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USAID/COMFISH PLUS Project PENCOO GEJ

(Collaborative Management for Sustainable Fisheries in Senegal)

Empowering Women in Artisanal Processing of Fisheries Products



Photos : USAID/COMFISH Plus
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Acronyms and abbreviations

AIGA:	Alternative (Diversified) Income Generating Activities
ANDS:	National Demographic and Statistical Agency
APTE:	Sanitation, Fisheries, Tourism and Environment
AWP:	Annual Work Plan
CLPA:	Local Artisanal Fisheries Council
COP:	Conference of the Parties
DALN:	Directorate for Literacy and National Languages
GO- Warmer:	Governance, Policies and Resources Management
IGA:	Income Generating Activities
ITA:	Institute of Food Technology
MPEM:	Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development

I. Introduction

In Senegal, women account for 52% of the population (ANDS Report, 2008). They play a major role in the socio-economic development of the country, but remain vulnerable to the impacts of poverty, climate change and the degradation of natural resources. In the fisheries sector, the role of women can be described as “paramount” as they operate at all levels of the value chain. The processing industry, which used to be 90% dominated by women engaged in the fisheries sector, now attracts a growing number of men. Close to 40% of pelagic landings are processed by artisanal processors. Despite their important role in the value chain, women are hardly appreciated, and their trade undervalued. As a result, women are faced with serious problems.

- Failure to adequately take into account their interests in the planning process of fisheries policies;
- Lack of technical and organisational capacities to promote women leadership in the fisheries sector;
- Lack of infrastructure to preserve and transport products to redistribution centres and local markets;
- Establishment of coastal infrastructure that pushes processing activities away from beaches, thereby increasing the transportation cost of fresh and processed products and their vulnerability to coastal erosion;
- Low quality processed products due to the lack of sanitation in processing areas and the low quality of inputs;
- Inadequate funding of women’s activities;
- Depletion of resources;
- Lack of access to international, sub-regional and regional markets;
- Partial or total lack of access to credit, due to cumbersome and numerous procedures, such as the provision of collateral securities and the lack of flexibility on the part of banking institutions, impelling women processors to turn to informal credit schemes characterised by usurious rates;
- Illiteracy among women, making it difficult for them to defend their rights and interests;
- Development of tourism which pushes processing activities away from beaches, thereby increasing the transportation cost of fresh and processed products;

In response to these constraints identified, the USAID/COMFISH Project developed, in the beginning of its intervention in 2011, a strategy known as: “***Strategy for Capacity Building and Social and Economic Empowerment for Women Engaged in the Fisheries Sector***” aimed at providing adequate response to the marginalisation of women in the fisheries sector in the national planning process. This Strategy revolved around the following three strategic pillars:

- Promoting equal representation of women in fisheries governance bodies;
- Women’s economic empowerment;
- Supporting women to have their interests, concerns and values taken into account in fisheries management plans and policies.

All initiatives supported by the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects, in collaboration with Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils (CLPAs), women processors and the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy (MPEM), form part of the implementation of the said strategy, the specific objective of which is to promote the empowerment of women engaged in the fisheries sector, which necessarily requires the improvement of their well-being and their socio-economic and environmental conditions with a view to promoting women leadership.

II. Observations

Fisheries and aquaculture products remain a major source of food, income and livelihoods for thousands of people in Senegal. According to recent statistics, women account for more than one quarter (27%) of the labour force in the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Senegal. The vast majority of these women are engaged in post-harvest activities (91.5%) and contribute tremendously to the food security, livelihoods and incomes of households. However, artisanal processing is practised by women against the backdrop of an acute crisis in the fisheries sector. This situation translates into the depletion of resources exacerbated by climate change, which is a reality along the Senegalese coastline, thereby accelerating the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems. This degradation undermines the ecosystems' ability to provide the goods and services on which depends the live of grassroots communities, especially women. All these impacts lead to socio-economic insecurity which increases their vulnerability.

These adverse impacts on women are exacerbated by the poor sanitation of processing areas, unhygienic conditions and the poor quality of processed products (with adverse effects on the marketing of the products and human consumption), pollution due to the smoke from the braising of the products on the ground, lack of adequate processing equipment, etc. On the whole, women fish processors employ rudimentary means and tools, which makes their work difficult, tedious and risky. For instance, the fish is smoked at open places or in poorly ventilated sheds. The combined effect of heat and the sun coupled with their contact with and inhalation of smoke, further exposes them to diseases and other respiratory problems. Against this backdrop, it has become a priority to build the capacity of women processors engaged in the fisheries industry to deal with economic, social and environmental issues associated with processing in the current context of climate change and declining resources.

Interventions carried out by the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects have helped to identify and to implement sustainable approaches tailored to the needs of women processors. These various interventions are aimed at building the organisational, managerial, leadership and management capacity of women processors to be able to defend their interests in the political decision-making process, but also to enhance their economic power with a view to their empowerment. The initiatives of USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects in this sector, first of all, focused on Cayar with the establishment of the first Modern Artisanal Processing Unit in Senegal, accredited by the European Union: The “Adjia Ndoumbé Seck Processing Unit of the Mantoulaye Guene GIE in Cayar”. Such initiatives have been scaled up to several other communities in eleven (11) Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils (CLPAs) of Joal/Fadiouth (Tann and Khelcom), Sindia Nord (Ndayane, Guéréo, Saly), Rufisque / Bargny (Ndéppé, Domaine bi, Khelcom), Sindia Sud (Pointe Sarène, Mballing village), Yenne / Dialaw, Mbour (Mballing site), and Sine Saloum CLPA of Missirah, CLPA of Djirna in Diamniadio ; Fass Boye (Fass Boye) ; Pikine (Mbao, Pencum Sénégal).

III. Contribution of the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects in the artisanal fisheries products processing sector

3.1. Approach

The support of the USAID/COMFISH Project in terms of empowering women and adding value to processed fisheries products was provided in collaboration with Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils (CLPAs) and women processors in the sector by revamping women's grassroots organisations, which entailed developing and implementing a Code of Conduct, putting in place Hygiene Committees and Hygiene Charters. Therefore, consultations (diagnosis) were organised at every stage of the development and implementation process of the strategy, involving all stakeholders (CLPAs, local communities, fisheries departments, NGOs and other grassroots partners). This led to the identification and formulation of environmental, financial and administrative management measures by beneficiaries. Such measures, upon validation, constituted the Charters and / or Code of Conduct for women processors who have been invigorated and organised into GIEs, Hygiene Associations and Committees. To ensure the sustainability of the strategy, the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects provided managerial capacity building for women interested in tailored management tools available for beneficiaries. Community relay workers trained by the said project actively participate in the process and support women in monitoring the implementation of the rules of the Codes of Conduct and the Charters as well as their wider dissemination.



Figure 1. Consultations with women processors

3.2. Tools

3.2.1. Hygiene Charters and Code of Conduct for the management of artisanal processing areas

A Charter is a document in which members of a group (committee) agree on an internal regulation suitable to their conditions. It aims to clarify rules that define the rights of members as well as their obligations, roles and responsibilities toward the group (committee). It is an initiative implemented with the participation of the various stakeholders in the sector (women processors, fisheries departments, technical and financial partners). Its main objective is to federate all players around regulated and organised sites for a better management of sanitation.

The eighteen (18) Hygiene Charters introduced by USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus in twelve (12) CLPAs¹ to support women, are considered a major innovation in the fisheries products processing sector.



Figure 2. Processing area in the Mballing village before rehabilitation



Figure 3. Processing area in the Mballing village after rehabilitation with the support of the USAID/COMFISH Plus Project

¹ Rufisque/Bargny, Yénne Dialaw, Sindia Nord/Sindia Sud, Joal/Fadjiouth, Missirah, Djirnda, Mbour, Saint Louis, Fass Boye, Pikine, Cayar

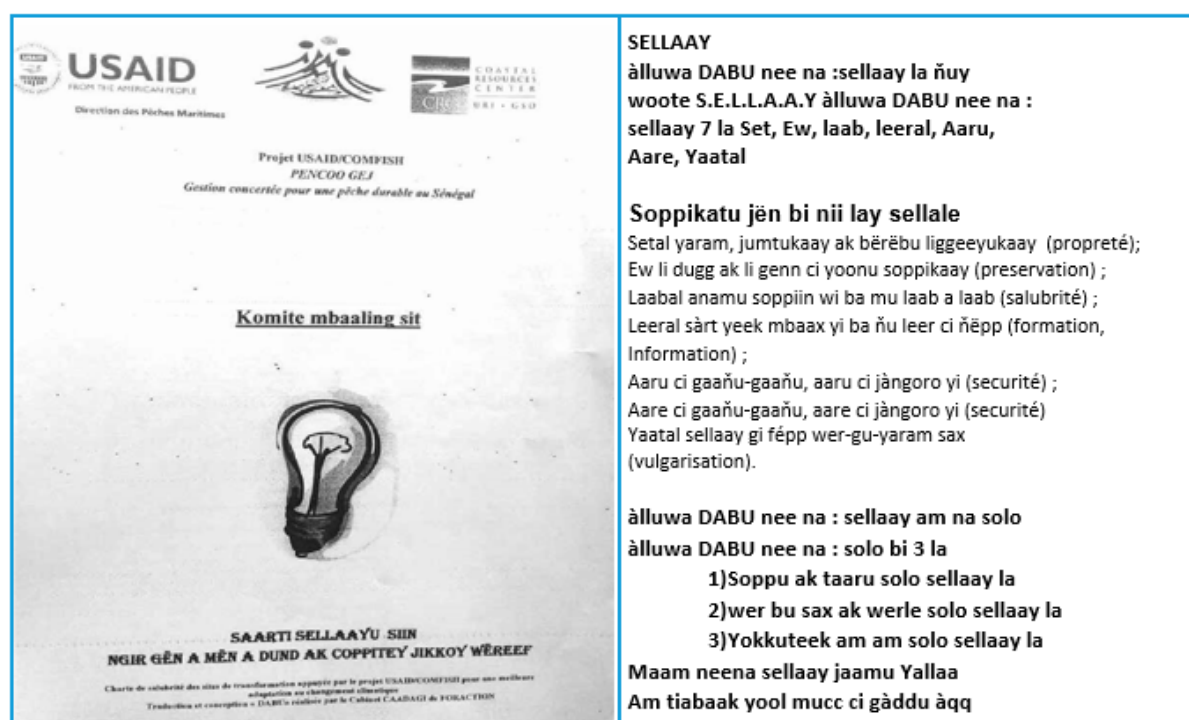


Figure 4. Charter (of the Mballing site) and the content of the first page on hygiene standards

The Code of Conduct is a tool developed in Cayar as part of the process to upgrade the Artisanal Processing Unit of the Mantoulaye Gueye GIE. This Code defines principles for responsible processing of fisheries products by taking into account all relevant technological, economic, social, environmental and commercial aspects. It serves as a reference for regulating standards and techniques to enhance the quality and value of fisheries products.

The general principles governing this Code are: consensus, environmental conservation, collective commitment, compliance with consensual decisions from the Code of Conduct and participatory democracy. This document introduced in Cayar, is a novelty in the artisanal fish processing sector. It was the outcome of an initiative by women fish processors of Cayar. The APTE provided assistance for the process of its development with support from the Departmental for Fisheries and Surveillance of Thiès in Cayar and from the Institute of Food Technology of Dakar (ITA). The objectives and general principles of this Code of Conduct are as follows:

- Creating enabling conditions for the promotion of a braised fish label (“Keccaxu Cayar”) by promoting good practices for braising fish and by standardising the keccax production process;
- Contributing to a sustainable management and operation of facilities used for artisanal fish processing;
- Enabling women processors to develop their businesses, which would contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities;
- Participating in the promotion of sustainable fishing through responsible processing of fisheries products and the reduction the environmental pollution generated by their activities.

3.2.2. Administrative and Financial Management Manual

The Administrative and Financial Management Manual was put in place as a response to the need for assistance following the various assessments carried out on the level of operation and the organisational dynamics of women processors within Hygiene Committees. It was supported by the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects and all stakeholders. This Manual constitutes a key management tool to enable women to improve their management practices, thereby facilitating transparency in the wealth creation by the Hygiene Committees. In practice, the Administrative and Financial Management Manual has contributed to a change among women processors within Hygiene Committees by:

- Promoting ownership of rules and measures governing administrative and financial procedures of their respective organisations (baselines, financial reports, action plans and budgets);
- Improving the management of resources and collective services (mobilisation of internal funds, revolving credit, Alternative Income Generating Activities (AIGA);
- Ensuring transparent implementation, monitoring, evaluation and supervision of activities and results of Hygiene Committees;
- Defining roles, responsibilities and frameworks for administrative and financial management.



Figure 5. Approval of the Charter by the Chairperson of the site, Missirah

3.2.3. Annual Work Plans

The Annual Work Plans (AWPs) of women processors are both a management tool and a means of communication on the performance of Hygiene Committees. They represent a reference to assess committees' performance in terms of human, technical and logistical resources (production means and basic infrastructure) These AWP are developed in a consensual manner by all stakeholders and demonstrate the commitment of each member to boost committees' dynamics and to improve the welfare of women processors. After they had been developed, the

USAID/COMFISH Project, in collaboration with CLPA relay workers and women, put in place a monitoring mechanism at all implementation levels to ensure transparency in the implementation of activities and selected initiatives. This close monitoring helped to conduct a permanent coordination of field activities, and to assess and readjust, if necessary, the AWP. This monitoring mechanism has been a key factor in the success of the tools supported on the field for grassroots players, especially women processors within Hygiene Committees.

3.3. Implementation strategy and monitoring & evaluation

3.3.1. Building managerial (leadership) capacity of women processors

Investing in human capital has played a significant role and constitutes the key to the success of initiatives supported by the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects at all levels, including for women processors. Indeed, both projects contributed heavily to building the managerial capacity of women processors engaged in the fisheries sector. An important training programme was developed, in collaboration with relevant government departments. This programme was based on thematic areas aimed at improving good practices and hygienic conditions in processing areas, products' quality and value, administrative and financial management, functional literacy education, women' roles and responsibilities in their respective organisations and in the fisheries sector on the whole (organisational dynamics).



Figure 6. Capacity building for women processors

3.3.2. Training on the hygiene and quality of processed products

To meet the challenge of adding value to fisheries resources, women processors on targeted sites benefited from capacity building programmes on good processing practices and techniques as well as good practices for managing the quality and hygiene of fisheries products. These empowerment initiatives enabled women processors to improve their working methods and the quality of their products for a better market access. In the case of the women at the Cayar Modern Processing Unit, this value addition process has further enhanced the value of their products which are sold from this Unit with sub-regional or even international contracts thanks to the European Union accreditation. This has enabled the women to improve their income. This process has also translated into the improvement of the hygiene and quality of the processed products and the diversification of the types of products meant for national consumption, thereby contributing to more sustainable food security.

There is the need to scale up capacity building in terms of good practices, processing techniques, and the management of the quality and hygiene of fisheries products, and all actions involved in the process with a view to bringing up to standards the hygiene and quality of products in the artisanal processing industry. The main actions to be carried out can be summed up as follows: improving production conditions and infrastructure (site development); formalising "artisanal processing" activities by providing incentives and harmonising standardisation measures at regional level, which includes a marketing approach that takes into account consumer preferences and value addition along the value chain. A prerequisite for achieving this result is to put in place an adequate legal and institutional framework, governing the profession of artisanal fish processing in Senegal.



Figure 7. Capacity building for women in hygiene / quality and diversification of resources

3.3.3. Leadership training (roles and responsibilities)

In view of the weak organisational dynamics of women processors, the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects have put in place a mechanism to bridge this gap through capacity building actions targeted at their roles and responsibilities (leadership), organisational management, decision-making. As a result of this capacity building and the monitoring and evaluation mechanism put in place, key women leaders have been trained in the sector. To facilitate this initiative, learning by doing has been promoted with the establishment of fourteen (14) functional literacy classes within the artisanal processing sites in collaboration with consultants and the Directorate for Literacy and National Languages (DALN). This functional literacy programme initiated focused on hygiene, quality, labelling and traceability, facilitation methods and techniques, and adult education in areas of widespread illiteracy. One of the dire needs expressed by women was education, because the vast majority of them are illiterates, and have no knowledge of the content of the laws and regulations, for instance, dealing with health standards in processing. Few are projects that sensitise beneficiaries on legislations relating to health standards. In most cases, women have no access to texts written in French.



Figure 8. Functional literacy education for women processors

The result expected from the leadership training was to make available to women, techniques and tools that promote effective leadership, and to enable them to fully play their roles by participating and assuming responsibility in initiatives relating to the development of their communities. The entire training process was divided into three sessions during which women leaders acquainted themselves with answering three questions with colour codes (black, blue, green):

Session 1: Who are you as a woman? (Answer in black colour). *Black means if you do not know who you are, it's as if you are living in the dark*

Session 2: Do you know the members of your organisation? Do you know how to appreciate them at their fair value? (Answer in blue colour). *Blue means the day you take the trouble to know better the people you are living with; you will gain in wisdom.*

Session 3: Do you know how to strengthen your leadership? (Answer in green colour). *Green means the day you have acquired the know-how and life skills that will enable you to live in harmony with other members of the association, the local, national and international community, you can move freely (green light).*

To help all participants to memorise and never to forget what they have learnt, the message, which was translated into Wolof (local language), was changed into a son.

These pictures show some of the messages contained in the note books of participants at the training

Who are we?

Alluwa 1 nee na: du ñu njiit, du ñu sàmm

Alluwa 1 nee na : ñu bayyi xel ci loolu Maam neena wommat kat la ñu nit ki dina jiite fekk wommatul

What kind of leaders are we?

Alluwa 2 nee na: wommatkat yi du ñu benn

Alluwa 2 nee na: ñu bayyi xel ci 4

Yàlla ju ndaw ji kooku yaakaar na ne suñu bur la Yilifkat bi kooku yaakaar na ay jur la ñu Borom bayre bi kooku yaakaar na ay dag la ñu Ki mat ki mo ñu jàppe nawle.

What are our roles?

Wone yoon	To guide
Oote	To bring together, to mobilise
Motteli	To build up
Mooytulo	To warn
Aar	To secure, to protect
Tàggat	To educate, to train



Figure 9. Simulation: Self-evaluation by a woman leader during the training

3.3.4. Monitoring and evaluation training

For more transparency in management, women processors of various committees were equipped with monitoring and evaluation tools. This enabled them, with support from the field mechanism, to sustain the achievement of the project and to be able to carry out self-evaluation. In terms of lessons learnt, this monitoring mechanism has been of paramount importance for the sustainability of actions supported by USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus on the field. Therefore, monitoring tools (financial and accounting management registers, reporting, minutes writing and AWP formats) were made available to women to enable them to better manage their income and daily activities.

3.3.5. Organisational management and dynamics (renewal, evaluation)

The intervention of USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus has boosted organisational dynamics as in the case of women in Guéréo, Cayar, Yenne, Missirah, Diamiadio and Mballing village according to the testimony of beneficiaries in chapter 3.2 below. For instance, currently women groups hold regular meetings and try to document their activities.

Women processors have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in their respective groups. Several collective initiatives are underway by women processors to boost the income level and the well-being of members through social and community actions. Hence, every quarter, with the support of relay workers and facilitators, evaluations are conducted to assess women's performance at all levels.

3.3.6. Inter-sites exchange visits: an effective tool for scaling up best practices

Apart from capacity building sessions and the strengthening of the organisational dynamics of women processors, other initiatives, such as inter-sites exchange visits, received support from USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus.

These exchange visits, which are highly valued by stakeholders, are a participatory and interactive method to promote mutual learning, identification of best practices, knowledge acquisition and skills development. The said visits which are based on thematic areas relating to organisational dynamics, the hygiene / quality of processed products / fund raising, etc led to a change in the practices and behaviours of women and increased collective awareness on management measures and initiatives developed by their peers and an improvement in their efficiency. Hence, during such visits, success stories are shared to promote the improvement of skills and practices among women. Lessons learnt during those visits are, among others: fostering a spirit of competition among women to dare challenge themselves, best practices in terms of administrative management, internal resource mobilisation depending on the communities. It was noted that exchange visits organised to Guéréo, Cayar and Missirah aroused, among women from other sites, the desire to improve upon their performance and to professionalise their daily practices. Those women, when they returned, shared the knowledge acquired and resolved to improve the dynamics of their respective organisations.

Such highly educative practices ought to be scaled up to improve the organisational framework for women processors and promote networking, which could facilitate purchasing and market access



Figure 10. Exchange visits to Cayar and Missirah

IV. Contribution of COMFISH and COMFISH PLUS to the empowerment of women processors in the artisanal fishing sector

4.1. Strategies

In addition to strategies to strengthen the organisational dynamics of women, the USAID/COMFISH and COMFISH Plus Projects developed other strategies to ensure the financial autonomy of women to enable them to embark on a path of sustainable development and to sustain their daily activities.

4.1.1. Internal resource mobilisation (mechanism and monitoring)

Women's funds are mainly from collective or individual contributions, fees charged on the use of workshops, grants etc. This resource mobilisation is considered as a strategy to finance the sustainable development of the activities of women processors with a view to their empowerment (financial, economic and social). Internally generated funds (member contributions, sale of membership cards, diversified income generating activities, grants etc.), are mostly used by women to fund activities for the improvement of their living and working conditions in artisanal processing areas.

A case in point is the Guéréo and Ndayane committees that have been able to use the funds generated to participate in the rehabilitation of their artisanal processing areas, and to meet social needs of members (support for the sick, payment of children's school fees and contributions of various kinds). Hence, this action fits within the framework of sustainable local community development, and must be sustained. To ensure transparency and the monitoring of activities, the project has strongly involved relay workers who provide support to women on a monthly basis to maintain management and monitoring tools made available to them. Similarly, accounts have been opened with several banks in the name of respective committees for a better management of generated funds. Also, with support from relay workers, monthly monitoring meetings are held by women, during which all funds collected are communicated to members, and future activities planned with a view to efficient and transparent use of resources.



Figure 11. Funds collected by women from other sites and their purpose (purchasing of products, site refurbishment, etc.)

4.1.2. Income Generating Activities

In addition to building the technical and organisational capacity of women processors' groups, USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus promoted new income generating activities to boost their income level, especially during periods of acute shortage of fresh fisheries products need for processing. These activities include renting of equipment, revolving credits and market gardening, etc.

4.1.3. Market gardening in Diamniadio (Sine Saloum)

Women processors of the Diamniadio Committee, located on the islands of Saloum in the Djirnda CLPA, because of their zeal, benefited from Income Generating Activities (IGA) through market gardening. Such activities are of paramount importance for women in the community because of their isolation and the dire need for fisheries resources for processing, which are viewed as the only source of income for women.

With improved table-top and raised bed gardening, the project has enabled these women (who used to spend one hour crossing the sea to Foudiougne to buy vegetables) to improve their daily diet, thanks to the availability of fresh vegetables in their community, to increase their income by selling harvested products and to curtail the risk of accidents on the sea due to incessant crossing of the sea by these communities in search for vegetables. These women have been trained on the entire process (from the production of the table up to harvesting), which will contribute to the sustainability of their activities after the completion of the USAID/COMFISH Plus Project.



Figure 12. Market gardening in Diamniadio

4.1.4. Revolving credit

To boost the income level of women and the funding of their activities, USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus used a revolving credit scheme as a different form of empowering women processors. This was in response to the request made by the women during the development of the “Capacity Building Strategy for Women Engaged in the Fisheries Sector”, who expressed the need for specific credit lines tailored to their needs. Therefore, funds were allocated to the most dynamic groups that demonstrated real commitment and determination. It is a system of revolving fund among members of beneficiary groups. The results achieved from the management of the funds are satisfactory. For instance, the Cayar site was able to generate an amount of 7,940,260 CFA Francs within four years; in Yenne Todd, the women were able to generate an additional amount of 1,000,000 CFA Francs out of an initial amount of 1,000,000 CFA Francs within three months. These funds are governed by an internal regulation approved by the project for the women, which laid down the conditions for allocation, reimbursement, fining, etc... Relay workers, project facilitators and the fisheries administration are also involved in the field monitoring mechanism.



Figure 13. Women processors of Yénne / Dialaw and Ndayane receiving cheques under the revolving credit scheme

4.2. Impacts on the improvement of living conditions and leadership of women processors

4.2.1. Social cohesion

“We, women processors of Sendou, wish to express our gratitude to the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects. No fisheries project has ever supported women processors of fisheries products in Sendou, and we were confronted with numerous challenges and constraints. Since the inception of the USAID/COMFISH Project and the introduction of the Hygiene Charter, women processors of the two sites in the community have been holding permanent consultations, which was not the case in the past, because we used to be in competition with each other and operating informally. Therefore, we can say that the USAID/COMFSIH Plus Project has created new social dynamics in the community by organising all active women processors in the area into the same committee (by means of the Hygiene Charter of Sendou) which is our reference framework for the financial and social empowerment of women processors in the community”.

Awa Ndoye: Chairperson of the Sendou site

4.2.2. Hygiene / quality / marketing

“The support from the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects has been invaluable for us women of Cayar. With the establishment of the Modern Processing Unit of Ajdia Ndoumbé Seck in Cayar, the first Processing Unit accredited at national level by the Directorate of Fisheries Processing Industries (DITP) and the European Union in Senegal and West Africa, our working conditions have improved tremendously. Thanks to the capacity building process in terms of best hygienic practices (Code of Conduct of Cayar) coupled with processing, preservation and packaging techniques, Cayar products have become more competitive at national, sub-regional and even international levels. This processing site has also served as a pilot project that inspired the Senegalese government in the process of upgrading artisanal processing sites in Senegal. In summary, the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects enabled us to improve our working conditions by adding more value to our products and by living up to our motto: ***Fish Less and Sell More***. These projects have trained us to take into account environmental issues (environmental conservation and climate change) in our daily activities. On this account, we won the ***Climate Change Award*** through the Mantoulaye GIE during COP 22 in Marrakesh in 2016 and the ***Biodiversity Conservation Award*** of the GO-WAMER Project in the same year. (2016)”.

Maty Ndao: Chairperson of Mantoulae Guene GIE in Cayar



Figure 14. Salted/dried tuna produced in the Processing Unit



Figure 15. Dried shrimps for export to the United states



Figure 16. The Adja Ndoumbé Seck Processing Unit in Cayar with the



Figure 17. Containers of salted fish for export to Central Africa

4.2.3. Financial empowerment

“Certainly, women processors in Guéréo had previously received support from several development projects, but the USAID/COMFISH Project has been able to prove itself as a leading project because of its participatory approach. As for us, women processors in Guéréo, the project has clearly improved our daily life. With the management system put in place, we have been able to improve our financial critical mass to about **6,303,580 CFA Francs (six million three hundred and three thousand five hundred and eighty)**. We owe this achievement to the support from the USAID/COMFISH Project which has been mentoring and monitoring us in financial management with monitoring and evaluation tools tailored to the local needs. We also received equipment and supplies (tarpaulins and chairs) in support of our Income Generating Activities (IGA), which enabled us to collect an amount of **122,000 CFA Francs** within two to three months, which will be reinvested into our respective businesses and social activities. Therefore, we women processors of Guéréo, express our deep gratitude to the USAID/COMFISH Project which has made us (with contributions of 200 CFA Francs per month per member and 50 CFA Francs per day per member) leaders in organisational dynamics and fund raising”.

Amy Collé Lo, Chairperson of the Guéréo Hygiene Committee of women processors



Figure 18. Visit by H.E. Mushingi, US Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea Bissau to Guéréo (CLPA Nord Sindia, Mbour Department)

4.2.4. Women entrepreneurship / group dynamics

Thanks to the tremendous contribution of the USAID/COMFISH Project, we, women processors of Mballing village, have noted a significant improvement in our artisanal fish processing activities. With support from the project, we have benefited from various training sessions that enabled us to become entrepreneurs and to instil group dynamics in our committee for sustainable local development. Thanks to the functional literacy programme, many among us have started writing and recording their products correctly, which was not the case previously”.

Fatou Kiné Diop: a woman processor in Mballing Village (South Sindia, Mbour Department)



4.2.5. Rehabilitation of processing areas

“The USAID/COMFISH Project has made a deep impression on us, we women processors of Yenne Todd. Previously, we used to work in tedious conditions due to the dilapidated nature of our equipment and existing infrastructure. Since the inception of the USAID/COMFISH Project in the community, we have seen a significant improvement in our working conditions. We benefited from the support of the project in terms of renovation and rehabilitation of the infrastructure on our site, and capacity building at all levels. We are urging the government and implementing partners to emulate the USAID/COMFISH Plus Project and to support women processors of Nhiaghal and Yénne Kaw sites who are also working in challenging conditions.

Fatoulaye Ndoeye: Member of the Yenne Todd Hygiene Sub-Committee



4.2.6. Women empowerment

Another important impact noted from the USAID/COMFISH and COMFISH Plus Projects was the active participation of women processors in international conferences, trade fairs etc. A case in point is when women processors of Cayar represented Senegal at the COP 22 (Conference of the Parties) in Morocco and won the “Climate Initiative Award” because of their dedication to resources and environmental management (afforestation of the Filao Strip etc.). They also received other awards, such as the Conservation Award (GOWAMER) and the Presidential Grand Award. Recently, women processors of Yenne Todd participated in the International Agricultural Exhibition in Paris in collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy. The USAID/COMFISH and USAID/COMFISH Plus Projects have been able to train key leaders in the artisanal fisheries products processing sector in Senegal by building their capacity and boosting their organisational dynamics with a view to the sustainable improvement of their social, economic and environmental well-being.



Figure 19. Filao nurseries for the afforestation of the Filao Strip and Visit to the reforested Filao Strip by a representative of USAID Washington

Future prospects

Scaling up the strategy

