



INFO-FLASH

the SFLP... on the move...

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Two new Pilot Projects

The Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) in West Africa recently launched two new Pilot Projects. One is on participatory coastal fisheries management while the other is on livelihoods improvement in the post-harvest sector.

The Pilot Project on participatory coastal fisheries management that was launched in Libreville, Gabon on the 18th of October 2004 covers Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania. The second that will focus on livelihoods improvement in the post-harvest sector involves Cameroon, The Gambia, Senegal and Chad; this was launched at Saly-Mbour on the 16th of November 2004.

Participants at the launching ceremonies of the two Pilot Projects in both Libreville and Saly-Mbour included representatives of the FAO or UNDP and national institutions in charge of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). Going by the active participation of the guests, there is every reason to believe that partnerships will be forged, and that the fisheries sector will be integrated in national PRSPs.

Cameroon / Mbakaou In progress: value chain analysis of the post-harvest sector

A methodology to analyse the value chain of small-scale fisheries products is currently being tested at the Mbakaou dam in Cameroon. The test is being conducted by a team of consultants with the support of the Cameroonian Ministry of livestock, fisheries and animal industries (*Ministère de l'élevage, des pêches, des industries animales* - MINEPIA) and the SFLP Pilot Project on livelihoods improvement in the post-harvest sector.

Three workshops will be organized to give a feedback and validate the results of the test. The first workshop will be organized for fishing communities, the second for the local administrations, and the third for government and all other stakeholders including development partners, support NGOs professional associations, etc.

The aim of the analysis is to conduct an inventory and to understand the interactions between the different actors in the post-harvest sector. Problems linked to fish products preservation and socio-cultural practices that influence the value chain will also be addressed. At the end of the test, pilot activities will be identified with a view to increasing the income of stakeholders.

The methodology will be used to analyse the value chain of small-scale fisheries products in other countries covered by the Pilot Project on post-harvest livelihoods (i.e. Chad, The Gambia and Senegal).

SFLP Info-Flash

The overriding objective of the **Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme** is to provide the 25 member countries with the most up to date information on the activities of the Programme. Info-Flash is produced by the Regional Support Unit based in Cotonou (Bénin).

Please feel free to contact SFLP if you have any information on events in your country.

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Strategic partnership

The World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have initiated the preparation of a strategic partnership on the establishment of an investment fund to support the sustainability of fisheries in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is the result of a first meeting held in Dakar from 17th to 21st of January 2005.

This strategic partnership is in response to a request formulated by the World Environmental Fund (WEF, created in 1991) to the World Bank to enable the organization, with the help of partners, to set up a financing mechanism aimed at increasing support for the fisheries sector for the sustainable management of fisheries resources in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This 60 million \$US investment fund worth to promote responsible fisheries will be disbursed in three installments over a period of 10 years to co-finance national projects linked to sustainable fisheries management and poverty reduction in coastal zones of Sub-Saharan Africa.

SLA sets the pace

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is forging ahead and seems to have become well accepted in francophone Africa, even beyond the initiatives financed by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID). Projects being implemented by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), as well as projects supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) now use SLA to guide their work.

This statement was made during the workshop on “lessons learnt from people-centred projects” held in Cotonou, Benin, from the 25th to the 27th of January 2005. The workshop was organized as part of the activities of the Sustainable Livelihoods Support Programme financed by DFID. It was co-organized by the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) in West Africa.

The meeting was attended by fifteen practitioners, working on project implementation, from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Officers from the FAO headquarters and the FAO Regional Office for Africa also participated in the event.

3 questions for ... Olivier Dubois, Senior Officer (Rural Institutions), Sustainable Development Department of the FAO

Info Flash: At the end of the seminar on lessons learned from people-centred approaches and projects, what are the elements that show that you have achieved your objectives?

Olivier Dubois: We have had rich exchanges between us as practitioners and officers in charge of people-centred projects. The main objective of this workshop was to evaluate lessons learnt from projects, see what works and what does not, so that we can correct what does not work. This is part of a process to develop training and information and communication tools for governments, donors and officers in charge of people-centred projects.

So what will now change in the design and implementation of people-centred projects?

We are embarking on a process in the medium term. We have already organized two workshops in Latin America, another in Anglophone Africa, and we are planning to organize yet another in Asia. We will inform FAO and governments, as well as development partners on lessons learnt to improve project implementation. One of the things that we have retained from this workshop is that the duration of projects should be long enough to accommodate a reorientation mid-way to facilitate the convenient involvement of all stakeholders and the institutionalization of the participatory process. Moreover, a long enough period will promote process ownership, participation, strengthening of partner institutions and internalization of results. A minimum of five years is required for a people-centred project. But at the same time, special emphasis must be placed on quality control of the process undertaken, because we know cases of projects that last for years but never achieve any of the desired results.

More and more African nations are decentralizing power to make local governance a leverage for development. What form do you think cooperation with decentralized local authorities should take?

FAO is already cooperating with local authorities. These are legitimate authorities with lasting structures. We support projects to strengthen local administration and rural organizations. Decentralization provides opportunity for people-centred projects. It can however also become a hindrance if it is done in such a way that responsibilities are given to decentralized authorities without providing the accompanying financial resources and legal backing they need to perform.

Impact of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities

The prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities is usually five to ten times higher than what has been generally recorded among the population of developing countries. This situation, which negatively affects cohesion within the communities and their contribution to poverty reduction and food security, was underscored during a workshop held at the FAO headquarters in Rome on 7 February 2005.

The workshop was initiated by the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) in West Africa, and opened by Mr. Ichiro Nomura, FAO Assistant Director-General, Fisheries Department (cf. extract of his speech reproduced in this edition of *Info-Flash*).

About twenty people from different Departments of the FAO and research institutions participated at the meeting. Mrs Marcela Villarreal, Director of the Gender and Population Division of the Sustainable Development Department of the FAO, presented a paper on the strategies for reducing the impact of diseases of poverty on food security and livelihoods in rural areas. Participants also listened to a paper on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities presented by Mr. Eddie Allison of the University of East Anglia. This was followed by the presentation of the results of two case studies. One on the integration of fishing communities in the national HIV/AIDS control Programme in Congo was presented by the SFLP, and the other on the impact of HIV/AIDS on fishing communities in Uganda, by Mrs. Mme Rachel Grellier, a hygiene and social development expert. Finally, Mrs. Janet Seeley from the University of East Anglia made a presentation on fishing communities' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The final document of the workshop, titled **IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON FISHING COMMUNITIES: policies to support livelihoods, rural development and public health** addresses issues relating to:

- The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities.
- The peculiar vulnerability of women.
- Impacts of HIV/AIDS.

- Activities undertaken to control HIV/AIDS in fishing communities.
- Stakeholders of HIV/AIDS control and strategies to develop.

NB: For more information, please visit the SFLP website (<http://www.sflp.org>) or the following site: <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/100061/index.html>

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the fisheries sector (Extract of the opening speech of Mr. Ichiro Nomura, FAO Assistant Director-General, Fisheries Department, 7th February 2005, FAO, Rome)

It was in a fishing village on the Ugandan shores of Lake Victoria in 1982 that a new and terrible disease began to affect large numbers of people in Central Africa. At that time, the disease was known only as 'Slim', after the wasting impact on the human body. In the ensuing years, the HIV pandemic has become associated with various groups of people designated as 'high risk groups' - commercial sex-workers, intravenous drug users, men who have sex with men, long-distance truck drivers, military recruits and urban youth, for example. But the population among whom the disease was first identified in epidemic form - the fisherfolk - have, until recently, been overlooked as a risk group, with the consequence that they have been left largely beyond the reach of prevention, treatment and mitigation efforts.

This neglect may be having devastating consequences. In the last five or six years, it has become evident that fishing communities in many developing countries in Africa, South and South East Asia and Central America suffer from very high rates of HIV prevalence - rates that are often five to ten times higher than those in the general population in those regions. These elevated rates of HIV prevalence and the alarming death rate from AIDS in these communities place the affected fishing communities among the so-called 'high risk groups' that merit special consideration in the fight against the disease.

(...) FAO, through its 1995 'Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries', has done much to support sustainable exploitation and equitable benefit sharing in the fisheries through empowerment of fishing communities and promotion of participatory management of fishery resources. These gains are threatened by the impacts of AIDS on fishing community cohesion and capabilities. For communities with very high levels of AIDS deaths, such as those around Lake Victoria, fatalism erodes any commitment to long-term stewardship of resources. Thus, addressing HIV/AIDS in these communities is a fundamental requirement if 'responsible fisheries' are to be achieved.

In identifying fisherfolk as a high risk group, there is a danger of stigmatizing and marginalizing a group of people whose livelihood systems are already vulnerable due to political and social marginalization, disadvantaged access to many social services and insecure rights over the natural resources they depend upon. For this reason, it is vitally important that understanding replaces blame, and that solutions address underlying causes as well as symptoms. Responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis in fishing communities will require a response to the social conditions that put fisherfolk and their sexual partners at high risk. This will require the collaboration of health sector professionals, rural development initiatives and specific fisheries-sector expertise.

Benin / AIDS control efforts Fishing communities draw up a plan of action

Small-scale fishing communities in Benin are entering an active phase in their HIV/AIDS community action plans. Hio, a small village between Cotonou and Ouidah, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, is leading the process through a general assembly organized there on the 24th of January 2005.

The general assembly was in the form of an appeal, which made it possible to obtain the community's support for the HIV/AIDS control action plan preparation process in the village. All the different groups of the community, as well as other people that may influence social behaviour in the village participated at the meeting. They promised to work in synergy to ensure that the fishing community's action plan would be ready latest by March 2005. The process is to be facilitated by *Globale initiative*, an NGO selected by the National Coordinating Unit (NCU) of Benin.

The HIV/AIDS control action plan project for Hio village was initiated after an HIV/AIDS KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) study was conducted with SFLP support in some small-scale fishing communities in Benin in 2003. This study made it possible to analyse the risk factors in the four villages: Hio, Ayiguinnou, Sô Zounko and Kétonou.

Apart from Hio, the three other villages involved in the KAP study are also preparing their action plans. The plans will be implemented with the support of the Multisectorial AIDS Control Project (*Projet plurisectoriel de lutte contre le Sida - PPLS*) with whom the SFLP is developing a partnership. These action plans integrate information on the modes of transmitting the virus and prevention methods, training, marketing of condoms, voluntary testing, care for the sick and for their families and orphans - psychosocial, material, food and nutritional care.

Latest additions to the RSU team

Angaman KONAN: He is the new Coordinator of the Pilot Project on co-management in inland fisheries since February 2005. Agronomist specializing in fisheries sciences, Mr. Konan has twenty years experience in project management, small-scale fisheries co-management and fisheries administration. He was the NCU Coordinator in Côte d'Ivoire.

Pascal ZANTOU: He is the Communication Assistant of the Information/Communication Unit. Journalist and historian by training, he was the publisher *Les Echos du jour*, a Beninese daily, and subsequently the editor of the Pan-African magazine, *Afrique Diagnostic*. Before joining the SFLP, he was the Technical Assistant in local communication for the support programme to launch Beninese local government (*Programme d'appui au démarrage des communes - PRODECOM*). He is the I/C focal point for *Info-Flash*, the bi-monthly electronic newsletter. He also contributes to the *Liaison Bulletin* and to the development of awareness-raising tools.