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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Sensitization on Fisheries Management Plan with Fisher Folks and Fisheries Commission n Apam and Winneba



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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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Cover photo: Boafo Yena Fish Processors Association in a group Photo (Credit: Development Action Association)

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

Raymond Babanawo	Chief of Party	Email: raybabs.sfmp@rcuri.org
Enoch Appiah	Deputy Chief of Party	Email: eappiah.sfmp@rcuri.org
Kofi Agbogah	Senior Fisheries Advisor	Email: kagbogah@henmpoano.org
Perfectual Labik	Communications Officer	Email: perfectual.sfmp@rcuri.org
Mary Asare	M&E Officer	Email: mary.sfmp@rcuri.org
Brian Crawford	Project Manager, CRC	Email: bcrawford@uri.edu
Ellis Ekekpi	USAID AOR	Email: eekekpi@usaid.gov

Hen Mpoano
38 J. Cross Cole St. Windy Ridge
Takoradi, Ghana
+233 312 020 701
Kofi.Agbogah
kagbogah@henmpoano.org
Stephen Kankam
skankam@henmpoano.org

Resonance Global
(Formerly SSG Advisors)
182 Main Street
Burlington, VT 05401
+1 (802) 735-1162
Thomas Buck
tom@ssg-advisors.com

SNV Netherlands Development
Organisation
#161, 10 Maseru Road,
E. Legon, Accra, Ghana
+233 30 701 2440
Andre de Jager
adejager@snvworld.org

CEWEFIA
B342 Bronyibima Estate
Elmina, Ghana
+233 024 427 8377
Victoria C. Koomson
cewefia@gmail.com

Friends of the Nation
Parks and Gardens
Adiembra-Sekondi, Ghana
+233 312 046 180
Donkris Mevuta
Kyei Yamoah
info@fonghana.org

Development Action Association (DAA)
Darkuman Junction, Kaneshie Odokor
Highway
Accra, Ghana
+233 302 315894
Lydia Sasu
daawomen@daawomen.org

For additional information on partner activities:

CEWEFIA: <http://cewefia.weebly.com/>
CRC/URI: <http://www.crc.uri.edu>
DAA: <http://womenthrive.org/development-action-association-daa>
Friends of the Nation: <http://www.fonghana.org>
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ACRONYMS

DAA	Development Action Association
FC	Fisheries Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic product
IUU	Illegal Unreported Unregulated
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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SUMMARY

The marine fishing sector of the Country has experienced continuous overfishing with Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing over the decades. Due to the continuous overfishing, the fish stock in the marine waters of Ghana has been depleted. To help rebuild the fish stocks to enhance the socio-economic status of fishing communities in the country, Development Action Association (DAA) under the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) had sensitized over 350 people along the Landing Beaches of Winneba and Apam through Workshop training on the Fisheries Management Plan of Ghana. The sensitization workshop was extended to Worabeba Landing Beach on 18th July 2017 to educate fisher folks on the contents of the Fisheries Management Plan, and the state of the Fishing industry in Ghana.

The workshop training on the Fisheries Management Plan sensitized 256 fisher folks of whom about 90% were processors. The leader of the Landing Beach at Worabeba, with the support of the Chief Fisherman said he will organize clean up exercises at the Landing Beach every Tuesday to keep the beach clean. Nana also said he will strengthen the Bye-laws at the Winneba Landing Beach to protect the mangroves, since he is now aware that the mangroves serve as breeding areas for fish.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ghana was shown a ‘yellow card’ by the European Commission, under the European Union (EU) Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) Regulation in 2013 as a result of government’s failure to control the rapid growth of IUU fishing. The ban was lifted in 2015 when government showed commitment in addressing the issue of IUU. However, for the needed growth in the fisheries sector, IUU fishing being a major threat to the global marine resources must be holistically addressed. The Trade and Communications Section of the EU estimates that between 11 and 26 million tons of fish are caught illegally each year, with an associated global value of up to 10 billion euros. Recurrence of such cases in recent times necessitated the formation and inauguration of a fisheries watch volunteer group in the Greater Accra region by the minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development. However, her attempt to collaborate with stakeholders within this sector to monitor the beaches in order to enforce fishing regulations and infractions has come with stiff opposition from fishermen and women. The question then is, ‘are the fishers not aware of the glaring dangers of illegal fishing activities?’ The interaction with some members of various associations indicated their own frustration over illegal fishing activities.

1.1 Objectives of the Sensitization Workshop

- To sensitize fisher folks on the contents of the Fisheries Management Plan.
- To education fisher folks to observe all the fishing laws and bye-laws in the sector.
- To alert fisher folks on how important their work helps the economic development of Ghana.
- To help reduce excessive pressure on the fish stock.
- To protect marine habitat and bio-diversity.
- To help stop Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing practices.

1.2 Expected Outcome

- Reduction in excessive pressure on fish stocks.
- Fish stock within the marine waters of Ghana are exploited within biologically acceptable level.
- Fisheries legislation is implemented to protect the nation’s fish resources.
- Strengthen participatory decision making in fisheries management.
- Effective enforcement of fisheries legislation along all landing beaches in Ghana.
- Improving information on fisheries biology and stock assessment to support good stock.

2. OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

The participants gained knowledge on the importance and objectives of the Management Plan. During the sensitization, the participants were asked to identify fishing vessels whose activities deplete the sea. Examples are Industrial Trawl fishery, Semi-Industrial fishery and Canoe fishery. About 90% of the participants pointed to the Semi-Industrial fishery as culprits, while only 10% indicated that the activities of Canoe fishery (e.g. use of chemicals and unapproved net sizes and types) deplete the sea.



Figure 1. Mr. Anthony Appiah, Zonal fisheries Commissioner for Winneba and Apam explaining the approved Net types and sizes for fish that fishermen were supposed to harvest

There was a change of mind set and attitude of the participants from which fishing vessels overfishing and depletion of the marine fisheries rampantly occur. Also, the participants realized that the local artisanal vessels overfish and deplete the marine stock much more than the Chinese semi-industrial vessels.

Madam Charity Garko said that some other activities of people along the landing beaches contributed to the depletion of the sea. She mentioned cutting of mangrove trees without replanting, and dumping of rubbish into the sea. Since the fishermen at Worabebe do not use chemicals and light in fishing, much effort was placed on educating them on approved net types and sizes. Mr. Anthony Appiah (Zonal Fisheries Commissioner for Winneba and Apam) read from the Fisheries laws and translated into the local dialect (Fante) about issues that entail approved net types and sizes to be used by fisher folks.

He advised the participants to desist from all fishing activities that deplete fisheries stocks. Mr. Anthony Appiah explained the Fisheries Management Plan in Fante for the understanding of the participants. He urged the fisher folks to use approved nets and correct sizes in their fishing activities in order to help sustain and rebuild the fisheries stock in Ghana. The chief fisherman of Worabebe was also very happy about the workshop and promised to monitor all fishing activities under his control. He added that he will educate fishermen on the fisheries bye-laws so that they will be abreast with the trends. During the sensitization, it was noted that some species of fish in the waters of Ghana were extinct. The fisher folks were asked to identify which species of fish were depleted. And almost all the

participants indicated the *small pelagic*. These species mostly migrate towards the surface of the water being attracted to light; and therefore easily captured.

Chief fisherman of Worabeba landing beach, pledging his support to fight illegal fishing in Ghana



Figure 2. Chief fisherman of Worabeba landing beach, pledging his support to fight illegal fishing in Ghana



Figure 3. Display of some species of fish in Ghana's marine waters



Figure 4. Madam Charity Gakor (fish processor) from Worabeba displaying some species of fish stock being depleted by the use of light and other chemicals



Figure 5. Mr. Kwame Kyikyibi Bondzie (Canoe owner) at Winneba landing beach making a comment, about “weak fisheries laws that had led to illegal fishing activities in the country”.



Figure 6. Mr. Kwabena Baiden (Municipal fisheries Commissioner of Efutu Municipal) sensitizing fisher folks about the importance of mangroves to the fisheries stock of Ghana

He advised them not to cut down the mangrove trees.

3. CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR

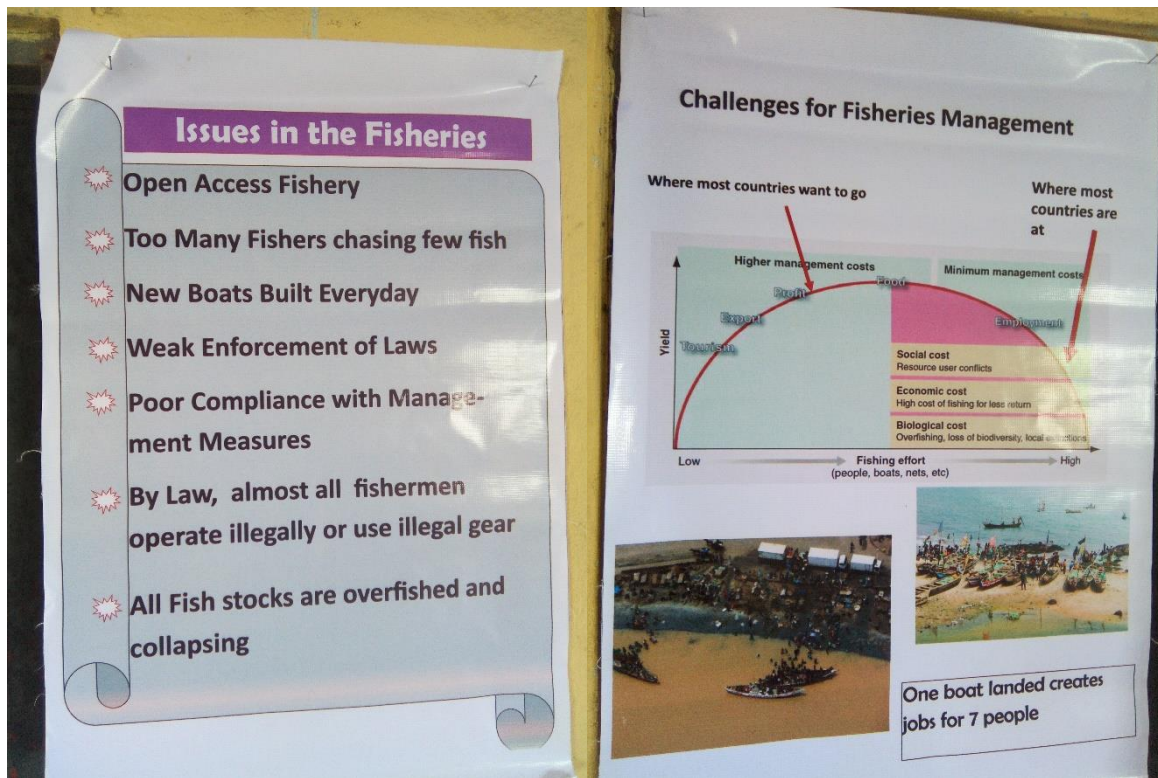


Figure 7. Challenges for fisheries management

Among the issues raised were the following:

- The open access fishery.
- Too many fishers chasing few fish.
- New boats being built every day.
- Weak enforcement of laws.
- Poor compliance with management measures.
- By law, almost all fisherman operate illegally or use illegal gear.
- All fish stocks are overfished and collapsing.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made during the sensitization:

- The fisher folk recommended the services of marine police at all landing beaches in Ghana to monitor activities of fishermen.
- Fisher folks should be educated on the Ghana fisheries laws and regulations to guide their operations

5. CONCLUSION

The fisher folks were happy about the Fisheries Management Plan, and were ready to support the contents and decision by Fisheries Commission in implementing the operations of the plan and help rebuild marine fish stock which had declined over a decade. Most of the participants were willing to contribute their quota to rebuild and sustain the fish stock in the sea since it is a source of their livelihood. Mr. Dotse, a fisherman at Worabeba said that they will form a Watchdog Committee to protect the boundaries of Worabeba marine waters from other fishermen who might come to fish illegally.