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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Quarterly Review Meetings With Fisher Folks In Winneba, Apam and Accra



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Development
Action Association

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Cover photo: Some members of Development Action Association during a Quarterly Review Meeting.

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ACRONYMS

CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CRC	Coastal Resource Center
DAA	Development Action Association
DOPA	Densu Oyster Pickers Association
DQF	Daasgift Quality Foundation
FtF	Feed the Future
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WRWD	World Rural Women's Day

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Development Action Association (DAA), an implementing partner under the USAID Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) works with fish processors in various communities in Apam, Winneba, Mumford and Accra. DAA under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project has also focused on improving on the livelihood of the association members while making them better understand the fisheries value chain and together bring on board proposals to help achieve the aim of SFMP. To accomplish this, information is key. DAA has used its Quarterly Review Meetings to disseminate information to members and also share ideas among members. Quarterly review meetings were held in December 2017 in Accra and Apam which included other members of DAA who are farmers to serve the purpose of sharing ideas in general. This will enable fish processors develop other interests which can aid them to engage in other sources of livelihood so as to be able to sustain their families during fish lean seasons.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- To discuss and review Year Four (4) activities.
- Identify challenges and opportunities.
- Share ideas, success stories and lessons learnt
- The way forward.

1.2 Expected outcomes

- Peer to peer learning.
- Plan for upcoming activities

2.0 DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF YEAR FOUR (4) FIRST QUARTER ACTIVITIES

The activities which were held in the first quarter were discussed. Some of the activities in the quarter included World Rural Women's Day (WRWD) celebration which was held in Sege in the Ada West District of the Greater Accra region, and Mumford in the Gomoa West District of the Central Region. DAA/UCC led research and data collection exercise on the Densu Estuary in line with managing the oyster resource, mangrove restoration exercise by Densu Oyster Pickers Association, Annual meeting with Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) held in the Ga South Municipal Assembly, Gomoa West District and Efutu Municipal Assembly, Fire safety workshop and Exchange visit to Ankobra.

2.1. Rural Women's Day Celebration

The annual celebration of World Rural Women's Day is considered a practical way of obtaining recognition and support for the multiple roles that rural women play, including indigenous women who are mostly farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty. Women Farmers account for about 50% of food production and food security worldwide and this figure rises to at least 80% in developing countries.

DAA has joined other organizations to celebrate WRWD towards recognition of its members and rural women farmers in general for their efforts in contributing to economic growth, reduction of hunger and poverty. The 2017 celebration which brought on board other stakeholders and government officials and which focused much on fishers was under the theme "Sea and Land Galamsey, the Impact on Food Security".

The celebration served as a platform for all crops, vegetables and fishers to communicate their various sector challenges. Issues that were addressed during the celebration were sand winning, Urbanization (Real Estate Development), Illegal mining activities and IUU fishing in our waters.

Fish processors appealed to government to ensure that the fisheries laws are enforced to end illegal fishing and other mining activities which affect water bodies; consequently, bringing negative impact on fishing activities.

Members during the discussions stated that the celebrations have helped in communicating to the masses especially in recent times, messages on IUU and Hygienic Fish handling.

2.2. DAA/UCC Led Research and Data Collection Exercise

As part of managing the Densu Oyster Resource, the Densu Oyster Pickers Association (DOPA) has since May 2017, embarked on data collection exercises to better understand parameters that contribute to the growth of oysters as in management of a resource, and better understanding of the habitat and related environmental conditions of the resource.

The oyster pickers acknowledged acquiring much knowledge in the research, and though most of them are illiterate, they were able to understand and read the temperature, turbidity, salinity, pH of the oyster habitat. Hence they were appreciative of the need to realign human activities which could temper with the conducive environment for the growth of oysters.

2.3. Mangrove Restoration

Mangroves are seen as one of the best habitats for oysters which are sessile, and settle on mangrove trees and shells. Thus mangrove restoration is one of the measures to put in place in rebuilding oyster stock. Mangrove forest which have been destroyed by residents in and around the Densu estuary are being replanted. In November 2017, one thousand five hundred (1500) seedlings were planted, in addition to the one thousand two hundred (1200) seedlings already planted. This will create a conducive environment for oyster habitat.

2.4. Annual Meeting with Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

Members were briefed on the above meetings which were meant to make the Municipal and District Assemblies aware of DAA's activities; so as to enable the Assemblies and DAA build synergies and work in collaboration to achieve the aims/objectives of the SFMP.

2.5. Fire Safety Workshop

DAA identified the need to give fish processors fire safety training which has become necessary due to the fact that these fish processors use fire much but have never received any training on prevention of disasters. Training on fire safety was therefore organized for the fish processors in Apam, Winneba and Mumford to ensure their safety.

2.6. Exchange Visit to Ankobra

Participants who were on board for the exchange visit to Ankobra shared lessons learnt on the trip especially the fishing closed season being observed at the time of the visit. Participants also shared the possible danger mining activities could pose to fishing when the appropriate action by government authorities are not taken. Participants said they practically witnessed that the Ankobra water body had changed color as reported from the community that the change of color was as a result of mining activities in the area.

3.0 CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS STORIES

The quarterly review meeting encountered some challenges. The meeting also served participants an opportunity to share success stories which in the end helped in sharing knowledge gained.

3.1. Success Stories/Lessons

Fish processors stated that they want to ride on their strength of unity to fight IUU completely. Stella Quartey, a fish processor in Winneba stated that, “we are putting in measures to quit buying fish harvested illegally”.

Fish processors agreed with the fishermen in Winneba, Elmina and Apam who have decided to say NO to chemicals or any harmful substances used in fishing.

The fish processors testified that the fire safety training they received was very helpful to them.

Anchovy processors in Apam admitted that the use of drying racks will be beneficial if all stakeholders come to understand the benefits of using the drying racks, and encourage fish processors, fish mongers and consumers to begin to sing the same song.

Densu Oyster Pickers Association was sure that the establishment of a Co-management committee and institution of a Co-management plan for managing the Densu oyster resource will succeed due to the oyster ecology and biology trainings received and the ongoing data collection exercise which has helped oyster pickers in the community to widen their knowledge in the need to manage the resource. Oyster pickers continued to say that even prior to the legal approval or backing of the management plan, the behavior of oyster pickers have changed positively towards managing the oyster resource.

Participants mentioned that the exchange visit to Ankobra had really opened their thoughts to the fact that observing close season is highly possible; and since the exchange visit they have had much desire to see close seasons observed in Apam and Winneba as well.

3.2. Challenges

Fishermen along the coast of Winneba, Apam and Elmina have been adamant to stop light fishing though they have decided to desist from chemical fishing.

Customers of anchovy processors in Apam are of no interest to purchase anchovies dried using constructed drying racks with the excuse that anchovies dried on the racks appear lighter and thus attract lower price in the markets.



Figure 1 . Stella Quartey, a fish processor from Winneba sharing with other participant's decision not to purchase fish caught illegally



Figure 2 A picture of Apam anchovy processor sharing her thoughts on use of raised drying racks



Figure 3 Mr. Ransford Owusu urging fish processors to adopt and make use of Ahotor oven and raised drying racks

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Participants were very vocal at the meeting, and have recognized the key roles and activities the SFMP has played to boost the fishery industry. Members acknowledged that trainings have widened their knowledge and will help in improving their livelihoods. Fighting IUU has become a big problem and this should be a major focus of government to fight illegal fishing.

It is also recommended that DAA continue to hold dialogue with fishermen to stop illegal fishing.