



SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Community Restores Degraded Mangroves Fast!



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Cover photo: Chief of Sanwoma spearheading the mangrove restoration exercise



Community Restores Degraded Mangroves Fast!

A year after study tour, residents replant 45% of degraded mangrove forest



Photo Credit: Hen Mpoano (Project Partner)

Chief of Sanwoma, left spearheading the mangrove restoration exercise.

“I had good resource at my disposal and didn’t know its worth. I now have a high sense of pride, knowing that this management activity will provide for posterity.”

**Odikro Nkrumah
Chief of Sanwoma**

Mangrove forests are essential for the sustenance of marine life. They provide an ideal habitat for juvenile fish, offering both protection and nutrition. Mangrove forests also play a key role in combating the effects of coastal erosion and rising sea levels.

Conservation of mangrove forests are very important for countries like Ghana, where the marine fishery is near collapse, with landings of important fish species at

14 percent of the record high of 140,000 metric tons 20 years ago. Fisheries in Ghana supports

the livelihoods of 2.2 million people, about 10 percent of the population.

Sanwoma is a popular rural fishing community in the West Coast of Ghana. The fisher folk are blessed with the sea where the village sits at the mouth of the Ankobra river. Hence, fish processors depend heavily on the Ankobra wetland mangroves for a cheap and readily available fuel wood source for fish processing. This practice has degraded over 24 hectares of the mangrove wetland over the years.

Under a US Government presidential Feed the Future Initiative, the USAID/Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project – SFMP – supported Sanwoma to embark on a study tour to another local community where sustainable mangrove harvesting is practised. Before the study tour, some community members did not even know that mangroves could be replanted after harvesting. Aside from the direct economic benefit from wood harvests, the community was unaware of other benefits of the mangrove forests – especially for a community that was battling with erosion of the shoreline, made worse by the loss of mangroves.

Sanwoma is now all about conservation! Led by the community Chief, and with technical assistance from the project, the community developed an action plan for restoration and is enforcing local laws to prevent excessive mangrove harvesting. The degraded areas were mapped and seedlings raised for replanting. Consequently, a total of 8,200 mangrove seedlings have been replanted in 12 months after the study tour, representing about 45 per cent of the degraded area.

Alas, the local fisher folk of Sanwoma have proved that they can become effective forest stewards!