

# Achieving poverty reduction through responsible fisheries

Lessons from West and Central Africa



**Cover photos:**

All photos were taken during the course of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme.

*Left:* Landing site at a beach in Mbour, Senegal; courtesy of M. Trudel.

*Top right:* Women smoking fish in Guínea; courtesy of D. Minkoh.

*Bottom right:* Men bringing in seine nets after a day of fishing in Benin; courtesy of D. Minkoh.

# Achieving poverty reduction through responsible fisheries

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PAPER

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# Preparation of this document

This technical paper traces the experiences of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) and its objective to reduce poverty in small-scale fisheries communities at the same time as introducing responsible fishing. The SFLP, a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and 25 participating countries in West Africa, ran from November 1999 to October 2007.

The aim of this document is to report on the important lessons generated by the SFLP with regard not only to reconciling poverty reduction and responsible fishing, but also showing how the two are mutually dependent and essential for sustainable outcomes. The paper provides a consolidated account of main lessons learned to serve as a source of information and inspiration for further work with small-scale fishing communities, in West and Central Africa as well as elsewhere.

The chapters – which have been put together through a collaborative effort by former SFLP staff and consultants, using the existing vast supply of SFLP documents and working papers – report on different aspects of its work and experiences. Presented in a framework summarizing current thinking in the development arena, the SFLP's approaches and methodologies are explained and its main findings discussed. The paper is structured as follows:

- *Chapter 1* provides an overview of the Programme itself and the strategic approach of combining the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) principles. It also summarizes the main lessons learned and hence provides an overarching introduction to the sections that follow;
- *Chapter 2* looks at the poverty concept in more detail and discusses the SFLP poverty profiling experience, i.e. how poverty assessments were carried out in practice and how the processes and results were used for identifying and implementing project activities;
- *Chapter 3* reports on the Programme's methodology for recalculating and re-assessing the economic contribution of the fisheries sector to local and national economies and presents the results from the SFLP's country studies;
- *Chapter 4* gives the arguments for why small-scale fisheries should be mainstreamed in development policy, e.g. through inclusion in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and National Development Plans (NDPs), and describes how this can be done;
- *Chapter 5* discusses the SFLP's co-management experience – both in inland water areas and on the Atlantic coast – and underlines the importance of addressing social exclusion and vulnerability factors as well as creating incentives to enable poor people to take part in resource management;
- *Chapter 6* analyses the importance of migration in West and Central African small-scale fisheries and discusses its implications for poverty reduction and co-management;
- *Chapter 7* reviews the requirements for microfinance in small-scale fishing communities and how the SFLP addressed this need;
- *Chapter 8* examines the importance of information in the context of development and how pro-poor communication strategies and tools were used by the SFLP;
- *Chapter 9* highlights the elevated prevalence of HIV and high incidence of AIDS in West and Central African fishing communities and reviews the SFLP's experience in addressing this issue in Congo and Benin; and
- *Chapter 10* presents the SFLP gender analysis tools and reports on the Programme's gender mainstreaming approach; and
- *Chapter 11* summarizes SFLP's experience in a broader context of development policy and gives a concluding reflection on the Programme's impact.

# Abstract

Despite massive development efforts, chronic poverty still remains a harsh reality for millions of Africans. The Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) examined ways to reduce poverty, and improve livelihoods, in the fisheries sector. In Africa, an estimated ten million men and women are involved in fishing and related activities such as processing and trading. Seven million fishing people live in West Africa and the fisheries sector is a major source of livelihoods in many coastal communities, both inland on lake shores and on the Atlantic coast. In addition to providing employment and income, fisheries plays an important role in local and national economies.

The SFLP, a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and 25 participating countries in West Africa, ran from November 1999 to October 2006. The Programme aimed at enhancing the livelihoods of artisanal fishery communities in coastal and inland lake areas by supporting the development and adoption of appropriate and replicable strategies for responsible and equitable fisheries, and by strengthening human and social capital.

New ways of working were explored, vulnerability and social exclusion were addressed as two central concepts of poverty, and emphasis was given to policy changes and institutional capacity building. The SFLP adopted the sustainable livelihoods approach to poverty alleviation and worked to implement the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to sustain fishery resources. The Programme promoted strategies for poverty alleviation that reinforce peoples' existing capabilities, are participatory and empowering and take into account the limitations of resource renewability.

This technical paper reports on the important lessons generated by the SFLP with regard not only to reconciling poverty reduction and responsible fishing but also showing how the two are mutually dependent and essential for sustainable outcomes. The paper provides a consolidated account of main lessons learned to serve as a source of information and inspiration for further work with small-scale fishing communities, in West and Central Africa, as well as elsewhere.

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

ADPES	Association for an Economic and Social Progress Movement (Senegal)
AICP	Association for self-promotion of fishing community initiatives (Congo)
ANACAM	Maritime Navigation Agency (Guinea)
ASCrAs	Accumulating savings and credit associations
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBO	Community-based organization
CCFAD	Commission for the Coordination of Artisanal Fisheries Training and Development (Guinea)
CDD	Landing Sites Development Committees ( <i>Comité de Développement de Débarcadère</i> ) (Guinea)
CEMARE	Centre for the Economics and Management of Aquatic Resources
CNSHB	Boussoura National Fisheries Science Centre ( <i>Centre National des Sciences Halieutiques de Boussoura</i> ) (Guinea)
CNSL	National Aids Control Council ( <i>Conseil national de la lutte contre la Sida</i> ) (Congo)
CNSP	National Fisheries Surveillance Centre ( <i>Centre national de surveillance des pêches</i> ) (Guinea)
CRD	Rural Development Communities ( <i>Communautés rurales de développement</i> ) (Guinea)
CRG	Rural Credit of Guinea" ( <i>Crédit rural de Guinée</i> )
The Code	Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAARF	Fund to support women's income generating activities ( <i>Fonds d'appui aux activités génératrices des femmes</i> ) (Burkina Faso)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FASP	Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Sub-Programme (Niger)
FENAGIE-Pêche	National Federation of Fisheries Economic Initiative Group (Senegal)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPS	Global Positioning System
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
I-PRSP	Interim PRSP
IC	Information and communication
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
ID	Development Initiative (Initiative développement) (Benin)
IDAF	Development of Artisanal Fisheries in West Africa

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IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IEC	Information, education and communication
IGA	Income-generating activity
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Organization for Migration
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (study)
LDED	Livelihoods Diversification Enterprise Development
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MECREPAG	Guinea small-scale fishing savings and credit mutual association
MECPROPEM	Mutual Savings and Credit Association for the Promotion of Fisheries (Senegal)
MFI	Microfinance institution
MSP	Multisector HIV/AIDS Project (World Bank, Benin)
MTAP	Medium Term Action Plan
NCU	National Coordination Unit (SFLP)
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OD	Organizational development
PAIA	Priority Area for Interdisciplinary Action (FAO)
PCU	Programme Coordination Unit (SFLP)
PIP	Policies, institutions and processes
PNLS	National AIDS prevention programme (Congo)
PP	Pilot Project (SFLP)
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSC	Programme Steering Committee (SFLP)
RSU	Regional Support Unit (SFLP)
RDS	Rural Development Strategy
RoSCAs	Rotating savings and credit associations
RDS	Rural Development Strategy
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SFLP	Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme in West and Central Africa
SLA	Sustainable livelihoods approach
SLIHS	Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey
SPO	Socio-professional Organization
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
SLSO	Sustainable Livelihoods Support Office (DFID)
TfD	Theatre for Development
TSP	Transforming Structures and Processes
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNPAG	National union of Guinean small-scale fishermen
UNSNA	United Nations System of National Accounts
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WID	Women in Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

# Introduction

Reducing poverty in small-scale fisheries communities at the same time as introducing responsible fishing – is that possible? The experience of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Programme (SFLP) in West and Central Africa shows that it is, but it requires innovative thinking, participatory approaches and political support.

The SFLP existed as a partnership between 25 participating countries, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Programme was implemented during a seven-year period from November 1999 to October 2006 and aimed at improving the livelihoods of artisanal fishery communities in coastal and inland lake areas by supporting the development and adoption of appropriate and replicable strategies for responsible and equitable fisheries, and by strengthening human and social capital. New ways of working were explored, vulnerability and social exclusion were addressed as two central concepts of poverty, and emphasis was given to policy changes and institutional capacity building (SFLP, undated; FAO, 1999).

The environment in which the Programme existed was characterized by the fact that poverty has been – and sadly continues to be – a cruel reality to millions of people. In spite of there being some progress towards meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted by world leaders in 2000 with an aim to halve global poverty by 2015, 41 percent of Africans still live on less than one dollar a day. Looking at other dimensions of poverty apart from income, the picture remains bleak with only slow progress towards, for example, reducing child mortality and improving access to clean water (UN, 2007).

The fisheries sector can make valuable contributions towards achieving the MDGs. In Africa, an estimated ten million men and women are involved in fishing and related activities such as processing and trading. Seven million fishing people live in West Africa and the fisheries sector is a major source of livelihoods in many coastal communities, both inland on lake shores and on the Atlantic coast. In addition to providing employment and income, fisheries play an important role in local and national economies in numerous ways: by contributing to food supplies and nutrition, helping stimulate the growth of a cash-based economy through the sales by small-scale fish-based enterprises, generating government income through fees and taxes and creating foreign exchange earnings through exports and international fishing agreements (SFLP, undated; FAO, 2006a).

The majority of the people employed by the sector are small-scale fishers and fish workers and their activities are particularly important to poverty alleviation. While no unanimous definition exists, the small-scale fisheries sector is generally described as being dynamic and evolving and is typically labour intensive, using relatively small amounts of capital and energy. Small-scale fishers use small vessels and often fish inshore for local and domestic markets although export-oriented production has increased significantly during the last couple of decades.

While it is common that coastal households have diversified livelihood strategies, combining for example fishing and farming activities, many are highly dependent on the fishery resources for their livelihood outcomes. Overexploitation and insecure access to resources threaten the very foundation of their livelihoods. The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (hereafter referred to as ‘the Code’) explicitly recognizes this and the consequent imperative that aquatic resources be properly

managed to continue to contribute to the well-being of the world's population. States, when adopting policies and measures for conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources, should protect the rights of fishers and fish workers and particularly those involved in subsistence and small-scale fisheries.

The current global trend towards introducing co-management offers small-scale fishers fresh opportunities to influence their situation but also contains new challenges and, as fishing pressure increases and resources decline, an increased need for diversification that reduces dependence on fisheries (SFLP, undated; FAO, 2006b; Béné, Macfadyen and Allison, 2007).

Poverty in West and Central African fishing communities is complex and multifaceted. In addition to concerns related to the fishery resource, people face a number of other constraints and have high levels of vulnerability. They are often excluded from development processes and have limited access to health, education and other public facilities and financial services. Illiteracy rates are high, particularly among women who are more frequently found to be marginalized in decision-making processes than their male counterparts. Fishing villages are often in remote areas and many fishing people are migrants, further accentuating social exclusion.

The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) has sought to provide a framework for analysing poverty and putting people's livelihood systems at the focus of the development process. It supports wide stakeholder participation and emphasizes the need to build on existing strengths and to bring about changes in policies, institutions and processes at micro-, meso- and macro-levels (SFLP, undated; Béné, Macfadyen and Allison, 2007).

The SFLP combined the principles of the Code with the cross-scale, cross-sectoral and participatory approach to development encapsulated in the SLA. This Technical Paper reports on the important lessons generated by the SFLP with regard not only to reconciling poverty reduction and responsible fishing but also showing how the two are mutually dependent and essential for sustainable outcomes. The paper provides a consolidated account of main lessons learned to serve as a source of information and inspiration for further work with small-scale fishing communities, in West and Central Africa as well as elsewhere.

The chapters – which have been put together through a collaborative effort by former SFLP staff and consultants using the existing vast supply of SFLP documents and working papers – report on different aspects of its work and experiences. Presented in a framework summarizing current thinking in the development arena, the SFLP's approaches and methodologies are explained and its main findings discussed. The paper is structured as follows:

- *Chapter 1* provides an overview of the Programme itself and the strategic approach of combining the Code and SLA principles. It also summarizes the main lessons learned and hence provides an over-arching introduction to the sections that follow;
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