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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Apam and Winneba Sensitisation Workshop Report



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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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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
Justice Odoi	USAID Administrative Officer Representative Jodoi@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 Organization
#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

Peter Owusu Donkor
Spatial Solutions
powusu-donkor@spatialdimension.net
#3 Third Nautical Close,
Nungua, Accra, Ghana
233 020 463 4488

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

Victoria C. Koomson
cwefia@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

Gifty Asmah
giftyasmah@Daasgift.org
Daasgift Quality Foundation
Headmaster residence, Sekondi College
Sekondi, Western Region, Ghana
233 243 326 178

For additional information on partner activities:

CRC/URI:	http://www.crc.uri.edu
CEWEFIA:	http://cewefia.weebly.com/
DAA:	http://womenthrive.org/development-action-association-daa
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ACRONYMS

CEDECOM	Central Region Development Commission
CENFA	Central Regional Fishermen and Fish Mongers Association
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CLaT	Child Labour and Trafficking
DAA	Development Action Association
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FoN	Friends of Nation
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Program
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of SNV's responsibilities under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project being funded by USAID and implemented by the Coastal Resource Center of the University of Rhode Island through a consortium of local implementing partners here in Ghana; of which SNV Ghana is part; SNV is expected to carry out sensitization workshops in Apam and Winneba.

The United States Agency on International Development has committed funds to support Ghana to rebuild fish stocks using the US science based management approaches. This system has been tested and used in the US, Philippines, France and Spain and in all situations the approach worked by boosting or increasing fish stock in the marine waters of the above stated countries.

In replicating this same system in Ghana the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project was launched in Ghana in April 2015. The project focuses on behavioral change and therefore will need all stakeholders within the Fisheries Industry to understand and accept the project concept and support it in order for the project goal to be achieved.

Ten fishing communities have been selected as pilot sites for implementing this project along the coast of Ghana. Among these are Winneba and Apam in the Central Region for which SNV and DAA take the lead.

The implementation process therefore started with formal community entry into both communities. For Apam, meetings were held with the Paramount chief and a number of elders, the DCE and management team of the District Assembly, the chief fisherman, the Konkohemaa and representatives of the district executive body for fish processors association located in Apam. Introductory letters were shared with the Chief and the District Assembly. The District Assembly has replied the letter and reiterated its support to the project.

For Winneba, meetings have been held with the District Assembly, the Chief and elders of Effutu, the fish processors groups, the fishermen association, the Forestry Division, the Wildlife Division, Challenging Heights, Plan Ghana, Microfin and International Needs Ghana.

All the above stated stakeholders and many others were invited to participate in the sensitization workshops.

2. THE CONCEPT OF THE SENSITISATION WORKSHOPS

The sensitization workshops sought to bring together all stakeholders within Apam and Winneba associated with fisheries. The objective was to create awareness of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project and gain the acceptance and support of the people and institutions at Apam and Winneba. This platform provided the opportunity for individual stakeholders to understand the role of other stakeholders within the communities and coordinate activities for effective implementation of the project. It also provided the opportunity for stakeholders to deliberate on the existing problem of fish loss, illegal fishing methods and share ideas on the way forward.

The target groups for the workshops were fishermen, fish processors, traders in fish, the district assembly, other agencies, traditional leaders, associations and organizations working with the fisher folk or directly on the sea.

2.1 THE SENSITISATION MESSAGE

2.1.1 Project Brief

- The SFM project is funded by United States Agency for International Development and is geared towards the rebuilding of marine fisheries stocks and catches through the adoption of responsible fishing practices.
- USAID, in agreement with Coastal Resources Center, is implementing a five year food security project (October 2014 to October 2019) in partnership with the Fisheries Commission and a consortium of other partners who work closely with the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and the Fisheries Commission in Ghana.
- Ghana's small pelagic fishery is on a steep decline, from an annual catch of 120,000 metric tons in 2000 to 17,000 metric tons just a dozen years later.
- Unfortunately, as the annual *Sardinella* catch plunges year after year, the number of artisanal fishing canoes has risen year after year to more than 13,000 in 2014, resulting in an increase in light fishing.
- This crisis is a result of the frequency in illegal fishing practices, over fishing from an increasing number of boats and fishers, the use of fine mesh nets, light fishing, bomb and carbide fishing and the inability of law enforcement to control these illegal activities.
- The livelihoods of over 130,000 Ghanaians as well as the food security of the nation and region are likely to be affected with this increasing decline.
- Ending open access, ensuring seasonal closure, closed fishing areas, additional weekly fishing holidays, increased mesh size, cap and reduction in the number of fishing vessels and removal of fuel subsidies, are all necessary options that turn situations around if all stakeholders including fishermen, fishmongers and government agree and work together to ensure that everyone goes according to the agreed rules.

2.1.2 Direct implementation activities at Apam and Winneba

- According to the project document, SNV is working with the Development Action Association (DAA) in two of the four pilot sites— Apam and Winneba in the Central Region— to understand the lifestyle of the people, to determine the current situation in the communities, and to identify the areas of intervention of the project through a baseline study.
- The target group for this project will be the fishermen and women involved in post harvesting processing of fish.
- The fishermen will be taken through training programs and the women will equally undertake similar programs and will be encouraged to form women’s groups (associations of women in fishing activities) to explore and access the benefits one can derive from these groups.
- 6 improved fish smoking ovens will be constructed for some of the women for demonstration purposes.
- A 50% subsidy will be provided by the project for early adopters of the new improved ovens.
- This project is not only interested in the fishery industry but also gender concerns, children and the role they play in the value chain.

2.1.3 Child Labour and Trafficking Concerns

The CLaT component of the SFMP project seeks to identify and address the practice of Child Labour and Trafficking in the fishing industry. It is the general practice in the fishing industry to see children being employed in fishing activities. Most of these children are of school going age and can be as young as eight years. These children are mostly sold by their needy parents for petty sums of money; 10 to 50 Cedis. These children are made to engage in harmful practises such as diving to set up the net in the river. The role of CLaT in this project is to identify such children, engage in healthy interactions with them and enrol them in school. CLaT will also sensitize parents on Child Labour and Trafficking and put in measures in addition to already existing ones to bring to book those who flout these laws.

3. SENSITISATION WORKSHOP AT APAM

The sensitization workshop at Apam brought together, 208 participants made up of 120 women and 88 men. As part of those present were fisher-folks from the Apam community; both fish processors and fishermen, the District Assembly, Development Action Association members, representatives of implementing partners of the SFMP, the Central Regional Fishermen and Fish Mongers Association (CENFA) members and the general public.

The workshop was held on Tuesday the 26th of May 2015 at the landing site (Alata Mpoano) near the Fishermen building. The Chief Fisherman, chaired the program whereas the Deputy Coordinating Director at the District Assembly represented the DCE as the Special Guest of honor. Also in attendance were the Zonal Fisheries Officer and the Fisheries officer for Apam.

Brian Crawford the Chief of Party for SFMP, Amanda Childress the Country Director for SNV and Lydia Sasu the Chief Executive Officer for Development Action Association graced the programme.

Proceedings were carried out in the local language but translations were made in English. Madam Lydia Sasu presented the purpose of gathering, informing the gathering briefly on the

need for the SFMP project and the need for the people to accept the project and work with the implementers.

The Zonal fisheries Officer presented the welcome address on behalf of the DCE. He informed the gathering about fishing in Apam and admitted that there were some challenges with the fishing system in Apam. He gladly welcomed the project and asked that the community and institution work together with the project implementers to ensure the success of the project.

Madam Sarah Agbey, Senior Associate Advisor with SNV presented the sensitization message. She briefly explained the project concept and presented information on the decline of fishery stocks in recent years. She stressed on the small pelagics and expressed the need to drastically reduce illegal fishing practices among the fishermen.

She informed the gathering of the various activities that will be implemented in the community and talked about child labor and trafficking. In conclusion she invited all gathered to join with the SFMP implementing team to work for the better of Apam and the country as whole.

Brian Crawford, the Chief of Party, representatives of other implementing organizations took turns to present brief solidarity speeches; encouraging the people to accept and be part of the project and also informing them of the various roles the implementing partners will be playing in the project.

Brian stressed on the fact that there are so many canoes on the sea in current years thus pressure on the fishery resource is overbearing. He explained that it is the collective responsibility of every user of the sea to protect it and SFMP seeks to give them that opportunity.

After the presentations, the participants asked a number of questions which had to be stopped at a point to enable the programme to continue. Some of the questions asked are as follows.

- What interventions does the project have to curtail the issue of Chinese trawlers on Ghanaian waters?
- Does the project have a mechanism in place to test landed fish for chemical infestations. The answer to this question was no but some of the women explained that they are able to identify fish harvested with chemicals.
- Will the project enact a law to manage the activities of those who produce and sell the chemicals to the fishermen? The answer was no, because the chemicals are actually produced for beneficial use, but fishermen miss use it.
- How do the improved fish smoking oven look and when will it be promoted? The improved ovens have a chimney and use less wood because of the insulated materials used for building the base. The stove promotion process will begin in July.

There was cultural display and three different sketches on the use of chemicals for fishing, better ways of smoking fish and awareness creation on SFMP.

The Chief fisherman in his closing remarks recounted some of the lessons learnt in the workshop and expressed his support and that of his team to the project.

The workshop was successful.

4. SENSITISATION WORKSHOP AT WINNEBA

220 people participated in the Sensitization workshop at the AME Zion Church in Winneba on the 2nd of July 2015. 112 Males and 108 females participated in the workshop.

Representatives of the municipal assembly and several government institutions such as NCCE, Fisheries Commission, MOFA, Forestry Division, and Wildlife Division among others were present at the workshop. Other NGOs such as International Needs Ghana, Challenging Heights, Microfin Plus and Plan Ghana were also present at the workshop. Fish processors, fishermen (The chief fisherman and Konkohemaa), the Chief Imam and the head of the Moslem community were also present at the workshop.

Brian Crawford, Chief of Party for SFMP and representatives of other implementing partners such as CEWEFIA were also present.

The Chief Imam chaired the workshop and he was supported by the head of the Moslem community and the Deputy Coordinating Director for the Municipal Assembly.

Madam Lydia Sasu presented the purpose of the gathering, informing participants of some of the interventions SFMP seeks to undertake and the need for fishers to stop illegal exploitation of the sea. She stressed that the project seeks to support them but they must also be willing to support the project to meet its targets.

The Chief Imam accepted his position as the chairman and steered the proceedings. The MCs for the programme were Miss Nancy Otu of DAA and Mr. Lovans Owusu-Takyi of SNV.

The welcome address was presented by Mame Esi Aikins the Deputy Coordinating Director for the Municipal Assembly. She expressed gratitude to USAID for selecting Winneba as one of its implementing communities. She explained that poverty amongst the fishers is a main worry for the assembly and will be happy to see the project implement interventions which can improve the living standards of the people. She also reiterated the message to the fisher-folk that it is their responsibility to protect their waters and sustainably use it to meet their needs and that of the country.

Madam Sarah Agbey presented the main sensitization message which centered on the project concept and the various interventions that will be implemented in Winneba. She also talked about child labor and trafficking.

Solidarity messages were presented by Brian Crawford and all implementing partners who were present at the workshop. Their messages are summarized as follows:

- The need to sustain the project after the five year period by Ghanaians and the fisher folks.
- The need to see behavioral and attitudinal change in the various pilot communities.
- The need to implement the legal policy on fishing by the governing agencies.
- The need for women to accept the challenge of the project, and support it.
- The need to protect the mangroves to help increase catch by all stakeholders.
- The need for improved technologies in the fishing communities. eg. The use of the improved stove by the women who process the fish.
- The need to avoid child labour and trafficking.

There were other solidarity messages presented by the representative of NCCE, the Fisheries Commission, the head of Muslim youth in the District and the Pastor of the AME Zion church, where the programme was organized.

After the speech sessions the participants asked a number of questions as follows.

- A participant wanted to know if there was any aspect of the project concerned with the oil fields in Takoradi and its possible effects on the sea.
- Some of the women participants wanted to know who to see to join the women groups. They were asked to see the Fisheries officer.
- Others wanted to know how sustainable the project is, and wanted to be assured it is going to work.
- Others wanted to know if there was a local office for the project and how they can have more information about the project when it is needed.

There were a number of cultural displays and drama centered on the project. A song was composed for the project. It said “All must help to protect the sea and fishermen and fish mongers should stop the unapproved method of fishing in the country”.

5. CONCLUSION

The workshops were very well attended by various stakeholders especially the fisher-folk. There was media coverage of the workshops by UTV, Radio Peace and GNA. So many institutions expressed the desire to collaborate with the project and a number of meetings are being scheduled with such organizations like Microfin Plus.