizing that the women are free to join any association they choose to without fear of coercion.

Recommendations to solve some of the above challenges

- FC will apply a participatory approach in developing policies and plans, including consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.
- NAFTA will reward compliance by establishment of awards for best practices and penalties for bad ones.

- Organize leadership training and vision building activities for association members.
- Organize activities to strengthen networking, collaboration, and coordination among local associations, affiliated groups, government agencies, and international NGOs.
- Build the capacity of processors to be economically and socially independent. Sensitize them to understand the status of the fish stocks and the science behind management regulation.

Networking opportunities

Platforms for sharing ideas and peer learning should be established, including exchange programs among FC, NAFPTA and NGOs

Develop community management plans that are specific to communities and drawn out of the Fisheries Management Plan to enhance effective implementation.

Sharing of resources and expertise among organizations, for example, shared use of training and processing centers where they exist.

Recommended Top 3 Priority Actions for Collaboration among SFMP Partners

- Establish platforms for exchange programs or sharing of ideas among associations and NAFPTA. This should be linked with behavioral change objectives among members.
- Share resources and services among organizations, where possible, to minimize duplication. Example shared expertise, best practice training centers (facilities).
- Develop and implement Co-management strategy for fisheries, to include actions that reinforce youth's and women's potential and leadership, cooperation between men and women fisher folk, and local governance.

Conclusion

It is evident that the Gambia-Senegal Study Tour has provided added impetus and clarity of purpose for partner organizations. It is also evident that SFMP has been a dedicated partner, providing material resources and technical and management advice to sustain the commitment of the organizations.

There is a need to redefine the purpose and structure of NAFPTA. Fisheries Commission officials suggest that it was initially conceived as an umbrella association to coordinate the programs and activities of local NGOs and groups. The fact that it has evolved as a retail level association that recruits individuals as members has created tension and confusion in the sector. All stakeholders should work together to ensure that NAFPTA plays the role it was intended to and divest itself from its identity of "political platform".

Finally, the University of Cape Coast and other academic institutions should have an increased role as stakeholders in the evolution of best practices in community-based management and conservation of fisheries resources.

APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOP AGENDA

Women's Civil Society Organizations Championing Best Practices in the Fisheries Sector

Day Workshop

February 2, 2017, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at SFMP Office, East Legon

Objective:

1. Review progress made and lessons learned since the Gambia-Senegal Study Tour
2. Identify priority collective actions going forward to further empower women's CSOs as leaders and champions of change in the sector.

Facilitators:

Fatou Janha, Director, TRY Oyster Women's Association, The Gambia
Mariama Ashcroft, Sr. Advisor, TRY Oyster Women's Association, The Gambia

Agenda

- 9:00 – 9:30 Opening Prayer, Welcome and Round Table Introduction of participants
9:30 – 10:00 Opening Remarks by SFMP
Opening Remarks by TRY Oyster Women's Association
Opening Remarks by Fisheries Commission Representative
- 10:00 – 11:00 Spotlight on a key post-study tour success in application of a lesson learned from each organization
5 minutes' presentation by the organization, 5 minutes clarification questions
6 organizations: CEWEFIA, DAA, DQF, FC, NAFPTA, SNV
- 11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break
- 11:15 – 12:15 Guided Group discussion by TRY on key themes (challenges and successes) from the presentations and observed during the individual site visits to each organization by TRY.
- 12:15 – 1:00 Small group work on the top 3 priorities recommended for collective action going forward by the organizations in the room.
- 1:00 - 2:00 Lunch
- 2:00 – 2:30 Plenary validation of 3 priorities
2:30 – 3:00 Closing remarks and a song

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Select a group rapporteur to take notes and present to the plenary. Do not spend more than 1 hour to discuss the following questions.

1. What are your major achievements and challenges in implementing your action plan after the Senegambia tour?
2. How would your organization contribute in its unique way to addressing some of the present-day problems in the fisheries sector?

What networking opportunities can you create among your various organizations to achieve greater impact?

APPENDIX 4: OYSTER BUSINESS BOOMING IN GHANA

Oyster Business Booming In Ghana

‘The Invisible Fisheries’ Could Drive Nutrition Security In Ghana

Oct 25, 2016 <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/oyster-business-booming-in-ghana/>

The country is indeed blessed with abundant natural resources, yet one that is unduly exploited is oyster. Given its vast benefits and accessibility in the country, one keeps wondering the challenges that confronts the business to realise its full potential-providing nutrition and livelihood to people and women respectively.

Oysters have very high essential vitamins and minerals such as protein, iron, omega three fatty acids, calcium, zinc, and vitamins C. Another important benefit in eating oysters is, it poses no danger to the cholesterol levels in the human body.

A research done by University of Washington shows oysters raise good cholesterol levels and lowers bad cholesterol levels. Despite these health benefits oysters are consumed by only a few in Ghana, due to superstitious beliefs and relative scarcity on the market. Oysters are mostly fished from the Volta River and only sold in few markets around the country due to lack of proper processing and preservation methods.

Oysters are very valuable economically not only for their meat, but their shells as well. Oyster shells can be used in landscaping, replacing gravels and tiles, when paired with cement can be used to design beautiful pavements, and interiors. A clear example of growing this business is the close-door neighbouring West African country-the Gambia, where women have taken up the business to boost income. Supported by the USAID/The Gambia, the women have been able to expand their business.

Members of the Try Oyster Women’s Association in the Gambia is a community-based organisation with a membership of over 700 women who harvest oysters and cockles in The Gambia was formed in 2007.

The aim of the organisation is to enhance sustainable livelihood opportunities for women along with improving and raising their standard of living. Coastal erosion and degradation coupled with unemployment were challenges that require surmounting.

Through action and education, Try Oyster Women’s Association members were empowered and taught how to balance sustainable harvesting of oysters and cockles with the management of delicate mangrove ecosystems.

This has resulted in a network of communities with organised leadership at community levels and at the apex. 15 different communities exist and efforts to improve local incomes have been complemented by efforts to reduce anthropogenic impacts on the Tanbi Wetlands ecosystem, the workplace that sustains the majority of the harvesters.