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Selected articles

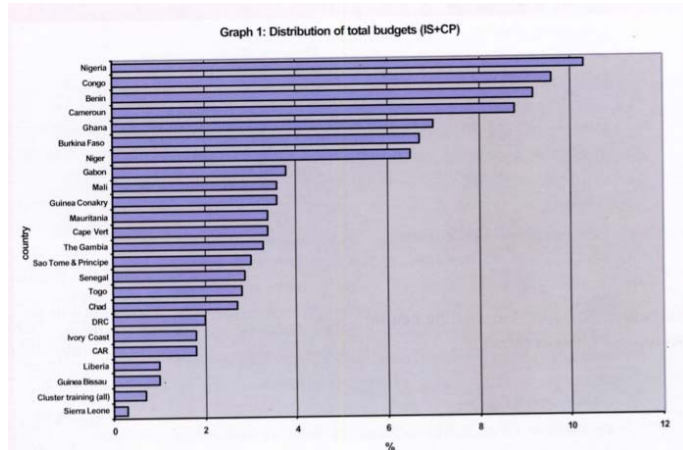
Quarterly

Publication

Baby projects¹ at the start of change processes in the fisheries sector

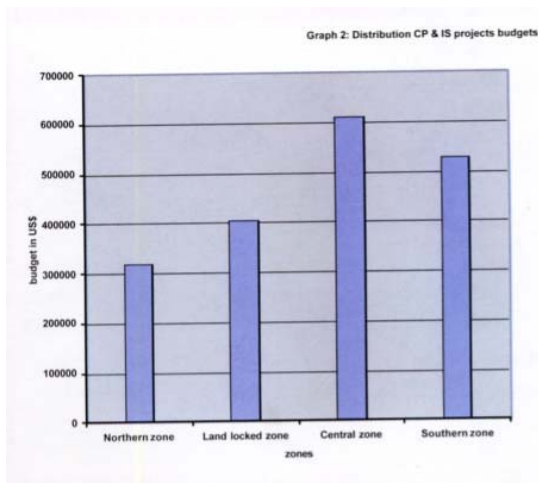
Katrien HOLVOET, Gender and Organisational Development officer, RSU/SFLP

As a measure of success of the community projects (CP), we propose the ideal situation whereby these projects contribute to similar development initiatives in a large number of other communities and generate evidence inducing policy and decision makers to change, adapt and review policies and institutions. CP together with institutional support projects were indeed able to influence policy makers and to bring about change in institutions. How these changes took place, is described in this article. Out of the 25 partner countries involved at different levels in the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) activities, 11 (Regional Support Unit – National Coordination Units -Partners) can claim to have influenced Policies, institutions and processes (PIP).



The start and the concepts²

End 2000, SFLP launched its first CPs in Benin, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Mali, Sao Tome and Principe and The Gambia. Today SFLP, in collaboration with the National Coordination Units (NCU) and their partners, has implemented a total of 82 project protocols on both institutional support and community projects. A total of 1.8 million US\$ was committed in this way to fisheries development in the region. The regional distribution of the funding is given in graphs 1 and 2.



The southern and central zone received more funding and very often this can be explained by the fact that fewer donors fund activities in fisheries as well as by the interest and the dynamic shown by the NCUs and their partners. The graph on the percentage wise distribution of baby project funding per country indicates that 10 countries make up a middle group who received between 2 and 4 % while 7 countries received more than 6% and 7 countries received less than 2%.

The CPs were set up as action research projects, the main focus being on people. The projects were formulated by the fisheries communities with support of the NCU and addressed one or more aspects of a community action plan that was a result of a Sustainable livelihoods analysis and a participatory planning exercise.

The projects were to be part of a dynamic process and could be or become multi-sectoral as they progressed. This dynamism was also to be reflected in the multi sectoral platform at the level of the NCUs. Out of 40 project sites (CPs) 25 (62 %) are multisectoral. Graph 3 shows that activities related to aspects of economic development (marketing services, micro finance services) are the most important and count the most partnerships. Activities around health, education and agriculture, livestock and forestry in the context of

¹ Community and institutional support projects have been brought together under the name of baby projects

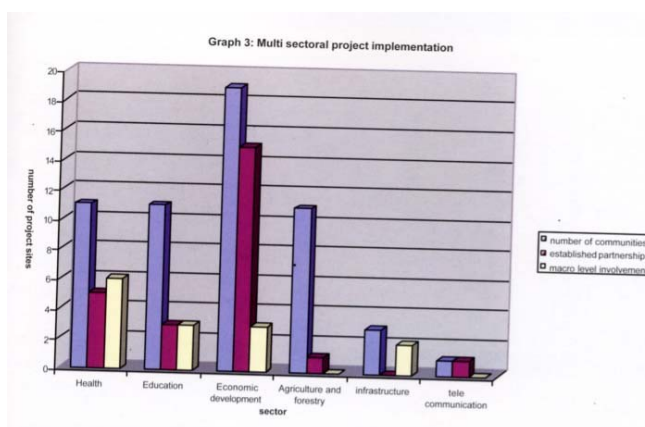
² The concepts that guide the community and institutional support projects are the principles of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) and the participation of stakeholders in the process.

diversification were implemented in 42% of the project sites. Partnerships and macro level involvement have been most important in support to Economic development and the health sector (HIV/AIDS issues).

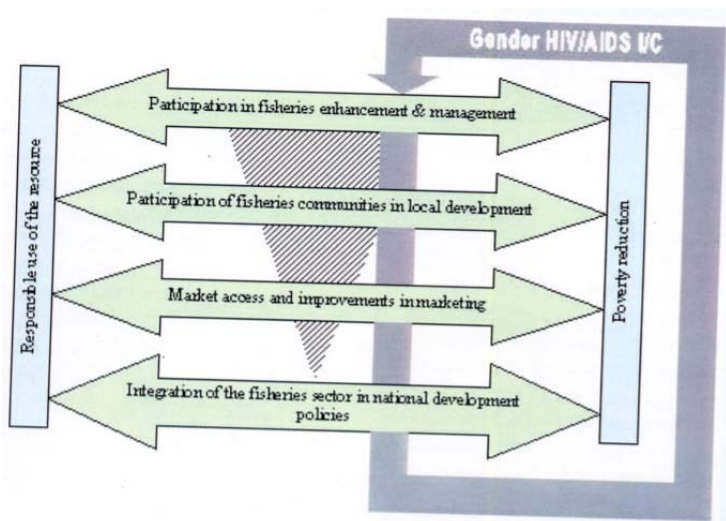
Important in all CPs is the different way in which the administrative authorities became visible and an active partner of the communities. In the majority of the CPs, the administration had to put aside their assumptions and start analysing (SLA diagnostic) the situation together with local partners. The first concern was on the livelihoods of the communities and the longer term commitment to improving resource management as well as the well being of all community members. The community projects focussed on the best entry points for actions, building on existing strengths. NCU, their partners and the communities were also asked to actively work on establishing partnerships who could carry on the development activities beyond the duration of the community project and who could contribute to the development initiative. The continuity of 69% of baby projects beyond the SFLP intervention has been guaranteed. 3 countries are still negotiating support (Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo).

Lessons learned on major fisheries development themes

To make it possible to document lessons learned and to undertake comparative analysis of contributions to fisheries development themes of baby projects executed in different contexts, they have been regrouped under four themes. As projects were dynamic and evolving into other sectors, it is frequently, CPs contribute to a number of themes. As shown in the diagram three themes contributed towards integration of the fisheries sector in national policies (fourth theme). All themes contributed to responsible fisheries and poverty reduction and were in some degree taking into account gender & HIV/AIDS concerns. Participation of communities in fisheries enhancement and co-management of the resources is a first theme and a main area of concern for fisheries departments in the search for ways to improve the management and the responsible use of the resource.



New institutions and management agreements are to secure access to the resource for the communities and build networks and linkages to support their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability. The new agreements should as well orient the economic development that, based on value added, conservation and processing (reducing post harvest losses) and promotion of aquaculture, could motivate responsible use of the resource.



Integration of fisheries communities in local development is a second theme developed in baby projects. Too often fisheries communities are not involved in local development and/or are not active in the decentralisation process. The lack of organisations and different forms of exclusion weaken the social cohesion and the basis for economic development. Weak social cohesion influences who sets the development agenda and who participates in decision making. Another challenge in local development is the access to micro finance and how the sector integration in mainstream micro finance development should be oriented in order to contribute to sustainable management of the resource.

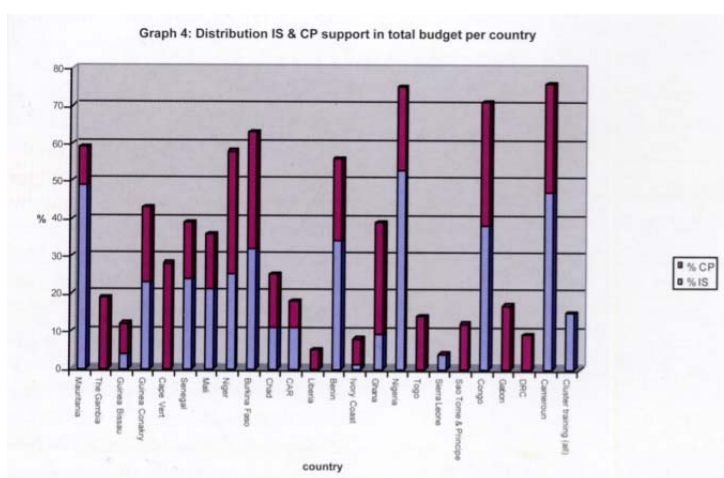
A third theme concerns Market access and improvements in marketing. It is an important fisheries development issue as the post harvest sector has not been visible in national policies and has suffered from under investment and neglect in terms of participation of its actors in the debates on the sector management

particularly the resources. The post harvest sector is very heterogeneous and the dynamic and tension between different needs and interests of its actors should be well understood by decision makers before taking development decisions especially since the sector is undergoing influences from changes in climate, the globalisation of markets, new ways of resource management and through the use of information technology.

Integration of the fisheries sector in national development policies is the fourth theme and is in the context of baby projects related to policy reform needs that were identified by stakeholders, during the implementation of projects. New institutional arrangements for management of infrastructure, management of the resource and the importance of a better integration of communities in national education, HIV/AIDS control and access to micro finance were in some of the countries, further developed by means of institutional processes. The implementation arrangement of linking macro and meso level administration with NGOs, stakeholders and the communities in one process was a challenge and an important opportunity chance in the way of working resulting in power sharing and learning from each other.

The process: from documenting evidence to informing and influencing the macro level

Graph 4 presents the percentage of the total CP and total IS budget support that each country received. Countries with balanced support (IS/CP) have managed to influence changes at the policy level. Not all experiences can be documented in this paper and only three examples have details on how micro level evidence was used to inform, influence and change issues at the macro level. More information can be found in other SFLP publications. The three detailed examples are from Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Others could include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, DRC, Guinea Conakry, The Gambia, Ghana and Sao Tome and Principe.



The nature of institutional support (IS) varies according to the process: in Guinea for example the IS consisted of an impact study and the organisation of a national forum. In Gambia studies on gender and micro finance (including a national restitution and establishment of a strategic partnership) and a study on literacy were conducted. Planning of the change process was done through a strategic planning undertaken with the NCU and its partners.

In Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sao Tome and Principe cluster training was organised as well as exchange visits. The training on organisation development has contributed to changes at macro level in DRC. The exchange visits have been very positive contributions to change in Chad, Congo, DRC, CAR and Sao Tome and Principe.

Chad: Promoting pro poor micro finance

The process in Chad started in 2002 with the approval of a CP in Ere. The CP contributed to theme 1, theme 2 and was at the end involved in improvements in market arrangements (theme 3) reducing women's vulnerability due to irregular transport opportunities to link up with the main fish markets. IS builds on the orientations developed in the CPt: (i) improved resource management and a (ii) constructive role of micro finance in terms of promotion of authorised fishing gears, contribution to reduction of exclusion all oriented towards improvement of the overall well being of members of the Walta association. The Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), APIBASE who implemented the project together with the NCU, monitored at household level the changes in well being. Based on the monitoring results the following impacts were achieved: 52% increase of income with an increase in expenses in health care (128 %), education (133 %) and investment in equipment (59 %). In terms of inclusion 41% of poor members have access to means of production and 21% have received social loans. The reimbursement rate of the savings and credit scheme is

100%. In terms of improvements in the use of the resource the main impacts are the reduction of conflicts on access settled now through agreements reached between the traditional authorities, the owners and the fisheries administration.

Is concerned an exchange visit to Benin (June 2003) on the topic of micro finance and umbrella organisations. In view of future work with the Ministry of Decentralisation and Ministry of Finance (lead ministries in on going reform of the micro finance sector in Chad), the participants to the exchange visit were, chosen from the aforesaid Ministries, the fisheries department, the financial service from APIBASE and different fisheries organisations from N'Djamena (fish mongers), Ere and Lake Fitri (fishermen group). Participants visited the macro, meso and micro level initiatives on micro finance in Cotonou (Benin) and met two of the national fisheries umbrella organisations. APIBASE and the Ere community agreed on return on new policies for their savings and credit scheme. APIBASE applied pro poor measures and when they got their recognition as a Mico Finance Institution (MFI) by the ministry they initiated savings and credit services in 5 other communities. APIBASE informed macro level actors on their initiative and through the SFLP funded Pilot project operating in Hadjer Lamis and N'Djamena rural they are promoting pro poor micro finance initiatives in 5 communities with impact at the macro level.

Niger: Lessons learned from CPs taken up in the national fisheries and aquaculture development plan

Tafouka, Tabalack and Niamey are SFLP has funded community Tabalack and Tafouka have organisation and management of region has over 400 of these water from a holistic, pro poor and gender approach implemented in Tafouka replicated in a large number of achieved in Tafouka and Tabalack convinced decision makers to National fisheries and aquaculture

Box 1: Some of the impacts of the Community project in Tafouka and Tabalack communities

- B All women have now an Altona oven
- B Men help women with fire wood collection and transport so that they have more time for their Income generating activities
- B Participation of women and men in trainings without discrimination
- B Parity in management committees
- B Integration of women in the committee of wise and participation in decision making at community level
- B Significant increase in fish production in the lakes
- B Poor group members have acquired fishing gear
- B Priority given to female fish mongers for purchase of fish
- B Increase of 350% of female associations
- B Establishment of a union of associations
- B Established partnership with a MFI and access to a total of 7600 US\$.

Box 2: Activities integrated in the national fisheries and aquaculture plan

- Component 1: Fisheries development / enhancement and river based fisheries
 - B Concertation and collaboration between fingerlings production at government managed stations and small producers
 - B Study of the fisheries chain, restitution to all stakeholders and priorities and plans established with stakeholders (taking into account different categories of poor)
- Component 3: Technology transfer and research development to increase economy of fisheries
 - B Training of staff of research institutions on participatory approaches
 - B Analysis of investment capacity of actors and discussion with communities on appropriate technology
 - B Participatory action research with restitution of results to MFI
- Component 4: Diversification of livelihoods
 - B Gender analysis and identification of Income generating activities
 - B Gender analysis to inform MFI to adapt products
- Component 6 capacity building for institutions and for community organisations contributing to improved sector management
 - B Gender analysis on the subject of NRM and concessions and taking into account gender concerns in the elaboration fisheries plans
 - B Training and establishment of female regional organisations
 - B CCRF extension
 - B Use experience from Chad basin data collection to strengthen data collection on the sector.

three communities where projects. The CPs in contributed to the small water bodies. Tahoua bodies and lessons learned sensitive development and Tabalack could be communities. The impact communities (see box 1) integrate initiatives in the plan.

The IS focussed first on gender in micro finance, followed by a PIP study conducted in different fisheries country wide. The national restitution of the studies led to supplementary funding for the CPs and strategic partnerships established to work on pro poor micro finance.

The national restitution of the PIP study was followed by another IS to formulate a national fisheries development plan. The plan was integrated in the National Rural Development Strategy and the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction. The impact achieved at community level and the lessons learned from these projects were integrated in the national fisheries and aquaculture development plan (see box 2).

Nigeria: SLA integrated in training curriculum and a new dynamic for cooperative unions

In New Bussa an SLA training module was included in the curriculum of the fisheries college. During a field practical exercise a community project was formulated with the Tatabu community. The community project is supporting poor community members to organise their savings and credit cooperative union.

SFLP gave institutional support to the NCU to set up Local coordination units (LCUs) in the states where CP were funded. This permitted to guarantee the technical assistance and to assist on establishing partnerships and exchange experiences between LCUs. Experiences with cooperative unions in CPs in Daban Massara and Doro Baga (Borno State) and Rumrum (Kano state) have been shared with the Tatabu community (Niger state).

The National coordination unit funded a field mission with representatives from International Labour Organisation (ILO) - Nigeria and a specialist in Cooperative movement from Tanzania who was invited by ILO Nigeria. The NCU, ILO and the Ministry in charge of the cooperative union movement are studying how best to assist a review of legislation and overall support. SFLP through the NCU will make sure that the fisheries sector will be integrated in this initiative.

Community and institutional support projects, if used within a well defined strategy, have been able to link micro, meso and macro actors and have delivered pro poor and sustainable development results.●

Integration of the fisheries sector in national development

Moustapha KEBE, Policy Adviser, RSU/SFLP

Problem: insufficient consideration for the fisheries sector in national policies

The SFLP experience over the last three years has shown that the small-scale fisheries sector as a general rule is not given enough consideration in the national economic and social development policies. Furthermore, fisheries policies are guided by a sectoral approach where the human factor is still not considered as a significant aspect of the decision-making process. This is inimical to the sustainable exploitation of the resources, and increases the vulnerability of small-scale fishing communities. And what's more, fisheries stakeholders find it difficult to have broad scope when analysing poverty-related problems in fisheries and to seek alternative or complementary solutions outside the open access resource base.. For the SFLP all these different factors serve as entry points for promoting the preparation of sustainable strategies that are well suited to poverty reduction in the small-scale fishing communities of West and Central Africa.

The national Poverty Reduction Strategy preparation process initiated and encouraged by the Bretton Woods institutions – the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank – has been prominent in the poverty reduction strategies of West Africa. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) describe the overall policy and planning framework for poverty reduction. This framework guides the preparation of government's partial and annual budgets, programmes and policies.

The PRSPs provide opportunity for adopting fisheries policies in a more holistic manner, reconciling sustainable resource management, the fight against poverty in fishing communities and the contribution of the sector to economic growth. Within the context of Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), this could be one of the major challenges in integrating small-scale fisheries in the PRSP and by extension in improving the consistency of government policies impacting on the sector, mobilizing partners to support the empowerment of communities, and providing an incentive to improve and decompartmentalize fisheries planning.

The need to consult the countries participating in the Programme thus became evident for understanding why the small-scale fisheries sector has so far remained in the background of the PRSP process, for evaluating the inherent advantages in further integrating fisheries in the PRSP (with reference to SLA and CCRF – the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries), and if necessary identifying the potential areas that the SFLP could provide support to assist the countries in this integration process.

Strategy developed to ensure better representation of the fisheries sector in national poverty reduction policies

The SFLP developed different initiatives to push for the integration of small-scale fisheries communities in the national poverty reduction programmes of West and Central Africa.

The process started by exploring the ideas and work done to reduce poverty in the small-scale fisheries sector of the West African region. This exercise was conducted during two sub-regional workshops on “Small-scale fisheries, poverty and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries” held in Cotonou in November 2001, with the support of CEMARE (Centre for the Economics and Management of Aquatic Resources). An FAO working group of which the SFLP was a member examined poverty-related issues in small-scale fisheries, and the outcome of this exercise was the publication of a paper in the FAO series on Technical Guidelines for responsible fisheries.

Next, entry points were identified with a view to improve the integration of fishing communities in the PRSP using the SLA guiding principles, and develop partnerships with National Coordinating Units (NCU). This approach made it possible to undertake the following activities:

- Compilation of current national poverty reduction papers of the different countries, as well as information on the way fisheries stakeholders have so far been involved in the PRSP process.
- The first analysis of the PRSP process in the region and the linkages that were identified during this process with the problems of poverty reduction in fisheries.
- Collection of information on the place of fisheries in national poverty reduction strategies and how Fisheries Departments participate in the PRSP process.
- Organization of a Consultation¹ with the support of the FAO Fisheries Department, to analyze the status of the PRSP process and its linkages with poverty reduction efforts in the small-scale fisheries sector in West Africa, and to identify the approaches the SFLP could adopt in providing support to the integration of fisheries in the PRSP.

On this basis, the SFLP assisted the countries in obtaining information on the social and economic role of small-scale fisheries, and in the lobbying required to ensure that more consideration is given to the sector in national poverty reduction policies.

In this regard, a methodological guide was designed for assessing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to national economy. The purpose of the guide was to provide basic knowledge, as well as a low-cost methodology, to facilitate both the calculation of the economic and social benefits of the small-scale fisheries sector, and the full exploitation of the “strategic” information that the exercise could eventually produce.

The guide was tested in Benin and further developed. It was thereafter used to conduct fourteen case studies to assess the contribution of fisheries to national economies. These studies were conducted in the countries participating in the SFLP Pilot Projects. The first Pilot Project is on “Improvement of the policy and institutional environment for the development of inland fisheries co-management systems” in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Mali. The second is on “Coastal fisheries co-management in Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania”, while the third is on “Improved livelihoods in the small-scale post-harvest fisheries” in Cameroon, Chad, Gambia and Senegal, and in two island countries (Cape Verde and Sao Tome & Principe). This activity made it possible to: (i) fill in the information/data gaps on the real and potential contribution of fisheries to national economies; (ii) develop in each of the countries, a close collaboration between the Fisheries Department and the office for national accounts, and (iii) arouse the interest of decision makers and development partners engaged in poverty reduction programmes in the fisheries sector.

Support was provided to some specific countries like Congo, Niger and Sierra Leone for the inclusion of the fisheries sector in the national poverty reduction policy. A study focusing on Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs) was conducted in Congo and Niger. The same study examined the institutional and economic issues that may have an impact on the livelihoods of fishing communities. Furthermore, as part of the activities supported by Pilot Project 2 a sectoral policy for poverty reduction was drawn up. In Niger a Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Sub-Programme (FASP) was prepared as part of the Rural Development Strategy of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). This Sub-programme will facilitate the implementation of the strategy for developing the fisheries sub-sector, an integral part of the medium term action plan (MTAP) 2006 – 2011 resulting from a sectoral consultation on the environment and desertification control in November 2005. In Sierra Leone, the inclusion of ten additional areas for the survey on small-scale fisheries – the primary sample unit – in the Integrated Survey on Households (ISHSL), with fifteen households per survey area made it possible to generate additional the information to supplement what was previously available for planning and for the implementation and monitoring of the national poverty strategy. It also helped to promote greater integration of fisheries in the PRSP, a development that would enable the fisheries sector to benefit from PRSP-related funds.

The results of the case studies on the contribution of fisheries to national economies

The results of the analysis and summary of the case studies on the evaluation of the contribution of fisheries to national economies show that this contribution is often under-estimated in most countries. The major reason for this is that all fisheries activities, whether direct or indirect, are not usually taken into

¹ The countries represented in the consultation are: Benin, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe and Sierra Leone. Each national delegation comprised two higher officials, one of whom represents the Fisheries Planning Department, and the other, the institution responsible for preparing the PRSP.

consideration in the calculations. The approach used made it possible to integrate not only fisheries production, but also such activities as fish-processing, fish mongering and fish-catering. The integration of the secondary and tertiary sectors in the primary sector significantly increased the results and “weight” of fisheries activities in national economies. Overall, the value added in relation to fisheries production could thus increase by about 50%, when compared to the usual figures provided by the classical type of studies.

The relevance of the results is further buttressed by the development of synergy between the Fisheries Department and the office in charge of preparing national accounts. This will facilitate the work of updating the information available on the social and economic role of fisheries, and enable the regular participation of Fisheries Department in the different stages of the PRSP process.

Lessons learnt

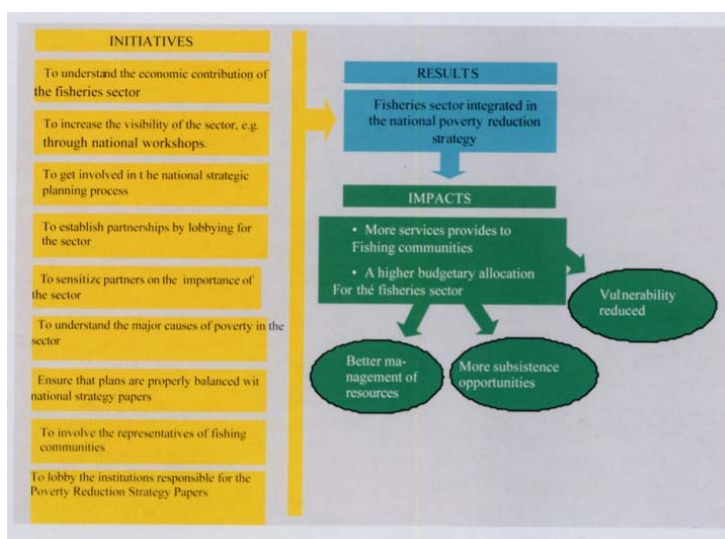
The support provided to fisheries stakeholders to prepare them adequately contribute to the PRSP through organizational development initiatives and the different training programmes, as well as the assessments conducted on the sector, which helped to generate relevant information especially on the poverty profile of fishing communities and the role of the sector in poverty reduction and food security, both helped to improve the inclusion of the sector in the PRSP in most SFP participating countries. This is particularly the case in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania and Niger.

The creation or strengthening of community-based organizations and national umbrella organizations, and the various trainings received contribute a lot to improving the negotiation capacities of the fishing communities. This made it possible for them to participate actively in the PRSP process, especially in the phase dedicated to incorporating their needs and aspirations in the Paper.

Advocacy work undertaken by the NCUs (National Coordinating Units) within the Fisheries Departments through the provision of information on the poverty level of fishing communities and the importance of the fisheries sector in terms of employment creation, income, food security and safety net, resulted in more visibility for the sector and led to its inclusion in national poverty reduction strategies. The preparation and implementation of a well adapted communication strategy, as well as the production of Information/Communication (I/C) materials probably facilitated the lobbying exercise.

This improved visibility of the fisheries sector in national strategies shall lead to increased capital flow for the benefit of the sector, both for specific interventions in the fisheries sector, and for the provision of basic social services to the communities. This is of vital importance in reducing the vulnerability of fishing communities and in increasing the opportunities provided through better basic social services like water, health education, transport, etc. In some countries like Cameroon, fisheries benefited from the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) Fund in the form of a project aimed at the sustainable livelihoods improvement of these fishing communities.

The factors that contributed to the successful integration of the fisheries sector in the national policies and strategies can be summarized as follows:•



The participation of fishing communities in the co-management process of fisheries resources.

Angaman KONAN, Regional Coordinator of the Pilot Project on “Inland fisheries co-management

Co-management can be defined as an institutional arrangement (natural resource management measures, roles and responsibility sharing among stakeholders, establishment of decision-making bodies to manage all the mechanisms) between the users of fisheries resources, other stakeholders and the fishing administrations (government). Basically, it is based on the participation of the fishing community in the implementation of inland fisheries co-management in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Togo, and draw some lessons.

Organizing for participation

The lakes have two configurations in terms of settlements. In countries with strong fishing tradition (Ghana and Mali), the indigenes have supplanted by fishermen from lakes of other regions through internal migrations. In host countries like Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo, migrant fishermen from other countries are more populous. Also in Cameroon (Mape and Maga), a mosaic of the different tribes of the country live around the lakes. The social structure of all these communities is on the basis of their tribe with each having a chief as their leader. The individual finds protection and security amongst his kinsmen while other groups are seen as threats. In practical terms, the riverine community is a patchwork of neighboring communities living side by side in an atmosphere prone to inter-communal conflicts. It is characterized by a heterogeneous population (origin, customs, religions fishing techniques and practices etc). Not only is it absolutely necessary to organize all the communities, encouraging them to work and manage all the fisheries resources together, and start considering the resources as their common wealth and heritage, but is also a great challenge. The objective of the organization is to get these tiny groups to come out of their “clannish shells” and open up to other people, setting up management institutions that will expose them to the brighter and more promising prospects inherent in joint development projects and the sustainable management of fisheries resources.

The expectations of fishing communities

Local authorities have invested community-based organizations with the powers to serve as their platform to claim some authority over the management of fisheries resources. The organization facilitates access to fishing equipments and loans. Furthermore, they offer the opportunity to resolve inter-communal conflicts and to work more closely with the administration. The communities hope to use the organizations to communicate their grievances to the administration, or to get their needs and aspirations incorporated in social and economic development policies, especially with regards to access to socio-community infrastructures.

The expectations of the administration and projects

Projects and administrations have clearer objectives by initiating and guiding the way the environment is structured. Through organization, they seek to: (i) create channels to circulate their information; (ii) have organized spokespersons and improve the way they plan for their field interventions; (iii) collect the opinions of the fishing communities; (iv) mobilize the fishing communities and get them to show more commitment to the project; (v) improve the relationships between communities and the administration.

An analysis of these expectations shows that some are orchestrating the others to achieve some immediate objectives. Both parties can be very active. Organizations may be created but their functionality and sustainability will be limited or at best, depend on external support (Project or Administration). The absence of an objective analysis of the situation may inevitably lead to a deadlock. It will be necessary to get a relatively neutral mediator on board (a non-governmental organization for example) to guide the organization of the fishing communities. This mediator will be able to reconcile and harmonize the objectives and move “things” forward in an atmosphere of trust. The co-management project itself has a sub-

project on participation. A special analysis is therefore required to ensure that specific co-management objective is attained, and to avoid a situation where the decision-making mechanisms are compromised by conflicting objectives. Participation must be based on a set of principles and a predefined mission to facilitate its evaluation.

Setting an objective for participation

Participation extends beyond information sharing to the transfer of control over decision-making and resource allocation to stakeholders. An objective can be fixed on the basis of timing, resources and experiences that the countries have in a particular aspect of participation. Experience has shown that only two stages have been overcome in co-management. They are dissemination of information and consultation.

The transmission of information involves the regular provision of information to the fishing communities. A series of meetings have helped to sensitize and keep them informed. A lot of effort was made to translate the documents into the local languages for dissemination, (participatory co-management plan of Lake Selingue, local fisheries agreements in Bamanan, Mali). Radio and television were also used to pass on the messages. All these campaigns have helped to mobilize and arouse the interest of the fishing communities and to get them subscribe to the Project.

The communities were widely consulted during the implementation process. The flow of information is no longer one-sided. Information now flows in the two directions from the community to the administration and vice versa. SFLP National Coordinators, consultants and the Project Management Team are vehicles in the circulation of information. The preparation of the co-management plans (Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire), co-management agreements (Cameroon, Togo and Niger), local fisheries agreements (Mali), procedural guidelines (Burkina Faso) provided opportunity for the fishing communities in the camping sites and villages to discuss directly among themselves, and thereafter in co-management decision-making structures (fisheries council in Mali, and Management Committees and Specialized Commissions in Burkina Faso, District Committees in Ghana). A series of meetings, one-on-one discussions and workshops sustained the whole processes. The consultation has made it possible to:

- clarify the areas of compromise and negotiate some agreements;
- prepare co-management plans and local management strategies for inland fisheries with special emphasis on local specificities;
- build partnership based on trust and consensus between the fishing communities and the administrations, and with other stakeholders. Trust facilitates dialogue and consensus makes it possible for all the stakeholders to work together to achieve a common goal;
- empower the fishing communities (recognition of the right to take decisions on the water bodies) and mobilize them to contribute;
- facilitate the flow of information (sharing it among all the stakeholders);
- strengthen transparency and make them responsible for decision-making.

There remains two stages of participation left to cross. One is the control over decision-making and the second is the effective transfer of decision-making and the resources to stakeholders in compliance with the principle of participation. It must however be noted that the current environment (existence of decision-making bodies and co-management instruments) promotes continuity for the process.

Setting principles

▪ **Fishing communities take ownership of the co-management mechanisms:** Fishing communities are beginning to feel that the on-going co-management process “belongs” to them. They can be further encouraged along through the engagement of administrative and governmental authorities which encourages them to express their opinions and give them the desired attention. By relating with the decisions taken by mutual agreement, the communities commit themselves more easily to their implementation. Support is

provided to the fishing communities to empower them to play their roles and to take on the responsibilities they have been given (training in a variety of capacity building activities).

- **Transparency:** Transparency encourages and builds on trust and the feeling of belonging between all stakeholders. It is sustained through the circulation of reliable information between stakeholders, and by down-playing the top-down relationship between the fishing communities and the administration. Relationships based on dynamic collaboration and responsive partnership where everyone is important are thus established.

- **Inclusion:** By inviting all the different groups in a fishing community, all the knowledge and experience of the different parties are also being called upon. The platform for dialogue and resource mobilization in the community opens up and is directed at everyone without exception. The women and vulnerable groups whose views are systematically integrated in the process feel relevant and sometimes even become more zealous in playing the roles assigned to them than those who are in the forefront. In Burkina Faso, the creation of a committee of the wise made up of chiefs of the communities facilitated the participation of migrant fishermen in the communal life of the camping sites (settlement of differences, contribution towards socio-community infrastructures, and active participation of the surveillance committee). Relationships have improved to such an extent that the villagers have agreed to carve out patches of lands for the immigrants to cultivate millet and maize.

Moreover, the women who have been sensitized and involved in the co-management process, follow through on the application of management measures. They participate in erecting spawning grounds, and in planting trees to protect river banks by providing food for the fishermen. They refuse to buy small-sized fishes and thus force the fishermen to comply on the use of regulated fishing gears and techniques.

- **Sustainability:** the participatory process is built on a legal and legitimate framework. This promotes institutionalization. The Community Based Organizations (CBO) are formalized and the decision-making bodies as well as their extended structures (supervisory committees, vigilante committees, village fisheries or development committees) are legal and legitimate organs. The legitimacy of CBOs, in other words, their recognition by the administrative is for fishing committees an indication of the administration's approval of all the initiatives they are taking up within the context of co-management.

- **Constant Improvement:** Co-management and the participatory process are neither uniform nor linear. It is a constantly changing process that should be planned and evaluated to ensure that the set objectives are met, and that necessary adjustments are made. The improvement of the process implies not only information flow, but also training of stakeholders to empower them to play the roles and take on the responsibilities that their participation in co-management requires of them. Some informed and competent community leaders or delegated authorities are more productive for themselves and for the community.

Recognize the limits of participation

The participation process is faced with the following constraints:

P When the structures involved in co-management are not integrated into the existing institutional and policy network in the fishing communities (villages and camping sites), a parallel process is established to counteract the activities of the structures that are regarded as official. A good institutional appraisal at take-off (analysis of the power and authority relationships) can help to avoid this type of trap.

- The various stakeholders have different perceptions of the participation and co-management process. They have unrealistic expectations. If this difference is misunderstood or given little attention, it can become a source of conflict and lack of trust. People become suspicious resulting in the sabotage of the entire process. Continuous planning and evaluation of the process provides opportunity for dialogue and readjustments.
- Government officers may lack the political will. They are reluctant to authorize massive participation because they are afraid of losing their authority, power and influence. Once they allow participation, they are forced to answer, no longer to a distant authority, but to an immediate "authority" (the fishing communities and other stakeholders who are close-by) which has daily information on what is going on. It is therefore necessary to educate and apply the principles of good governance on all stakeholders.

- One of the major set backs in participation is insufficient communication and access to information for the stakeholders. The relationships between the administration and the fishing communities have always being characterized by one-sided information flow. Efforts should be made to ensure that information flows in the two directions, (administration - fishing communities) so that each side can have enough information at its disposal to form its opinion. Balancing access to information with information sharing helps to promote real sharing of power and authority. Adult literacy programmes for the fishing communities and availability of relevant information that they can access will limit their being under-informed.
- The excessive number of consultations (meetings and workshops) of the fishing communities leads to consultation fatigue which can derail the process. This feeling can be further aggravated by fact that they have time constraints, low capacity and insufficient funds, all of which tend to put pressure on the meetings forcing them to do a cost effective analysis, the result of which can be disastrous for the process. This can lead to the process being abandoned. The process method should allow each participant to evaluate within a limited period, the benefits he personally derives, and which the community as a whole derives form the process. A training programme to strengthen the capacities of fishing communities to work effectively should be integrated in the process.

Sometimes, these constraints are neither perceived nor acknowledged and the means of resolving them are non-existent, and the process eventually breaks down without one ever being able to determine the cause.

Lessons learnt

The participation of fishing communities has not yet been achieved. Rural communities are usually very wary and can take a long time to observe what is going on, during which period their presence is a type of passive resistance. They are only present to avoid conflicts with the administration. Their diligence and total commitment only come after the sincerity of the declarations and the extent to which the daily behaviors of the facilitators is consistent with what they say have been tested.

Participation is a process that is built slowly and gradually and limits (modest) must be set and there must be a gradual withdrawal process as the foundation becomes more solid in the community. Participation nurtures sincerity and trust. It is demanding and affects all the stakeholders. Sometimes apathy to the anticipated changes is higher on the part of the administration than on the part of the fishing community. The professionals (administrative and development officers) should be able to change their opinion, abandon their behaviours and practices, and come accept and entertain other points of view while simultaneously questioning their own.●

Integration fishing communities in local development

Jean Calvin Njock, Regional Coordinator of the Pilot Project on “Coastal fisheries co-management”

In the aftermath of the Structural Adjustment Programmes adopted in all the countries of the sub-region in the 80's and 90's spurred by the international community, these countries had to start implementing decentralization and poverty reduction policies (cf. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers), a large part of which was concentrated in grass-root communities, including small-scale fisheries stakeholders. In the fisheries sector, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)¹ also focused on the inclusion of the needs of coastal fishing communities in the definition of coastal management related policies. The PRSPs are incontestable reference documents in development planning for the countries of the sub-region. As for the CCRF, this document guides fisheries management policies. What these two instruments have in common is the participation of communities in development, including local level.

Set up since 1999, the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) has assisted some of its partner countries to integrate the fisheries sector (small-scale fisheries included) in the PRSP, while at the same time establishing linkages with the decentralization process and local development.

One of the expected outcomes of the Pilot Project on “Coastal fisheries co-management” being implemented by the SFLP in Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania, briefly referred to as PP2, is the participation of fishing communities in fisheries management and local development. In this article, the examples and lessons learnt from this initiative² have helped in illustrating our viewpoint on the integration of fishing communities in local development.

Capacity building and right of participation

In order to foster community participation, the capacity of grass root stakeholders must first be strengthened, failing which it will be very difficult to get them to participate in management and local development. Participatory appraisals within the communities enabled the identification of the training needs of the communities. Some of the training needs identified include functional literacy, organizational development, technical aspects (product processing and other income-generating activities). Sensitizing and keeping decision-makers informed is also vital. This was why campaigns were undertaken on different aspects related to fisheries management, poverty reduction and local development, to encourage the different stakeholders to come on board. As attested by Nancy Fraser³, the right to participate plays a pivotal role in the analysis of government policies. The inclusion of fishing communities in local development is of similar importance. To uphold social justice and ensure efficiency, this right has to be legally acknowledged for a refusal to do so could lead to frustrations of all kinds, and subsequently destabilize community institutions. This could in turn end up becoming a handicap to community-based stakeholders who would have been deprived the opportunity to participate in public debates on local development. Consequently, on the basis of existing laws, the PP2 trained participating countries on the legal process for ensuring the recognition of small-scale fishing communities as full fledged stakeholders in local management and development. This is in addition to SFLP support to integrate the fisheries sector in the PRSP, as earlier mentioned. The process for ensuring legal recognition of the rights of the communities to participate in fisheries management and local development was pursued to its logical conclusion in Guinea, and enshrined through the signing of a ministerial directive handing over the responsibility for coordinating the development activities of the fish-landing sites to local organizations known as the landing sites development committees, (Comités de développement des débarcadères – CDD). A similar process is ongoing in the three other countries involved in PP2. (Congo, Gabon and Mauritania).

Social opportunities encourage participation on local development

¹ FAO, 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

² Kourouma M., 2007. Rapport terminal du PP2 (Guinée) ; Bidoungou Boutchanga A., 2007. Rapport terminal du PP2 (Gabon) ; Sidi Moctar, O.M.A., 2007. Rapport terminal du PP2 (Mauritanie) ; Bagamboula E., 2007. Rapport terminal du PP2 (Congo)

³ Nancy Fraser, 2005. Qu'est-ce que la justice sociale ? Reconnaissance et distribution. Editions la découverte, politiques et société,

The combined actions used led to among others to the attainment of some results which caught our attention, and can be linked to local development. The emergence of new opportunities for livelihoods diversification by communities is one of these. Thus:

(i) In Congo, cassava farming has been observed thanks to the publicity given to improved cassava cuttings in the project intervention area, where 60 beneficiaries started community farms in addition to their existing vegetable gardens.; (ii) In Gabon, a community banana plantation has taken off in Ongam, the fishing communities of Lémé and Massamboué are into domestic livestock farming, while the Cap Estérias fishing communities are promoting vegetable crops; (iii) In Mauritania, mechanical and maintenance workshops, as well as the production of the non-prohibited fishing nets (traditional shoulder nets) to replace the single filament nets are being set up. The women are also developing domestic waste collection systems and catering and accommodation activities.

A lot of progress has also been made in the dialogue process started between Microfinance Institutions (MFI) and fishing communities. This process was aided by the access of some communities to the MFI's facilities although still to a limited extent for now. Thus in Congo, about half a dozen socio-professional organizations (SPO) have opened accounts with the MFI based in Pointe Noire. The same goes for Guinea where 36 individual stakeholders, including both men and women, and 43 groups have been granted "proximity" loans in Koba, Kindiady, Doyéma and Kamsar by "Crédit Rural de Guinée (CRG)", a microfinance institution.

The creation of community-based financial structures is also seen as a significant progress. On the initiative of the communities themselves, more or less formal financial structures have emerged in the form of the traditional savings schemes (esusu). With the support of the SFLP and the National AIDS Control Council, a community savings scheme took off in Base AGIP beach in Congo. It has about fifty members. In Guinea, a similar structure is being set up in the form of a special Mutual Credit Scheme for fishermen. This Mutual, called MECREPAG was able to mobilize 700 million Guinean Francs (1\$EU = 6050 GF) as at December 2006 from local resources and the voluntary contributions of fishermen. It must be noted that the MECREPAG is currently the major development tool of the National Union of small-scale fishermen in Guinea (Union nationale des pêcheurs artisans de Guinée -UNPAG).

The design of fisheries management and financing mechanisms is also a major innovation. In Guinea for example, the management of community infrastructure was handed over to several CCDs by the central administration. Such is the case of the CDDs of Kamsar, Koba, Koukoudé and very soon, Kanfarandé. These CDD have been able to open bank accounts and are now responsible for collecting the exploitation earnings and various other taxes on the landing sites in exchange for paying State taxes. As a decentralized community group sub-sector recognized by law, these CDDs benefit from public funds managed by the rural development committees (communautés rurales de développement - CRD). The CRDs have the powers to receive and guide the use of public funds derived from the decentralized budget and the interventions of development partners. On the basis of this provision, some CDDs, like the one in Boffa Centre, were able to benefit from financial allocation to purchase ten new fishing units for their cooperatives. The ministerial acts signed in favor of the fishing communities also grants the CDDs the right to earn fees for participating in fisheries surveillance if the information given by a fisherman member of the CDD leads to the arrest of a fraudulent industrial vessel, and if the vessel pays up its fine.

The development of the capital of coastal fishing communities is also an asset that deserves to be taken into consideration. The example of Congo can be used to illustrate this point. An interesting community initiative was observed in this country on the way HIV/AIDS prevention activities were implemented. The community-based stakeholders were involved in all the activities planned as part of community response to the national HIV/AIDS control strategy. On the basis of the positive results obtained by the Base Agip umbrella organization within the context of the HIV/AIDS prevention project financed by the NCAC (National Council for AIDS control), members of the fishing communities have become peer educators and providers of social communication services all along the coast of the area. This has further helped to raise the awareness of the 2374 persons affected by the pandemic on HIV/AIDS related problems. After that, 25 vulnerable households in Base Agip were provided support to diversify their livelihoods, thanks to the joint actions undertaken by the NCAC and the FAO (LDED⁴), thus illustrating a good example of partnership developed at local level through the Pilot Project.

⁴ Livelihoods diversification enterprises development

The promotion of responsible fisheries and environmental protection can also be considered as part of local development efforts. By promoting the use of best practices in the processing of fisheries products, the communities are applying the principle of responsible fisheries. In Guinea, the recommended use of fish smoking grills with normal mesh sizes means that small sized fish will not be available for sale in trading circles, and this helps to promote efforts to protect and preserve immature fish. In developing their surveillance capacities in this country, (a fact that discourages trawlers from fishing in the coastal zones reserved for small-scale fisheries), these small-scale fishermen were able to protect these zones which are also the spawning grounds (fish-breeding zones) and nurseries. The preparation of a strategy to support the communities' efforts at environmental protection was initiated in the four countries involved in the PP2. This is because the countries were aware of the fact that a healthy environment offers an added advantage to upgrade the land.

An improvement in the intercommunity relationship between the fishermen has also been noted as it helps to promote social cohesion. In Gabon, according to the fishermen, the frequency of conflicts linked to the occupation of fishing posts which was rather high before the PP2 took off, seems to have reduced. This has helped to promote a more peaceful climate in the fishing community. This is a significant outcome for local development in as much as nothing can prosper, whether at local level or any other level, in an environment that is prone to conflict.

In conclusion, we were able to confirm, according to the writing of Amartya Sen⁵, that "Social opportunities (education and health) promote economic participation. The opening up of the economy (participation in production and marketing) helps to improve the living standard of the individual and to make public funds available for social services. Thus, the fact that they have adequate community-based socio-economic services at all (schools, dispensaries, landing sites, etc.), is enough reason for individuals, including fishing communities, to take charge of their destiny, to provide mutual support, and to participate in local development. They are very eager to be seen as active contributors to development if they are given the opportunity to do so in the policies on decentralization, land management and local development. This is more so because they are aware, as recognized by Joseph Stiglitz⁶, that development aims to change the life of people, and not only to turn around the economy. •

⁵ Amartya Sen, 2000. Un nouveau modèle économique, développement, justice, liberté. Editions Odile Jacob.

⁶ Joseph Stiglitz, 2005. Un autre monde, contre le fatalisme du marché. Editions Fayard

The contribution of small-scale post harvest Fisheries to poverty reduction and food security

Joseph Ndenn, Regional Coordinator of the Pilot Project on
“Improved Livelihoods in post harvest fisheries”

The post-harvest fisheries sub-sector provides a diverse range of employment opportunities for many people, especially women and offers many “low entry barrier” labouring opportunities often taken up by the poor. As well as supporting the food security of millions of people in urban centres and remote locations, it is also a driver for local economic activity, supporting service sectors for post-harvest activities and other livelihood needs. The sub-sector also supports domestic, regional and international trade and is an important source of foreign exchange for many countries.

Key issues in post harvest fisheries

It is widely recognized that the post-harvest fisheries sub-sector is often very much under-represented in development policies and plans of most countries. This is due to post-harvest activities being poorly defined and differentiated from harvesting and culture activities, and because post-harvest activities are often much more integrated with activities in other sectors of the economy, such as general trade and transport.

Other reasons are that very little is actually known about the post-harvest sector, including the understanding of poverty within it, or that knowledge is rarely brought together in a systematic way and used in formal planning processes. Without a systematic and informed approach to the sector it is difficult to respond to the difficulties that the sector faces. This situation is changing as the importance of the sector is being realized through its contribution to international trade and the resultant foreign exchange that this trade generates. Domestic food security issues are also raising awareness of the sector’s importance.

Post-harvest fish losses e.g. the discarding of fish because of quality deterioration or lack of market access, occur at many stages of the distribution chain from capture to consumption. Such losses have long been a concern of development practitioners working at global, national and local levels who wish to improve the livelihoods of fishermen, processors and traders and the contribution fish makes to food security. What makes the problem of fish loss particularly worrying is that it occurs against a backdrop of dwindling or static supplies of fish from wild capture fisheries.

One of the major constraints to loss reduction faced by policy makers, planners and other development practitioners in many countries is the lack of information on the cause and effects of fish losses, who is particularly effected, when losses occur and how they are changing over time

The SFLP identified that organizational capacity and management skills of poor post-harvest stakeholders were low and that high prevailing illiteracy rate hinders their ability to effectively participate in decision making processes. They have restricted access to basic services and a limited ability to establish sustainable partnerships with public and private service providers and NGOs, to organize themselves into pressure groups in defence of their interests.

The living and working conditions of the fishing communities and post harvest operators make them vulnerable to disease. Poor waste disposal practices from post-harvest and domestic activities and poor planning of settlements create environmental sanitation problems which in turn lead to health and hygiene problems. The situation is often compounded by poor access to health services, lack of potable water and sanitary facilities.

The SFLP also identified post harvest communities are restricted because of weak legal and institutional issues related to the micro finance environment, to fish supply and trade barriers such as informal taxation and market transparency, access to quality of socio-economic infrastructure, access to land, security at sites where post-harvest activities take place and the participation of women in decision making.

Access to micro-finance is essential to the good management and diversification of post-harvest activities in order to improve livelihoods. Inadequate access to credit due to reluctance of formal credit institutions to

deal with fishing communities and the poor uptake of microfinance by the poorest and vulnerable post-harvest stakeholders aggravate the situation which is already complicated by high interest rates, the stakeholders' lack of collateral, lack of information, lack of representative bodies, and their perception as a high risk market (SFLP 2004).

Within communities there is a high level of awareness of problems caused by degradation of the aquatic and terrestrial natural resource base on which post-harvest stakeholders depend. Furthermore, poor natural resource management is recognised as an underlying cause of conflict amongst resource users.

The Project

The aim of the SFLP has been to help fishing communities improve their livelihoods by increasing human and social capital, by working towards a sustainable use of aquatic resources and the development of an adequate institutional and policy environment that takes into account the aspirations of these communities. The programme has been operationalised through a series of institutional support and community projects and three major pilot projects.

One of the three pilot projects, the PP3, was implemented in Cameroon, Chad, Gambia and Senegal on the theme "Livelihood improvements within the post-harvest artisanal fisheries sub-sector". It took a primarily non-technical focus in coming to terms with the development constraints and the consideration of the available opportunities for post harvest fisheries sub-sector which is reflected in its goal and purpose.

The goal of PP3 is to reduce poverty amongst the sector's post-harvest stakeholders by developing policies and institutions for improved sustainable livelihoods and food security.

Its purpose is to improve relevant policies, institutions and processes by enhancing the capacities of the sector's post-harvest stakeholders, developing partnerships and promoting responsible use of resources.

In order to achieve its purpose the PP3 focussed on a number of developmental issues:

- Post-harvest fish loss assessment;
- Development of post-harvest overviews
- Capacity building in organisational development and responsible fish utilisation;
- Strategies for improving environmental health and sanitation;
- Participatory legal and institutional frameworks;
- Mechanisms and strategies identified for improved microfinance institutions;
- Mechanisms to improve effective participation in resources management.

PP3 and CCRF

As reflected in the goal, purpose and activities, the PP3 has worked to create an enabling environment by improving skills, institutions, participation in the decision making and management process, and access to services and technology. It has supported post-harvest operators so that they can better articulate their needs and aspirations, improve the benefits from post-harvest activities and achieve improvements in their livelihoods. To all intents and purpose, the PP3 has promoted the implementation of CCRF Article 4.1 and 6.16.

Outcomes

The PP3 has produced several important outcomes during the past 2-3 years of implementing the project in the four countries.

Following are few examples:

▪ Post harvest loss assessment

The PP3 loss assessment initiative has helped a cadre of public sector stakeholders to develop and apply skills with which they can understand post-harvest fish losses, understand the post-harvest sector, as well as

understand who the poor are in the sector and engage with them in a participatory way. As a result, awareness has been raised amongst public sector and post-harvest operators of the existence and effects of post-harvest fish losses.

- **Human capacity building of pilot project stakeholders**

Articles of CCRF promoted by PP3

Article 4.1...All members and non-members of FAO, fishing entities and relevant sub-regional, regional and global organizations, whether governmental or nongovernmental, and all persons concerned with the conservation, management and utilization of fisheries resources and trade in fish and fishery products should collaborate in the fulfilment and implementation of the objectives and principles contained in this Code.

Article 6.18 Recognizing the important contributions of artisanal and small-scale fisheries to employment, income and food security, States should appropriately protect the rights of fishers and fish workers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction.

The PP3 provided post harvest stakeholders with training that has strengthened their capacity to manage their fish micro-enterprises and alternative income generating activities enabling them have a better control of their incomes. For example, the training enabled post harvest fisheries stakeholders of Soukouta in Senegal improve their capacity of negotiation in marketing of fish products resulting in increasing their gains from their trade.

- **Responsible fish utilization**

The post harvest fisheries stakeholders' capacity to enhance the value added to artisanal fish products has been reinforced. This is marked by improvements in the awareness of post harvest stakeholders of the need to produce quality products and a reduction in the use of harmful substances in fish products.

In Chad, the empowerment of post harvest operators in improved and responsible utilisation of artisanal fish catches has made them gain a better control over their revenues from marketing fish due to the advantages offered to them by the improved preservation techniques enabling them time to sell at attractive prices.

Improvements in human capital assets were complemented by improved access to better fish handling and processing equipment and

techniques to facilitate the production of improved quality products and a reduction in labour associated with traditional fish processing.

- **Institutional capacity building of post harvest fisheries operators**

The PP3 has led to an emergence of organised and functional organisations with the improvements in the capacities of the existing and newly formed associations to run and manage their associations. The project has improved equity in participation and decision-making by improving the participation of women and vulnerable post harvest fisheries groups in decision and policy making processes.

Observable indicators are to be found for example in Chad, with the presence of women in the executive of the savings and credit schemes and the increased participation of the young in the surveillance committees of the water bodies. The project's targeting of the stakeholders who are more vulnerable has led to improvements in the access to the organisations and the social and economic inclusion of the poor. The frequently excluded groups of post harvest fisheries operators have in so doing been given the opportunity to make their needs and interest known and taken into account in the local development process.

In The Gambia, fish off loaders and oyster harvesters identified as the poorest post harvest operator groups had never been members of any professional organisation and had no institutional framework for reflecting and consultations on their professions had organised themselves and set up their own registered trade association and went on to be members of the mixed post harvest fisheries trade association at the community level. Changes in national policy have also been brought about in The Gambia by the emergence of post harvest fisheries apex organisations empowering post harvest operators to interact in policy and decision making process.

Post harvest fisheries operators have been assisted to make significant improvements in the care and management of community-owned equipment and infrastructure. In Senegal, new skills and practices have been imparted on post harvest fisheries stakeholders of Bossingkang in Senegal for the sustainable maintenance of their physical assets such as transport boat, processing equipment and infrastructure. The

existence of a trained management committee for these and the possibility for it to render account in front of the stakeholders involving them in the decision-making process are favourable conditions for assuring the proper running and care of the facilities.

In Cameroon, post harvest operators in Tibati have been supported to put in place an effective system of co-management for the fish marketing hall involving the community and Tibati Municipal Council which has led to a better negotiation of taxes and dues payable to the Council by post harvest operators.

The project has veritably succeeded in empowering post harvest fisheries operators and has significantly improved the visibility of post harvest fisheries in the four countries. At the micro and meso levels, poor socio-professional groups such as fish off loaders, fish cleaners and oyster harvesters in The Gambia and boat haulers, shell fish hullers, fish carriers, push cart operators and old and very young men and women were better organised and have been mainstreamed in local development process. With the facilitation of the project, post harvest stakeholders engaged with and mobilised different partners. This has led to the greater inclusion of post harvest issues in local government development plans and the greater involvement of development partners in post harvest issues.

▪ **Strategies for improving environmental health and sanitation**

The heightened awareness and mobilisation that the strategy formulation process implemented by the PP3 generated in the communities has improved waste disposal and product handling practices in the pilot project intervention sites. Implementation of the strategy in The Gambia will go a long way to providing a lasting solution to the problem of environmental health and sanitation in the fish landing and processing sites. The involvement of the post harvest operators, local and central government authorities provides good opportunities for the sustainable management and care of the immediate surroundings of post harvest fisheries activities providing favourable conditions for good house-keeping in the processing sites and hence the production of safe and high quality fish products and a healthier working environment.

The observed improvements in the abilities of post harvest fishers to produce quality fish products in The Gambia and Chad are also a result of the cleaner environments around the processing sites.

In Chad, as a result of the process, post harvest fisheries stakeholders of the project sites of Mitteriné, Mahada, Roumaye, Kassalaré and Djoumras have been demanding and seeking assistance for potable water facilities for their villages, being enlightened about the unclean and unsafe state of their water.

▪ **Legal and institutional framework and the fisheries post harvest overviews**

The Fisheries Post Harvest Overviews (PHO) were produced to respond to the need for improved knowledge on the sector, for informing policy makers on the sub-sector and for improving its profile in general so that it may be accorded more attention in countries' public policies and development planning. At macro level, the (PHO) process in the countries has contributed much in informing and influencing the policy framework in favour of post harvest fisheries. The PHO, an up-to-date compilation of vital information on the sub-sector and its importance was disseminated to national level policy makers by means of an informing and influencing strategy. This led to important changes in national policy in favour of poor post harvest fisheries stakeholders. For instance, in Chad, Senegal and The Gambia, the PHO was used in the formulation of the current PRSP documents and has been instrumental promoting a poverty focus in development plans for the sub-sector.

▪ **Improved micro finance for post harvest fisheries**

Pilot credit and savings schemes launched in 2006 involved the project providing financial assistance in the form of a capital grant delivered to the post harvest fishers' organisations that in turn provided money to individuals on a low interest rate.

The significant features of the scheme include:

- A capital grant given directly to the fishers organisation, shared and revolving amongst project target groups with technical assistance of a local micro finance institution;
- Priority given to women post harvest operators and marginalised groups identified from the gender studies commissioned by the pilot project;
- The beneficiaries are sensitised to a savings culture;
- Guarantee or collateral of individual is derived from the social capital provided by being a member of an association;
- Disbursement and collection of payment from groups, the administration and management are provided by local micro finance institutions;
- The money loaned to individuals serves to boost their working capital;
- Loan reimbursement rates being closely monitored have as a result been high.

The scheme provided the project with the opportunity to learn ways of promoting the economic empowerment of the target post harvest operators leading to an increase and sustenance of their livelihoods. By establishing pro-poor and gender sensitive micro-finance services in the post harvest sector, one of the most important factors causing vulnerability in the fisheries communities was addressed.

A few examples of the lessons learned are:

- Identification and targeting are necessary to ensure that the poor, marginalised and credit needy operators are not left out.
- Capacity building is necessary for inculcating savings culture and micro enterprise management into operators.
- Efforts made in getting micro finance institutions to get to know the post harvest fisheries sub sector and its stakeholders should be promoted since they may lead to an improved access to funds by post harvest operators.

Conclusion

The PP3 has undertaken activities and generated outcomes that have contributed to the CCRF Objectives:

- Multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach to development
- Promoting food security (quality, safety, nutritional needs)
- Recognizing the need for capacity building at all levels
- Promoting research for sustainable development and the use of traditional knowledge
- Promoting participation in decision making, policy and legal processes
- Promoting safe, healthy and fair working and living conditions
- Responsible fish utilisation
- Social and economic importance of post-harvest fisheries. •

Gender and development of the fisheries sector

Katrien Holvoet, Gender and Organisational Development Officer (RSU/SFLP), Colette Kaboré, Juliette Assienan and Chantal Gnimadi, SFLP Consultants

The general objective of community development policies is to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty. Beyond the lack of income and financial resources, this poverty also includes the concept of inequality of access and control of material and non-material resources: rights, political expression, employment, information, access to services, infrastructure and natural resources. Addressing and correcting these inequalities between women and men is an integral part of community development policies and strategies in the fisheries sector.

Table 1: Gender issues status observed in the organizational profiles at the start of the process

Gender issue level	Status at the start of the process
Participation	The contributions of women during meetings are usually less appreciated by men (their higher illiteracy level contributes a lot to this situation) The membership of the associations is dominated by men The less privileged socio-economic groups participate less in the activities of the associations The women have less time to participate in the activities of the associations
Human asset	The illiteracy rate is higher among women Women have less experience in management and public speaking than men
Decision-taking	Social and cultural norms encourage men to take decisions in public Men have more to say on who participates in training sessions Men are better represented in management bodies
Information and communication	Men dominate access and control of information and communication. This is often linked to the inequalities in education and gender issues in participation. The inequality in terms of information sharing is often a source of friction, and limits the opportunity for equal participation in decision-making. Women have less access to the media and information in general because of their limited relaxation time
Physical asset	Many more men's organizations have their statutes; IR: action plans; assets (offices, infrastructure) than women's organizations, and/or are much more involved in the management of community infrastructures. Men's associations benefited from more technical training support than women's associations
Financial asset	Women's associations usually have greater access to microfinance structures and usually record better repayment rates

The Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) therefore developed a process of streamlining gender issues by interlocking actions at micro, meso and macro levels (please see table 2) through its Community, Institutional support and Pilot projects. The process starts at community level with a gender analysis of the livelihoods of the community, with special emphasis on institutions and the vulnerability context. The unequal division between men and women in access, control and participation in decision-making are visualized in the gender profiles restituted to the community¹.

Table 2: Interventions resulting from the Sélingué (Mali) gender analysis

Level	Actors	Options for change	Expected outcomes
Macro	Ministry of fisheries and livestock	Stipulate in policies and programmes that gender analysis should be done before implementing co-management agreements Insist on the monitoring of indicators the impact of policies, institutions and processes on gender	The impact of gender on newly created co-management institutions is well known, addressed and monitored.
	Government Agencies for international development	Co-management committees should agree to be more flexible by allowing migrant fishers to be represented	Diversification alternatives for those who are negatively affected by the co-management measures are supported, for example women fish processors
	Private sector	Define objectives and norms for the participation of women in co-management committees and the institutions concerned. Encourage the integration of co-management institutions in local development	Migrant fishers are represented in co-management institutions
Meso	Women's NGO and Organisations	Financing of local development includes support for livelihoods diversification for women fish-processors and youths, taking into consideration their specific vulnerabilities.	Access of women (and men) to Micro finance services are increased
	Local government (social services, health, education)	Undertake activities that aim at freeing women to participate in discussions Regular monitoring of co-management institutions to determine if women participate, and to check the impact of gender on institutional changes	Fishing communities are better integrated in local development
	Regional Councils	Assist co-management institutions in the practical aspects of gender like financing and transportation Make micro finance services aware of gender issues	Women's capacity are strengthened for participation in co-management institutions
Micro	Community-based organisations	Participate more in the co-management institutions to establish linkages with local development and make the needs of fishing communities known	Savings and funds management skills are strengthened at household level
	Households	Contribute to local taxes in order to enjoy the right to participate in decision-making on local development. Strengthen local traditional savings schemes (essus) as an entry point to Microfinance systems	The availability of local services in education, health and access to drinking water is improved in fishing communities

Making reference to some of the SFLP experience in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, this article shows how the decisions of community-based organizations play a vital role in the change process, impact the change process towards a more equity men/women relationships in households, communities, institutions, and the society at large. More in-depth analyses were conducted on such issues as illiteracy, access to information, marketing and supply chains and neighborhood financial services. Table 1 summarizes the gender issue status observed in the organizations profiles prepared in the different countries² at the beginning of the exercise.

In Mali³, the gender analysis conducted in two fishing communities along Lake Sélingué enabled stakeholders in the co-management process at different levels to formulate as

¹ In Congo, Burkina Faso and Mali, the restitution was made using a forum theatre tool.

² Gender issues identified in the organizational gender profile of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal

³ See the report of the gender analysis study and the outline of a gender strategy in Mali (*Rapport d'étude analyse genre et ébauche d'une stratégie genre au Mali*), Howard Charlotte ; 2006

presented below, a set of interlocked interventions that were expected to facilitate the achievement of the following expected outcomes (Table 2).

Burkina Faso⁴: An action plan on gender implemented as part of the co-management process

Institutional support to the implementation of the organizational gender action plan prepared in Bagré Chantier by 6 women's organizations and 4 men's organizations in 2004 is integrated in the Pilot Project⁵. The organizational gender analysis revealed the significant differences between men and women in (i) access to capital (human, financial, natural and social capital), (ii) participation in the power structure, and (iii) the control of the resources, all of which need to be addressed in order to guarantee sustainable and equitable community development. To remedy this situation, the facilitation of the power-sharing change processes by a resource person in social communication, and information-sharing made it possible for the expert in question to intervene in order to reduce the friction generated by the process. It also helped in guiding the different stakeholders towards a compromise/agreement that was acceptable to all parties concerned. In the General Assembly, the fishing community committed itself to working directly on the strategic areas and to prepare a gender-driven action plan based on the realities of their immediate environment. An impact study documented the results of this experience after twelve months of implementation. The SFLP financed other activities like adult education and facilitated access to micro finance facilities⁶ in the same community. Social dialogue was of vital importance in the implementation of this gender action plan and a resource person was present on the field to provide back up to the organizations in the implementation of the project, and to ensure that dialogue is maintained between the groups and communities and between the communities and the different partners. The following specific impacts were noted:

- **Better climate of trust and cooperation**

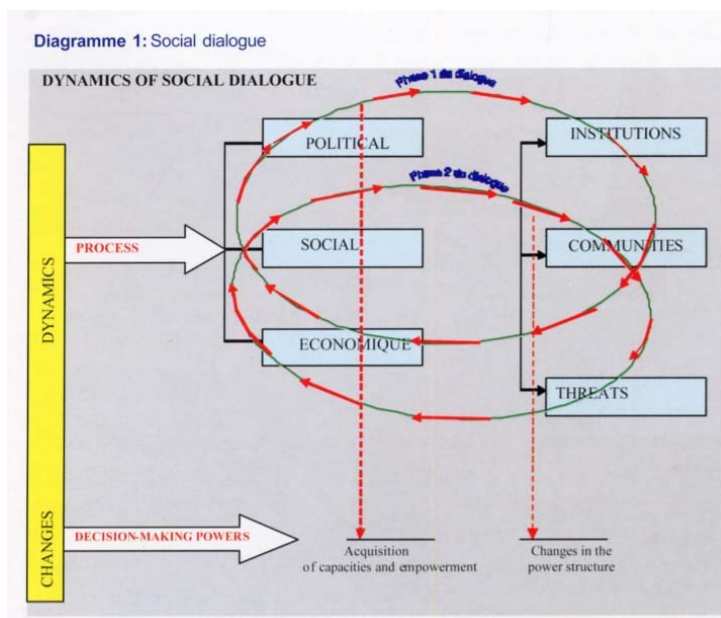
within the community, with such indicators as the institution of intra- and inter-organizational meetings which have enabled the stakeholders to get to know each other better, and to realize that they were fighting on the same side in the war; regular consultation between all parties to discuss some sensitive issues; the gradual correction of the negative impression that the fishermen have about fish mongers and vice versa, and a significant improvement in information flow within and between the fishing communities and the administration.

- **Stronger internal cohesion** leading to more engagement in community activities with massive participation of stakeholders in community initiatives unlike before (the exercise) when the vision was mainly individualistic; the reduction of conflicts and the increased priority given to negotiations between associations, communities and services.

▪ **Increased dynamism** of community organizations (9/11)

- **Increased knowledge by all stakeholders** on such topics as (i) health; (ii) nutrition; (iii) the participation of women and vulnerable groups in the management of the waterbody, and (iv) transparency in the management of the organizations. The knowledge acquired have among others, facilitated information exchange on the different experiences and systems developed to improve the repayment of credits, the sanitary situation in households, book-keeping on activities or a notebook to record credit sales.

- **Creation of a union of women fish-processors**, consultation instituted among fish-processors organizations, and **an agreement reached on access to fish catches and the opening up of fish mongering activities for women:** institution of tacit agreements between the Bakacow fishermen's groups and women



⁴ The contribution of Mrs Colette Kaboré, Gender Consultant

⁵ Improvement of the policy and institutional environment for the development of inland fisheries co-management systems in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana et Mali

⁶ Funding at the end of 2005 of a community project titled "Support in organizing a functional adult education programme for the fishing communities of Bagré"

fish-processors' groups to guarantee them access for fish processors to the fish, increased access of women fish-processors to market information and more participation of women fish mongers in the day to day activities of the fisheries sub-sector. Also a stronger agreement reached with fishermen on the reduction of bad fishing practices.

The dynamics of power change and changes in terms of empowerment are presented in diagram 1. Two cycles of dialogue were identified: (i) a first cycle which introduces opportunities for economic changes in marketing at local, meso and macro levels; (ii) a second cycle which influences the way community organizations do things, and the relationships at household level. The building up of political and social capacities ensures sustainability for economic capacity building.

The objectives of the gender action plans of the community organizations of Gbégbéssou (Côte d'Ivoire)

- To build up the organizational and technical capacities of existing organizations and cooperatives
- To set up a sustainable operation and financing system that will reduce gender vulnerabilities and gender inequities.
- To promote group marketing of fisheries products
- To raise awareness of the community on savings and gender inequities
- To mobilize partners (stakeholders at meso level) and to arouse their interest in how gender issues affect the fishing community.

Côte d'Ivoire, the interaction between the stakeholders at meso and micro levels⁷

A gender analysis (conducted on the Gbégbéssou fishing community on Lake Kossou in Côte d'Ivoire, which led to the elaboration of an action plan aimed at reducing gender inequity and the vulnerability of women and the poor. The analysis made it possible to observe that institutions (General Advisory body, MFI, government support structures) know very little about the peculiarities of fishing communities, and that there is a lack of synergy and coordination in the interventions of the different institutions. Interlocking actions at micro and meso levels was therefore given special attention.

Information, a precious resource

During the course of implementing the gender action plan, special attention was given to informing and sensitizing all stakeholders (men and women) at the micro and meso levels (Bouaflé Department). Equitable access to information and communication should be seen as a central theme of the strategy. This helped to promote a closer relationship among the institutions of fishing communities.

The interest that these institutions showed on the concerns of the fishing communities increased. Cooperation arrangements were established between the Gbégbéssou community and COOPEC (Micro finance) institutions, the General Council (the highest authority of the Department), the Fisheries Bureau (decentralized unit at departmental level), ANADER (a national agricultural extension service). The Fisheries Bureau reduced some taxes by fifty percent. The General Council has already injected over 4 million fcfa into the local development fund (Fonds de développement de Gbégbéssou). L'ANADER has signed a memorandum of understanding to support the organizations to diversify their activities. COOPEC is the institution hosting the local development fund and is also expected to receive the savings of the organizations and their members. It is ready to contribute to female entrepreneurship through AFISEF, one of its facilities. All the interest that is being shown in fishing communities are the result of the communication strategy and lobbying efforts undertaken in the course of implementing the gender action plan. The forum for social dialogue instituted through the periodic meetings between the different organizations, the marketing review committee, and the development fund committee all combined to improve social cohesion. Given the often

Table 4: Interventions resulting from the gender analysis

Level	Stakeholder	Options for change	Expected outcomes
Macro	Fisheries Department - European Union	Design of a pilot programme for equitable support for shrimps export development (poverty reduction, gender promotion and local development)	More equitable access of stakeholders in the sub-sector to opportunities for generating higher income through the inclusion in the export segment and the diversification of sources of income
	NGO and Technical services (training of stakeholders (men and women) in the sub-sector on compliance with the hygiene and quality standards)	Equitable participation of stakeholders (men and women) of the sub-sector in trainings on the techniques and new technologies	More equitable access of stakeholders of the shrimp export sub-sector in the communities to the support being provided by the Fisheries Department with the assistance of the European Union for the development of the shrimp export sub-sector and IGA diversification.
Meso	NGO and Technical services (setting up of quality control structures for the products of the shrimp export sub-sector)	Promotion of equitable access to the equipment and credit in support to shrimp hygiene quality improvement, equipment and to financing of IGA diversification projects.	More equitable access/control of one and all to training, technology, credit, equipment and community hygiene and sanitation infrastructure, and to the financing opportunities of other IGA depending on the interests and practical and strategic needs of men and women.
	Quality control committees	Equitable participation of the representatives of both men and women's organizations of the sub-sector in the activities and decisions of the product quality control committees.	More equitable access of women and men to quality control committees.
Micro	Local authorities, fishermen and women shrimp processors of fresh and smoked shrimps and the SPO of the sub-sector	Support to the equitable representation of women among the stakeholders of the sub-sector to training and in the committee to guarantee quality monitoring and control	

⁷ Contribution of Assienan Juliette, Consultant

conflicting interests of the different fisheries actors, it is very important to continue this process of dialogue to ensure more peaceful co-existence and social cohesion. The interlocking actions at micro and meso levels are summarized in table 3.

Benin: Interaction with the macro level

The gender analyses conducted in 8 villages on 4 different waterbodies in southern Benin have revealed the fact that fisheries and shrimp marketing are the primary source of revenue of both women and men. The women dominate the local/domestic shrimp market while the men are more involved in the modern collectors market industry meant for exportation.

Table 3: Interventions resulting from the gender analysis done in Gbégbèssou (Côte d'Ivoire)

Level	Stakeholders	Options for change	Expected outcomes
Macro	ANADER	To support gender mainstreaming and gender analysis based on the decentralized and devolved services	The co-management plan and the gender-sensitive texts and documents promote equity.
	Pilot Project management team	Conduct a gender analysis and make the documents governing the co-management structure gender-sensitive.	More transparency and sharing of information originating from the meso level, fishing organizations galvanized and motivated
Meso	COOPEC	Develop a gender-balanced communication strategy	A common vision, built on consensus, involving all the socio-economic groups of the community.
	Fisheries Bureau	Finance local development by supporting the cooperation between the MFI and the fishermen's and women fish-processor's organization.	Women's capacity strengthened and they participate in decision-making for local development.
	ANADER devolved service	Support the access of women to production assets	
		Institute a pro-poor tax policy backed by microfinance facilities to finance group marketing activities thereby improving their economic status	
Micro		Train women in entrepreneurship skills (MFI)	
	Traditional authorities	Share information on the tax agreements	
	The Gbégbèssou development Fund management committee and associations	Contribute to the discussions of the Brainstorming committee to integrate issues that are of interest to women	

In an environment where the shrimp export chain has become very attractive because of the possibilities of higher income it offers, where competition is keen among stakeholders, and where women and the poor are marginalized, the stakeholders in the sub-sector (men and women) have expressed interest in the training and equipment programmes being planned by the Fisheries Department. The aim of the training is to ensure sufficient respect for the hygiene standards for fisheries and shrimp processing with a view to promoting the products' export. The wealthiest groups in this sub-sector, mainly comprising men, have a better chance of applying the new rules on hygiene for shrimps, equipment, personal and environmental hygiene, because they earn a higher income and have more capital, more productive equipment, a better social status, and a means of transportation. They also have more control over the declining fisheries resources, community

infrastructures and the socio-professional organizations of the sector. The women have a greater workload and are more marginalized because they are mostly illiterate and because of the rigid way work in the sub-sector has been divided between men and women.

The interlocking activities contained in the gender action plans as part of the national initiative to promote the shrimps sub-sector in Benin were first undertaken at the meso and macro stakeholder levels. To date, women participate alongside men in the internal control committees, but the review of the changes in their access to training and equipment distributed by the development support institutions of the shrimp export sub-sector have not yet been undertaken.

Senegal: monitoring changes and informing decision-makers⁸

The interlocking actions used in the preparation of gender action plans and gender strategies have led to a higher level of cooperation and interaction between the different levels. The ideal situation would be for information exchange to be intensified between the three levels. This will make it easier to guide the process and will enable stakeholders to lobby on the basis of the results. Gender analysis as practiced by the SFLP makes it possible to obtain a very clear picture of the gender situation in villages, within organizations and in households (targeted in different socio-economic classes). In Senegal, the household level was included in the participatory monitoring exercise and the information collected (over the two years of implementation of Pilot Project 3), offer the possibility of informing the stakeholders at the meso and macro levels in a more detailed manner about the changes in terms of vulnerability and poverty reduction. The monitoring provides the arguments required by the decision makers to justify the policy and institutional changes and the replication of the experiences in other communities, while however noting that such replication must still be preceded by an analysis.●

⁸ Contribution of Mrs Nogyaye Diop, Consultant

Involvement of communities in participatory monitoring and evaluation

The SFLP methodological approach

Kpakpo Adote, Monitoring Officer, RSU/SFLP

Monitoring and evaluation is one of the major concerns of the donors' community. The need to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of activities has always been considered as a very important part of ensuring the efficient use of the funds allocated for Projects and Programmes.

Apart from this purely conventional objective of accountability, monitoring and evaluation is being used more and more to promote the internal learning process and improve the implementation of activities. It is also being more and more

acknowledged that the best results are only obtained if this learning process is done in a collective manner with the different stakeholders as part and parcel of the participatory monitoring and evaluation process. However, this presents quite a lot of challenges, some of which are:

- how to make monitoring and evaluation more participatory to ensure a high level of involvement of the different stakeholders concerned, most especially, the communities;
- to what extent can the participation of the different groups influence the choice of what should be monitored and evaluated?
- what methods are applicable, and in what context.

The SFLP was confronted with these questions. In fact, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach that is part of its design and implementation poses the major challenge of how to incorporate some of its major principles in the methodology of the monitoring and evaluation process - that the monitoring and evaluation system should be participatory and people-centred. These principles require that beneficiaries and especially the poorest groups should be the major stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process. The monitoring and evaluation itself should focus on the extent to which the livelihoods of the fisherfolk have been taken into consideration and improved upon.

Several initiatives were undertaken specifically to help the National Coordinating Units (NCU's) and fishing communities to design a monitoring and evaluation system whose objective will be to determine the changes expected through the implementation of community projects. These initiatives were also extended to the first Pilot Project to be implemented (Co management in inland fisheries co-management in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali). However, the results were on the whole very limited and the monitoring, which is considered as a source of information on the changes linked directly or indirectly to the intervention of the Programme continued to be a weak link.

This was why, when the time came to implement Pilot projects 2 and 3¹, one of the major concerns of the Programme was the elaboration of an appropriate methodology for the definition and implementation of a participatory monitoring and evaluation system, with a view to ensuring an accurate documentation of the change process in the eight countries involved.

Process for setting up the participatory monitoring and evaluation: key stages

This process is based on the lessons learned from the monitoring and evaluation system set up as part of the Community Projects and Pilot Project 1.

The preliminary stages

This is not a formal stage of the process, but made it possible to obtain the elements that were used in designing and implementing the participatory monitoring and evaluation system.

¹ Pilot Project 2 : "Participatory coastal fisheries management" in Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania
Pilot Project 3 : "Small-scale fisheries post harvest sector" in The Gambia, Senegal, Chad and Cameroon

- **Poverty Profiles:** these were implemented with a view to conducting a participatory evaluation of poverty in the countries participating in the Pilot Projects as part of the project formulation phase. This series of activities made it possible to obtain a general overview of poverty in small-scale fishing communities, the causes of poverty, marginalized groups, and development opportunities.
- **Stakeholders' Analysis:** this series of activities was basically aimed at identifying and characterizing the different stakeholders in the intervention zones of the countries, the linkages between them and their interests and influence on the objectives of the Pilot Projects. The series of stakeholders' analysis to a large extent helped the management teams of the two Pilot Projects to identify the stakeholders that are likely to be taken into consideration, both as stakeholders and targets in the participatory monitoring and evaluation process.
- **The baselines:** these were set up as a support to the participatory monitoring and evaluation process, to serve as a basis for the assessment of the changes brought about by the activities undertaken on the livelihoods of fishing communities in the intervention zones of Pilot Projects 2 and 3. They were conducted with the assistance of the communities and validated by them as well. The poverty profiles were a source of relevant data that proved useful in elaborating the baselines.

Formal stages in setting up the participatory monitoring and evaluation process

Stage 1: Specification of areas of change and the major indicators of each country

This basically involved the organization of participatory meetings in each country, on the initiative of the management teams. This exercise made it possible to analyze and agree upon, in consultation with the representatives of the communities, the livelihoods changes that were likely to occur as a result of implementing the Pilot Project activities. Some simple indicators for measuring these changes were also specified.

Stage 2: Elaboration and validation of the monitoring chart

On the basis of the results obtained in the first stage, the RSU provided support to the management teams and national Monitoring focal points recruited as part of the Pilot Projects implementation to prepare a specific monitoring chart for each country to support the data collection process. This chart was designed in such a way that the linkages between the major areas of change of the SFLP and those retained in the different countries were clearly shown.

The monitoring chart were validated in each country during a series of workshops facilitated mainly in the local languages. They also served as a framework for training the stakeholders concerned on the participatory monitoring and evaluation tools and techniques. They include:

The representatives of communities: 2 to 3 persons chosen by the community based on criteria previously defined by they themselves (literacy level, availability, gender, interest in participatory monitoring, etc..) in the different areas the Pilot Projects will intervene in, to set up Community Monitoring Committees (CMC).

The representatives of local decentralized administrative services, especially those intervening in the fisheries sector and Non Governmental Organizations operating in the zones of intervention of the Pilot Projects.

Glimpse of the monitoring chart of Congo in relation to a major area of change in the SFLP

Major areas of change	Areas of change	Indicators	Interlocutors	Target groups	Questions
Institutions and processes put in place and functioning at micro level to participate in the management of the resources and in local development.	- Community spirit is strengthened through the emergence of socio-professional organizations (SPOs)	- The number and types of SPOs created and functioning in fishing villages/camping sites - Number of Local Development Committees (LDCs) set up and functioning	Community Monitoring Committees (CMC)	SPOs LDCs	- How and what types of SPOs exist and are registered with the administration? - How are the different groups represented? (men/women/ migrant fishers) in the different structures? - What is the functioning level of these different structures (number of meetings, major decisions taken and how are they applied)?
	- Women are strongly represented in the SPOs	- The level of representation of (men/women/migrant fishers) in the SPOs and LDCs of the different groups - The participation level of women in the decision-making bodies of the associations			- What changes linked to the emergence of these structures have occurred?
	- Fishing communities participate actively in the management of the resources and in local development	- Participation level of fishing communities in the different stages of the local development process			- What are the consultative/coordination/integration structures that have been set up by the communities to promote development in the communities?

Stage 3: Implementation of the data collection and analysis mechanism

The data collection and analysis mechanism that was put in place is directly linked to following intervention phases:

- Information collection by the Community Monitoring Committees (CMC): this has to do with information on the areas of change on the monitoring chart that were agreed upon as priority issues by the fishing communities during the validation workshop. The CMCs in the different countries organize and collect data from members of the community periodically using the tools and techniques that had previously been initiated in, and which they fine-tuned with the support of Monitoring Focal Points: this concerns the filling of monitoring forms, interview guides, community monitoring notebook, etc... using various methods: direct observation, in-depth qualitative and semi-structured interviews, organization of village meetings, etc...
- Collection of information by the Monitoring Focal Points: this involves not only the collection and validation of the information gathered by the CMCs, which are carried out in collaboration with the communities during the periodic visit to supervise them, but also the collection on the basis of semi-structured periodic interviews, of information on the areas of change, especially those relating to institutions and other structures and organizations.
- Restitution, analysis and circulation of information: This phase was implemented through:
 - 1 the preparation of monthly activity reports by the Monitoring Focal Points;
 - 2 the organization of quarterly participatory evaluation meetings attended by the Monitoring Focal Points, the management team, the Community Monitoring Committees, and other major stakeholders involved in the implementation of the monitoring system;
 - 3 the preparation of joint quarterly analysis reports by the Monitoring Focal Points and the Management Teams. These reports highlight the achievement level of the different changes expected, the evidence that support the changes, as well as the major lessons learned;
 - 4 the production of bi-annual brief notes by the RSU on the monitoring of changes, and highlighting the changes brought about through the interventions of the Pilot Projects in terms of poverty reduction and livelihoods improvement in the fishing communities of the eight countries concerned.

Achievements

On the whole, the communities have to a large extent internalized the organization put in place as well as the simple data collection and analysis techniques that they were previously taught. Furthermore, they showed they had acquired the right skills in monitoring the major activities of the Pilot Projects, taking notes, and analyzing the changes that had occurred.

Several evidences are available to show the satisfactory level the communities of the different countries have reached in taking ownership of the monitoring and evaluation process:

- In Congo, as part of a drama designed and implemented by the communities themselves, the expected changes validated in the Monitoring schedule and the achievement level were dramatized by non-professional stakeholders;
- In Guinea, the communities requested for and obtained an approval to institutionalize CMCs, and these have now become an integral part of the Landing site development committees (Comités de développement des débarcadères). Moreover, during a participatory evaluation meeting, several fishermen declared that the mechanism put in place for the participatory monitoring and evaluation exercise had helped to create a counter power structure within the fishing communities, and that they served as an instrument for the surveillance and control of communities on the different practices and methods used by different stakeholders and the administration on the field. Finally, discussions on the achievement level of the expected changes from the activities of the Pilot Project are organized periodically between the fishing communities and aired on rural radio stations in the five intervention zones;

- In Senegal and Guinea, the communities have arranged for the inclusion of a clause in the contracts with service suppliers, which authorizes the CMC to monitor the activities of these suppliers in their respective communities, and to duly present their requests to them;
- In Gambia, the monitoring mechanism put in place for the Pilot Project, especially the CMCs is used by the communities as part of other projects being implemented in the zones;
- In Gabon, the twelve fishermen's associations existing within the communities taken into consideration by the Pilot Project have instituted, and provided in their office premises, a Monitoring officer to serve as their spokesperson to the CMCs.

The participatory monitoring and evaluation system has served as a vehicle through which the communities have been able to report back on the changes they have observed in their livelihoods as well as the challenges they encountered during the process. The system played a vital role in highlighting the major significant changes that occurred through the implementation of the Pilot Projects.

These changes were documented in the various countries through the collection of data by the CMCs and the subsequent discussions held with the communities during their visits to monitor progress and during the participatory evaluation meetings.

Lessons learnt

The setting up of a participatory monitoring and evaluation system turned out to be a learning process at all levels. The major lessons learned from the methodology used by the SFLP in the implementation of Pilot Projects 2 and 3 can be broken down as follows:

- Whatever its objective may be, ownership by the communities at grassroot level alone is not enough to guarantee sustainability and continuity of a participatory monitoring and evaluation system. It is absolutely necessary for the institutions operating at local level to also take ownership of the process.
- The fact that most members of the community do not know how to read or write is a major challenge in setting up an efficient participatory monitoring and evaluation system and this implies that training and capacity building for the communities on the use of the simple data collection and analysis techniques should be one of the main components of the process.
- The use of well adapted participatory approaches to conduct poverty profile appraisals and the establishment of the baseline helped considerably in ensuring that the communities take ownership of the participatory monitoring and evaluation exercise.
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation is more efficient, and the process of ownership by the communities is facilitated when it is implemented in a policy environment that is conducive for the promotion of local participation and development.
- The setting up of a participatory monitoring and evaluation system has some cost implications that need to be properly evaluated and taken into consideration in order not to have to skip any of the stages.
- To implement the participatory and monitoring process, the communities should identify people from among themselves who have the specific skills and time necessary. Incidentally, the use of literacy level as one of the criteria in the choice of the members of the Community Monitoring Committees can be a determinant factor in ensuring efficiency for the system, in as much as it enables the skilled persons to directly transcribe the phenomena they have observed and analyzed. •

Information and Communication: Vectors for integrating fishing communities in national HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes

Joël Gallard, SFLP Consultant and
Katrien Holvoet, Gender and Organisational Development Officer, RSU/SFLP

The social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector and most especially in artisanal fisheries in Africa actually is not well known because of the lack of well adapted studies and statistics.

What is however known, based on the estimates of international institutions and organizations specializing on HIV/AIDS issues in Africa is that the prevalence rate of the pandemic in fishing communities is among the highest in the continent. While there are many reasons for this high prevalence rate and for the sector's vulnerability to the disease, they are more often than not related to the peculiar nature of socio-professional institutions of the artisanal fisheries sector...¹

Paradoxically, fishing communities have for a long time been, and are still often ignored in the national and international policies and programmes undertaken to prevent and control HIV/AIDS.

Because of the little interest shown in fishing communities when development policies like the poverty reduction or food security strategies are being planned, as well as the absence of official and informal support groups or networks, these communities are unable to handle the effects of HIV/AIDS. Members of fishing communities for example have little or no opportunities to access Anti-Retroviral (ARV) Therapies (due to the fact that they have no action plan and no incentive to get tested for the disease; or because they are mobile groups who will therefore find it difficult to maintain continued access to the ARV therapies).

The initiative now being taken in fishing communities is fragmented and mainly part of isolated projects or activities of the associations of some communities.

Information and communication

How then can a reliable system be implemented in the communities, and how can the communities be mobilized to respond appropriately and permanently to HIV/AIDS? More importantly, how can a well conceptualized and well adapted information and communication strategy be used as a major and efficient catalyst in raising awareness and bringing together all fisheries sector stakeholders, as well as those who are involved, or wish to invest at different levels, in the organization of the response to HIV/AIDS?

The Information/Communication (I/C) strategy initiated by the SFLP in support to the integration of the fisheries sector and fishing communities in the national HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes, and which is summarized below, drew lessons from an approach that had been used in the different SFLP participating countries since 2003.

The objective of this approach is in the first instance, to obtain a better understanding of HIV/AIDS issues in fishing communities by conducting Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) studies, surveys on the socio-behavioral tendencies of the population, etc. This approach will also involve the evaluation of the capacity and ability of the communities to respond to the disease, especially through the recognition level as well as the extent to which it is taken into consideration in national and programmes and policies like the Multi-sectoral Programme for the Prevention and Control of AIDS (Programme plurisectoriel de prévention et de lutte contre le SIDA - PPLS)².

¹ SFLP Brief note, 11.2005

² The PPLS is a programme financed by the World Bank

Some interesting initiatives emerged from this process through some Community and Pilot Projects. This development contributed to a lesser or greater extent, and with varying levels of success, to sensitizing and raising awareness in some countries about the problems of HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector, and on the need for a response.

Without underestimating the work done in other SFLP countries, the process embarked upon by the National Coordinating Units (NCUs) of Benin and Congo, with SFLP support (in the area of recognition and awareness-raising for the fisheries sector in national AIDS Prevention and Control Programmes like the National AIDS Control Council), is undoubtedly the most striking. Moreover, the Information/Communication strategy proposed is derived mainly from the lessons learnt from the process engaged in these two countries.

The Strategy: Methodological approach

Rationale for intervention.....

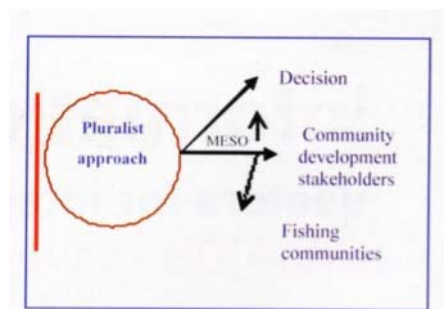
The strategy proposed is based on an intervention rationale that is both pluralistic and progressive. In other words, the strategy takes into account, and acts gradually and as appropriate on all the stakeholder groups who are involved or directly affected by the disease at different levels:

- **Macro level (national institutions, donors):** The intervention here is mainly through advocacy to inform policies and institutions so that steps can be taken to integrate the fisheries sector in the national response to HIV/AIDS.

Strategy				
I/E/C Supports	Why	How	Who	Expected outcome
MACRO	To convince to take action	Sensitize and convince	National Institutions Donors	Policy and institutional arrangements
MESO	Support to the organisation and implementation	Sensitize, build up capacities to engage and intervene	Decentralized Institutions Local community groups NGO, associations	Organizational and operational arrangements
MICRO	Take responsibility and mobilise	Sensitize, build up capacities to mobilize and take charge	Fishing communities	Mobilization Taking over

More specifically, what this level aims to achieve is:

- to inform all the stakeholders involved in organizing the national response to HIV/AIDS about the extreme vulnerability of fishing communities to the disease, and to get them to integrate appropriate community response in their action plans;
- to confirm the role of national fisheries institutions as the major structures responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the decisions and measures put in place during the lobbying.



- **Meso level (decentralized and devolved administrations, community development stakeholders):** In the same logic, the lobbying should be extended to meso level stakeholders, especially those who, by their statutes or functions at local level are likely to serve as “entry points” or focal points that will actively promote the engagement of all the stakeholders in the implementation and development of joint community programmes in response to HIV/AIDS.

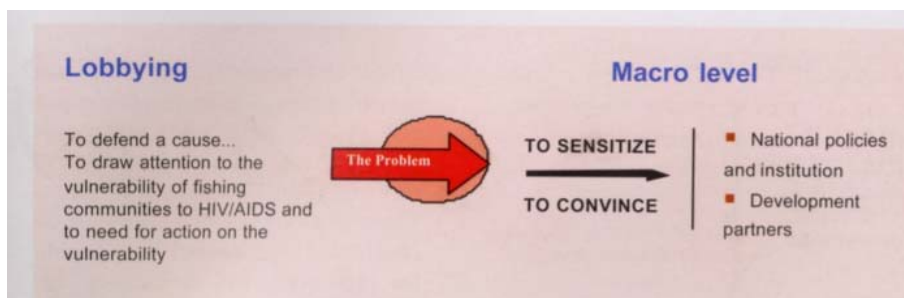
More specifically, this involves:

- Information and awareness raising actions among decentralized community administrative structures, decentralized community groups, fishers’ umbrella organizations and other important stakeholders and

NGO's intervening in local development on the specific areas where the artisanal fisheries sector is most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS;

- The promotion of a culture of consultation, synergy and partnership between stakeholders interested in investing in providing support for the organization and implementation of local response to HIV/AIDS;
- Building up the intervention capacities of the structures, especially in community planning, financial resource mobilization, the use of appropriate communication tools and teaching aids that are well adapted to the peculiar needs of fishing communities, training of trainers, etc.

▪ **Micro level (associations, groups, fishing communities):** The intervention here will focus mainly on informing and sensitizing the stakeholders in the group in a way that will make fishing communities mobilize and behave prudently and responsibly during the implementation and management of community response to the disease.



More specifically, this involves:

- Informing and raising the awareness of fishing communities through their professional organizations (umbrella organizations,

associations, groups) about the AIDS disease and the consequences of infection, as well as on why they are particularly highly vulnerable to it;

- Making fishing communities take responsibility so that they can become part and parcel of the local community response to the disease, and getting them to contribute their share in terms of taking charge and monitoring of the activities.

How to go about this?

▪ **Who are the target audience? How should it addressed and convinced?**

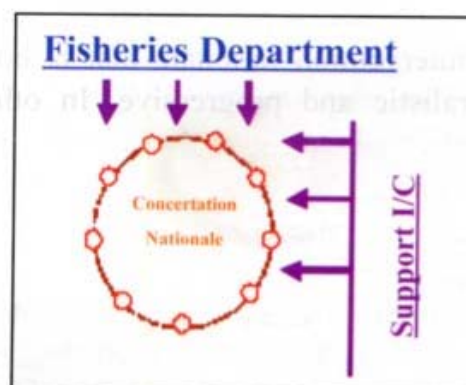
Lobbying at macro level is targeted at all stakeholders involved in organizing the HIV/AIDS response at national level.

The national leaders and development partners of most countries of the African continent, and more generally in developing countries have, in the last decade, become more active to a greater or lesser extent, in organizing and implementing national initiatives in response to STD/HIV/AIDS.

These government responses are generally in the form of institutional mechanisms or frameworks (with varying levels of efficiency) whose responsibilities are to guide and coordinate initiatives to control the disease. These national institutions are more often than not referred to as the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), or the National AIDS control Council (NACC). These government initiatives benefit from the technical and financial support of development partners (please see the frame opposite).

Other initiatives exist in different forms:

- **Anti-AIDS projects or programmes** with national coverage attached or not to the institutional organs set up in the countries. These projects or programmes are usually initiated and financed by development partners (specialized NGOs or other international institutions) and usually targeting a particular social class.



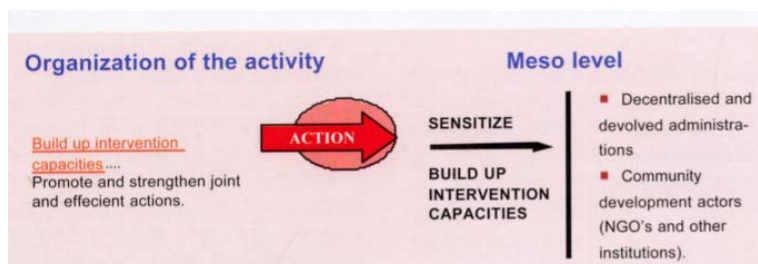
- **Development projects** with national coverage, supported by development partners who integrate one or several components focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention and control; these component as in the previous case also targets some particular social or professional groups.

Therefore, what this involves in the first instance is, first to draw up a list of all the different institutions and stakeholders and to obtain a good understanding of their roles and functions in the organization and implementation of HIV/AIDS response at national level. It is only after this that they are lobbied in such a way as to draw their attention to the problems of HIV/AIDS and its socio-economic impact on the fisheries sector, and on the **need for action**.

▪ ***What is the ideal framework for successful lobbying?***

Lobbying national institutions and development partners (macro level) is an important phase that will determine the follow-up and achievement of the purpose for the action. Special attention must therefore be paid to the organization, session and content (message) of the lobbying exercise.

Preference should be given to the official context. Lobbying should be done during an official meeting at national level: a workshop, a forum initiated by the national fisheries institutions of the country concerned, to which all the stakeholders with decision-making powers on the organization and implementation of the national response to HIV/AIDS are invited.



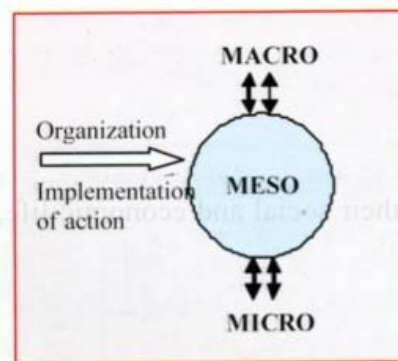
▪ ***What are the most appropriate communication tools and supports for backing up the lobbying process?***

Different types of Communication tools and supports can be used in a well thought out combination (multimedia). Their choice and content must however be determined by the target group as well as by the expected results and outcome of the lobbying exercise.

How to go about this?

▪ ***Who is the target audience at meso level?***

The organization of action is an extension of the measure taken at macro level, to which it gives substance and visibility. The organization of action to a great extent targets meso level institutions and organizations which, because of their position and functions, occupy a very important position in the implementation and management at local level, and as a result, are direct stakeholders and determinant factors in supporting the effective organization and implementation of community response to HIV/AIDS in fishing communities.



The major targets at meso level are thus first and foremost:

- **NGOs and umbrella organizations** of socio-professional organizations engaged in the actions to control AIDS or interested in intervening in the area.
- **The large decentralized structures institutions** or national AIDS control programmes (NACP, Community Councils for AIDS Control - CCAC, etc.).
- **The decentralized administrative structures** of the government, especially the technical units of the fisheries sector and also those in the health, education and planning sectors...
- **Decentralized community groups**, those that have emerged as a result of the new decentralization process put in place in the countries, especially village or town halls.
- **Media institutions** especially community or neighborhood radio stations.
- **Other institutions** operating in various areas of development.

▪ **Who constitutes the “priority” target?**

As in the case of lobbying, this involves drawing up a list of all the stakeholders as well as understanding their roles/functions and areas of intervention.

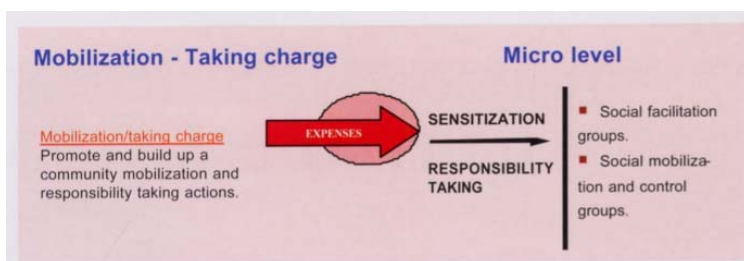
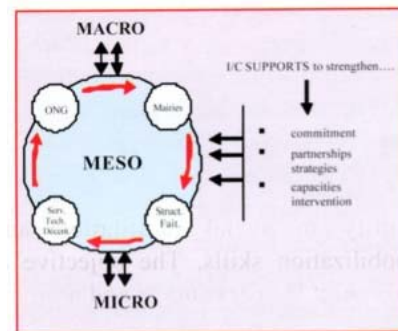
Although all meso level institutions are concerned and they are all potential stakeholders in organizing and providing support to the implementation of activities, it is nevertheless necessary to:

- Prioritize the stakeholders to be targeted, at least in the first instance (institutions, programmes), on the basis of their statutes and functions, or on their involvement in anti-AIDS programmes that could eventually serve as entry points or focal points for committed and consistent joint efforts in support to the organization and implementation of community response to HIV/AIDS in fishing communities.
- Define some indicators: the umbrella organizations of socio-professional organizations (cooperative unions, groups, etc.), NGOs or other specialized institutions already intervening in AIDS control programmes, religious institutions, village/town halls, etc. But also formal and informal inter-NGO (for example) consultation platforms are also priority targets for awareness raising activities on the problems of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities. These platforms should therefore be considered as important entry points for promoting and developing the desired responses.

▪ **What types of interventions?**

The interventions undertaken at meso stakeholder level are a very important part of the I/C strategy. They are of different types but they all have one common objective: to further motivate and build up the capacities of these stakeholders in the support they provide in organizing the implementation of community response to HIV/AIDS:

- Inform and raise awareness: Again as in the macro level, the stakeholders identified must first be informed and sensitized on the high vulnerability of fishing communities to STD/HIV/AIDS and their effect on the social and economic life of fisherfolk. Attempts must also be made to get them to engage further in organizing and implementing activities to strengthen community response to HIV/AIDS.
- Promotion of consultation and the development of strategic partnerships between structures wishing to invest in organizing and implementing community response actions. Give preference to forums that are most appropriate for developing joint action: **village/town halls, decentralized structures for the control of AIDS, NGO platforms etc.**



Build up the capacities of these structures in the areas of participatory approach and planning of community response to HIV/AIDS by endowing them with the tools produced by the SFLP well adapted participatory approaches to AIDS control in fisheries communities (participatory appraisals, KAP studies, Community action plan to control HIV/AIDS (CAPCA), etc.).

How to go about it?

▪ **Who constitutes the target audience?**

The IEC interventions to mobilize and promote responsible participation in community response programmes to HIV/AIDS are directed at fishing communities through some leaders or groups that are well known for their ability to social facilitation and mobilization skills. The objective at this point is to encourage and promote the mobilization of these stakeholders in the information and awareness raising

process on AIDS in order to get the communities to opt for healthy and preventive behaviors towards HIV/AIDS, the objective being to limit the stigmatization of HIV positive people, and most especially to get them more involved as responsible stakeholders in HIV/AIDS community response initiatives.

Groups recognized for their community facilitation and mobilization skills can be divided into two major groups:

- Community facilitation groups: associations, socio-professional groups, educational institutions (schools, adult literacy), health institutions (dispensaries, rural hospitals), traditional musical/drama groups...
- Social mobilization and control groups: village heads or groups, religious groups, etc.

▪ *What types of interventions?*

The extent to which the stakeholders are mobilized and take responsibility at micro level is naturally a determinant factor in the implementation and efficiency of community response to HIV/AIDS. Special attention must therefore be given to the I/C interventions, both in the choice of support, as in the content of the messages.

The commitment of the communities to mobilizing and taking responsibility for the activities depends on two major factors which will become the main pivots of the I/C interventions:

- Real awareness of the problems of the disease and of its impact in their social and economic life, and also awareness of the origin and reasons for their high vulnerability to it.
- A good understanding of their capacity and ability to take action through the implementation and commitment to local response.

What this mostly involves is for the communities to be informed and brought into contact with some local structures (institutions, NGOs) that are likely to back up their mobilization process through local response initiatives. •

Fishing communities: the battle against STD/HIV/AIDS has only just started*

Fernand Nouwligbèto, Journalist

AIDS continues to wreak havoc in fishing villages of Benin, communities with little involvement in the efforts to control the spread of the pandemic. The Fisheries Department, with the support of such organizations as the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP), is trying to do something about this. But it is a big task that requires the involvement of donors and other partners if it is to succeed.

Mathieu Amoussou does not want to be caught unprepared. A month before the end of year festivities, a period when risky behaviors increases among the inhabitants of Kétonou (18 km east of Cotonou, the economic capital of Benin), this fisherman and eight other of his friends who are also members of the Village Disease Control Committee already have a plan. “Apart from the fifteen awareness raising activities that we have organized to date, we are planning others like for example, chatting with socio-cultural groups on how one can get infected and how to prevent STD/HIV/AIDS infections”, declares this fifty-something year old man who is also the President of the Committee. The people in the community set up this structure in 2005 with the assistance of Community organization for health, education and development (Organisation communautaire pour la santé, l’éducation et le développement - OCSED), a local NGO financed by the SFLP. “One of the major targets of these activities are our brothers who return to the village after staying for a long time outside the country, Nigeria for example, to celebrate the festivities with us” adds Mathieu, who was seated on a stool in the courtyard of his homestead. “We don’t know what their sexual behavior was like where they are coming from; we believe prevention is better than cure».

From December to January, during the festive period at the end of the year, migrant fishers who had traveled to neighboring cities (Cotonou, Porto-Novo, Abomey-Calavi...) or even other countries in the sub-region (Nigeria, Gabon, Congo, Cameroon...) some weeks or months earlier, return to small-scale fishing communities (coastal and inland). The fact that they are separated from their spouses whom they have left behind in the village, and the resulting unstable lifestyle away from home is sometimes too tempting for the men. Worse still, most of them are either indifferent or completely ignorant about STD/HIV/AIDS prevention methods, and so tend to entertain many sexual partners and expose women to prostitution. “These expatriates often come back to their village around the 15th of December with all sorts of gadgets (radio sets, sunglasses, shoes, etc.) for everyone to admire. They come strutting like cocks into the barnyard, seducing young girls and inciting other people to migrate», observes the sociologist, Gervais Nounhatin Atahouet. This gentleman was the one who, in 2003, led on behalf of the SFLP, the team that conducted the survey on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) on STD/HIV/AIDS in two coastal fishing communities (Ayi-Guinnou in Grand-Popo and Hio Plage in Ouidah) and five lagoon fishing communities (Hio Houègbo in Ouidah, Kétonou in Sèmè-Kpodji and Gbètingao, Nouhouéto-Lokpodji, Zounhomey-Somahi, the three of which are in So-Zounko in Sô-Ava).

This study revealed the existence of about ten HIV positive cases in this village of 18,000 souls. The study focused on a worrisome “risk situation” linked to the existence in the communities, of some factors that promote the development of STD/HIV/AIDS. The list is long: the extreme poverty resulting partly from the growing scarcity of fisheries resources; the high illiteracy level; ignorance how AIDS is contracted; the fact that preservatives are not sold in the community; the high propensity to migrate; the high number of immigrants (Togolese, Ghanaians...), etc. In view of this situation, the National Coordinating Unit (NCU) of the Programme with headquarters in the Fisheries Department therefore decided to turn this trend around. In April 2005, the NCU signed an agreement with the Mutisectorial AIDS Control Project (Projet plurisectoriel de lutte contre le SIDA - PPLS) to the effect that the Fisheries Department will finance the preparation of seven Community Action Plans on STD/HIV/AIDS control (Plans d’actions communautaires de lutte contre les IST/VIH/SIDA - PACLS), while the PPLS bear the cost of implementing them over the next three years. The NCU selected four PPLS NGO partners and informed each one the communities it would be expected to assist in preparing their Action Plans.

* This article was written in collaboration with the Programme d’appui au développement participatif de la pêche artisanale au Bénin (PADPPA).

The beginning of awareness

“We adopted a participatory approach “, explains Jonas Padé, the Executive Director of Global Alternative, an ONG that worked in Hio Plage and Hio Houègbo. “Our role was to get the communities themselves to do an inventory of the factors contributing to their vulnerability to AIDS”. Frédéric Sagbohan of the NGO known as Forces nouvelles pour le développement humain durable (FNDHD), which worked in Ayi-Guinnou added: “We worked closely with the communities to identify four types of actions to undertake in the community: awareness raising, voluntary and free testing, care for People Living with AIDS (PLA) and AIDS orphans, training of trainers, in other words, some villagers representing the different socio-professional groups that have enough skills to continue the work of keeping the communities informed even after the end of our mission”. To ensure the success of these activities, the NGO’s helped the communities on the use of some management tools and thereafter in the last quarter of 2005, to set up local structures referred to as the Village HIV/AIDS Control Committees (Comités villageois de lutte contre le VIH/SIDA - CVLS). The PPLS provided these committees with awareness-raising materials like wooden phallus, leaflets and prospectus... After several months of implementing these Community Action Plans for the control of AIDS (PACLS), «people now know that AIDS really exists; this was not the case before 2005 », was the delighted comment of Gisèle Gbaguidi, a mid-wife who, through her counseling, assisted the Management Committees in Hio.

A proof of this awareness is the significant increase of sales points for preservatives. This is the case for example in the two communities in Hio where today, one can count over eleven preservative sellers as against only one before 2005. “The purchase of preservatives is now a habit in Kétonou, confirms Doxèton, a housewife in the village. “I sell an average of 48 pieces every three days and this figure increases during the holidays”. The same goes for the number of people who undergo the tests voluntarily: while before 2005 there were very few in Hio, there are now 305, some of which tested positive, including a couple and one man. Two of the three have already died. |If I am still alive and in good health today, it is thanks to Mrs. Gbaguidi”, confided an AIDS positive fisherman who preferred to remain anonymous. She knew how to tell me that I was HIV-positive and gave me some advice so that I do not infect other people. Furthermore, I am taking the antiretroviral drugs provided to me at a Centre in Cotonou regularly”. This AIDS-positive fisherman, in his turn, advised other people to go for the test.

To build on the results of the PACLS, the SFLP launched a Community Project to develop the Income Generating Activities (IGA) so as to provide further support to the poorest groups in Hio and later in Ayi-Guinnou, by granting them some micro credit facilities. “The poverty level in our community is very high”, affirms Olivier K. Aligbo, the village head and President of the Ayi-Guinnou management committee. « We have some people who cannot even afford clothing and food for their children, or to send them to school ...And we all know how easy it is for a jobless, hungry girl to yield to a man and to entertain multiple partners». In each of these communities, about twenty persons, mainly women, who were selected and trained by the NGO’s received loans of between 60,000 and 130,000 CFA from the management committee to start new activities, or to refinance the activity they have already embarked on (vegetable gardening, fish smoking and fish mongering ...). If they refund these loans that were granted at a 1% interest rate properly, they will give others the opportunity to enjoy the same facility. At local level, this will make it possible to «organize solidarity and most especially, to build up the capacity of the community to come up with a response to ‘soften’ in other words, reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on people», pointed out Katrien Holvoet, the SFLP Organizational Development and Gender Officer. Kétonou and So-Zounko are also soon to benefit from an IGA development project. Meanwhile, « we have successfully developed some internal self-management capacities within the community and that is a very important achievement», declares Nello Idohou, who worked in So-Zounko under the umbrella of an association promoting humanity, environmental protection and sustainable development know as Association pour la promotion de l’homme, la protection de l’environnement pour un développement durable (APHEDD).

Around 600,000 other stakeholders of the sector threatened

However, things are far from being rosy. The management committees in the seven communities are encountering a lot of difficulties as a result of insufficient funding for the proper implementation of some Community Action Plans. (PACLS). Moreover, the awareness-raising sessions are still very few and are not done regularly. And what’ more, all these activities are for the time being limited to the communities retained by the SFLP and the PPLS. But these represent only about 3% of the 600,000 persons (fishermen,

women fishmongers, boat builders and sellers, and sellers of other fishing materials ...) who, according to the Fisheries Department, make their living from small-scale fisheries. « Apart from the PPLS and the SFLP, we would sincerely want other organizations to come to our aid because the challenge posed by this war against HIV/AIDS is the socio-economic development of our country » posits Catherine Hounkpè, the Fisheries Director. “We still need capable hands that will continue to fish and to provide each and everyone of us with fish protein ».

“This is even more necessary, stresses Gervais Nounhatin Atahouet, because of the high migratory trend. It is difficult to fight an effective battle against the pandemic on a national scale if appropriate actions are not envisaged in the said communities. Which explains the urgent need, he argues, for the creation of a consultative framework that will enable all fisheries stakeholders (grassroot communities, NGO’s, development partners, government structures, social partners ...) to come together to evaluate what is required to organize joint actions to fight against STD/HIV/AIDS in the fishing communities of Benin. Some ministries like the one in charge of fisheries could facilitate this consultative framework. “This way, each actor will be able to determine its position in relation to the intervention zone”, continues M. Atahouet. “All the activities will be implemented, monitored and evaluated within this joint framework. However, to get there the Beninese government must first define a clear strategy for fighting against STD/HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector”, he concluded. •

Participation of fishing communities in development

The role of local radio stations

Pascal ZANTOU, Communication Assistant, RSU/SFLP

The involvement and integration of fishing communities in the programme schedule of local radio stations¹ provide them the opportunity to express their daily concerns and to gradually get to know the advantages of responsible fisheries, not only for their own sakes, but also for future generations.

How did the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) go about getting local radio station to play a role in the participation of fishing communities in development, and in raising awareness on good fishing practices? By developing partnerships with them. The procedure used can be summarized under the majors stages presented in the brief outline below.

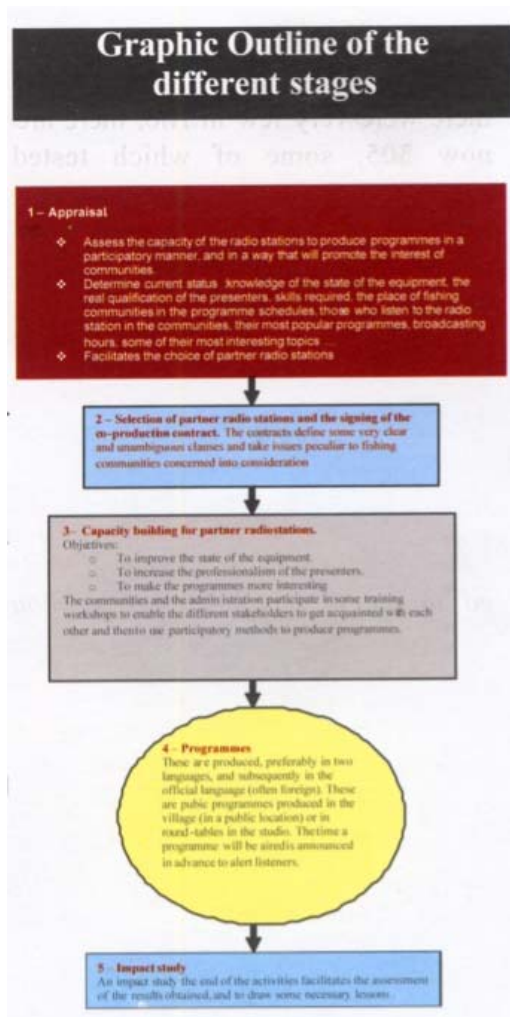
The SFLP conducted studies that facilitated the evaluation of the technical capacities of the radio stations to produce programmes in a participatory manner for fishing communities, their coverage range, and their ability to receive feedback on the impression of the fishing communities who are their listeners. The studies highlighted the low skills of radio station presenters, the dilapidated equipment they use, and the little consideration given to fishing communities in their programme schedules.

In Burkina Faso, 66% of radio presenters (Bagré region) have primary school certificates, 27% have the equivalent of Junior Secondary School certificates, (Brevet d'études du premier cycle - BEPC) and 0.5% have the equivalent of GCE A level. None of the presenters had any previous training² in radio presenting.

In Mali, only one radio station, Radio Wassoulou, a community radio station sustained by the United States Department for International Development (USAID), the Panos Institute and the French development agency has telephone lines and internet access. Consequently, apart from this radio station interactive programmes cannot be envisaged.

The radio station in the two communities do not broadcast programmes aimed specifically at fishing communities although they cover all types of general topics relating to health, education, the environment, culture and adult education. It was noted for example that fisheries has some peculiarities that should be taken into consideration, like high mobility, 'sex for fish' relationships, which are some of the high risk factors of HIV/AIDS.

The result of the appraisal was a determinant factor in the choice of partner radio stations, the capacities to be built, and the programmes to be produced and aired.



¹ Partner radio stations: Burkina Faso: Radio Pax Manga, Radio Goulou, Radio Frontière, Horizon FM Garango. Mali: Radio Wassoulou, Radio Baya.

² Oumar MKONE : Etude sur le contexte des stations FM des radios de proximité en appui a la mise en œuvre du plan de gestion du lac Selingue, août 2005.

Impact

The radio programmes had some clear impact that would be better assessed at three levels: impact on the communities, impact on the radio stations themselves, and impact on government policies.

▪ On the communities

The radio station serves as a means through which the fisheries resources management bodies communicate the results of their deliberations to all the fishing communities in the neighborhood, thereby improving access to information and information flow. They back up the process and raise consideration for the fisheries sector and the fishing communities to the same level as all the other agricultural activities. This in a way affirms members of the fishing communities.

In Burkina Faso, the women who participated in the programmes were very proud of this fact and they felt good because they had been given some responsibilities. They therefore decided to refuse to buy small-sized fishes in order to force the fishermen to comply with the fisheries regulation in force.

The fishing communities were sensitized on microfinance (access, management and most especially, the need to refund loans so as not to penalize others). Other themes like organizational development and Income-generating Activities (IGA) were also addressed.

▪ On the radio stations

The presenters who obtained free training during the process started training other presenters. Because they had more knowledge about fisheries and fishing communities, they have become more sensitive to the needs and challenges of the sector and they are well disposed to support all the initiatives of the sector. Programmes on fisheries were fore-runners to other programmes on environmental protection. On the basis of the fishing experience referred to as « fréquence pêche » (fishing frequency), the Zoundwégo local development project (Burkina Faso) produced some public programmes on the refuge and protection of hippopotamuses.

▪ On government policies

Thanks to the communication activities (radio stations, information meetings etc.), national, regional and local administrative officers and the fishing communities are now gradually cooperating much and more easily, and this creates better visibility for the fisheries sector and fishing communities as a whole. The leaders of socio-professional associations get to have their say. They now have access to administrative officer, a fact that undoubtedly gives them “a certain prestige³.” They feel proud of the fact that they are able to sit around the same table with high-ranking officials of State to discuss fisheries issues. This was certainly not the case before the project, because of the strong authoritarian powers that government had over the management of fisheries resources.

Cape Verde: " Voz di Santa Cruz "

In Cape Verde, the SFLP implemented a different kind of exercise from those that were conducted in Burkina Faso and Mali on the use of local radio stations as communication support for development. Here, the Programme did not go into a timely partnership with commercial radio stations. Rather they worked closely with an association Community Radio, the creation of which involved the communities as a whole. Thus, the communities themselves chose the name of the radio station and set up a Programme Committee which prepared the Programme schedule.

" Voz di Santa Cruz " (The Voice of Santa Cruz) is the name given to the radio station and it was inaugurated on the 3rd of August 2006, at its headquarters in Pedra Badejo, a city where most of the people are fisheries dependent. It is headed by Veronica Sanches, a young journalist, and its programmes focus on as varied a range of topics as health, youth-related matters, cooking recipes, sports, culture, civil activism, etc.

This radio station is the initiative of the Dia International Solidarity organization, implemented since May 2005 in partnership with the Camara Municipale de Santa Cruz and the Cape Verdian NGO known as SOLMI. In collaboration with other partners like the Luxembourg development cooperation and the UNDP, the SFLP provided significant support to the project in terms of capacity building and provision of equipment that will enable the radio station to achieve its principal objective of offering the community, development stakeholders and the Santa Cruz Municipal Council a platform for debates and discussions.

³ Idem

In Burkina Faso as in Mali, the communities are now closely associated in fisheries management. The legal environment of the fisheries sector has been improved and deep-seated institutional changes have occurred⁴. In Mali, just to mention one example, the fishing communities are becoming more and more integrated in local development, their concerns are now being taken into consideration in the social, economic and cultural development plans (Plans de développement social, économique et culturel des communes - PDSEC) of the communities.

These structural changes can not be credited to the radio stations alone. An integrated approach including the mass media and interpersonal communication channels, an aspect that we shall not bother to build up in this paper, were also used. The different experiences in fact proved that neighborhood radio stations can play an important role in developing responsible fisheries and improving the livelihoods of fishing communities. To do this, a sustainable partnership between the radio stations and the fisheries communities must be put in place. The partnership must be based on a participatory approach involving the communities at all the stages of the communication process. •

⁴ See the paper on fisheries co-management or participatory fisheries management.