

THE POWER TO THE FISHERS PROJECT

NEWSLETTER - Dec 2019 to May 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Power to the Fishers (PTF) project aims at enhancing the socio-economic livelihoods of selected fishing communities in the coastal savannah zones of Ghana. Welcome to our 2020 half-year newsletter, which provides an update on progress made under the project and anticipated activities.

For further information about the PTF project, visit: www.powertothefishers.com

POWER TO THE FISHERS PROJECT LAUNCH and LEARNING WORKSHOP



To formally outdoor the Power to the Fishers (PTF) project, a launch cum learning workshop event was organized on 12th December 2019 at the Erata Hotel, Accra. The inaugural event was set out to introduce the project to key stakeholders and communicate findings of the project's baseline survey. It was also an avenue for creating national awareness on the project and its intended outcomes.

The event was well attended by relevant stakeholders in the fisheries sector including representatives of the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MoFAD); Fisheries Commission (FC); Parliamentary Select Committee on Food, Agriculture & Cocoa Affairs; European Union (EU) Delegation to Ghana; Ghana

Standards Authority (GSA); Food and Drugs Authority (FDA). Representatives from various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), beneficiary communities and fisher associations also graced the occasion.

The event was opened with a brief address by the Regional Director of CERATH Development Organization, Mr. Paa Kofi Osei-Owusu. He pointed out that the Power to the Fishers project will enhance the livelihoods of the target beneficiaries, and also complement existing fishing projects funded by the EU and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This was followed by other addresses from the EU delegation and the Parliamentary Select Committee.

Mr. Christopher Ackon, of the EU delegation to Ghana, remarked in his presentation that this project is one evidence of the EU's commitment to the fishery sector of Ghana and West Africa as a whole. The Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs, Hon. Abraham Odoom, mentioned in his speech the need to continuously engage communities in the implementation of the project in order to achieve maximum impact on beneficiaries.

A presentation was made by the Mr. Derek Adabie, the project manager of the PTF project. He gave a



detailed background of the project, stating the activities undertaken so far. Ms. Matilda Quist, the Director of Marine Fisheries gave a speech on behalf of Hon. Elizabeth Afoley Quaye, the Sector Minister. Ms. Quist commended the EU for its support to the fisheries sector of Ghana and applauded the project for its direct benefits to fishers, particularly the youth and women. She further declared the project officially launched.

As part of the learning workshop, Mr. Emmanuel Kwarteng presented on the key findings from the baseline study conducted in the project districts. He explained that the baseline findings serve as a benchmark for the project and offer a better understanding of the socioeconomic livelihood situation in the target districts.

The workshop ended with a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Raymond Babanawo, Chief of Party, SFMP. A team of experts in the fisheries sector, shared several viewpoints on strategies to enhance the socio-economic livelihoods of fisher folks. Some recommendations made include the adoption of good marketing strategies by fish processors, provision of training programs for fish processors on hygiene and financial management, financial support from

government and financial institutions in the form of loans and saving schemes, continuation of the closed season to help restore fish stock, and collaborations between projects in the sector to ensure sustainability of efforts.

COMMUNITY LEARNING SESSIONS

In January 2020, the project engaged the beneficiary communities in learning sessions on the findings from the baseline study conducted in September-October 2019. With the beneficiary communities as active collaborators, the Power to the Fishers project deemed it essential to bring to the knowledge of the community folk the findings of the baseline survey conducted. Key findings discussed during the learnings sessions included fishing and fish processing practices within the target districts, fish smoking technologies and fuels, perspectives on the closed season, business constraints, past NGO interventions and existing fisher groups in the project districts. The key findings were visually communicated to the beneficiaries using infographics.

The fisherfolk raised several issues with a considerable number focused on the recently observed closed season (May-June 2019) and



The project team presenting the baseline survey findings to the beneficiaries in Narkwa community



The project team presenting the baseline survey findings to the beneficiaries in the Senya Bereku community

prospects for the next closed season. This engagement cut across the respective coastal communities within the project's districts: Awutu Senya, Effutu, Gomoa West, Ekumfi, and Shama districts.

The general feedback and comments from the fisherfolk were:

- The closed season was harsh on the coastal economy since fishery is the only economic activity of most fisherfolks.
- Some fisherfolks sided with the Scientific & Technical Working Group (STWG) and called for the subsequent closed seasons to be moved from May/June to July/August - since the latter is the spawning period for fish.
- IUU fishing practices - saiko, pair trawling, light fishing, chemical fishing, among others - are still ongoing. The perpetuation of these acts, as well as the non-enforcement of fishery laws, defeats the purpose for the closed season (i.e. the rebuilding of fish stocks).
- Impacts of the closed season will be imminent and consolidated when IUU fishing is stopped.
- Access to finance is a challenge to the average fish processor.
- Some communities reiterated the need for a breakwater (sea defence) due to the adverse effects of high tides.

Content for the community learning sessions was compiled

from the PTF baseline survey report. The baseline report is available at:

https://powertothefishers.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Baseline-Survey-Report-Power-to-the-Fishers-Project_2019.pdf

MANGROVE SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP

During January 2020, Power to the Fishers held a district-level sensitization workshop on the importance of mangroves to coastal ecosystems. This was organized for the coastal communities within the Shama District with the support of the Fisheries Commission (FC) and Pra Estuary Co-Management Committee. The workshop brought together lead fisherfolk, mangrove harvesters, the co-management committee members, and community folk of the Shama District.

The workshop took participants through the types and differences in mangrove species, communal and national benefits to derive from the resource, threats being posed to mangroves, and how to protect this resource.

Participants were made to understand that though the harvesting of the mangrove resources provides immediate economic benefits, its conservation far outsizes the near-term benefits. This reflects in fish stock replenishment (food), enhanced livelihoods, mangrove tourism, flood prevention, carbon sequestration and climate control. This workshop brought together 59 participants across the district.



Mangrove Sensitization in the Shama Apo community

NHIS SENSITIZATION



NHIS sensitization workshop in Shama Amenano community

In efforts to enhance access to social protection services, the PTF project organized a number of sensitization activities on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) within the Shama District. As preliminary steps, the project team had focused group discussions with community folks, as well as an introductory meeting with the Shama District office of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA). The preliminary engagements revealed that there were some misconceptions and inadequate knowledge (on the part of community folks) about the subtleties in service delivery of the NHIS. These activities were carried out from January and March 2020.



NHIS sensitization workshop in Shama Apo community

The sensitization activities took the form of community meetings where personnel of the district NHIA office were invited to educate fisherfolk on the service. Participants were educated on the importance of health insurance, coverage and nuances of the scheme, sign up modalities and innovative means of renewing subscription, the costs involved, and how they can easily access information. A total of 126 fisherfolk were sensitized

As part of next steps, the project will extend this sensitization activity to the other beneficiary districts.

STUDY TOUR ON FISH PROCESSING

In February 2020, the project arranged a study tour for lead fishmongers across the seven (7) coastal communities in Shama District: Anlo Beach, Apo, Bentsir, Amenano, Abuesi, Kese wo kan, and Aboadze. This engagement was to expose the lead fishmongers to improved smoking technologies, hygiene practices and appropriate fish handling.



Study tour for lead fishmongers at the CEWEFIA compliance facility in Elmina

Sixteen (16) participants were conveyed to the CEWEFIA compliance facility in Elmina. The lead fishmongers were taken around the facility, i.e. the chambers and requisite activities to be carried out in each - handwashing area, washing area, processing area, cooling area, as well as elevated racks for fish drying. The participants had training sessions on appropriate fish handling, the use and merits of the Ahotor oven, as well as packaging of their smoked wares.

As agents of change, the lead fishmongers were encouraged to disseminate lessons learnt to promote the adoption of improved technologies among other fishmongers.



CEWEFIA facilitator training project beneficiaries on how to use the Ahotor oven

TRAINING ON FISH HANDLING & PRE-TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

During the first half of 2020, the PTF project facilitated training for fishmongers in the Shama District. This training centered on good fish handling, hygiene practices, and pre-technology adoption. Participants were also taken through the use of appropriate packaging materials and the need to brand their wares - using Ziploc bags, cling film, branded stickers, among others.



Training on best fish handling practices in the Shama District

The pre-technology training was to introduce fishmongers to improved smoking technologies, particularly the Ahotor oven. This exercise afforded participants to appreciate the technology - for its low smoke emissions and health benefits, low use of fuelwood, and acceptability (of resulting smoked products) in international markets.

So far, the project has trained 180 fishmongers on the above-stated subjects and will extend the training to the other project communities.



Training on best fish handling practices in the Shama District

STOVE CONSTRUCTION



Ahotor oven under construction for a 'stove host' beneficiaries in the Shama Apo community

The project, employing the stove host model, has constructed 2 double unit Ahotor ovens in the Shama District. The stove host model identifies an ideal fish processor (with a processing shed or kitchen) and constructs for her the proposed smoking technology which will be for her use and that of other interested parties.



Ahotor oven constructed for a 'stove host' beneficiary in the Kese wo kan community

The project team developed an assessment toolkit to objectively settle on the ideal processing kitchens which will receive the proposed smoker oven. With assistance from lead fishmongers in the project communities, several potential sites (kitchens) were identified for the construction. The project team went further to assess these sites using the toolkit. Two stove hosts were selected and an Ahotor oven constructed for each host. The selected stove hosts are located in the Shama Apo and Kese wo kan communities.

INCIDENCE OF COVID-19

In the wake of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Ghana, the Government of Ghana (GoG) imposed a lockdown and other restrictions in efforts to curb and manage the spread of the virus. These restrictions impeded project delivery and disrupted the work plan for the first half of the year.

Despite this, the project team was in constant touch, via phone calls, with lead fishers and other key beneficiaries for feedback on training and skills adoption. Post lockdown and with the easing of restrictions, the project team has resumed the execution of planned activities while ensuring all COVID-19 protocols are observed.

COVID-19 INSPIRED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Strategy and approaches guide how project activities are conducted. Where possible, the project team leverages on digitization and virtual technology to carry out some engagements - to lessen the frequency of direct facetime and do away with the assembly of participants at particular points in time.

While COVID-19 lingers on, the communities and the project team must take action to prevent further transmission, reduce the impacts of the pandemic, and support control measures.

The project has incorporated safety precautions advocated by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and these include:

- Limiting community engagements (in enclosed spaces) to 25 persons. This is to facilitate the observance of social distancing. To allow for a large audience, the project team organizes multiple sessions per community - one after the other.
- Seats are organized in a 3 ft by 3 ft seating arrangement.
- For every engagement, the project team carry along a pack of nose masks and hand sanitizers and make them available to attendees.
- Project beneficiaries and team members (including trainers/facilitators) are required to put on a nose mask, as well as apply hand sanitizer, before participation in community engagements.

CERATH Development Organization is implementing the **Power to the Fishers** project with financial support from the **European Union**. The Power to the Fishers project is a four-year project to enhance the socio-economic livelihoods of fishing communities within selected districts of the coastal savannah zones of Ghana.

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