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# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

## Exchange visits to Oyster Growing Area



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THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
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**Cover photo:** Members of DOPA Visiting Ada Clam Site (**Credit:** Development Action Association)

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SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>  
SSG Advisors: <http://ssg-advisors.com/>

## **ACRONYMS**

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
DAA	Development Action Association
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
FtF	Feed the Future
GSMA	Ga South Municipal Assembly
HM	Hen Mpoano
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In November 2016, DAA as part of its post-Senegal and Gambia visit, activities embarked on a sensitization exercise for oyster pickers in Bortianor and Tetegu communities. Some of the sensitization includes initial visits to other stakeholders to prepare their minds on the need to manage the Densu-Delta oyster resource to help improve livelihood of these oyster pickers and to preserve the oyster resource for the sake of posterity. The oyster pickers were ready and interested for change so they decided to form an association named DAA Oyster Pickers Association. The members' enthusiasm was shortly followed with a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) which was led by consultants from Gambia Try Oyster Women to help understand how these oyster pickers go about oyster farming; so as to help tease out possible measures to be used for the resource management. In order to help the oyster pickers, have an in-depth knowledge and be committed to issues of managing the oyster resource, a training on Oyster Biology and Ecology and Management was given members of association. A visit to Ada clam site was made with thirty (30) selected beneficiaries of the oyster biology, ecology and management training. The visit was intended to help the oyster pickers better understand the concept of managing a resource such as the Densu oyster resource.

Among the series of engagements with the Densu Oyster Pickers Association and other stakeholders was the idea of a site visit. The Ada clam site was discovered as one that had been managed over the years and had yielded results, hence a visit to the site to enable the Densu oyster pickers learn some of the good practices the clam miners had so far used in managing the clam resource; give in-depth knowledge to the beneficiaries on trainings received and discussions made earlier on, so as to put together ideas towards managing the oyster resource of the Densu Delta and also help improve the livelihood of the oyster pickers.

The visit which was embarked on by 30 oyster pickers included other stakeholders like the secretary Sakumo-We (Sakumo family) who are the custodians/owners of the Densu resource in Bortianor, a representative from Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD). The trip was embarked on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2017.

### **1.1. Objectives**

The objectives of the visit were to:

- Learn possible measures the Ada clam farmers have put in place towards management of the clams.
- Learn how close seasons have helped in managing the clams.
- Give in-depth knowledge on training received on oyster biology, ecology and management.

### **1.2. Expected outcomes**

Expected outcomes of the visit included:

- Lessons learned from the visit.
- Change in behavior of oyster pickers to contribute to management of the Densu oyster resource.
- Change in behavior of oyster pickers to ensure conducive environment (cleanliness) that aids in the growth of oysters.

## 2.0 DETAILS OF EXCHANGE VISIT

It took three and half hours trip from Accra to get to Kponkponkpanya (the clam site) in Ada. The participants were taken to the landing site by Kofi Amartey and Prosper Gibson Gaskah (both clam miners), where some clam processors were processing for the market. Some were frying while others were drying the clams. The processors at the site educated participants on how much income they make on a heap of shells. A bucket of the shells according to the clam processors is sold for GHS 50.00 to factories.



**Figure 1. First two gentlemen who are clam miners, leading participants to look around the Kponkpokpanya landing site**

After a tour at the landing site, participants went on a boat ride to see the clam farms of the clam miners.

The boat ride to the clam farm was led by two clam miners. The participants were shown farms which belong to the clam miners; which they cultivate or mine from during the lean season or closed season.

The clam miners stated that they observe a natural closed season from December 24 to March 6 every year. During this season, farm owners mine only from their farms and all individuals who do not have farms cannot mine from the main site and have no right to visit anybody's farm either. Individuals work on their farms by pruning to give room to better growth of the clams. After the boat ride, there was brief interaction with participants to share lessons learnt from the trip.





**Figure 2. Participants in an interaction with clam miners**

## **2.1 Lessons Learnt**

The participants mentioned the following lessons:

### **2.1.1 Cleanliness at the landing site**

The participant observed that the landing site was very clean despite the absence of a refuse container at the site. They were inspired to do likewise in their community.

### **2.1.2 Unity**

Participants stated that there was unity among the clam miners which enabled them to work hand in hand in keeping the landing site clean, and also respected the law that individuals were restricted from entering each other's farms.

### **2.1.3 Planting and not cutting trees**

Participants appreciated the fact that trees which gave beautiful shade at the site had enabled the processors to comfortably seat and work on the clams as these trees were protected from being cut from the time they were planted.

Another lesson was on how clam processors at the site attached seriousness to the clam shells. The participants said they will have to treat their oyster shells with the needed attention so as to create the available market and embark on sales to increase their income.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Such visits in the future should be to places where the same species of fish can be found since both oysters and clams have issues peculiar to the species based on their differences.
- Government should take the responsibility to educate communities on managing resources like oysters.



**Figure 3 A picture of participants on a boat ride to the clam farm site**



**Figure 4 A heap of clam shells for sale**

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Participants were very excited with the serene atmosphere at the Kponkponkpanya landing site. Participants confessed to ensuring their landing sites to be equally clean; and they appreciated the fact that the clam miners have been disciplined to have achieved such success. Consequently, they pledged to unite for better management of the Densu oyster resource. It was noted also that the sale of oyster shells was another source of income therefore, the participants decided to create such market for alternative livelihood in addition to harvesting and selling oysters. Though not many Ghanaians depend on oysters, the demand on the international market is very high, its nutritional value is also appreciated. Therefore, it was envisaged that other stakeholders would be invited to join forces to having the Densu oyster management plan so as to better manage and sustain the oysters. Policies would be formulated and oyster management must be the focus of government.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Exchange Visit Participants**

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AZORSHIE AMEVOR	DOPA
AGNES DOGBATSE	DOPA
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DIVINE AGBENYO	DOPA
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ABIGAIL LARWEY	DOPA
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KOFI AMARTEY	DOPA
PROSPER GIBSON	DOPA
DORAH KUFORLOR	DOPA
DIANA AGBEVE	DOPA
CECELIA SENU	DOPA
VERONICA FOMEVOR	DOPA
LOVEROSE AKWETAY	DOPA
CHALLOTE AWUDI	DOPA
CHRISTIANA ZIGAH	DOPA
ADOLEY LILY	DOPA
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