

# Achieving poverty reduction through responsible fisheries

Lessons from West and Central Africa



***Cover photos:***

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

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

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

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

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FAO  
FISHERIES AND  
AQUACULTURE  
TECHNICAL  
PAPER

513

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ISBN 978-92-5-106112-1

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# Preparation of this document

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

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

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

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

# Abstract

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

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

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

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

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

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

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

# Abstract

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

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UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNPAG	National union of Guinean small-scale fishermen
UNSNA	United Nations System of National Accounts
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WID	Women in Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- *Chapter 1* provides an overview of the Programme itself and the strategic approach of combining the Code and SLA principles. It also summarizes the main lessons learned and hence provides an over-arching introduction to the sections that follow;
- *Chapter 2* looks at the poverty concept in more detail and discusses the SFLP poverty profiling experience, i.e. how poverty assessments were carried out in practice and how the processes and results were used for identifying and implementing project activities;
- *Chapter 3* reports on the Programme's methodology for recalculating and re-assessing the economic contribution of the fisheries sector to local and national economies and presents the results from the SFLP's country studies;
- *Chapter 4* gives the arguments for why small-scale fisheries should be mainstreamed in development policy, e.g. through inclusion in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and National Development Plans (NDPs), and describes how this can be done;

- *Chapter 5* discusses the SFLP's co-management experience – both in inland water areas and on the Atlantic coast – and underlines the importance of addressing social exclusion and vulnerability factors as well as creating incentives to enable poor people to take part in resource management;
- *Chapter 6* analyses the importance of migration in West and Central African small-scale fisheries and discusses its implications for poverty reduction and co-management;
- *Chapter 7* reviews the requirements for microfinance in small-scale fishing communities and how the SFLP addressed this need;
- *Chapter 8* examines the importance of information in the context of development and how pro-poor communication strategies and tools were used by the SFLP;
- *Chapter 9* highlights the elevated prevalence of HIV and high incidence of AIDS in West and Central African fishing communities and reviews the SFLP's experience in addressing this issue in Congo and Benin; and
- *Chapter 10* presents the SFLP gender analysis tools and reports on the Programme's gender mainstreaming approach.
- *Chapter 11* summarizes SFLP's experience in a broader context of development policy and gives a concluding reflection on the Programme's impact.

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# 1. The sustainable livelihoods approach: new directions in West and Central African small-scale fisheries

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## INTRODUCTION

After decades of only limited success in alleviating poverty, by the 1990s development workers and cooperation agencies started to rethink their strategies for working with rural communities. Building on research and experience, a new approach emerged, putting people in clearer focus and emphasising the need to work closely with rural communities to support them in building on their existing strengths to improve their lives in a sustainable manner. The many different dimensions of poverty were recognised as well as the impact of external shocks and trends, and the importance of the political and institutional environment and processes. The concept of livelihoods, at individual, household and community level could be seen not just in terms of economic output and earnings, but in a broader sense of human capability, self-realisation and empowerment. These shifts in perception led to recognition that, to achieve poverty alleviation, a participative, flexible and holistic approach for building sustainable livelihoods was needed. While many development organizations moved in a similar direction, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (DFID), in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), was at the forefront of setting out and promoting the conceptual framework and analytical tools of the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) (Scoones, 1998; DFID, 2001).<sup>1</sup>

The SLA had subsequently become prominent in development programmes aiming at reducing poverty in rural communities and different forms of the approach have been widely used across sectors, including in coastal and inland communities engaged in fisheries and related activities. In the sustainable fisheries livelihoods Programme in West and Central Africa (SFLP), the SLA was combined with the principles and guidelines of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (hereafter referred to as ‘the Code’) and turned into a comprehensive regional programme with the aim of promoting responsible fishing and contributing to poverty alleviation by improving the livelihoods of fisheries dependent coastal and inland communities. The SFLP used a process approach engaging the SLA within the broader policy setting of the Code to improve fisheries livelihoods in local communities and to influence and inform

<sup>1</sup> Most definitions of the concept ‘sustainable livelihoods’ derive from the work of Chambers and Conway (1992). DFID adopted the following meaning: “A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.” (DFID, 1999)

national and regional policies and institutions promoting sustainable livelihoods and responsible resource utilization.

In spite of the growing global recognition and use of the SLA, the experience of applying it in small-scale fishing communities has generally not been well documented (ECFC, 2005; Béné, Macfadayen and Allison, 2007). This chapter reports on how the SLA was applied by the SFLP in combination with the Code. It provides an overview of the rationale behind the Programme, and its achievements and lessons learned in the wider context of poverty alleviation and fisheries governance. It aims to assess conceptually and practically, the nature and scale of the overall impact of the SFLP in the region, interacting with the small-scale fishing sector and responding to changing circumstances for development. The main issues and lessons learned, which are explored in more detail in subsequent chapters, are summarized.

## **THE SLA PRINCIPLES AND FRAMEWORK**

### **The SLA context**

The SLA is a broad, multidisciplinary approach that aims to promote a better understanding of and response to the multiple dimensions of poverty. When taking shape in the 1990s, the underlying ideas of the approach were not new, but built from and combined ongoing development trends with concepts borrowed mainly from the fields of economics and ecology. These included Amartya Sen's capitals and capability framework and concepts from New Institutional Economics with regard to the importance of institutions in economic growth and development (Allison and Horemans, 2006b; World Bank, 2007). The SLA also incorporated the ecological system concepts of sensitivity and resilience, referring to the degree to which a livelihood system reacts to shocks or other types of stress (its sensitivity) and how well it can "bounce back" and recover from such shocks (its resilience). The SLA vulnerability context relates to these concepts, and sensitivity and resilience are thus incorporated as factors related to poverty (Allison and Horemans, 2006a).

Following the development and active promotion of the SLA, DFID commissioned a study in 2002 to look into its use among fifteen development agencies, including bilateral and multilateral organizations as well as NGOs. Applied across a range of sectors, it was found that uptake of the approach was impressive and confirmed the view that the SLA was by then generally considered to be 'best practice'. The study also found that different development agencies interpreted and used the approach in different ways. This was considered to reflect the creative and evolutionary characteristics of the SLA and the fact that it was not designed to be prescriptive but to provide tools for holistic analysis and response (Hussein, 2002).

This section briefly describes the guiding principles and analytical framework of the SLA as used by the SFLP. This interpretation was mainly based on DFID's SLA guidelines.

### **The SLA guiding principles**

In context specific situations, the SLA principles provide a guide for practitioners to design and implement people centred initiatives to help address sustainable livelihood concerns. The core SLA guiding principles can be summarized as follows (based on Allison and Horemans, 2006b):

- the SLA puts people's social and economic activities at the centre of the analysis, acknowledging that attempts to reduce fishing pressure or allocate rights of access to the poor require people to be understood in wider terms than just their 'fishing effort';
- application of the SLA helps in assessing options for management and development intervention that transcend sectoral boundaries such as fisheries, agriculture,

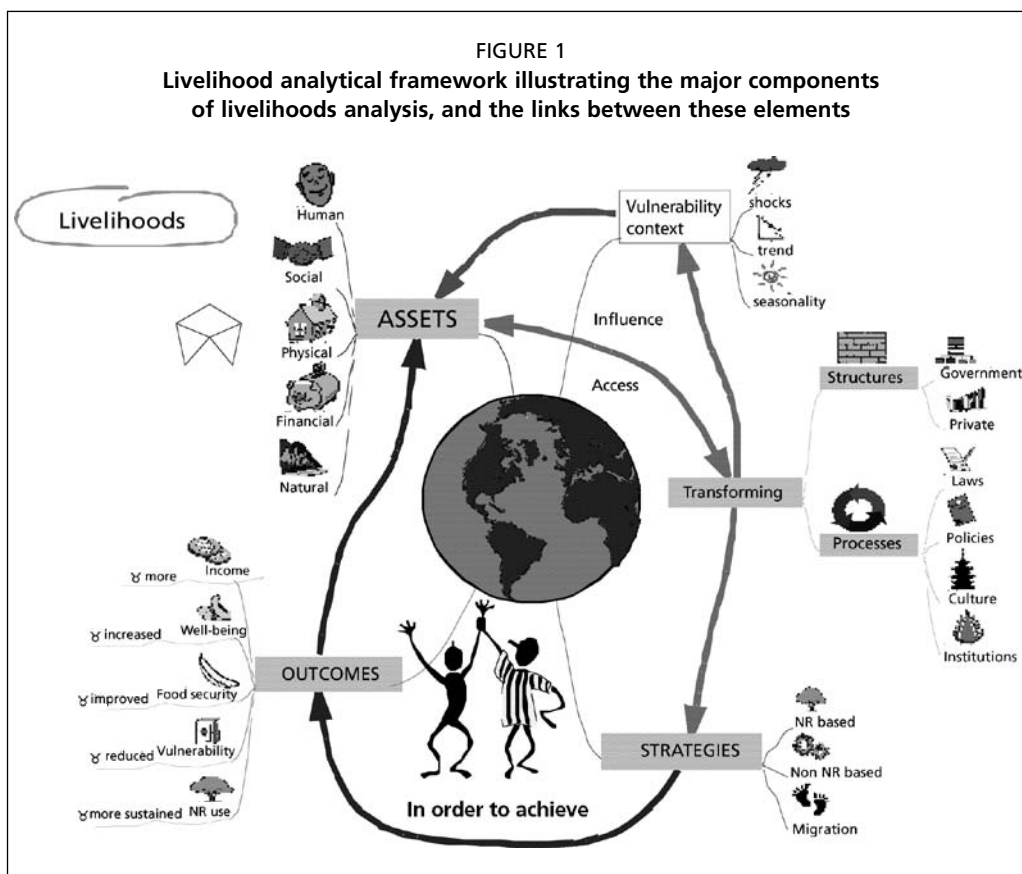
pastoralism, wage labour or small enterprise, and that incorporate issues affecting all people, irrespective of occupation, such as access to social services (e.g. health, education, and social security), political representation and judicial services. Within this also, issues of a specific sector such as fisheries can be more clearly framed, ensuring that external influences can be identified and their processes and impacts understood;

- the SLA makes micro-macro links. It encourages explicit consideration of links between local issues (such as resource allocation among different types of resources-users in a fishing port or a landing), meso-level processes such as decentralisation of government (e.g. bringing planning and financial management of fishing ports/landing sites under the control of local authorities) and wider concerns including national policy and economic and social change (such as the adoption of new fisheries policy or legislation, the liberalisation of markets and the withdrawal of production-related subsidies);
- the approach is responsive and participatory in addressing management priorities. It involves working in partnership with fishers and other stakeholders in the public and private sectors, and promotes a dynamic, adaptive and learning process to management;
- it builds on strengths. Although development aims to reduce incidences of low incomes, poor health, lack of education, food insecurity, social exclusion, or vulnerability, the livelihood approach encourages ways of tackling these problems that make the most of peoples' existing capacities, and so potentially result in better and more effective development impact. In fishing communities, these strengths may include extensive local or indigenous technical knowledge, strong vocational skills, local task and resource sharing processes, learning processes, and diverse and flexible livelihood strategies;
- the livelihoods approach takes a broad view of sustainability. Economic, institutional, social and environmental dimensions all contribute to sustainability in fisheries management. The SLA makes these dimensions explicit and recognises the dynamics of people's lives. Sustainability is viewed not in static, equilibrium terms but as the capacity of elements of a livelihood system to withstand shocks and adapt to change.

None of these principles is new or unique to the livelihoods approach. But, taken together, they represent a new way of working in development that has the potential to yield much more positive results than those which focus less on people, their livelihood systems, and the ways they interact with resources and with social, economic and policy forces around them.

### **The livelihoods framework**

As part of the SLA, the livelihoods framework can be presented diagrammatically (see Figure 1). This can help to clarify the relationship between assets and activities at individual, household and community level and the interacting social, economic and policy conditions that affect them, while guiding the consideration of short and longer term dynamic issues which affect livelihoods. In turn, the framework can help to locate entry points for development interventions of various kinds, aimed at building capital assets, reducing vulnerability, enabling resource access and so on. The framework has a diversity of uses in development programmes – though in many cases primarily regarded as a diagnostic tool – to improve the understanding of livelihoods, particularly those of the poor. In development practice, it is often used as a 'process' tool to enable participants in development programmes who come from different sectors (e.g. local government, business development, health, transport, natural resources) to work together with communities to identify key constraints and opportunities for



Source: SFLP, 2002.

development intervention. In association with this, the SLA is also widely used as a project and programme design framework.

The framework is particularly valuable in providing an inventory of important issues and shows how these link to each other. It draws attention to core influences and processes as well as emphasizes the multiple interactions between the various factors that affect livelihoods. It contains five main elements:

- the capital assets owned, controlled, claimed by the household/community/group are defined in five categories. These comprise human capital (skills, knowledge, ability to work, produce and reproduce, good health...) social capital (networks and relationships which exist in society that are made use of by people in pursuit of their livelihoods), physical capital (infrastructure, material, tools and equipments used to support livelihoods), financial capital (financial resources used to achieve people's livelihoods strategies such as cash, savings, access to savings and credit including the ability to quickly and easily convert other assets into cash), and natural capital (natural resources which benefit the community/group, including fisheries resources, biodiversity, land, forests, waters, etc.). These capitals can be defined both in quantity (type and scale) and quality, with respect to issues such as suitability and access for livelihoods aims;
- the policies, institutions and processes (PIP)<sup>2</sup> which can enable or hinder access to both assets and activities. This comprises the institutions and organizations together with their policies, legislations and regulations that affect and influence

<sup>2</sup> The terms Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIP) and Transforming Structures and Processes (TSPs), are both used in the SLA framework (see Figure 1). TSPs are considered to be inclusive of policies and institutions. Hence the PIP can be seen to specify elements of the structures and processes to be transformed.

- livelihoods, and also provide the commercial contexts in which economic outputs are realised. The PIPs are at the heart of fisheries management, and of the broader social, policy and legal processes in which opportunities and constraints are defined;
- the vulnerability context relates to the external environment can affect the susceptibility to poverty and consequently the potential for livelihood sustainability. It is described in terms of shocks (sudden deaths, droughts, cyclones, conflicts and wars, accidents, floods, fuel-price hikes, currency devaluations, etc.), trends (in this case including decreasing catch rates, increasing prices for fish, changes in population, diseases, environmental and technical tendencies, factors unrelated to fisheries that nevertheless impact on fishing communities such as rising costs of food staples or medicines) and seasonality. All of these describe circumstances in which people exist and over which they have limited or no control, and which require coping and adaptation. To be effective, policies and interventions to assist people's coping and adaptive strategies need to be based on understanding how people succeed or fail in the face of shocks, trends and seasonality;
- livelihood strategies considered as the range and combination of activities and choices that people undertake or make from their capital assets to achieve their livelihood goals. They are supported or limited by the PIPs. Mobility and migration is one of the most important livelihood strategies that fishing communities use (including fishermen and women fish processors and/or traders), though others such as learning new skills, developing alternative income options, getting access to better health and education resources, or protecting against the loss of assets can be equally or more important;
- livelihood outcomes include all of what people actually achieve from their livelihoods and/or aspire to achieve in the future (livelihood goals). These livelihood outcomes can also be defined as the expectations of one or more particular development initiatives, commonly involving transforming structures and processes (TSP) to deliver them.

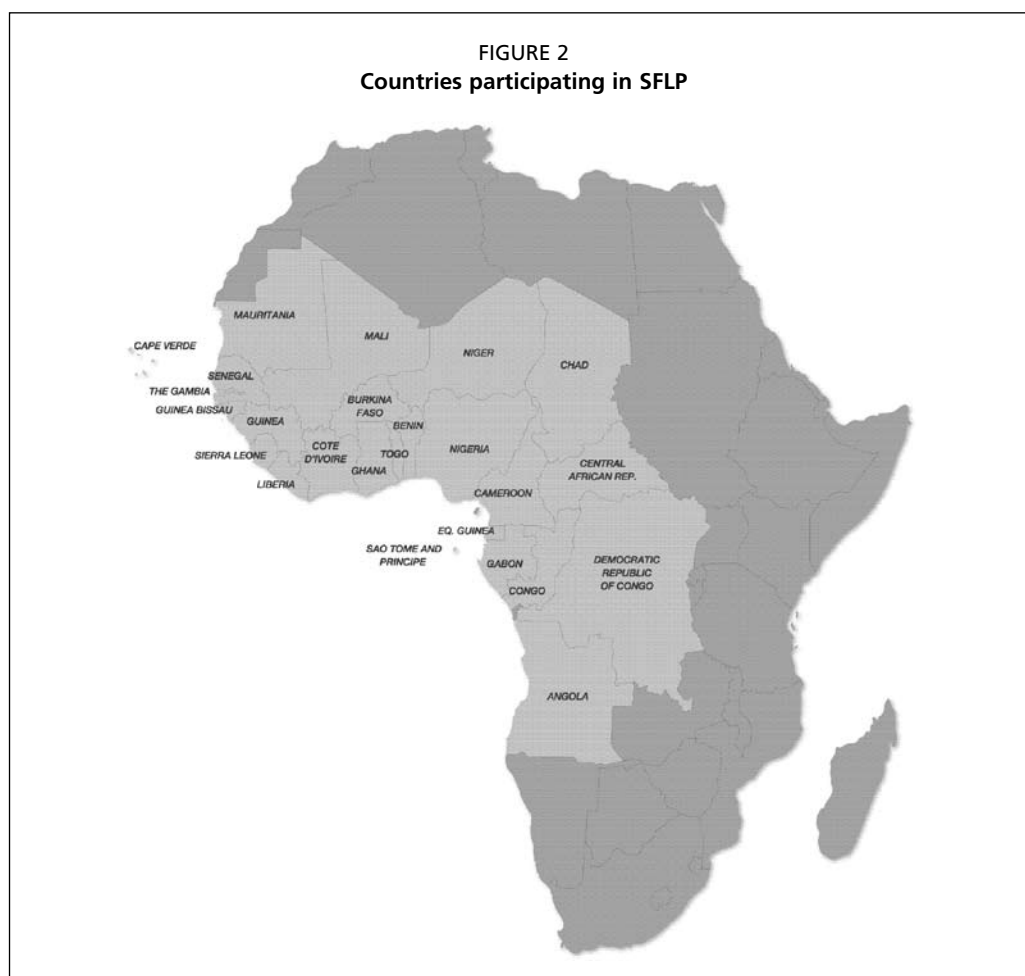
The framework does not and indeed cannot prescribe off the shelf solutions, preconceived "entry points" or instant remedies for how to resolve the causes of poverty. Its application in the fisheries sector is instead intended to help achieve a better understanding of the dimensions and processes of poverty and to address its alleviation and reduction through the same principles (Kuyateh and Monan, 2001). Neither, however is it intended to generate an over-complex approach which would be too difficult to implement, but instead require those involved in the development process, at whatever level, to be reminded of the importance of interactions in and outside communities, and to focus in on those which are most critical, and where attention would result in the most valuable outcomes.

## **BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF SFLP**

### **Combining the Code and SLA for synergistic effects**

The SFLP was a partnership among 25 participating countries in Western and Central Africa,<sup>3</sup> FAO and DFID (see map in Figure 2). The Programme started in November 1999 with funding for seven years. Its overall goal was "to reduce poverty among coastal and inland communities in West Africa through the sustainable use of aquatic resources" and its purpose was "livelihoods of artisanal fisheries communities improved" by the "development of social and human capital in fisheries-dependent

<sup>3</sup> Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.



communities, by enhancing the natural assets of those communities, and by supporting the development of appropriate policy and institutional environments”.

To achieve this objective, the SFLP connected together the Code as a policy guidance instrument for good practice in fish resource use and the SLA as a means of linking small-scale fisheries communities into a mechanism for influencing policy issues, institutional frameworks and processes, and for strengthening assets, reducing vulnerability and thereby reducing potential risks of resource overexploitation. The Code aims to translate the political will of governments and other stakeholders to engage fully in more responsible fisheries exploitation and management, with due regard also for social equity, particularly relevant for the livelihoods of the most vulnerable groups in fishing. To do so it provides a reference policy framework with the principles and criteria applicable for the preservation, management and development of fisheries (FAO, 1995) (see Box 1). For countries to implement the Code, political engagement has to occur in concrete terms, applying objectives and principles at macro, meso and micro levels with measures for long-term conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources through an appropriate policy, a legal and institutional framework.

In West and Central Africa, PIPs are recognized as being critical factors influencing the livelihoods of small-scale fisheries communities. Inadequate or poorly targeted institutional capacity and fragile macro-micro links are considered to be significant constraints in providing support for the communities to improve or maintain fisheries livelihoods (Anon., 2001). Most of the countries in the region have been engaged in poverty-reduction, decentralization and civil service reform processes during the last decade. While these have led to attempts to redefine the roles of central and local governments, to encourage the participation of the primary resource-users in the



## BOX 1

**Key Elements of the Code**

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was adopted by FAO members in October 1995 against a background of widespread international concern over the serious problem confronting fisheries and aquaculture around the world.

One of the objectives of the Code is to establish core-guiding principles that take into account the biological, technological, economic, social, environmental and commercial aspects of responsible fisheries. The Code also serves as a reference and provides guidance to States to improve their legal and institutional frameworks and enter into international agreements. It facilitates co-operation in the conservation, management and development of fishery resources. It promotes the contribution of fisheries to food security, especially at the local level. It promotes the protection of living aquatic resources and their environment, trade, research, and provides standards of conduct for all persons involved in the fisheries sector.

The key elements of the general principles of the Code are to conserve aquatic resources, to secure the availability of resources, to balance fishing effort with the sustainable use of resources, to take account of traditional knowledge, to promote the precautionary principle and co-operate bilaterally and regionally in the research and management of fisheries. The Code aims at promoting the awareness of responsible fisheries through education and training; to involve fishers and fish farmers in policy formulation and implementation; protecting the rights of fishers and fish workers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access to traditional fishing grounds and resources.

*Source:* FAO, 1995.

planning process and natural resources management, and to address micro-macro and cross-sectoral links, the processes may still require to be reinforced. At the commercial, private-sector level, the PIP context is variable, in some cases with growing markets and better opportunities for commercialization, while in others, with competition for resource from industrial fleets, and environmental and access concerns related to oil and gas exploration.

The linking of the SLA as a diagnostic, process and implementation tool for the Code has been a particular area of innovation by the SFLP, and it is useful to set out the connections between the two themes (see Table 1, p.8).

The combined application of the SLA and the Code had been expected to result in a number of favourable outcomes and results (FAO, 2002; Kéb  , 2007). Thus the Code could be used as a sectorally defining policy tool to support and guide the implementation of the SLA in specific instances concerned with PIPs related to the sustainable use of fisheries and aquatic resources. This could be applied in practical terms by providing indirect support to avoid or mitigate negative effects of the external environment, support asset development and to strengthen and diversify livelihoods.

**Background of the SFLP**

The regional development context of SFLP, and the institutions it built from, had their genesis in an earlier broad-based programme targeted at the fisheries sector in West Africa: the Programme for Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries (IDAF). Funded by DANIDA and executed by FAO for fifteen years (1984-1998), IDAF promoted participatory approaches in artisanal fisheries development and management

TABLE 1  
Interactive elements between the Code and the SLA

The Code	SLA	Possible 'disconnections'
Encourages inclusion of socio-economic parameters in decision-making, the protection of the social rights of fisheries workers, and sustainability of the resources within the context of food security and livelihoods improvement in small-scale fisheries.	People are the central focus, rather than the dynamics of the resources that contribute to their livelihoods. Encourages a focus on the sustainability of the livelihood system, rather than just the resource.	The Code emphasizes the preservation and sustainability of natural resources to benefit fisheries stakeholders in general, applying the precautionary principle and managing fishing effort.
Encourages participation and consultation of the communities, then transparency in planning and management. Also encourages consideration for traditional practices and knowledge.	People in the communities are the major stake-holders of the planning process. SLA functions at and across all levels (multisectoral), within the general economic and human development framework, benefiting people whose livelihoods depends to a large extent on small-scale fisheries.	The Code is mainly a sectoral policy instrument, with participation and consultation primarily focused on fisheries and their ecosystems (though influences of external factors are not expressly excluded).
Encourages institutions and processes to improve linkages between the State, its decentralized structures and civil society in definition, implementation and monitoring of fisheries development and management. Also encourages international cooperation, especially for activities that need to be managed supranationally.	Seeks to operationalize actions at several levels (micro-macro linkages). Emphasis on "bottom-up" planning process, addressing aspirations and needs of poor/vulnerable fishing communities, without prejudice to the consequent actions and levels of response.	The Code may be more "prescriptive" with a set of standards and principles to influence Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIP) in the fisheries management process, in principle applicable in wider contexts, while at the same time encouraging: "participatory" planning procedures.
Provides and promotes normative orientation for management strategies based on responsibility-sharing between the State and users in management of the resource (the concept of "co-management").	Encourages partnerships with communities, including NGOs. Can be translated into actions, community-based and otherwise, on any livelihoods entry point (e.g. human, or physical assets, PIP, etc.).	The Code in many circumstances is used a reference document with the major intention of influencing PIP, but not specifically operationalized, as demanded in good SLA practice.
Is stated to recognize the variable and changeable nature of the natural, economic and social environment of the fisheries sector, and the need to take all these into consideration in management.	Explicitly recognizes dynamic aspects of the external environment and its impacts on livelihoods, capacity and ability to deal with resource management and other approach.	Challenges of determining the significance and response action appropriate to sector and non-sector aims.
Encourages wider bases for decision-making, beyond the biological aspects; also stresses the concept of environmental management e.g. for inland fisheries. Article 10 of the Code is especially dedicated to integration of coastal fisheries.	A holistic approach which includes and promotes wider based decision-making and integration of fisheries within broader development themes and aims.	Stronger and more explicit the Code focus on resource and environmental criteria may not be matched in wider social/community targets based on exigencies of current livelihoods.
Prepared in line with the Rio (UNCED, 1992) principles of sustainable development.	Is inclusive of and stresses the concept of sustainability.	Aspects of sustainability may have different emphasis – e.g. resource vs. social welfare.

Source: Developed from Kébé, 2007.

in the 20 coastal countries which are now the core participants of SFLP, and was instrumental in associating them in a regional fisheries network. Though largely predating both the Code and the SLA, the programme contained a number of elements and approaches which could be seen as valuable primers for the focused and more methodologically defined concepts of the Code and hence the SFLP.

At a regional workshop in Cotonou in June 1998, representatives of the 20 IDAF countries expressed their commitment to use the Code as the framework for planning and management of their fisheries sectors and officially requested external support to take up the challenge to do so. During the same year, DFID adopted a Thematic Initiative in support of Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, and a joint DFID/FAO appraisal resulted in a programme-concept focusing on 25 West and Central African countries with large numbers of fisheries-dependent communities whose populations are known to be poor.

Approval of the concept by DFID, FAO and the potential partner governments led to a Programme formulation process between January and May 1999, involving field visits to a selected

number of countries by a DFID/FAO team. A participatory planning workshop involving 90 representatives from governments, NGOs, fishers, fish traders and fish processors from the 25 countries designed the skeleton of what became SFLP, which was officially agreed between DFID and FAO in October 1999 (Anon., 1999).

- The Programme's intervention was based on three underlying premises:
- that there are significant threats and constraints to the sustainable use of aquatic resources by artisanal fisheries communities;
- that SLA and the Code could be used as a guide to improve livelihoods, and reduce poverty, by removing or mitigating these threats and constraints through responsible management; and
- that government and communities can through co-management share responsibilities for sustainable use and equitable delivery of benefits to stakeholders, promoting the most appropriate approach to addressing constraints.

### **Programme structure and processes of implementation**

The SFLP was designed to assist partner governments in using SLA to formulate policies and plans which take into account the artisanal fishing sector and the principles of the Code. It also helped poor local communities in developing their capacity to participate more directly and effectively in fisheries planning and management. Its strategy centred on stakeholder participation and capacity building for implementing the Code, both generally and specifically with regard to small-scale fisheries, using SLA. Hence the project concept note and plan emphasised building human and social capital as the means to make both resource governance and poverty reduction initiatives more effective.

The SFLP organizational framework comprised: (i) a Programme Steering Committee (PSC), with advisory functions; (ii) a Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) in FAO HQ Rome with strategic oversight, administrative and managerial responsibility; (iii) a Regional Support Unit (RSU) in Cotonou, Benin which handled operations and (iv) a National Coordination Unit (NCU) based in each of the 25 participating countries (Horemans, 2004). In each participating country, the NCU served as interface between the RSU and the administration (relevant government and local government authorities), partners and fishing communities in the concerned country. Its functions were to ensure the coordination of the many and various actions to be taken in the country and to specifically supervise and monitor the implementation of activities promoted or supported by SFLP (Konan and Holvoet, 2007). Intended to be based on a wider range of technical, community, development and commercial agents, linking fishery sector skills and interests with others, they were also encouraged to become increasingly autonomous bodies, with a greater potential for longer term interaction and development impact, beyond the lifetime of the SFLP itself.

The strength and capacity of the NCUs not unexpectedly varied across member countries, depending on staff and resources available and on the opportunities for NCUs to develop and learn from SFLP and other development activities. Nevertheless, the SFLP experienced that the NCUs were indispensable in implementing a programme across such a wide regional coverage. Moreover, by taking ownership of local activities, these national representative bodies were in a position, at the end of SFLP, to extend the momentum beyond the programme period.

The SFLP provided assistance to participating countries in the form of investment and staff support in three main areas, i.e. institutional and policy development, community projects and pilot projects. An essential feature was that they were intended as learning and strengthening processes for all those engaged in the projects, activities and interactions developed, and that there would be processes of reflection and assessment among participants at a range of levels.

Institutional Support projects were aimed at improving the PIP context and strengthening and making more sustainable the benefits potentially deliverable to

fishing communities. This included support to representative groups which integrate the poor, improve service delivery to artisanal fishing communities, participation of fisheries communities in the design and implementation of policies and processes that affect their livelihoods, and communication about SLA within the Code at all levels. The primary and most important range of Institutional Support projects were identified in the early stages of the SFLP by the participating countries on the basis of their needs and priorities. Other themes were developed through these projects from experience gained during the life of the Programme. A major intervention was the support provided to selected participating countries to inform and influence a range of national policies (for poverty reduction, micro-finance provision, HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care, literacy provision, etc.) to be more favourable to fishing communities (See also Chapter 4).

*Community projects* were the most numerous and diverse component of SFLP interventions. They were designed as small investment projects with the objective of strengthening the capacities of communities and the cohesion of national and regional networks. They focused on poverty reduction, building social and economic opportunities and potentially attracting more development interaction. They also offered the opportunity for countries not directly involved in subregional Pilot Projects (see below) to participate in the Programme, and among all countries, to share and compare experiences and lessons. Community Projects were to be conceived and implemented directly by the communities, together with, as appropriate, external agents such the NCUs, NGOs and service providers.

Community Projects were also set up as action research initiatives, the main focus being on people rather than fish. They were intended to support and be part of a dynamic process of change within communities and could be multisectoral, linking fishing people and activities into a wider network of options. An important feature in all Community Projects was the different ways in which administrations were encouraged to become visible and active partners of communities. Later assessments (Holvoet, 2007) suggested that in the majority of the Community Projects, the conventional administration bodies had to put aside their assumptions and practices and start analysing situations and defining solutions together with local partners.

In the early stages of the SFLP, community sensitisation and capacity-building activities were undertaken to develop reflection, analysis and dialogue within communities in each participating country. This provided the opportunity to explain the SLA and how communities should think of their project's activities in terms of improving their livelihoods. This exercise was carried out by support teams (comprising NCUs members, extension workers or NGO members) who were familiar with the SLA and the Code principles. To facilitate their task, the SFLP had also established a capacity-building programme with training sessions in participatory development to help the NCUs in Community Project identification, formulation and implementation process

The second stage of the process of identification and formulation of Community Projects involved a participatory diagnosis of the livelihoods of fisheries communities using the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method. This field exercise of livelihood analysis and planning allowed the fishing communities themselves to identify their strengths and livelihoods assets, and the existing opportunities to improve their livelihoods. During the discussion of potential solutions to problems identified, the community considered ways to include relevant technical information on cost, feasibility, ecological impact, sustainability and reliance on local skills. The technical options provided the opportunity for community to be integrated into a single strategy in the Community Action Plan (CAP) which was prepared at the end of the exercise (Kuyateh and Monan, 2001). Typically then, one of the priority actions of this CAP

was funded by the SFLP as a Community Project, and technical support was provided to the fishing community by the NCU for partnership development to implement the other actions. This process gave the community a longer term vision (usually 2-3 years and onwards), which helped the identification of partners according to the identified priorities and facilitated the necessary decisions and mechanisms for participatory monitoring. On the basis of lessons learned through the SFLP over the first two years and to facilitate field work in later stages of the programme, a guide for the preparation of Community Projects was developed in collaboration with NCUs and NGOs. This guide highlighted the successive stages to take into account during the process of identification, formulation and implementation of a community project (see SFLP, 2002). It was also intended to promote the SLA and the Code as vital instruments for poverty reduction in fisheries communities.

The common implementation arrangement used in Community Projects, linking macro and meso level administration agents with NGOs, stakeholders and the communities in one process was a challenge and an important change in the way of working, both for FAO and for government departments. This approach was not always considered to be necessary or relevant at the start of projects, but in most countries these reservations were overcome and NCU, NGOs and fishing communities started to establish new relationships, with varying levels of interaction. As a result, where this started to work, power sharing and learning from each other became more widely applied than before.

Collaboration with partners and NGOs well acquainted with participatory methods and processes proved to be very important during the execution of the Community Projects (as well as of the Pilot Projects, see below) as these aimed to work with people in the poorer layers of society, and develop action research and learning processes to build and disseminate solutions. The NCUs, as stakeholders themselves, were to learn from the lessons and experiences in the Community and Pilot projects in order to replicate these in other communities. Institutional support projects also made it possible to assist these processes of replication and dissemination, and influencing of policies (Holvoet, 2007).

The purpose of the *Pilot Projects* was to explore major themes at a larger scale and interactive level, involving a range of complementary and/or comparative countries and social/environmental contexts within the wider SFLP grouping. These went beyond the delivery of specific benefits to individual communities by aiming to involve all key decision makers and administrators, establishing national institutions and processes to sustain and replicate the benefits derived from the various SFLP activities. Like the Community Projects, these were conceived as action research and learning processes, effectively forming the operational framework (institutions and processes) within which Community Projects and related initiatives could interact to build up stable, long-term, fisheries community livelihoods (Blake and Coutts, 2001).

Pilot Projects were large investment initiatives – though, in principle, not infrastructure development activities – selected and developed to address significant common issues or constraints which clearly related to livelihood security in poor fisheries communities. The issues and approaches for the Pilot Projects and the chosen countries were identified and selected through a participatory process by the stakeholders in the 25 countries, itself conceived as an extensive learning and capacity building exercise for the NCUs and other agencies involved. Three Pilot Projects operated in twelve countries (four per project) during the latter part of the SFLP, and focussed on broad themes within the fisheries sector: (i) inland fisheries co-management, (ii) coastal fisheries participatory management, and (iii) post-harvest livelihoods. Countries were selected on the basis of relevance and importance of the themes, comparative learning value, capacity and multiplier potential, and their willingness to address the issues involved.

### Aims and expectations

The SFLP was expected to have an impact both at the local level and in a wider policy context. In accordance with the Programme's objectives, communities, resource users and local governments in participating countries would improve their capacity to participate in the management of the resources they depended on for their livelihoods. Awareness and knowledge with regard to the need to use resources judiciously and to pay attention to the state of the environment would be enhanced. Livelihoods of poor households dependent on fishery and aquatic resources would be secured and improved. Moreover, based on its field experience, the Programme would have generated lessons learned and best practices that could be disseminated at a global level and fed into both fisheries and development policy work (Anon., 1999). On the basis of the revised logical framework approved by the Programme Steering Committee (Blake, 2001), the SFLP was expected specifically to:

- support the national governments to improve their fisheries plans and policies through adoption of relevant Code principles, and their poverty alleviation planning by taking account of fisheries community needs;
- help the communities and their partners to improve their capacity to participate in planning and management for fisheries livelihoods;
- establish functioning co-management systems for government and communities;
- support enhanced and/or protected ecosystems and resources;
- improve the efficiency of the whole system of artisanal fisheries by enhancing the economic and social benefits;
- disseminate experience and knowledge gained through the implementation of the various activities.

By any standards such a list of expectations would be ambitious, in particular considering that the SFLP was pioneering an approach in a large-scale programme and developing methodologies at the same time. Strictly speaking, there were few definitions of the scale, quality or extent these elements were to be achieved, but a definable change in each was intended. To bring this about, in conjunction with the project structure outlined earlier, the SFLP carried out an equally ambitious work programme. By the end of the programme, as externally evaluated, its main activities and outputs could be summarized as (Cunningham and Holleran, 2007):

- institution building of 25 National Coordination Units (NCUs);
- production of Field Studies (poverty profiles, economic contribution of fisheries, etc);
- 83 Community Projects in 23 countries;
- three Pilot Projects operating in 12 countries (four countries in each pilot project);
- Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) outputs: policy briefs, a book, articles, guidelines
- Regional Support Unit (RSU) communication outputs: e.g. newsletters, (Liaison Bulletin and Info-Flash), community theatre, radio programmes, videos, pilot project communication strategies, a library, a web site.

The question of the interaction and impact of the output components in meeting the original aims and expectations has been reviewed in specific detail in mid-term and final evaluations (Muir *et al.*, 2000; Cunningham and Holleran, 2007) Prior to the final evaluation, and in an attempt to better document the outcomes and lessons learned for wider dissemination, the SFLP interventions were grouped into four major themes. These were identified as being capable of providing clear messages that could help strengthen the FAO normative functions and enhance FAO's capacity for contributing to international development goals. These four themes were:

1. participation of communities in fisheries enhancement, inland fisheries co-management, coastal fisheries participatory management and protection of ecosystems;

2. integration of fisheries communities in local development, including capacity building (on co-management, infrastructures management, participation in local development and conflicts management);
3. market access and improvements in marketing (post-harvest technology and market issues); and
4. integration of the fisheries sector in national development policies.

A fifth crosscutting theme was then added to collect lessons concerning transversal issues of gender, HIV/AIDS and communications.

This arrangement of themes was valuable in pulling together the very diverse results of the SFLP's work, and provided useful reflection for participants at a range of levels, in contributing background to final stage materials and discussions, and then in informing much of the thought and content of the more specifically targeted themes in this paper. Some of the main experiences emerging from and related to these themes and issues are summarized in the following section.

## EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES

### Putting emerging concepts into practice in SFLP

An important experience of SFLP was the affirmation of the value of applying new working methods to address the issues relating to the promotion of responsible fisheries and poverty reduction in fishing communities. While many of the approaches and methodologies used by the Programme were not new to the theory or practice of development as such, the SFLP's holistic approach pioneered their combination within the SLA framework in the fisheries sector. This linked in turn with the practical testing and implementation of the broad policy instrument afforded by the Code. The SFLP also generated significant practical experience in implementing a wide range of approaches within this. Some of the main conclusions for these are summarized below:

- focus on reducing vulnerability through cross-sectoral approaches: With respect to development strategy, the SFLP proposed that key ways to reduce poverty among fishing-dependent people were to decrease their vulnerability and marginalization. Constraints to achieving poverty eradication in fishing communities were to be found both within the sector and outside it. Within the sector, particular issues were the inadequate institutional arrangements for the management of coastal and inland fish resources and for the protection and conservation of critical fish habitats. Externally, notable issues included inadequate access to, or utilization of, social infrastructure such as schools and health services. The situation had been commonly worsened because fishing people would often have limited alternative livelihood options, making them vulnerable to changes in the condition of, and access to, the aquatic resources on which they depend. Programme activities were specifically aimed to address such constraints;
- addressing exclusion and marginalisation: The SFLP experiences also showed the need to determine mechanisms of exclusion within communities, in order to understand particular aspects of vulnerability and the more specific ways to address them. This was done through diagnostic tools such as poverty profiles, the sustainable livelihoods approach, and gender analysis, the use of which was also valuable in local awareness raising and capacity building. Many of the elements of success of SFLP interventions involving marginalised groups had then been due to the use of concepts central to the SLA, looking at ways to build on strengths, improve resilience, and mechanisms for identifying and supporting opportunities;
- capacity building and organizational development: the SFLP recognised at an early stage the need to strengthen and empower fishing communities and their organizations, to allow them to effectively engage in local development and



co-management for responsible fisheries. The range of activities carried out in this respect had been broad and included, among other things, basic literacy training and the development and support to community-based organizations (CBOs). Capacity building was also important at the meso levels and the involvement of Fisheries Administrative Officers in implementing activities of the Programme through the NCUs helped them to acquire new skills, especially in the participatory appraisal of livelihoods (PRA/SLA, the Code project formulation and management). Some carried out studies that also provided wider opportunities for learning. All these skills that are now available in the various Fisheries Departments and other agencies are valuable capital assets;

- partnership development: the holistic approach adopted opened up new prospects for the development of cross-sector partnerships to the benefit of the fisheries sector and fishing communities. Partnerships have been sought and established with a much wider range of organizations than previously linked with fisheries departments and ministries in West and Central Africa (SFLP 2005). This has enabled a wider scope of interventions, for example linking with the Ministry of Health and NGOs to address HIV/AIDS or linking with micro-finance institutions and banks to offer more effective credit designed specifically for the fisheries sector, particularly with an equitable access for marginalised groups;
- micro-macro linkages: People and groups were involved at the micro (household and community), meso (local agencies, NGOs) and macro (national sectoral and non-sectoral agencies) levels, and opportunities created for better interaction, and for the defining shared purposes and ways of addressing them. An important element of the SFLP approach was the building of micro-macro linkages in order to bring about change. This has involved integrating fisheries into national policies and strategies, adopting and applying legislation and involving communities in plans and implementation. The meso-level, linking local agencies between local issues and needs, and national aims and policies, is critical in this process. The strength of this approach is also in setting up and supporting feedback loops that allow experience at grass-roots level to influence policy direction. A particular illustration is that of integrating the fisheries sector within national poverty reduction policies and strategies, but in addition to this the SFLP has been working within a number of countries to integrate the fisheries sector within national HIV/AIDS strategies, micro-finance programmes, gender strategies and literacy training, ensuring that fishing communities receive the policy attention and practical support they need to reduce the vulnerability and marginalization;
- participatory planning: As an exploratory and integrating tool for many of these interventions and processes, the participatory planning exercises carried out within the SFLP was a particularly valuable component of the learning process it promoted in West and Central Africa.

### **Achievements and lessons learned**

The measurement of impact over a wide and complex programme engaging in a wide variety of initiatives and varying scalar and organizational levels is a formidable if not an impossible challenge. This is always more challenging within the wider contexts of change, when the countries and communities in the SFLP are subject to many other forces and influences, and in the relatively short time since the programme in its original form was completed. The immediate outputs and outcomes are summarized below and discussed in fuller detail in the next sections of this technical paper, The more intangible, but in many ways more essential consequences were those which emerge during and beyond the programme in the form of ideas and policy influence, institutional change, differences in attitude, behaviour, ways of doing things, differences in opportunity, choice and confidence, and reductions in vulnerability, poverty, and resource stress.

The real measure of these will come about among communities and national organizations in coming years, in the processes and directions of new rounds of development investment, building effectively on the platform of the SFLP, in the resources of the region and in the resourcefulness of its people. At this stage at least, a number of lessons can be learned which combined with Field Studies, Policy Briefs, and with a wide range of experience gained among communities, sector agents and development practitioners, represents a substantial experiential base for future benefit to continued efforts towards development and responsible fisheries by communities and their development partners.

One of the primary lessons concerns the possibility of reconciling responsible fisheries with poverty reduction. In many views these have been considered to be opposing objectives. Thus many approaches to fisheries management seek to control access or reduce effort, potentially marginalising or excluding the poor from access to resources. Conversely an aim to increase incomes of fishing communities through increased exploitation of resources can threaten sustainability. The SFLP approach has attempted to challenge this assumption, essentially by proposing that poverty can be addressed – indeed needs to be, through a wider perspective than that of resource exploitation alone. Addressing poverty is not necessarily about increasing incomes through increasing fish catches, but about understanding and dealing with vulnerability, and exploring wider livelihood options, in and outside the sector. It is also about improving access to services to reduce vulnerability and ensuring the inclusion of stakeholders and marginalised groups in institutional processes. Applying this perspective, experience within 25 West and Central African countries has shown that not only it is possible to address the two objectives of poverty reduction and responsible fisheries together, but it is necessary to tackle them both for the long term sustainability of fisheries livelihoods (SFLP, 2005). Some of the more specific elements of this, and other lessons learned in the SFLP experience, as detailed further in respective chapters of this paper, are outlined below.

#### *Analysing and addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty*

At the core of SLA is the recognition that poverty is multidimensional and complex, requiring diversified and dynamic actions. SFLP raised the awareness of the usefulness of SLA and of the relevance of the Code not just in resource management but for addressing issues of poverty and equity associated with the sector. The various methodologies developed and used by SFLP for the participatory diagnoses of fishing community livelihoods and for poverty profiling were shown to be powerful tools for understanding the processes and characteristics of poverty, and for communicating this wider perspective to local and national agencies. From this understanding of poverty, there have now also arisen various projects aimed at supporting community approaches to change and opportunity, and on using these interventions to inform and influence higher-level policy. (See Chapter 2).

#### *Re-assessing the economic contribution of fisheries to national economies*

The methodological guide developed within the SFLP to assess the contribution of small-scale fisheries to national economies was used to conduct case studies in 15 participating countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Mauritania, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Senegal, Cape Verde and Sao Tome & Principe). In many countries, these case studies have altered the perception of the fisheries sector, by showing that its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is notably greater than had commonly been described in national statistics. In addition to clarifying the fisheries sector's role in GDP, the studies also provided useful information concerning other economic aggregates, such as comparative added value per person employed, the size and scope of multiplier effects, the impacts in trade, and

the contribution of the sector to government resources and hard currency reserves. (See Chapter 3).

#### *Mainstreaming fisheries in national policies*

Partly as a consequence of defining the economic contribution of fisheries in the region, it was then possible to integrate the fisheries sector better into national policies and strategies. This has been a key area of success of SFLP initiatives across West and Central Africa. The fisheries sector has often been considered as very marginal, with limited significance to poverty reduction. It has therefore rarely been given priority in national development plans or in the poverty reduction strategies of West and Central African countries. Putting across the case that the fisheries sector is important in providing employment, income generation, food security and a safety net has therefore resulted in a greater coverage of the fisheries sector in national strategies. This in turn has significant impacts on sustaining key resources over the longer term, on local and national poverty reduction, and on national food supply and security. (See Chapter 4).

#### *Introducing institutional innovations in fisheries co-management*

The Programme addressed poverty by specifically targeting the resource users in artisanal fishing communities, small-scale traders, processors (mainly women), and consumers. The Programme's focus on improved management combined with social development in fishing communities as well as with its focus on helping to improve government capacity for policy formulation, planning and management have been the essential elements of its relevance to sustainable development. The consequent increase of institutional capacity has supported fisheries co-management and the empowerment of fishing communities, including vulnerable groups, in the decision-making process involved. (See Chapter 5).

#### *Taking account of fishing people's mobility and migration patterns*

One of the livelihood strategies often applied by fishing communities in West Africa is migration. Migration is undertaken for a number of reasons among which economic factors are the most important. A better understanding of the mobility and migration patterns of fishers and other fishing community members is needed to inform fisheries management policies and poverty reduction strategies. Migration constitutes an opportunity both for the host country and the country of origin. The current lack of detailed information on the characteristics of migrant fishing people makes it difficult to establish the necessary measures for the protection of their rights and to formulate policies that are supportive of migration. (See Chapter 6).

#### *Synergies between microfinance services, capacity building and livelihoods diversification*

The economic environment in poor rural communities can be characterized by two main attributes: monetary transactions are often in small amounts and there is a high level of insecurity and risk with regard to money flows. Financial services for fishing communities need to be adapted to these conditions as well as to the specificities of the fisheries sector. The SFLPs experience showed that capacity building and organizational development are key elements of interventions aiming to allow poor and vulnerable groups access to microfinance services. Microfinance can play an important role in livelihood diversification, which is an important component in promoting responsible fisheries and decreasing vulnerability. A holistic and poverty focused approach in microfinance can contribute significantly to sustainable development. (See Chapter 7).

### *Changing ways of working through innovations in communication*

Information and communication (IC) is a cross-cutting theme playing an important role at all levels and phases of project planning and implementation. While SFLP was successful in its application of IC in some areas, the complexity of the Programme and the lack of a clear communication strategy made it more difficult in others. At the field level, successful new approaches to communication were a core change in the ways of working with fishing communities and other partners. Rather than seeing communication as the linear and usually unidirectional dissemination of information from formal sources of knowledge to deprived recipients, a number of interventions placed and used communications at the heart of their activities, in a much more open and discursive way to engage with partners and bring about change. This involved using communication methods that were relevant to stakeholders and to the tasks at hand, contributing to a shared perspective on a range of issues and responses. (see Chapter 8).

### *Responding to HIV and AIDS in fishing communities*

Recent studies have shown that fishing communities in many developing countries frequently suffer from HIV prevalence rates many times higher than those of the general population. The SFLP's work in fishing communities in Benin and Congo included participatory socio-behavioural studies, identifying transactional sex patterns and risk behaviour. Working closely together with communities and, at the same time lobbying at higher political levels, brought about important support action for addressing HIV/AIDS in the two countries. The Programme also brought attention to the fact that the pandemic is not only a local issue but a regional one because of the mobility and migration of people. Major challenges remain with regard to mobilising national responses to gender issues with regard to HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector. Increased integration of gender and HIV/AIDS concerns in the fishery strategies and development plans are needed. (See Chapter 9).

### *Gender and fisheries*

The gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the SFLP was consistent with the call for holistic approaches within livelihoods programmes: people-centred approaches that require cross-sectoral, cross-ministerial and cross-organizational cooperation. Gender concerns exist at all levels – among households, communities, meso actors and at the national policy – and analyzing gender relations and mainstreaming become more effective if bottom-up and top-down processes are implemented at the same time. The proposed way forward to achieve improved gender equality in fisheries includes increased application of gender analysis by fisheries departments. There is a need to develop sector specific gender strategies at the same time as engaging in overall mainstreaming processes and ensuring that gender equity is an integral part of the development objectives for the fisheries sector. (See Chapter 10).

### *The future*

It is that clear that the SFLP has contributed to creating an enabling environment for the small-scale fisheries sector and its people, and has had a definable impact at the policy level, e.g. inclusion of fisheries in national development plans and in poverty reduction strategies, improved legal frameworks and increased awareness of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities. The Programme has also raised the awareness of SLA and the Code, as well as the profile of small-scale fisheries in the development arena, including in FAO itself. Tangible results have also been achieved locally but the experience of the Programme also shows clearly that it takes a significant amount of time to bring a wider range of results to sustainability and to induce firm and durable political and institutional changes that allow for wider impact.

The SFLP has laid an important foundation in the West and Central African region. Further efforts are now needed to ensure that the outcome achieved will be sustained and reinforced (Cunningham and Holleran, 2007) (see Chapter 11).

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## 2. Analysing and addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty

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### INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, a significant evolution has taken place in the international development community with regard to the understanding of poverty and how to achieve poverty reduction. From having mainly related poverty to income and consumption, the World Development Report of 1990 promoted a move towards a multidimensional definition by suggesting a two-part strategy for poverty reduction consisting of labour-intensive economic growth combined with the provision of basic health and education services to poor people. In the 1990s, the importance of governance and institutions were recognised and the concept of social networks and the place of poor people in these networks became part of the poverty picture (World Bank, 2001; Bastiaensen, De Herdt and Vaessen, 2002). A social capital perspective emerged together with the political dimension of social exclusion as an explanatory factor for poverty. It was recognised that groups of people may be excluded from fully participating in political, social and economic life due to constraints created by their relationships with the more powerful and that policies, institutions and processes (PIP) influence people's possibilities to overcome poverty (Bastiaensen, De Herdt and Vaessen, 2002; Allison and Horemans, 2006). Moreover, the importance of vulnerability was acknowledged, being "a function of the risks to which people may be exposed, the sensitivity of their livelihood system to those risks, and their ability to adapt to, cope with, or recover from the impacts of an external 'shock' to their livelihood system" (Allison and Horemans, 2006, pp. 757-758).

Analogous to the development of the understanding of poverty, definitions and indicators aiming at describing and measuring poverty have evolved and a number of different methodologies exist. For example, at the global and national level, the UNDP Human Development Index – first introduced in 1990 – combines "indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and income into a composite human development index" (UNDP undated, webpage) in the Human Development Reports. Since 1997, UNDP also compiles information on human poverty (the Human Poverty Index) and gender equality (Gender-related Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure) reflecting the recognition of the complexity of human development and poverty aspects (UNDP, undated).

When adding qualitative aspects to the predominantly quantitative income-related indicators mainly used earlier, more participatory approaches to defining and understanding poverty are needed. In the World Bank's report 'Voices of the poor' (Narayan *et al.*, 2000), poverty is described by using poor people's own perceptions, summarising them into a number of interrelated dimensions of ill-being and bad quality of life such as inadequate assets, physical ill-being, unequal gender relations, discriminating social relations, insecurity and disrespect, lacking or weak institutions and organizations, and lack of education, information and confidence.

Using a human rights perspective to define poverty enhances the understanding of many of the vulnerability issues and allows looking at not only resources but also



at the capabilities, choices, security and power required to enjoy basic civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The United Nations Social and Economic Council (ECOSOC) proposes the following definition of poverty: “a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights” (ECOSOC, 2001, point 8).

Small-scale fishing communities have long been considered to be among the ‘poorest of the poor’. This is explained by a number of factors including, for example, the often remote location of fishing villages and hence limited access to health and educational services, limited access to financial credits because of lack of collateral, and exposure to natural disasters in coastal areas. More importantly, it has been argued that poverty in fisheries is related to the uncertain or – nowadays in many areas increasingly – low level of fishery resources. This argument relates to the common property nature of the fishery resources and their overexploitation because open access leads to more and more people fishing. However, as in the general discussion on poverty referred to above, there has recently been a growing understanding that poverty in fishing communities is a complex issue and that socio-institutional aspects are more important than pure economic or biological considerations. This would mean that although overfishing and potential depletion of fishery resources constitute a real threat to many coastal livelihoods, the “social positions and institutional arrangements controlling the access to, and the use of, these resources [...] play a more critical role in determining poverty” (Béné, 2003, page 968).

This argument has important consequences for small-scale fisheries management in a poverty context. Addressing poverty requires that marginalised groups are included in the institutional processes related to resource management and new institutional approaches are needed to ensure effective fisheries co-management. However, due to their continuing social exclusion and vulnerability, fishing people may lack the capacity and incentive to participate in resource management and these aspects of poverty need to be addressed first, or simultaneously.

The SFLP fully recognised poverty to be complex and multidimensional, requiring an in-depth and holistic analysis. The multifaceted character of the poverty context – including the interrelationships among poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation – forms the basic analytical framework used in the sustainable livelihoods approach (see Chapter 1). This chapter describes the SFLP SLA-based poverty profile methodology and how the process of developing the profiles as well as the information generated were used as the basic building blocks for formulating development interventions in participation with the concerned communities. The profiles constituted a powerful tool for understanding poverty and the poor, and for addressing poverty and fisheries management in an effective manner. The chapter includes highlights from some of the poverty profiles developed for individual areas and countries as well as examples of how the profiles were used in subsequent development interventions.

## **POVERTY PROFILING**

Poverty profiles – or livelihood profiles or assessments as they are also called – have been used by several development agencies in various countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia since the late 1990s (Pittaluga, Salvati and Seghieri, 2004). A poverty profile describes groups of poor people, defined according to their livelihood systems and other characteristics. The questions that poverty profiles help answer include who the poor are in a particular geographic area, why they are poor and what specific actions are required to address their needs (Pittaluga, Corcoran and Senahoun, 2004). Poverty profiles are hence analytical instruments that provide information to help formulate actions for poverty reduction. They can be carried out at the national level or for more limited areas such as a community. National level poverty assessments using secondary

data and participatory methods are key tools in countries preparing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in line with World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) requirements (World Bank Web site; Macfadyen and Corcoran, 2002).

The SFLP methodology used for poverty profiling had its origin in work by FAO in the early 2000s (see, for example, FAO, 2001). Although the methodology evolved over time and the focus of the analysis was somewhat different in different countries (see also below), the main principles of the approach can be summarized as follows:

- “Use of the Livelihood System as the ‘lens of analysis’;
- zero-in approach (from larger units of analysis to smaller ones);
- participation at macro- meso- and micro-levels;
- use of unwritten information vested in the institutional memories of stakeholders at meso level;
- use of mixed sets of qualitative-quantitative methods for data collection and analysis”

(Pittaluga, Salvati and Seghieri, 2004, p. 11)

Using a livelihood systems approach facilitated a holistic analysis covering the existing multitude of poverty facets – i.e. human, natural, financial, physical and social capitals – and including the important aspects of social exclusion and vulnerability. The vulnerability aspect of poverty was documented in depth and analysed at different levels. The vulnerability factors were discussed and analysed with representatives of institutions at the meso level and during focus group meetings at the village level. The vulnerability at the household level was discussed during the analysis of the characteristics of different poverty categories and the perception of poverty. There was however no specific exercise to address issues of exclusion and only a few of the poverty profiles did mention factors leading to exclusion (e.g. in Congo and the Gambia).

In order to understand the full extent of the livelihood system, a zero-in approach was used. A national or regional poverty profile takes a somewhat different focus than one at the community level but in both cases it is important to include stakeholders at all relevant levels. Reality is not always understood in the same way by everyone. Sometimes overarching policy mechanisms are not clear to the village or household members, which is why it is important to also directly include higher institutional levels in a local poverty analysis. By including the participation of people at the macro (e.g. national or regional), meso (e.g. subregion or department) and micro (village or household) levels, a full range of interpretations of the various structures and relationships relevant to the livelihood system of the local community could be captured (Pittaluga, Salvati and Seghieri, 2004).

The profiling exercises combined written and oral information and it was found that a substantial amount of information often exists within development institutions or with individuals at the meso level who work with local communities. While some of this information may be available in reports and documents, other is not and it can only be accessed by oral communication (Pittaluga, Salvati and Seghieri, 2004).

The SFLP poverty profiling sought to combine full stakeholder participation and scientific principles and initially extensive quantitative data were used in addition to qualitative information. (Pittaluga, Salvati and Seghieri 2004). The first poverty profiles carried out by the programme concerned lakeside communities in four countries – Burkina Faso (Lake Bagré and Lake Kompienga), Côte d’Ivoire (Lake Kossou), Ghana (Lake Volta) and Mali (Lake Sélingué) – and included detailed questionnaire surveys of which the results were analysed statistically. The results of the assessments fed into the formulation process for the Pilot Project on co-management in inland waters.<sup>4</sup> As

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1 for an overview of the SFLP project activities and Chapter 5 for more information on the co-management initiatives.

## BOX 2

**Poverty profiling processes in Lake Sélingué, Mali, and in Lake Volta, Ghana**

The poverty profiling surveys in Mali and Ghana started with analyses of existing secondary data, focusing on information on artisanal fisheries livelihoods, poverty and food security issues, existing experience of co-management of natural resources, and institutions working with small-scale fishers. This was followed by collection of data and discussions in the field. In Ghana, one-day workshops were organised bringing together officials, private sector representatives and civil society key informants from the five administrative districts on and around the southern shore of Lake Volta. These workshops discussed large-scale dynamics affecting the communities in the different districts.

The community level field surveys were carried out by multidisciplinary teams including specialists in gender, socio-economics and fisheries and focused on a selected number of villages in the areas that had been proposed for participating in the SFLP inland water co-management Pilot Project (eight villages out of 72 in Mali and 35 out of 100 in Ghana). Three main types of exercises took place:

- Discussions in focus groups consisting of representatives of community institutions and key informants (e.g. the village chiefs, school principles, heads of socio-professional associations).
- Participatory discussions, using PRA tools (e.g. wealth ranking and Venn diagrams), with community members in groups according to gender and age.
- Questionnaire surveys based on SLA.

The questionnaire surveys were constructed in different ways in the two countries. In Mali, the household was the unit of analysis and the questions focused on household demographics and assets, participation in and use of institutions and services, access to natural resources, current livelihood strategies, and access to financial services. In Ghana, the analysis took place at the village level and the questionnaires were constructed based on Likert scales<sup>1</sup>.

In the data analysis process, the accumulated qualitative information was first analysed to arrive at a local perspective of poverty and to attempt to classify the population into wealth classes. These findings were then compared with the results of the statistical analysis of the data collected by questionnaire. In Mali, a set of indicators was combined into a general poverty index using fuzzy sets statistical analysis. This permitted the incorporation of different aspects of livelihoods (e.g. assets, vulnerability and resilience levels) into a composite index that could be used for, among other things, monitoring purposes and comparisons between villages.

<sup>1</sup> Likert scales are commonly used in questionnaire surveys asking respondents to tell to which degree they agree with a certain statement. An example from the Lake Volta survey is the statement 'Fish catches over the past 5 years have...' 1. substantially decreased. 2. somewhat decreased. 3. remained stable. 4. slightly increased. 5. increased considerably (Pittaluga *et al.*, 2003).

Source: Pittaluga *et al.*, undated; Pittaluga, Salvati and Seghieri, 2004.

examples of this methodology, the procedures followed for the poverty profiles of Lake Sélingué in Mali and southern Lake Volta in Ghana are summarized in Box 2.

However, the methodology proved to be time-consuming and required skills in statistical analysis that were not generally available locally. Also, the statistical models used were over-parameterised causing problems at the analysis stage. For the

continuation of the poverty profile exercises that were carried out for the formulation of the Pilot Projects on maritime co-management and on improvements in the post-harvest subsector<sup>4</sup>, a simplified methodology was used, focusing more on qualitative information. The process included a review of secondary information followed by a brainstorming session with representatives of institutions at the district level and focus group discussions with community members in a sample of villages. In these discussions, community members were divided into groups according to gender, age, ethnic group or any other characteristic likely to determine significant differences in perceptions. A wide spectrum of stakeholders was involved and local perceptions of poverty were explored and compared to other survey results. Past experiences were reviewed and lessons learned on what had worked and what had not were noted as inputs into the formulation of project activities (Pittaluga, 2002).<sup>5</sup>

A team consisting of a socio-economist, a gender specialist, a sociologist and a fisheries expert carried out the surveys. Some difficulties encountered by the field teams included:

- Communication and transport problems due to language barriers and lacking infrastructure.
- A tendency of communities to see visitors from projects and the administration as potential donors with miracle solutions sometimes leading to biased discussions and long lists of needs (rather than an analysis of root causes).
- Difficulties for some community members to express themselves in public due to cultural or social constraints or unwillingness on behalf of some villagers to participate due to a particular political situation.

(Angaman, 2003; Djangone *et al.*, 2003; Njifonjou *et al.*, 2003b).

Triangulation, *i.e.* a process of cross-referencing sources commonly used as part of participatory appraisal approaches, and other validation methods were generally effective in overcoming these difficulties.

## POVERTY IN WEST AFRICAN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES COMMUNITIES

The results of the poverty profiles confirmed the complexity of poverty in fishing communities and illustrated some of its particularities. They showed that fishing communities may not be as poor in monetary terms as previous national poverty assessments may have indicated – due to a focus in these surveys on assets that many fishing people do not own (e.g. agricultural land) – but that they often suffer from a high degree of vulnerability and social exclusion (FAO, undated).

Nonetheless, assets and income do of course still play an important direct role in fishing people's poverty and while income from fishing and related activities may at times be higher than generally expected in the rural community context, these earnings are commonly seasonal and subject to a high degree of uncertainty. There is also an important variation in incomes between communities and among different socio-professional groups within communities; boat owners and large-scale traders can be among the wealthiest but crewmembers are commonly at the other end of the rural income scale (FAO, undated). Not surprisingly, those with no or few productive assets were generally found to be among the poorest. It was also noted that women were often poorer than their male counterparts (Coulibaly, 2003; Jallow *et al.*, 2003; Njifonjou *et al.*, 2003).

In the post harvest sector, the degree of poverty and vulnerability differed according to the position the actors have in the chain and the skills and market access they have

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the countries/areas mentioned above, this chapter mainly draws on the SFLP Poverty Profiles and related working papers for Cameroon (Mbakaou waterbody), Chad (Lake Chad and Chari river), Congo (Lake Kouilou), Gabon (Noya and Komo Mondah districts), the Gambia (villages around the western/central part of the Gambia River), Guinea (Boffa and Boké districts) and Senegal (Mbour and Foundiugne districts)

been able to negotiate. In the Gambia, fish smokers, fish dryers and oyster harvesters were identified as the poorest segments due to their limited access to and control of resources and assets, i.e. financial resources (credit), physical (distant markets), human (education skills and information), natural (especially land and sometimes fish resources) and social (institutions) (Jallow *et al.*, 2003). In the Pilot Project zone in Chad, the organization and control of the post harvest sector was found to be in the hands of those categorised as “well off and less poor groups”. The difficult access and harsh working conditions in the zone contributed to the fact that without adequate equipment, sufficient capital or access to credit it was impossible to work as a collector, trader or wholesaler (K. Holvoet, personal communication, 2007)

Those who could diversify their income generating activities were better off than those who did not. The survey of fishing communities in the districts of Boffa and Boké in Guinea showed that this included fishers who had fishing gear allowing them to engage in different fisheries according to season. For women, however, a diversity of activities did not always guarantee a better situation if they were not in possession of the productive assets. In Guinea, it was found that women who engaged in salt and vegetable oil extraction in households where the revenues accrued to the male decision-maker were not necessarily better off from diversification (FAO, undated; N'Dia *et al.*, undated). Overall, there were many examples of fishers-farmers in the region and combining different economic activities was a common livelihood strategy. In the inland water areas, the combination of agriculture and fishery activities was found to be particularly common. However, for some, e.g. migrant fishing households, this may not be a realistic possibility due to restrictions with regard to access to land and other resources (Njock, 2007).

Also local fishing people commonly lack formal land titles and are often excluded from equitable access to land. This situation is particularly pronounced with regard to women; in the poverty profiling survey area in Guinea, women land owners were found only in one village, Dobiré (N'Dia *et al.*, undated).

Factors that are often closely correlated with poverty are isolation and lack of access to services and institutions. Around Lake Sélingué in Mali, the poorest community groups were found in areas with poor access to the road network and markets (Pittaluga *et al.*, undated). Access to health and other services, including government extension facilities and financial products, were noted as particular constraints in several areas, e.g. in the southern Lake Volta area in Ghana and around the two lakes in Burkina Faso. Moreover, illiteracy levels were found to be high, in particular among women, hindering access to information and services (SFLP, undated b; Pittaluga *et al.*, 2003). In Gabon, the existence or absence of infrastructure and services was perceived to contribute significantly to poverty levels and the further away the fishing village was from Libreville, the more likely a lack of safe water sources, schools and health services (Djangone *et al.*, 2003). In Mali, the lack of formal land ownership was found to contribute to the social exclusion of fishing people in development processes and to further impede their access to public services since they do not appear in formal registers (SFLP, undated c).

The poverty profiles showed that many fishing communities exhibit low levels of engagement in local development. Their political power is limited and there appears to be a general lack of community organizational structures. This situation is particularly distinct for migrants and the lack of involvement in local development is in some countries related to the migration policy – or the lack of a policy – and an animosity of fisheries institutions towards foreign fishers. In the fourteen villages surveyed in Gabon (Noya and Komo Mondah districts) where the fishers are predominantly immigrants, the uncertain legal status of many of the foreign fishing people constituted a disincentive to organizational engagement (Djangone, 2003). In Mauritania, the artisanal fisheries sector is also characterised by migration and many fishing villages

along the coast are mere “fishing camps”, although more or less permanent, and hence low levels of community organization are common. In fact, migration is an important feature of artisanal fisheries in the whole West and Central Africa region. The poverty profiles showed that the poverty situation of immigrant groups is sometimes different from that of the native population because of their marginalisation and exclusion in development processes (Njock, 2007). On the shore of Lake Kossou, Côte d’Ivoire, the livelihood sustainability of fishing people is further compromised by ethnicity based clashes between fishers and farmers and by a broader economic and political crisis in the country that threatens personal and asset security (Pittaluga *et al.*, 2002).

Lacking political power and low levels of organizational strength make small-scale fishing communities vulnerable to unfair treatment and neglect. Small-scale fishers are often the weaker party in conflicts with other resource users, e.g. industrial trawlers encroaching on inshore fishing grounds, and may be pushed to take additional risks in order to fish. In a study undertaken by SFLP’s predecessor, the Programme for Integrated Development of Artisanal Fisheries in West Africa (IDAF), in seven West African countries in 1991-1994, incidents with industrial vessels getting their trawls entangled in fishing nets and dragging them away while canoes are fishing were among the main causes for accidents at sea (Gallène, 1995). During the poverty profiling exercises in Congo, Guinea and Gabon, infractions by larger vessels in the artisanal fishing area and safety at sea were identified as significant vulnerability factors (Njock, 2007).

Generally, the local communities surveyed by SFLP expressed alarm with regard to diminishing fishery resources although this was not always mentioned as a priority worry. In the Gambia, communities had noted declining resources and felt the reason was illegal fishing and a higher fishing pressure due to increasing number of fishers (Jallow *et al.*, 2003). Forty-five percent of the fishers interviewed during the poverty profiling exercise in Ghana considered that the fishery resources had declined considerably, also citing illegal fishing practices as one reason together with the destruction of shore habitats due to farming activities and diminishing rainfall (Pittaluga *et al.*, 2003). Likewise, in Gabon, demographic factors and destruction of mangrove areas were given as explanations to production decreases (Djangone *et al.*, 2003). In some countries, unfair access to resources (the Gambia) and a need for fishery management were mentioned (Cameroon) (Jallow *et al.*, 2003; Njifonjou *et al.*, 2003).

## **POVERTY, VULNERABILITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE CONTEXT OF SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

Outsiders’ perceptions of poverty do not always correspond to how poor people themselves see their situation. At the same time, local people do not always see the links and wider context of their own situation. Using a participatory livelihoods perspective and analysing poverty at micro, meso and macro levels achieved a better understanding, both of what priorities poor people have and of the institutional framework relevant to their livelihoods. The SFLP poverty profiles illustrated in particular the significance of vulnerability and social exclusion in the overall poverty picture. This was an important outcome of the poverty profiling. Income and asset poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion can be seen as three components of poverty and while the three concepts are closely related, they generally require different entry points for development (FAO, undated) (see Box 3).

The profiles helped identify the target groups for the Programme’s interventions by providing a classification of poor fishing people into subgroups of poverty and showed the relatively high level of heterogeneity of fishing communities with regard to livelihood situations and strategies. The poverty surveys also emphasised the need to take micro, meso and macro linkages into consideration and confirmed the importance

**BOX 3**  
**Poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion**



Poverty can be divided into three interrelated concepts: income and asset poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. Standardized measures of asset and income poverty can be expressed as poverty lines and be compared to targets. Vulnerability refers to people's exposure to risks, how sensitive their livelihoods are to these risks and what their capacity is to cope and adapt to risks. Social exclusion or marginalization refers to the process by which certain population groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against. The SFLP experience showed that the two dimensions vulnerability and social exclusion are at the centre of poverty in West and Central African fishing communities.

*Source:* FAO, undated.

of institutions. In order to achieve sustainable improvements at the local level, changes of policies, institutions and processes (PIP) are essential. Moreover, there are significant cross-sectoral linkages since livelihoods generally are diversified.

Another finding – related to the importance of vulnerability – was that, for poor fishing people, the risk of resource degradation and the need to manage fisheries might not represent a main concern. In fact, the results of the SFLP poverty profiling and the exploration of local perceptions of poverty pointed to other needs and threats. This is typical in situations with high vulnerability since this tends to reduce the incentives to save and to invest in future. Hence, in order to enable fishers to engage in fishery management, it is essential to reduce their vulnerability by addressing other needs they identify (FAO, undated).

#### **USING THE ENHANCED KNOWLEDGE OF POVERTY**

The poverty profiles were key inputs into the formulation of the three SFLP Pilot Projects and other related Community and Institutional Support projects.<sup>6</sup> They also

<sup>6</sup> Chapter 1 gives an overview of the different Programme components and projects.

provided a baseline that could be used for impact monitoring purposes although this did not work as may have been intended. Reasons for this included that the monitoring systems conceived by the Programme were complex and data intensive – as the original poverty profiling methodology had been – and hence difficult to implement. There was also a certain focus on project development processes rather than on monitoring of implementation and impact, and this coupled with time constraints led to difficulties in impact monitoring (Cunningham and Holleran, 2007).

Nonetheless, the poverty profiles contributed directly to the Programme's objectives by facilitating the formulation of demand-driven and poverty-focused interventions. In the context of the Pilot Projects on co-management and post-harvest activities, the profiles provided essential information with regard to relationships among different institutions and the communities. They also ensured that the objective of fisheries co-management was supported by accurately addressing vulnerability issues. The co-management Pilot Projects included the following key features and components:

a process of awareness creation, participation and partnerships with communities, meso and macro level institutions, and NGOs;

support to livelihood diversification through capacity building and training combined with the establishment of improved access to financial services by partnerships with micro-finance institutions (MFIs);

literacy training and other skills development especially designed for the needs of fishing people;

integration of fishing communities in local development by lobbying for increased attention and providing information of these communities to the national policy and development level, e.g. enabling inclusion of fishing communities in national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and in health and HIV/AIDS action plans;

development of co-management institutions based on community and socio-professional organizations at the micro and meso levels, and of appropriate linkages to the macro level. The co-management committees included a wide range of stakeholders and extensive support to capacity building was given to ensure participation by all groups. Organizational capacity building included participatory management and conflict resolution;

- inclusion of the post-harvest sector in project activities, in particular by assisting them with regard to organizational development and ensuring that these organizations are linked to the resource management structures; and
- assistance to national level policy and legislation work in order to create a political and legal framework allowing the legalisation of local co-management arrangements.
- (Angaman, 2007; Njock, 2007; K. Holvoet, personal communication, 2007)
- Partnerships were particularly important to the capacity building and training activities. As an example of activities and partners, Table 2 gives an overview of SFLP capacity building in Guinea together with the service providers.

The SFLP Community and Institutional Support projects also used information from the poverty profiles, or – when there was no poverty profile available for the particular intervention area – used elements of the poverty profiling methodology as part of the project formulation process. In addition to the co-management (mentioned above), these projects contributed to three themes, i.e.; (i) integration of fisheries into local development; (ii) market access and improved marketing; and (iii) integration of fisheries into national development policies. There were also three cross-cutting themes identified; gender, HIV/AIDS and communication. The principles of the projects were analogous to those of the co-management and post-harvest Pilot Projects and many of the activities were in direct support of these. Some examples of activities carried out and the benefits produced include:



TABLE 2  
SFLP capacity building and partners in Guinea

Subject matter	Partner
Functional literacy	NGO EUPD
Organizational development (including decentralization, participatory management, conflict management, savings and credits).	NGO CENAFOD
Awareness raising with regard to HIV/SIDA and other illnesses	Sector Committee for the Fight against AIDS (Comité sectoriel de lutte contre le SIDA)
Fish processing	NGO HTS
Safety at sea	Maritime Navigation Agency (ANACAM)
Environment management	Boussoura National Fisheries Science Centre (CNSHB)
Appeals and lobbying	Project management team
Analysis of traditional communication and dialogue systems	Guinea National Fisheries Observatory (Observatoire national des pêches en Guinée)
Support to communities for the formulation of development projects	Commission for the Coordination of Artisanal Fisheries Training and Development (CCFAD)

Source: Adapted from Njock, 2007, p. 10.

- promoting livelihoods diversification (fish drying, cassava production, goat rearing) in support of co-management in Congo led to increased incomes and reduced vulnerability for fishing households;
- analysing gender issues in microfinance and providing training in business skills and enterprise development increased women's participation in management of their socio professional organizations, village management committees, infrastructure (ice plants and processing equipment) and in the credit union or cooperative unions in the Gambia, Niger, Chad and Nigeria;
- achieving national level commitment to the provision of literacy services in fishing communities and using fisheries specific literacy training modules contributed to improved literacy rates which in turn led to increased use of health services and more effective participation of members in the management of community based organizations in Burkina Faso;
- financing the construction of a transport boat and providing training in navigation and in business management helped a local NGO in São Tomé e Príncipe to set up transport service facilitating the marketing of fish; and
- assisting communities in Guinea to address conflicts between artisanal and industrial fisheries through participatory monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) in partnership with relevant government authorities reduced fisher household vulnerability (by improved safety at sea) and increased incomes. (Holvoet, 2007).

The experience of SFLP clearly showed that by properly analysing the different dimensions of poverty and understanding its context as well as the micro, meso and macro linkages, interventions could be designed that both provide poverty reduction and promote responsible fisheries. By focusing community development on the strengthening of human capitals (training, education, improved access to health and other services, etc) and social capitals (community organizational skills, inclusion of marginalised groups, supporting networks and linkages, etc), a solid foundation was laid for reinforcing and building the physical, natural and financial capitals. Fishing

communities that are sensitised, informed, educated, and given self-esteem and responsibility have great potential to achieve poverty reduction and sustainable fisheries management. However, it is a long process and while the SFLP projects produced a number of significant successes – in terms of local level capacity building and influence at the macro policy level creating increased awareness of the importance of small-scale fisheries – continued support to the participating countries and communities will be needed to sustain and further enhance these achievements.

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### 3. Reassessing the economic and social contribution of fisheries in developing countries

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#### INTRODUCTION

The fishery sector plays multiple roles in the national economies of West and Central African countries and contributes to economic growth, employment, exports and tax revenues. A high proportion of these benefits are generated by the small-scale subsector which plays an important role in food security and poverty reduction that are essential elements of global development strategies as expressed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (FAO, 2006; Heck, Béné and Reyes-Gaskin, 2007).

In most cases, the current and potential role of small-scale fisheries in poverty reduction and food security is not well documented by national statistical systems and is poorly recognized (Thorpes *et al.*, 2005). The subsector is consequently neglected in both fisheries and national policies (Dugan, 2005; Horemans and Kébé, 2006). Few attempts have been conducted so far to document the contribution of small-scale fisheries to the livelihood of African populations (Béné, 2005; Béné, 2006).

National statistical systems use the national accounts as the framework for evaluating the overall economic importance of the national economy and individual sectors. The national accounts system of a country allows economists to measure and monitor “the level of economic development and the rate of economic growth, the change in consumption, saving, investment, debts and wealth” (UNSD, 2003, p.1), for the economy as a whole or specific parts of the economy. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) provides guidelines for countries how to set up national accounts, i.e. the United Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA). UNSD also compiles national accounts data over 200 countries on an annual basis, allowing for aggregated macro-economic analysis and comparisons between countries (UNSD, 2003).

National data aggregated in time series and by sector can be used for appreciating the priority given to individual sectors or activities of the national economy and this information is used for development planning purposes. One of the most commonly used aggregates for measuring economic growth is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The GDP is an aggregate production measure based on the gross value added created by the residents of a country. To compose the aggregate, national economic activities are divided into three main sectors: primary (production), secondary (industry) and tertiary (all services including trade). The conventional approach to evaluate the GDP of a sector such as fisheries is to consider it entirely part of the primary sector and hence only include value added created in primary production activities, i.e. fishing. The value of fish processing and trade activities, which are in many respects the driving forces of the fisheries sector, are counted for under other items (secondary and tertiary sectors) and hence not appear as part of the fisheries sector GDP.

More importantly, to only look at the economic contribution of the fisheries sector as measured by GDP ignores many other economic and social considerations and is likely to lead to undervaluing its economic importance. This could result in a number

of disadvantages for the sector with regard to budgetary support and prioritisation in development planning.

Recognising these weaknesses of current economic assessment practices, the SFLP developed a methodology considering a wider range of economic and social impacts of the fisheries sector. Particular attention was nevertheless paid to issues related to the contribution of fishery sector to GDP since it is the indicator of reference for most decision makers and donors. The approach included the whole fish value chain, i.e. from fishing through to trade and retail marketing. The value added created by the various elements of the system were aggregated into a revised GDP measurement including (i) actual fishing or fish production, (ii) trade of fresh fish products, (iii) processing of fresh fish products and (iv) trade of processed fish products. This approach was complemented by the development of other basic indicators related to the creation of national wealth, employment and food security to better appreciate the economic and social contribution of fisheries sector (Kébé, 2007).

This chapter looks at the methodology used by SFLP to carry out economic studies and presents the results of studies in 15 countries.

## **SFLP VALUATION METHODOLOGY**

### **Selection of basic reference methodologies**

A detailed evaluation of the economic and social performances of a sector like small-scale fisheries needs data, tools and human expertise that were unfortunately not available in most of SFLP participating countries. Moreover, the SFLP initiative was not intended to be part of a process to assist government in planning, since this would require more sophisticated means and methods of collecting, analyzing and processing data. This is why the procedure adopted by the Programme and presented here should rather be seen as a 'simplified' tool that can be used to conduct an appraisal – and not necessarily to produce a detailed and accurate assessment – of the contribution of fisheries to national economies and welfare. The objective sought was to make some first step towards a better and cost-effective assessment of the contribution of fisheries to national, regional and local economies.

No one specific methodological approach suffices to estimate the contribution of the fisheries sector to economic and social development. The determination of the economic value, for example, of a natural resource like fisheries becomes irrelevant if people whose livelihoods depend on these natural resources cannot access them (Béné and Neiland, 2003a). The various analytical frameworks available offer a set of complementary techniques which when properly applied, can help to improve understanding of the contribution of fisheries sector to national economic development and to the livelihoods of the local populations.

The SFLP approach integrated the main basic indicators developed in other methodologies for valuation of fisheries, particularly indicators of national wealth, employment and food security (Anon., 2004; Béné and Neiland, 2003a; Béné and Neiland, 2003b; Béné, Macfadayen and Allison, 2006; Emerton and Muramira, 1999; FAO, 2005; Kébé, 1998; Murray, 2003; Sarch and Allison, 2000; Yaron *et al.*, 2004). There are three broad but complementary approaches potentially applicable to the valuation of fisheries, i.e. conventional economic valuation, economic impact analysis and socio-economic analysis. They were reviewed by Béné and Neiland (2003a), although in the specific context of inland fisheries.

In the broader context of complementarities between these empirical methodologies, the SFLP methodology used the total economic value analysis (part of conventional economic valuation method) and the livelihood approach (part of socio-economic analysis) in determining the economic and social contribution of the fisheries sector in West and Central African countries. Considering its importance as a reference for decision makers and donors, particular attention was paid to issues related to

the contribution of fishery sector to GDP, but the approach also integrated other basic indicators to better appreciate the contribution to food security and poverty reduction.

### Identification of counterpart organizations

As mentioned above, the purpose of the SFLP methodology for assessing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to national economy was to provide basic knowledge, as well as a low-cost methodology, to facilitate the calculation of the economic and social benefits of the small-scale fisheries sector. At a later stage, this could lead to the full exploitation of the “strategic” information that the exercise could eventually produce. To achieve these objectives, two options were considered: to work closely with fisheries departments to generate the information or to involve the government service in charge of statistics (e.g. ministry of planning).

These two options were tested and analysed in real conditions, for relevance and efficiency issues through a case study conducted in Benin during a period of one month. The test made it possible to validate the proposed methodology as a tool to reinforce the capacities of the fisheries departments and their partners in production and valorisation of strategic information on the contribution of fisheries sector to national economies. It appeared that this option was more relevant and efficient than the other one, it proved difficult to develop appropriate networks and information channels to facilitate access to basic data on the fishery sector by governmental services in charge of official statistics (Houndekon, Fagbohoun and Ekue, 2003).

### Definition and construction of indicators

In the SFLP methodology the process of defining indicators took place in a three step approach: (i) identify the type of indicators most relevant and that can be produced at the least cost; (ii) identify the type of data required to build these indicators; and (iii) proceed to the calculation (or development) of these indicators.

The basic indicators used in the SFLP methodology have been classified under three main categories: (i) national wealth, (ii) employment and (iii) food security.

The SFLP methodology considered a wider range of economic and social impacts of the fisheries sector to assess the *national wealth* created by the sector. As an improved measurement of the *contribution to economic growth*, the value added created by the various elements of the fisheries system were aggregated into a revised GDP measurement including (i) actual fishing or fish production, (ii) trade of fresh fish products, (iii) processing of fresh fish products and (iv) trade of processed fish products.

This meant including the main stages of the fish value chain from fishing itself to retail marketing. It also recommended to take into account the wealth created by auxiliary activities, e.g. while supplying inputs for the production. However, in reality, such an economic analysis proved too difficult to implement and as a supplement to indicators based on GDP and trade aspects, an assessment of *annual investments in fisheries* was used as a proxy for national wealth created by the fisheries sector.

By estimating the amount of annual investments in the fisheries sector, an assessment of the quantity of monetary resources mobilized each year by the sector can be made. It refers to boats, outboard motors, fishing gears, isothermal boxes, ovens for smoking fish, drying trays, boathouses, stores for stocking fishing materials, ice production factories, cold rooms, fishing products transportation means, markets of fishing products etc. This indicator gives an idea of the importance of the economic role of fisheries upstream of the sector although it cannot be compared to the added value.

In addition, the contribution of the sector to national budgets was included as a third component among the national wealth indicators (along with the value added and annual investment). Income from fishing licences (for foreign and national fishers) and taxes on production and on trade are examples of such contributions.



The indicator of *employment* refers to the number of professional fishers and occasional fishers, and other jobs related to fishing and handling of fish. The definition of professional fishers is sometimes subject to discussion, particularly in inland fisheries. In the context of the SFLP methodology, a professional fisher was defined as a person drawing more than half of his/her income from fisheries (Kébé, 1998). Fisher-helpers, as well as people practicing farming and fishing, are also included in this category if more than half of their income is generated by fishing or related activities. A distinction between sedentary professional fishers and migrant professional fishers was made due to the fact that their income and way of living are very different (see Morand, Sy and Breuil, 2005). The occasional fisher (fisher-farmer particularly) may be defined as someone who considers fishing as a temporary activity, seasonal most of the time, complementing his/her main economic activity (e.g. farming). Most of the people practicing farming and fishing are found in this category.

The importance of the fishery sector as a livelihood for West and Central African populations is often appreciated in practice according to statistics on the activity of capture, i.e. the number of boats or the number of fishers strictly speaking. In fact, other fishing related activities are generally not counted since they are buried in the extensive informal sector of African economies. However, there are methods of investigation to assess the importance of jobs upstream and downstream the production. Those jobs refer to domains of activities such as: equipment suppliers, net menders, ice producers, carriers, fish processors, fish wholesalers, haulers, retailers, etc. In practice, emphasis will put on two main categories of other fishing activities, namely processing and trade of fish products. In addition, the SFLP methodology recommended to calculate the total population whose livelihoods depend on the fisheries sector, based on the average size of fishers' household and the number of fishers, e.g.: 7-8 people/household \* X fishers.

*Food security* is defined by the 1996 World Food Summit as “a condition when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2005, p.7). Fish can hence contribute to food security both directly, fish as food, and indirectly by providing income for purchasing food.

The basic food fish availability indicator is estimated from the *apparent availability* of fish and fish products which is calculated from information on domestic production, exports and imports of fish and fish products. It represents the quantity of fish available in the country once exports are subtracted from and imports added to the domestic production. From this the apparent annual consumption per capita i.e. the average quantity of fish consumed per capita (kg/annum) on the basis of calculated fish availability and the population, may be deduced. It is recommended to qualify this average number taking into account disparities in consumption observed according to different areas (rural, urban, production areas, etc.).

The commercial balance of fish products which corresponds to the difference between exports and imports in value was used to assess the degree of connection of the fisheries sector to external markets and the contribution in terms of foreign currency. Foreign currency generated by the fisheries sector could be important for countries to allow them to import necessary food staples.

In addition to these main indicator categories, a set of *other indicators* was developed to appreciate the indirect contribution of the fisheries sector to the economy. According to availability of information, the following complementary indicators were used to assess the contribution of small-scale fisheries to (i) local communities' budgets: market taxes and rights of access to resources (according to the decentralisation process in some cases); (ii) local development and poverty alleviation: impact of fishing on the

development tourism, seasonal jobs (e.g. good fishing season at the end of the dry season) and generation of additional incomes for some of the poorest categories of the population (e.g. young people in activity on wharfs to make a little income, old people in search of unsold products), (iii) protection of environment: traditional management practices of water spaces by the communities and coastline quality control by communities.

Once the type of indicator had been selected, based on relevance and cost-effectiveness, the type of data required to build the indicators were identified. Most of the information needed was provided by national administrations (ministry in charge of fisheries, ministry of planning and statistics, ministry in charge of commerce), research institutes/centers, development projects and NGOs. In some cases, specific studies had to be carried out to complete the data needs (e.g. surveys on costs incurred by fishers, boat owners, processors and traders). Some indicators required more data than others, e.g. the calculation of value added to production was based on annual domestic production, auto-consumption, prices and costs of production (Kébé, 1998; Kébé, 2007).

## **FISHERIES CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL ECONOMIES**

### **Case study process**

Following the test in Benin, the SFLP methodology was further developed through case studies in 14 other SFLP participating countries. These studies were conducted in the countries participating in the three pilot projects, i.e. Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali for the first pilot project, Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania for the second pilot project, and Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia and Senegal for the third pilot project. Two island countries (Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe) were also integrated in the analysis to better appreciate the situation in the region.

The major objectives of the analysis were to assess the economic and social contribution of fisheries, and to make recommendations and suggestions to improve the SFLP proposed methodology and the national statistical data collection system of the fisheries sector.

The case studies made it possible to (i) fill in the information and data gaps on the real and potential contribution of fisheries to national economies; (ii) develop a close collaboration between the Fisheries Department and National Accounts Office in each of the countries; and (iii) arouse the interest of decision makers and development partners engaged in poverty reduction programmes in the fisheries sector.

The case studies were conducted in each country by a national team of three experts including an economist specializing in macro-economic analysis, a fisheries specialist of the Department of Fisheries, and a Statistician with the National Accounts Office. The relevance of their findings is buttressed by the connection between these three areas of specialty. This helped to provide a general overview, backed with figures, of all the various activities that are directly or indirectly linked to fisheries. After investigations during 45 working days, a one-day national workshop was organized with the key policy makers to discuss and validate the findings of the study. Then a communication strategy was developed by the SFLP National Coordination Unit (headed by the Fisheries Department) to facilitate a wider dissemination at the national level, particularly for the use of the information generated to influence national policies (see also Chapter 4).

### **Results of the case studies**

The overriding conclusion from the case studies carried out was that the contribution of the fisheries sector is important in West and Central Africa, and varies from country to country. The results of the case studies, according to the main indicators defined

TABLE 3  
How the fisheries contribute to economy (selected examples)

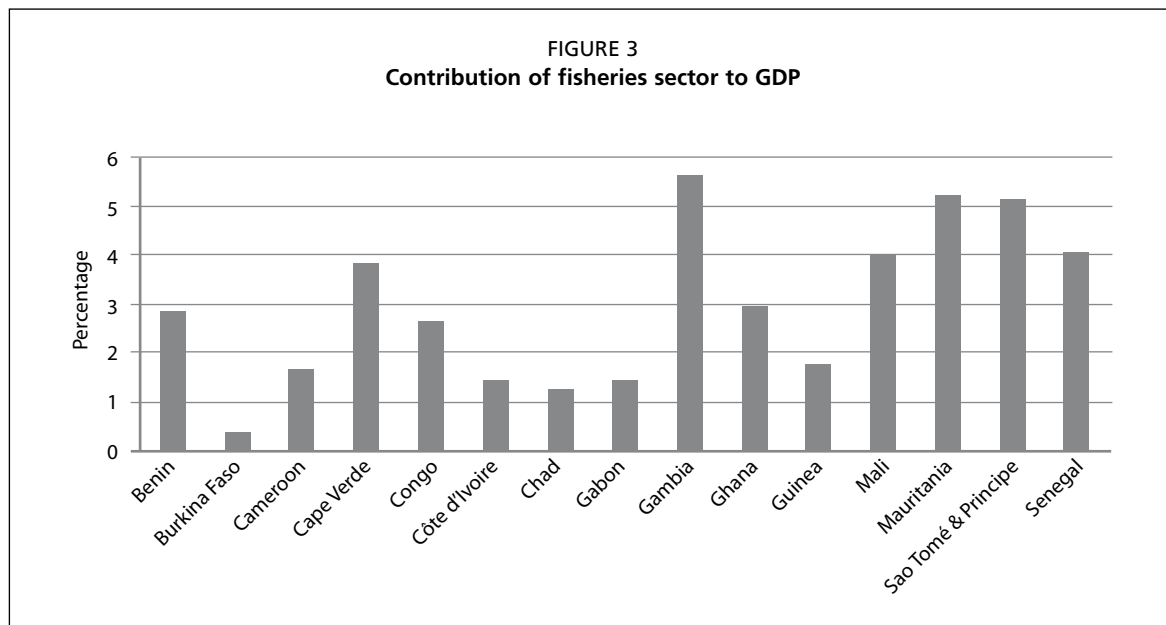
Countries	GDP	Employment	Fish Supply	Fish Trade	Taxes
Congo	Fisheries contributes to 2.75% of GDP and 23.6% of the primary sector	6.8% of the labour force is involved in fisheries 80% to 90% of fish traders are women	Fish consumption averages 25 kg per year per person Fish provides 46% of animal protein	37% of the national fish supply is provided by imports	Taxes are mainly collected from fishing licenses but their contribution is marginal
Ghana	Fisheries contributes to 4.5% of GDP The small-scale sector alone contributes 3.4% of GDP	The livelihood of one in ten Ghanaians depends on fisheries 300,000 people depend on Lake Volta fisheries	Fish consumption averaged 27.2 kg per person in 2003 Fish provides 45% of animal protein	Exports amounted to US\$95 million in 2002, representing 4.74% of total export earnings	Taxes are from fishing licenses and market tolls and represent less than 5% of local revenue
Mali	Fisheries related activities contribute 4-5% of GDP	Fisheries provide 285,000 jobs, of which 70,000 are fishers, and represent 7.2% of the national labour force	Fish consumption averages 5.4 kg per person per year, compared to 4.7 kg for meat	Official exports are marginal; however, 15-20% of the fish traded in Mopti (Niger Central Delta) is exported to other countries in the region	Taxes on added value represent about 10% of the total value
Mauritania	Fisheries sector contributes to 4-5% of GDP and 22% of the primary sector	Small-scale fisheries represent only 10% of fish production, but provide 80% of the jobs	Fish consumption averages 4.3 kg/year but varies regionally – it is 17.1 kg/yr in Nouadhibou and 9.2 kg/yr in Nouakchott	Fish exports represent 70% of total exports, half from small-scale fisheries	From 2000 to 2004, fisheries contributed to 41% of budgetary revenues, mainly through EU fishing agreements (34%)
Sao Tome & Principe	Fisheries contributes to 5.2% of GDP and 19% of the primary sector	Between 1999 and 2002, the number of fishers increased from 3 310 to 5 296 (+60%)	Fish consumption averages 28kg per person per year – well above the world average of 16.3 kg	International fish trade is insignificant	Main source of revenue is the EU fishing agreement providing 600,000 euros per year
Senegal	Fisheries contributes to 4.1% of GDP and 13.7% of the primary sector	600,000 people are employed in the sector, i.e. 17% of the national labour force	Fish consumption averaged 30.8 kg per person in 2003 Fish provides 44% of animal protein	Fisheries are the leading export sector, representing in value 37% of total exports	25% of the value added goes to the state In the fishing commune of Joal, the sector provides 27.5% of the budget revenue

above, are presented below. A summary of the contribution of the fisheries sector to the economies of selected countries is provided in Table 3.

## National wealth

### *Contribution to economic growth*

The value added generated by the fish production subsector alone represents on average only 60 to 70 percent of the total value generated by the sector. The rest (30-40%) is derived from the secondary and tertiary sectors. It appears clearly that fisheries contribute more than what conventional national accounts show and that the contribution of fisheries to the national economy is not currently reflected in the official GDP statistics. By comparing the estimated value added by each of the fisheries subsectors using the SFLP methodology with the estimates from National Accounts data in Ghana, an apparent overall underestimation of the GDP added value created by the fisheries sector of approximately 5 percent was found in 2001 and in 2002. The conventional calculation gave 1 377.5 billion cedis (US\$193 million) in 2001 and 1 655.1 billion cedis in 2002 (US\$232 million) of fisheries sector GDP while the values



Source: Kébé and Tallec, 2006.

calculated with SFLP's methodology were 1 444.8 (US\$202 million) and 1 738.0 billion cedis (US\$243 million), respectively (Sarpong, Quatey and Harvey, 2005).

The analysis of the results of the case studies on assessment of the contribution of the fisheries sector to national economies also showed that there is unequal development of fisheries activities from one country to another. The percentage of value added credited to the fisheries sector in national GDPs ranged from 0.4 percent (Burkina Faso) to 5.7 percent (see The Gambia).

The countries with the highest percentage are mainly those endowed with a favourable geographic location or vast natural resources. For example, in Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe, two island countries with natural easy access to the sea, the fisheries sector plays a prominent role in the economies. The same goes for the Gambia, entirely located in the Gambia River basin along 470 km from the Atlantic coast inland. In Mali, the water surface of the central delta of the River Niger (over 20 000 km<sup>2</sup>) is greater than the continental shelf in the coastal zone of Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire or the Gambia.

In Mauritania, the vast surface (230 000 km<sup>2</sup>) of the Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) is characterized by high biological productivity, translating into an abundance of fishery resources. In spite of the fact that the various fishing licenses have been granted to foreign fishing vessels as part of the fisheries agreement with the European Union, national production is still high. In this country where 90 percent of the national territory is desert land, fishing activities in the EEZ provides an important opportunity for development, also when compared to other primary sector activities (Ould Cheikhna, Guisset and Souëlim, 2005).

In oil producing countries like Gabon and Congo, the contribution of the fisheries sector to the national economies would seem to be minor, in as much as the rent from oil exploitation accounts for the major part of the national income.

In the economies of some countries (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana), the contribution of the value added as a percentage of the GDP is marginal, whereas in absolute values, it represents a large volume when compared with other countries involved in the case study process. With a contribution to national economy of 1.7 percent, 1.5 percent and 3 percent, respectively, the artisanal fisheries do not seem to be a key subsector; in absolute values, this subsector contributes three to five times more wealth to these countries than in, for example, Mauritania and Benin (Kébé and Tallec, 2006).

The small-scale fisheries represent the most important of the value added created by the sector in most of countries. In Mauritania about 45 percent of the overall value added is attributed to the small-scale fisheries; it accounts for only 10 percent of production but provides 80 percent of the employment opportunities. The small-scale fisheries sector has developed considerably during recent years (Ould Cheikhna, Guisset and Souëlim, 2005).

In Senegal, the whole added value calculated derived from the small-scale fisheries being the most dynamic subsector and generating 80 percent of total landings and 60 percent of the export volume (2002–2003). The small-scale fisheries provide an important quantity of fresh fish products for export through processing plants and factories. (Dione, Sy and Dia, 2005).

In Gabon where profits from oil are decreasing, the development of small-scale fisheries sector facilitates the diversification of the national economy and helps to create employment, with direct impact on local communities (Mabounda, Ondo Magne and Rarambyath, 2005).

The small-scale fisheries sector is also very important for the local economy in Mali. The ethnic group of *Bozo* has contributed to the development of this sector. The small-scale fishing activity is an important vector of the Malian culture and expertise, representing, among other things, a wide-spread tradition (Dolo, Sako and Diarra, 2005), which, in economic terms, can be thought of as ‘cultural wealth’.

#### *Investments in the fisheries sector*

In Côte d’Ivoire, the availability of data made it possible to study the fisheries investment annual growth rate from 1990–2002. The amount of investments increased at an average annual rate of almost 5 percent. However, investment effort was highest in the first five years of the period at a rate of over 25 percent per annum. From 1996 to 2002, political upheavals probably contributed to the reduction in the annual investment volume in the fisheries sector (Gole Bi, Koffi and Dadi, 2005).

In Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Mauritania, the inventory of investments made in the fisheries sector was at best, only partially carried out. In Mauritania for example, only information on public investments was obtained. It clearly indicated that a survey would first have to be conducted in order to find out the total investments made in the sector.

In Benin, Gabon and Congo the cost of fishing materials brought to light the importance of investments for fishers. Small-scale coastal fishery with motorized canoes requires a total investment of approximately EUR300–350 (US\$450–525), representing an average annual investment of about EUR50 (US\$75) based on an average economic lifespan for equipment of seven years. There was not enough information on fishers’ income, but this annual investment probably represents roughly one month’s salary. In fishing activities, investments account for a substantial part of the fishers’ budget. The development of this activity means being able to mobilize large amounts of capital, and having access to the credit market.

#### *Contribution to national budgets*

The fisheries sector makes some direct, non-negligible contributions to national budgets. The major earnings from the sector are through “fishing rights” or “exploitation rights” or “exploitation license”. Various taxes are paid by traders and benefit usually decentralized administrative structures like the local government or community groups. These include the “tax on value added” or “license tax”, “trading tax”, “local government tax”, “packaging tax”, “phytosanitary tax” or “health clearance certificate”, “import” or “export” taxes, or “port tax” (if shipped by sea). It appeared that the government would generally collect between 5 and 15 percent of

the value added of the fisheries sector in the form of taxes and duties. (Dolo, Sako and Diarra, 2005).

The fisheries sectors of the Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire contribute the most in absolute terms to government earnings among the countries in the region. These revenues represent 4.4 percent and 26 percent, respectively, of the value added. In spite of the fact that the contribution of fisheries to the national budget in Côte d'Ivoire is lower, it has nevertheless increased at an annual rate of 4.5 percent. This performance was probably maintained mainly through the small-scale subsector. In Mauritania, over the 2000–2004 period, earnings from the fisheries sector accounted for more than two thirds (37.6 percent) of the national budget of the country.<sup>7</sup>

### Employment

Direct and indirect employment is an important way in which the fisheries sector contributes to national economies. There are an estimated of 10 million fishers in sub-Saharan Africa, 7 million of which are from West and Central Africa. These are mainly fishers, fish processors and fish traders, but other associated jobs should be added to his figure (FAO, 2006).

The analysis of the results of the case studies revealed that data on employment is the most difficult to obtain, and the most inaccurate. One of the major difficulties is the lack of clear definitions. How do you classify a fish-food caterer who only partly uses fish to cook the food she/he sells? How do you classify a transporter who loads different proportions of fish, cattle, cereals and even people? In addition to these complications there are those related to a lack of standardisation of data collection procedures between the countries covered by the study. The proposed SFLP methodology was eventually not used by all the countries. In Mali, the number of people whose livelihoods depend on the fisheries sector was estimated to 260 000 based on the number of fisher households (33 000) and the average size of a household (7.9 members) as recommended by SFLP. However, it would appear that the studies in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire did not take all the relevant households into consideration when estimating the total number of people dependent on the fisheries sector when compared to the total population of (1 percent and 0.15 percent, respectively).

Both employment and revenue in the fisheries sector create multiplier effects in other sectors of the economy – highlighting fisheries' importance to national economies as a whole. In Cameroon, an income multiplier indicator, called the social accounting matrix multiplier was created by the National Account Office. The results of a simulation exercise showed that fisheries activities have a strong multiplier effect on revenue (7.3) and therefore a strong “domino effect” on the rest of the economy. This would mean that an investment of CFA francs 1 million in the fishing sector generate additional revenues of CFA francs 7.3 million in the national economy (Ngok, Djamen and Dongmo, 2005). This estimate – derived from the one case study – does however seem high and would need to be confirmed by other wider analyses of the same nature. For comparison the average income multiplier effect for agriculture is between 2 and 3 (Delgado, Hopkins and Kelly, 1998).

### Food security

The analysis of apparent *fish availability per inhabitant* highlighted the countries where the direct contribution of fish to food security is most critical. Burkina Faso, Mali and Benin have less than 10 kg/inhabitant/annum of fish. In contrast, Gabon and Ghana are the highest consumers of fish, with an availability level of 44.1 and 29.7 kg/inhabitant/annum, respectively. Interestingly, fish availability per inhabitant and the

<sup>7</sup> Most of these revenues are made from fishing agreements with the European Union.

Human Development Index (HDI) showed a significant positive relationship between these two sets of data for the 15 SFLP countries covered by the analysis (Kébé and Tallec, 2006).

While fish consumption per capita in Africa is less than half the global average (7.8 kilos vs. 16.3 kilos in 2001) this figure has to be seen in the context of the generally lower total protein consumption in the diets of the African population. Fish provides 18.6% of animal protein in Africa – above the global average of 15.9 percent. In the case of Mali, a landlocked country benefiting from important inland fisheries, average fish consumption is higher than meat, 5.4 kg vs. 4.7 kg per capita in 2001. In countries such as Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Ghana, fish provide almost 50 percent of animal protein needs. It is often more accessible than meat or poultry for the underprivileged populations, particularly those close to fishing areas. From a nutritional perspective, fish products are an important source of food nutrients (protein, poly-unsaturated fat), vitamins (A, B and D), minerals (calcium, phosphate and iron) and trace elements (iodine for sea products).

Fish exports help national economies enter into international markets, particularly in high value segments (crustaceans, cephalopods, demersal fish species). When exports mainly concern high-value fish, this does not necessarily threaten the supply of lower-value fish on local markets. In Senegal, for example, only 15 percent of cheap small pelagic catches are exported (mainly to other African countries) compared to 80, 100 and 95 percent of demersal, cephalopod and shrimp catches, respectively; revenues from fish exports have generally exceeded the value of cereal imports (annual average of US\$275 million and US\$217 million respectively between 1995 and 2003).

When the trade balance in fishery products is positive, as is the case in Senegal, Mauritania and Gabon, the fisheries sector is a net provider of currency to the national economy (Horemans and Kébé, 2006). The fisheries sector can constitute a principal motor of growth in such countries and in this way contributes to underlying economic growth processes in a substantive manner (see also Chapter 4).

Between 2000 and 2003, the difference between fish imports (US\$1.2 billion) and exports (US\$3 billion) in Africa gave an average positive balance of US\$1.8 billion per year making the continent a net exporter of fish products. Overall, as a region, the exports of all the 15 countries studied generate the equivalent of US\$578 million, and imports amount to US\$320 million. The trade balance as a whole is in excess of US\$258 million (Kébé and Tallec, 2006).

Furthermore, it should be noted that better knowledge on the transboundary trade of fish products among African countries would likely show much greater volumes than those actually recorded in trade statistics. This is especially the case in inland fisheries for which data are generally poor. Lack of reliable data at the customs posts of the borders between the countries is likely to contribute to an underestimation of exports from, for example, Chad, Gabon, Ghana and Mali.

Three types of profiles emerged from the fish trade analysis. They include (from Kébé and Tallec, 2006):

1. A dynamic and surplus external trade: countries that were upgrading a large portion of their export products towards one or several specific market segments.
2. A dynamic but deficit external trade: since local demand is high, national production is insufficient.
3. A barely developed external trade: countries that were basically using up their local production, supplemented by small quantities of imported fish, and having an almost zero trade balance.

Profile 1 corresponds to the cases of Senegal, Mauritania and Gabon, as well as Guinea, although with less importance. Given the high added value obtained for

export products, external trade in the fisheries sector injects a large amount of foreign currency into the economies of these countries.

With earnings of almost US\$270 million from fish exports (average for the 2000–2002 period), Senegal is in the first position among the SFLP participating countries. The value of exports of the second highest exporter in the region – Côte d'Ivoire – is less than half of that of Senegal (US\$130 million). Senegal not only has the advantage of having a lot of economic actors capable of exporting large quantities of fish, but it also enjoys a high market value for its fish exports, as in the case of cephalopods (especially octopus on the Chinese market) and demersal species (Dione, Sy and Dia, 2005).

Mauritania also enjoys the advantage of high prices for its cephalopods on the export market. Octopus contributed 56 percent to the total value of fish products exported in 2001. A high proportion of the fishery products exported from Mauritania consists of non processed fish (iced or frozen). An increase of the volume of processed products destined for the export market would improve their market value considerably, and by extension, the total value added of the sector. However, when international demand is for non processed products, as in the case of octopus, it may be difficult to change.

In the case of Gabon, the export of shellfish (shrimps) to Europe represented 78 percent of the total export value in 2001. Asia does not import shellfish from Gabon but is the second largest importer of the country's other fishery products.

Under Profile 2 are four countries – Cameroon, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Congo – with the highest trade deficits among the 15 countries studied. However the four countries represent countries with a relatively high volume of exports, in particular Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, whose export volumes are higher than that of Mauritania and Gabon. When a comparison was made for the 2000–2002 period, Côte d'Ivoire exported almost twice as much fish products (in terms of value) than Mauritania. The large volume of exports is however offset by the volume of imports.

The characteristics of the Congo export market are rather particular and the country appears to belong somewhere in between profile 1 and profile 2. While on the one hand the country basically orients most of its export products towards only one segment of the market (shellfish) like the countries under profile 1, the volume of its fish import results in a trade deficit that is close to that of Côte d'Ivoire which is under the Profile 2.

Profile 3 includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Mali and São Tomé and Príncipe. External trade is barely developed; the flow of goods (imports or exports) is no more than US\$7 million dollars per annum. These countries are also the ones that have the smallest EEZ in the area studied. Besides, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali have no access at all to the sea. They do not have saltwater fish which they therefore have to import; this kind of fresh fish is preferred in export markets. In fact, the fisheries production of these countries does not fully meet the demand for fish. The trade balance tends towards negative. Still, fisheries play an important role in other respects in several of these countries, hence illustrating that trade balance data sometimes poorly reflect the relative importance of fisheries. In Mali, for instance, Zwarts *et al.* (2006) have shown that it is economically more sensible to invest in fisheries than in dams for irrigation agriculture.

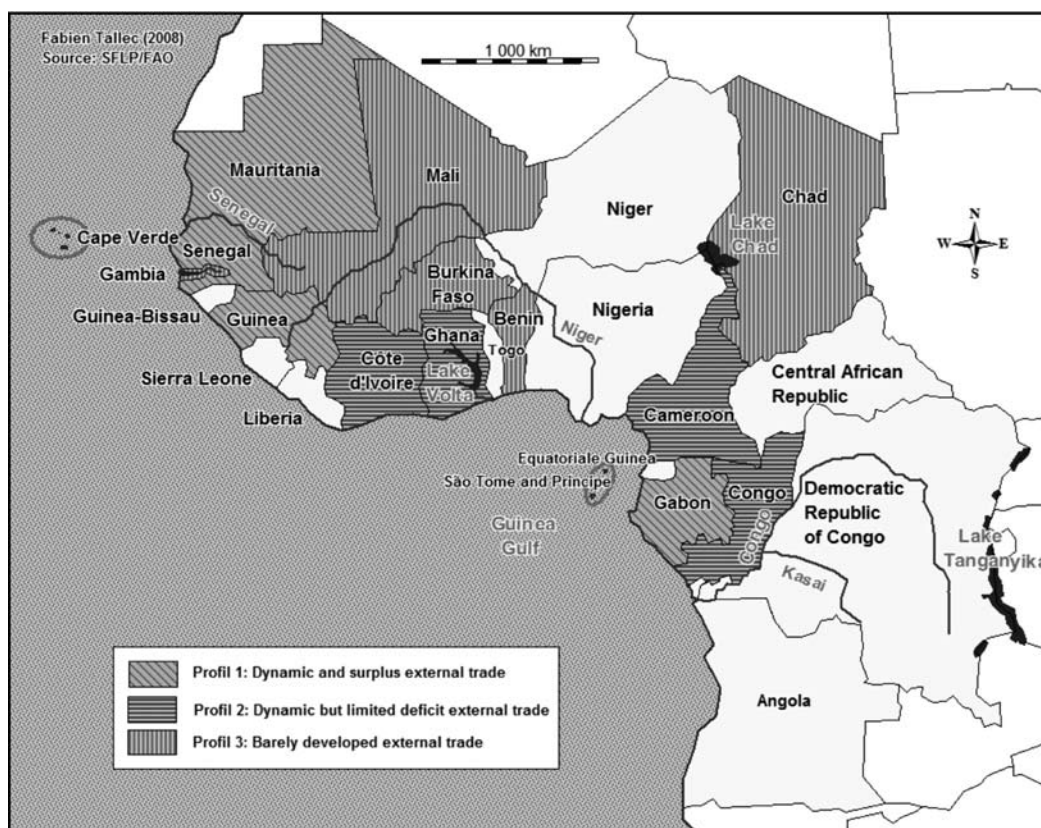
The map in Figure 4 gives a geographical summary of the Profile 1–3 countries.

## **BEYOND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS – POVERTY REDUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY**

The fisheries sector contributes immensely to the livelihood aspirations of millions of people in West and Central Africa. However, an important lesson learned from SFLP work is that the ways fishing activities contribute to household's livelihoods are complex and cannot easily be reduced to basic statistical indicators.



FIGURE 4  
Map of SFLP countries and their trade development status



Nevertheless, the case studies and the indicators they produced have been useful in clarifying some of the aspects of the sector's importance. With regard to value added and the contribution of fisheries to national GDP, the work confirms the validity of the sectoral approach that includes all activities along the fish value chain. By including, in addition to fish production, related activities such as fish processing, trade and fish food-catering activities, a more accurate assessment of the sector's economic significance was possible.

The small-scale fisheries sector creates employment. This makes it possible for people in the poorest groups in the communities to earn income on a permanent basis, or occasionally. The fact that this trend is most common in the poorest circles suggests that it contributes directly to poverty alleviation.

The number of people dependent on fisheries in developing countries is estimated at 234 million. However, there are people who are engaged in temporary fishing activities in marine areas and, more typically, inland water bodies that are not included in these estimates (FAO, 2005). For them, fishing may not be a full-time occupation but an activity that complements other livelihood strategies. (Béné, Macfadayen and Allison, 2007).

Fishing is of particular importance to the protein needs of West and Central African people. Fish is the preferred and cheapest source of animal protein and represents a large proportion of the animal protein intake by the African population. Fish products contribute to food security, both directly - by providing animal protein and nutrients - and indirectly, by providing a source of income to both fishers and fish workers, and the state. Many countries rely on the incomes from fish exports to generate the hard currency they desperately need to import food staples for their population. These

TABLE 4  
How the fisheries contribute to economy (selected examples)

Countries	GDP	Employment	Fish Supply	Fish Trade	Taxes
Congo	Fisheries contributes to 2.75% of GDP and 23.6% of the primary sector	6.8% of the labour force is involved in fisheries 80% to 90% of fish traders are women	Fish consumption averages 25 kg per year per person Fish provides 46% of animal protein	37% of the national fish supply is provided by imports	Taxes are mainly collected from fishing licenses but their contribution is marginal
Ghana	Fisheries contributes to 4.5% of GDP The small-scale sector alone contributes 3.4% of GDP	The livelihood of one in ten Ghanaians depends on fisheries 300,000 people depend on Lake Volta fisheries	Fish consumption averaged 27.2 kg per person in 2003 Fish provides 45% of animal protein	Exports amounted to US\$95 million in 2002, representing 4.74% of total export earnings	Taxes are from fishing licenses and market tolls and represent less than 5% of local revenue
Mali	Fisheries related activities contribute 4-5% of GDP	Fisheries provide 285,000 jobs, of which 70,000 are fishers, and represent 7.2% of the national labour force	Fish consumption averages 5.4 kg per person per year, compared to 4.7 kg for meat	Official exports are marginal; however, 15-20% of the fish traded in Mopti (Niger Central Delta) is exported to other countries in the region	Taxes on added value represent about 10% of the total value
Mauritania	Fisheries sector contributes to 4-5% of GDP and 22% of the primary sector	Small-scale fisheries represent only 10% of fish production, but provide 80% of the jobs	Fish consumption averages 4.3 kg/year but varies regionally – it is 17.1 kg/yr in Nouadhibou and 9.2 kg/yr in Nouakchott	Fish exports represent 70% of total exports, half from small-scale fisheries	From 2000 to 2004, fisheries contributed to 41% of budgetary revenues, mainly through EU fishing agreements (34%)
Sao Tome & Principe	Fisheries contributes to 5.2% of GDP and 19% of the primary sector	Between 1999 and 2002, the number of fishers increased from 3 310 to 5 296 (+60%)	Fish consumption averages 28kg per person per year – well above the world average of 16.3 kg	International fish trade is insignificant	Main source of revenue is the EU fishing agreement providing 600,000 euros per year
Senegal	Fisheries contributes to 4.1% of GDP and 13.7% of the primary sector	600,000 people are employed in the sector, i.e. 17% of the national labour force	Fish consumption averaged 30.8 kg per person in 2003 Fish provides 44% of animal protein	Fisheries are the leading export sector, representing in value 37% of total exports	25% of the value added goes to the state In the fishing commune of Joal, the sector provides 27.5% of the budget revenue

Source: FAO, 2006.

multiple roles of the fisheries sector confirm the need to consider the relationships between fishery and national policy on food security.

Fishing and fish processing and trade are also considered as safety-net activities for the poor. It was demonstrated through the case studies that small-scale fisheries contribute to poverty reduction at the household level in West and Central African countries. However, it is recognized that at the present time the most important contribution of small-scale fisheries to poverty alleviation is probably through their role in poverty prevention.<sup>8</sup> It was noted that for the large majority of households

<sup>8</sup> In the general literature, “poverty prevention refers to the role of an economic activity in helping people to maintain a minimum standard of living (even when this minimum standard of living is below a given poverty line) and which prevents them from falling any deeper into destitution (see e.g. Angelsen and Wunger, 2003). Poverty prevention in small-scale fisheries therefore refers to situations where fishing contributes – through various mechanisms – to reduce risks and create safety-net mechanisms in a general context of vulnerability.” In contrast, poverty reduction describes “a situation where people are becoming measurably better off over time due to their involvement/investment in economic activities. Poverty reduction in small-scale fisheries therefore refers to the cases where wealth is generated and capital accumulated through investments made in the fishery, which then helps to lift people out of poverty.” (Béné, 2006, page 11).

involved in the fisheries sector in African countries fishing and related activities do not generate high economic returns but instead help them to sustain their livelihoods and prevent them from falling deeper into deprivation.

As noted by Béné, Macfadayen and Allison (2007), the safety-net dimension of fisheries is of greater importance and relevance to poor and marginalized households – generally those with limited access to land and other resources. The relatively easy and free access to fishing grounds allows poor people to rely more heavily on the local commons' resources to obtain the goods and services they need to sustain their livelihoods, or to gain access to paid employment, in situations of economically or institutionally restricted access to other capital (e.g. financial capital such as credit) or production factors (such as private land).

The fisheries sector offers a lot of opportunities for the social integration of women in trade, processing and food-catering. These activities provide income for those groups considered as the poorest and marginalized. By addressing this issue in assessing the economic and social contribution of the fisheries sector, the important gender dimension was partially taken into consideration through the evaluation of the contribution of the post-harvest subsector. However, it is very important to better understand the gender dimension by including gender sensitive indicators.

The results of the case studies on assessment of the contribution of fisheries to economies are of great interest, as noted by Cunningham and Holleran (2007). In many countries, the case studies have altered the perception of the fisheries sector by showing that its contribution to GDP is greater than appears to be the case in national statistics. Those case studies also have had an impact on the position of the fisheries sector in national accounting systems, and strengthened (and sometimes established) relations between the fisheries administration and that responsible for the production of national accounts. Moreover, they helped to improve the SFLP methodology which has since been adopted in some of the participating countries. The studies were very well received and have been used at the global and national levels. Given this success, it was strongly recommended to investigate the impact that improved fisheries management could be expected to have on the social and economic contribution of fisheries to help decision-makers and donors (Cunningham and Holleran, 2007).

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## 4. Mainstreaming fisheries in development policy

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### INTRODUCTION

Increased international concern over world poverty and food insecurity led to the commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 and revitalised focus on poverty eradication. Along with rethinking the approaches used for working with rural communities, such as the development of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA), the need for strengthening local and national planning was recognised and tools for policy development and monitoring progress towards the MDGs were introduced. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank made the preparation and adoption of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) mandatory for eligible countries wanting to benefit from their debt-relief initiatives. Other World Bank programmes and donors also started to refer to the PRSP and base their country strategies around these national plans. Today, PRSP has become the main strategic planning instrument for poverty eradication in Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). In low and middle-income developing countries not qualifying for debt-relief under the HIPC scheme, national planning including poverty reduction initiatives are generally spelled out in National Development Plans (NDPs) (UNDP, 2003; Thorpe, 2005).

Most of the 25 countries participating in SFLP are HIPCs and use PRSP as the main strategic document for poverty related issues. However, following conventional lines of sectoral divisions, fisheries have generally been separate from this development processes. This might imply not only the possible omission of fisheries specific needs and activities in local and national development plans but also a risk for disconnects to overall policies when fisheries sector plans are elaborated.

A key activity of SFLP has been to work with relevant government staff and other stakeholders to increase the understanding of the importance of the fisheries sector and how it needs to be included in local and national poverty reduction plans. At the same time, assistance has been provided to ensure that fisheries policies include reference to the relevant overall poverty context and objectives.

This chapter outlines the arguments for why and how the needs of poor small-scale fishers and fish workers should be addressed explicitly in PRSPs and NDPs. The increased visibility of the fisheries sector at these high-level policy documents is evidence of recognition of the role of the fishing sector in poverty reduction and a chance to benefit from related funds, particularly by getting it into medium-term expenditure frameworks. It gives an account of the achievement of SFLP with regard to influencing the planning process to include the fisheries sector and to ensure a holistic approach, as well as incorporating the principles of FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (hereafter referred to as 'the Code'). The likely livelihood impact is discussed and lessons learned explored with a view to shed light on what future priorities should be. Based on the fact that fishing communities in West and Central Africa are characterized by a high level of poverty/vulnerability, parallel efforts were made by SFLP to get poverty-related objectives into national fisheries sector policy.

### WHY INCLUDE FISHERIES IN PRSPs?

The process of preparing national poverty reduction strategies as initiated and encouraged by the Bretton Woods institutions has been prominent in the strategic planning for poverty eradication in West and Central African countries considered as HIPC. The PRSPs describe the overall policy and planning framework for poverty reduction. These frameworks guide the preparation of government budgets, programmes and policies.

The SFLP experience over the three first years of its lifespan showed that in general the small-scale fisheries sector was not given enough consideration in these national economic and social development policies. Already at the preparatory analytical stage, the poverty assessments used for PRSPs did not explore systematically the main factors affecting poor people's livelihoods as proposed by SLA. This was found to be particularly true for poverty in the fishing communities where in-depth poverty profiling was lacking. The analysis tended to be superficial and the special characteristics of fisher folk households were usually not considered in the poverty diagnosis. This lack of a rigorous methodological approach led to failure to notice the entry points for relevant interventions for improving fishing communities' livelihoods by reducing poverty and vulnerability. The impression given was that the proposed strategic interventions came from a shopping list, characterized by remarkable lack of consideration for fisheries, even in the countries where fishery visibly should accord the sector a certain priority.

As noted in the Chapter 3, the fisheries sector contributes significantly to the economic and social development of the West and Central African countries. The SFLP economic studies particularly demonstrated that some countries have dynamic and surplus external trade. These countries (Senegal, Mauritania and Gabon) were upgrading a large portion of their export products towards one or several specific market segments (Kébé and Tallec, 2006). Given the high added value obtained from export products, external trade in the fisheries sector attracts a large amount of foreign currency into the economy of these countries. Moreover, the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people depend on the fisheries sector in many of the African countries. The fisheries sector appears as the principal motor of growth in some countries of the region. For the other countries, the sector can still play an important ancillary role in enhancing African growth rates over time through exploitation of under-exploited aquatic resources – where they still exist –, development of aquaculture activities, increasing the value-added created by the sector, and integrating the sector more closely into tourism and coastal-zone management programmes (Thorpe *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, fisheries policies were guided by a sectoral approach where emphasis was put on the resource management forgetting that people are the centre of the decision-making process (see Chapter 1). Considering that fishing communities are characterized by a high level of poverty/vulnerability in the region, there is a need to get poverty-related objectives into national fisheries sector policy particularly by promoting responsible fishing and poverty reduction.

For the SFLP all these different factors served as entry points for promoting the explicit inclusion of fisheries in national planning processes, such as PRSPs, and the preparation of sustainable strategies that are well suited to poverty reduction in the small-scale fishing communities of West and Central Africa (Kébé, 2007). Participation is a main guiding principle of PRSP planning and is applied to each step of the process. It is implemented through extensive discussions and consultations on priority issues and appropriate actions with various administrations, public institutions, civil society, socio-professional organizations and external partners. Participation aiming at consensus is required for mobilising the efforts needed to achieve the objectives of the poverty reduction strategy. This also implies that fishing people are – or should be – involved in the whole process (Onibon and Alimi, 2002).

The inclusion of fisheries in PRSPs provides an opportunity for adopting fisheries policies in a more holistic manner, reconciling sustainable resource management with the fight against poverty in fishing communities and contribution of the sector to economic growth. Within the context of SLA, this was 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 various poverty profiles and diagnoses conducted by the SFLP in the fishing communities gave concrete evidence substantiating the endemic nature of poverty within these populations (see Chapter 2) and an argument for inclusion of the fisheries sector in the PRSPs (Thorpe, *et al.*, 2004). The advantage of a better visibility of the fisheries sector in national strategies and policies is that this leads to increasing investment in the sector, both for specific interventions in the fisheries field and in improving access to economic and social basic services, in order to reduce vulnerability of the fishing communities and increase the livelihoods opportunities. A better understanding of the poverty in the fishing communities could help to target these interventions (SFLP, 2005; Kébé, 2007).

## ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SFLP: PROCESS AND RESULTS

### The process

Different initiatives were developed by SFLP to push for the integration of small-scale fisheries communities into the national policies of West and Central African countries, particularly the PRSPs. The process started by exploring the ideas and work done in the past to reduce poverty in the small-scale fisheries sector of the West and Central African region. This exercise was conducted during two subregional 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) (see Nieland and Béné, 2004). A 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 (see FAO, 2005).

During the next step, entry points were identified with a view to improve the integration of fishing communities in PRSPs by using the SLA guiding principles and by developing partnerships with Fisheries Departments through the SFLP National Coordination Units (NCU) implemented in each SFLP participating country. This approach made it possible to undertake the following activities (Kébé, 2007):

- 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.
- A 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, through questionnaire surveys in selected SFLP countries.
- Organization of a Consultation<sup>9</sup> with the support of the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, to analyze the status of the PRSP process and its

<sup>9</sup> The SFLP participating countries represented in the consultation were: 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.



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 (Anon., 2005).

In parallel with these interventions, an important component of capacity building was developed by the SFLP in most of countries through the organization of various training and awareness sessions for the main stakeholders including fishing communities and NCUs within organizational development, strategic planning, literacy, advocacy, lobbying, management of infrastructure, participation in local development etc. to facilitate their participation in the PRSP process.

Moreover, guidelines for the assessment of the contribution of artisanal fisheries to the national economies in West and Central Africa were produced. On this basis, SFLP assisted the countries in obtaining information on the social and economic role of small-scale fisheries (see Chapter 3), and in the lobbying required to ensure that more consideration is given to the sector in national poverty reduction policies. SFLP's work on poverty profiling also provided key information on fishing communities in this respect (see Chapter 2).

National studies and workshops were conducted to support the different stages of the process. The example of Niger illustrates the SFLP course of action taken to facilitate the integration of the fisheries sector in national policies and strategies (Kébé, 2005).

In Niger, SFLP initiated a participatory study on Policies, Institutions, and Processes (PIP) which have an impact on the livelihoods of fishing communities. The result of the study served as the basis for discussion during the national workshop organized to brainstorm on poverty reduction efforts in fisheries. Following the recommendations of this workshop, support was provided to the Fisheries Department to prepare a fisheries and aquaculture subprogramme within the context of the Rural Development Strategy (RDS) of the PRSP.

The fisheries and aquaculture subprogramme was prepared on the basis of participatory diagnosis of the fishing communities' livelihoods, the lessons learned from various SFLP interventions and an in-depth analysis of the four major issues addressed in the RDS of Niger. These are (Kébé, 2005):

- To promote the access of rural populations to economic opportunities in order to create the conditions for sustainable growth.
- To reduce the vulnerability, improve food security, and manage natural resources in a sustainable manner, so as to secure the livelihoods of the rural population.
- To build up the capacities of public institutions, civil society and rural development stakeholders associations in order to improve natural resource management.
- To strengthen horizontal consultation and collaboration at national and regional levels.

The guidelines for the sustainable improvement of the livelihoods of fishing communities defined by the PRSP of Niger were translated into priority actions identified in the fisheries and aquaculture subprogramme. This action plan was discussed and validated by the main stakeholders including representatives of public institutions, fishing communities, civil society and development partners during a national workshop.

The exercise in Niger was completed by the formulation of the Strategy for Fisheries Development which was integrated into the 2006-2011 Medium Term Action Plan adopted by the government. The subprogramme for fisheries and aquaculture, elaborated as part of the RDS, will facilitate the implementation of the Strategy for Fisheries Development. This was an opportunity to include for the first time the fisheries sector in the ongoing PRSP process in Niger. This engagement was facilitated by the importance of the support provided to the national authorities following their

request to make more visible the sector. It provided a good model for similar activities to achieve better sectoral integration in other countries in the region. Congo has adopted the same approach and the process is ongoing.

### **Status of PRSPs before SFLP interventions**

The results of the questionnaire surveys conducted by SFLP at the starting of the process to appreciate the integration of the fisheries sector in the national PRSP process showed that most countries were in the process of implementing interim PRSP (I-PRSP) and at the same time preparing their final PRSP.<sup>10</sup> Some exceptions included Burkina Faso that was at the beginning of the implementation of its final PRSP while Togo and Nigeria were starting the elaboration of their interim PRSPs. With regard to participation of small-scale fisheries stakeholders, responses showed that only in 7 countries out of 13 the authorities of the sector were involved and consultations were organized with fish workers. These countries were Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Sierra Leone (Onibon and Alimi, 2002). However, also in these countries, little attention was given to poverty in the fishing communities during the diagnosis analysis as well as when identifying strategic orientations and priority actions. The needs and aspirations of the fishing communities were not taken into account even the main stakeholders of the sector were involved in the process.

It was possible to distinguish four categories of countries, according to the importance given to the fisheries sector in the PRSPs. It appeared that in most of the countries the fisheries sector was almost completely absent in the PRSPs, i.e. in Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, The Gambia, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone and Togo. For another group of five countries – i.e. Benin, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria – fisheries was mentioned only in relation with another sector as agriculture or water, without any specific importance. Priority was given to fisheries in only a few countries, in Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal, as well as in Ghana although to a lesser extent. In Ghana, poverty issues relating to fish workers were the main subject of an in-depth diagnosis and specific strategic orientations as well as priority actions were included in the PRSP (Onibon and Alimi, 2002).

Table 5 gives an overview of which stage of the PRSP process different countries were in at the time of the SFLP survey and what support needs were identified with regard to the improved integration of fisheries.

### **Mainstreaming the fisheries sector in national poverty reduction policies**

The SFLP process described above contributed to a significant positive change in how the fisheries sector was treated in PRSPs in the region. Although not all the support needs and suggested actions identified in Table 1 have yet been addressed, the inclusion of the sector in the national development planning process was improved in most SFPL participating countries. This was particularly the case in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania and Niger. Some examples of successful mainstreaming outcomes are given in Box 4.

The more important elements and lessons learned from the mainstreaming exercise include (Holvoet, 2007; Kébé, 2007; Konan, 2007; Ndenn, 2007; Njock, 2007):

<sup>10</sup> An interim PRSP (I-PRSP) summarizes the current knowledge and analysis of a country's poverty situation, describes the existing poverty reduction strategy, and lays out the process for producing a fully developed PRSP (final PRSP) in a participatory fashion. I-PRSP includes among others: (i) commitment of government to reduce poverty, (ii) a brief diagnosis of poverty and strategies identified by government to face it, (iii) a timeframe and a procedure of PRSP elaboration, (iv) a 3-year policy matrix and a macro-economic frame (provisory). According to World Bank, the final PRSP should comprise the 5 following elements: (i) assessment and poverty and main determining factors, (ii) definition of poverty reduction objectives, (iii) prioritization of public actions to reduce poverty, (iv) set up of systematic monitoring of poverty tendencies and evaluation of impact of government programmes and actions, (v) description of major aspects of the participative process.

TABLE 5  
Steps in the PRSP process and needs for support (2002)

Steps in the process	Countries	Probable date	Needs for support
'Step 1' Ongoing elaboration of PRSP: starting of the process	Nigeria	2002	Refinement of the mechanisms of representation of fisheries departments and fish workers in the PRSP process  Elaboration of documents on fisheries sector as inputs to PRSPs  Integration of the fisheries sector in the medium-term framework expenditures and annual programme-budgets  Elaboration and implementation of the sectoral poverty reduction strategy for the fisheries
	Sierra Leone	2002	
	Togo	2002-2003	
'Step 2' PRSP process almost ended	Benin	June 2002	Integration of the fisheries sector in the medium-term framework expenditures and annual programme-budgets
	Chad	2001	
	Congo	2002	
	Côte d'Ivoire	2002	Elaboration and implementation of the sectoral poverty reduction strategy for the fisheries
	Ghana	January 2002	
'Step 3' PRSP Implementation launched	Burkina Faso	Since 2000	Adjustment of the medium-term framework expenditures and annual programme-budgets
	Cameroon	November 2001	
	Mali	2002	Elaboration and implementation of the sectoral poverty reduction strategy for the fisheries
	Mauritania	2001	
	Niger	2002	
	Senegal	2002	
'Step 4' Transition between the end of a phase and the preparation of a new phase of PRSP	Cape Verde	2002	Refinement of the mechanisms of representation of fisheries departments and fish workers in the PRSP process  Elaboration of documents on fisheries sector as inputs to PRSPs  Elaboration and implementation of the sectoral poverty reduction strategy for fisheries.
	The Gambia	2002	
	Guinea	July 2002	

Source: Onibon and Alimi, 2002.

- The economic assessments and fishing community poverty profiles conducted by SFLP generated more realistic information on the importance of the fisheries sector in terms of employment, incomes, food security and safety net. This information generated renewed interest in the sector and a concomitant uplifting of its status in the PRSPs.
- The development of appropriate communication strategies in some countries facilitated a wide dissemination of the results of the various studies and the mainstreaming of the fisheries sector in national policies. Advocacy work done by the NCUs and Fisheries Departments through generation and dissemination of information on the sector, resulted in more visibility of the sector and led to its integration into national PRSPs.
- The creation or reinforcement of community-based organizations and national umbrella organizations, and various training received contributed widely 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 national poverty reduction policies.

## BOX 4

**Successful mainstreaming outcomes**

In Niger a Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Sub-Programme (FASP) was prepared as part of the Rural Development Strategy of the PRSP. This Subprogramme will facilitate the implementation of the strategy for developing the fisheries subsector, an integral part of the medium term action plan (MTAP) 2006–2011 resulting from a sectoral consultation on the environment and desertification control. This development was possible thanks to efforts by the National Coordination Unit and a leap in visibility from a marginalized sector to one with a significant role in poverty reduction. The strategy was adopted and will potentially benefit the sector through financial support to implement an action plan for reducing poverty and improving sustainable fisheries management. The factors of success are diverse but include time and effort spent raising awareness of partners through discussions and national workshops. It was important to have data and evidence of the contribution of fisheries to the economy to convince partners. Interventions at the community level were also vital in providing an understanding of the characteristics of poverty, vulnerability and gender relations on which to base a realistic strategy and using this to inform partners.

The interventions included in the FASP, corresponding to selected components of the Rural Development Strategy of the PRSP, are the following (Holvoet, 2007; Kébé, 2007):

**Component 1:** Fisheries development/enhancement and river based fisheries

- Concertation and collaboration between fingerlings production at government managed stations and small producers;
- 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

- Training of staff of research institutions on participatory approaches;
- Analysis of investment capacity of actors and discussion with communities on appropriate technology;
- Participatory action research with restitution of results to micro-finance institutions.

**Component 4:** Diversification of livelihoods

- Gender analysis and identification of income generated activities;
- Gender analysis to inform micro-finance institutions to adapt products.

**Component 6:** Capacity building for institutions and for community organizations contributing to improved sector management

- Production of a functional literacy curriculum for the fisheries sector;
- Gender analysis on the subject of natural resources management and concessions and taking into account gender concerns in the elaboration fisheries plans;
- Training and establishment of female regional organizations;
- Extension of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;
- Strengthening of data collection on the sector using experience from Chad basin.

In Congo and Mauritania, the assessment of the contribution of fisheries to national economy was completed by other studies to prepare respectively ‘a sectoral strategy for poverty reduction for eradication’ and ‘a national strategy for sustainable fisheries development (2006–2008)’. The results of the study in Congo were taken into account for the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP2) in preparation and in which fisheries is considered as a motor of growth that could help to fight against poverty in rural areas. The national strategy for sustainable fisheries development of Mauritania included, for the first time, the principle of promoting fishing community participation in sustainable management of fisheries resources (Njock, 2007).

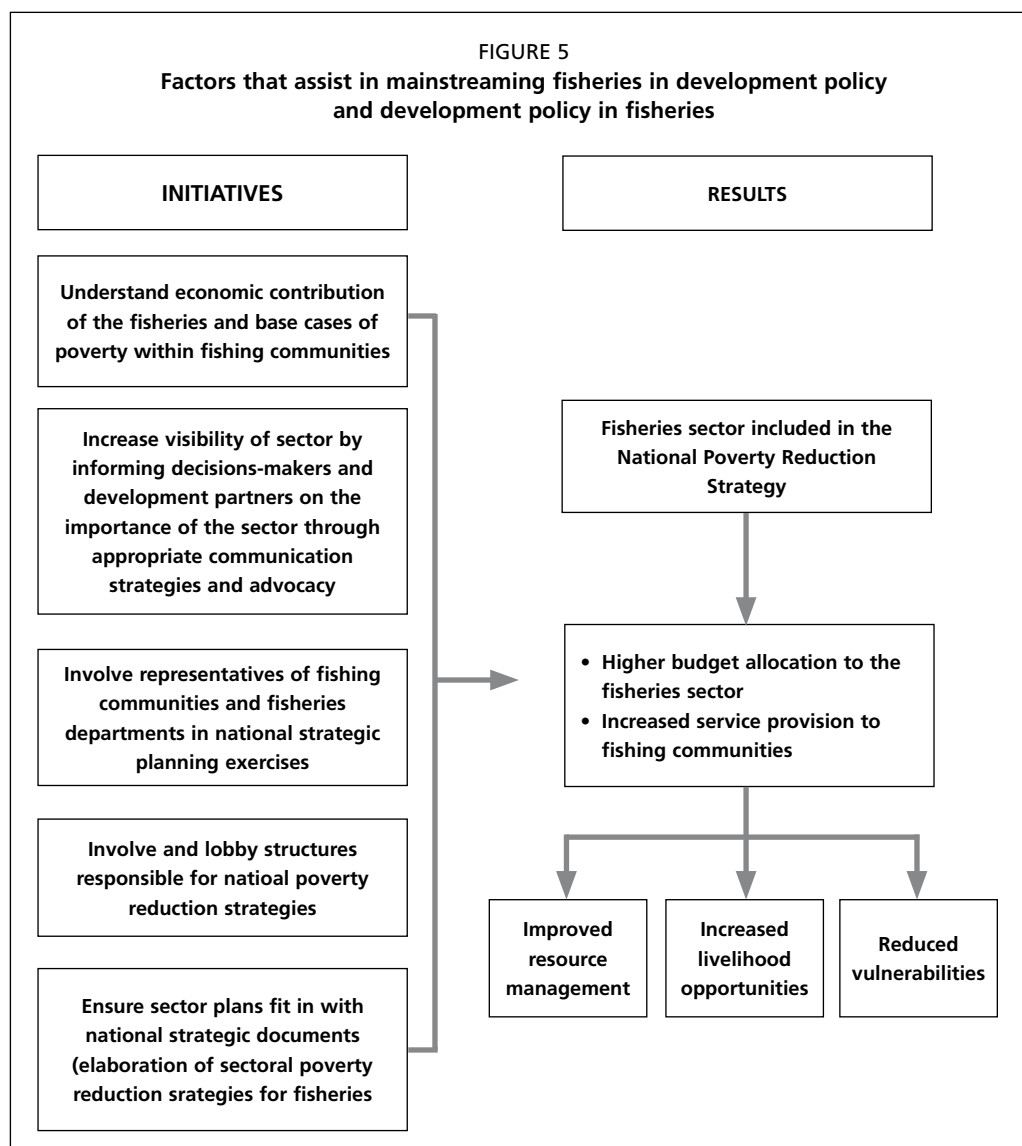
- Emphasis on PIPs and micro-macro linkages providing information from field level poverty profiles and SFLP interventions to the attention of policy and decision makers triggered changes in favour of the small-scale fisheries sector. For example, in Guinea, the SFLP contributed to the integration of fisheries into the finalized PRSP, in particular in the field of participatory Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) in fisheries. The various SFLP interventions helped to set up legal and institutionalised mechanisms for participatory surveillance, improve collaboration between the different institutions involved in the national MCS system and generate relevant information on the importance of the conflicts and accidents at sea (Holvoet, 2007; Njock 2007).
- The increased recognition of the fisheries sector influenced and improved data collection mechanisms. An example is the incorporation of ten additional artisanal fishing enumeration areas, the primary sampling unit, in the Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS) - with fifteen households per enumeration area. SLIHS provided information for the national PRSP planning, implementation and monitoring. Such data helped to prepare the national fishery policy and contributed to a better integration of fisheries in PRSP and to the eligibility of fisheries to PRSP related funds.

Compared to the situation of the countries in 2002 (see Table 4), many efforts were made by SFLP to provide appropriate support to selected countries to improve the degree of inclusion of the fisheries sector in PRSPs. The generation of information on (i) poverty profiling in the fishing communities; (ii) the economic and social role of small-scale fisheries; (iii) the importance of post-harvest issues; and (iv) the impact of Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs) has contributed to a best visibility of the sector in PRSPs. In 2008 the fisheries sector can be considered as part of PRSPs in most of SFLP participating countries; specific strategic orientations and priority actions for the fisheries sector are included in PRSPs. It is the case particularly for Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Mali and Niger. In other countries like Congo, Niger and Sierra Leone sectoral poverty reduction strategies for fisheries were prepared and will be implemented. In addition, the priority given to the sector in Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal since 2002 was reinforced during the preparation of new phases of PRSPs.

#### **FROM PRSP TO LIVELIHOOD IMPACT**

Integrating the fisheries sector into national policies and strategies has been a key success of SFLP initiatives across West and Central Africa. Generation and distribution of strategic information on the sector particularly data on poverty profiling in the fishing communities and contribution of the fisheries sector to the national economy helped to increase the visibility of the sector in national strategies. In many countries the national views of the fishing sector have changed, the relevant government authorities and other stakeholders better understand the importance of the sector and its potential contribution to poverty reduction and food security in the country.

This improved visibility of the fisheries sector in national strategies led 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 improving the fishing communities' livelihoods by 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 fisheries benefited from the HIPC Initiative in the form of projects aimed at the sustainable livelihoods improvement of selected fishing communities. For example, two fisheries project proposals were funded in Cameroon for CFA francs 1.6 billion, approximately US\$3million.



In addition to support to better integrate the fisheries sector into PRSP, SFLP developed linkages between the fisheries and various other national policies such as food security, HIV/AIDS, microfinance and literacy, ensuring that the fishing communities receive necessary attention (see also Chapters 7 and 9). It appeared clearly that integration of the fisheries sector in national policies and strategies is crucial for building partnerships and establishing the necessary national awareness to catalyse integration of fisheries communities in local development and decentralisation processes. The fisheries departments should be investing in lobbying and advocacy and use every opportunity to make the sector more visible. The preparation and implementation of a well adapted communication strategy, as well as the production of information and communication (IC) materials probably facilitated the lobbying exercise (see also Chapter 8).

The importance of the current and potential contribution of small-scale fisheries for achieving poverty reduction and food security is the principal factor of mainstreaming the sector in development policies. The fishery sector is dynamic and reactive to its local, national and international environment. To sustain this successful integration it is necessary to guide policy formulation by identifying the role that the fisheries sector can play in poverty reduction, food security and economic growth, and ensuring a fair representation of the fisheries sector in poverty reduction strategies at macro (national),

meso (departmental/district/regional) and micro (local) levels. Particularly the impact that improved fisheries management could be expected to have on the contribution of the sector to national economy should be investigated (Horemans and Kébé, 2006). The elaboration and implementation of a sectoral poverty reduction strategy for the fisheries sector in each country would facilitate this task to ensure both the inclusion of fisheries specific needs and activities in local and national development plans, and the connection to overall policies.

The main factors that contributed to the successful integration of the fisheries sector in the national policies and strategies are illustrated in Figure 5 (see p.64).

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## 5. Institutional innovations in fisheries co-management

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### INTRODUCTION

The concept of fisheries co-management has evolved based on a number of ideas in development studies and natural resource management, including participatory development, empowerment and relevance of indigenous knowledge and traditional systems. It has also been supported by recent general policies of decentralisation and devolution of rights and can be seen as a response to the perceived crisis in world fisheries, acknowledging the often common failure of central management regimes and a need to search for new forms for fisheries governance (Allison and Badjeck, 2004).

Co-management – in essence meaning that the responsibility and function of managing a natural resource based activity such as fisheries is shared among the government, resource users and other stakeholders<sup>11</sup> – can take a number of forms ranging from arrangements where resource users are involved in implementing government management decisions to delegation of the decision making authority to fishers and other stakeholders. While the exact specificities of a particular co-management arrangement will depend on the local context, successful outcomes are more likely when the latter more narrow definition is applied, i.e. involving decentralised decision-making and shared responsibilities (Arthur and Howard, 2005; Arthur, 2005). The benefits that all actors in co-management strive to achieve are “more appropriate, more efficient and more equitable management” (Pomeroy and Berkes, 1997).

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (from here on referred to as ‘the Code’) supports the principles underlying co-management. In the Code and its technical guidelines, institutional structures and processes required for successful fisheries management are described and include the need for appropriate legislation, principles of transparent and participatory management, processes for developing fisheries management plans, administrative structures and monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS).

In practice, co-management arrangements are often conceived either based on a desire of fisheries departments to improve efficiency and reduce costs or as a response to reduced resources due to poor property rights, and the perception that this is a main cause of poverty (Pomeroy and Berkes, 1997; Lowry, Pallewatte and Dainis, 1999).

Experience from around the world shows that the following conditions are important to successful fisheries co-management (adapted from APFIC/FAO, 2005 and Allison and Badjeck, 2004):

<sup>11</sup> Jentoft (2003, p.3) defines co-management as “a collaborative and participatory process of regulatory decision-making between representatives of user-groups, government agencies, research institutions, and other stakeholders”.

1. An enabling policy and legal framework, and continued government support;
2. Effective institutions and linkages;
3. Real participation by resource users and other stakeholders, avoiding elite capture and exclusion of minority groups;
4. Incentives for individuals to participate.

In the Central Africa region, co-management arrangements have been successfully used in forestry (Nginguiri, 2004) but there are no well-documented fishery examples. In West Africa, on the other hand, there are several examples including some of the earliest fisheries co-management arrangements in the world (Sverdrup-Jensen and Raakjær Nielsen, 1998). The Aby lagoon case in Côte d'Ivoire is the best-known example of co-management in the region, and has been reported on by many authors (Konan, 1999; Kponhassia and Konan, 1997; Njifonjou, Satia and Konan, 2005; Horemans and Jallow, 1998). Other cases are cited in Benin, Senegal and the Gambia (Njie and Mikkola, 2001). In most of these cases, Sverdrup-Jensen and Raakjær Nielsen (1998) argue, co-management was (and perhaps remains) government-based, and user groups are not given the necessary authority through enabling legislation, such that the co-management principle has not been formally institutionalized.

Earlier co-management attempts in the region – and indeed most co-management programmes worldwide – were focused entirely on improving fish-stock management, with the assumption that poverty could be reduced solely or primarily by improving the state of fish resources. This inevitably required people to collectively participate in reducing their own fishing activities, involving short-term costs, without offering any form of interim or collateral benefits. Thus, of the four enabling conditions identified above, incentives were not factored in, except in the form of the 'deferred gratification' of presumed future benefits from higher fish catches and more secure community-based aquatic property rights. In the context of poverty and high levels of vulnerability, where the future may be heavily discounted, this has often proven insufficient incentive to gain the cooperation of communities (Allison and Badjeck, 2004).

The SFLP approach was instead based on embedding the need for fisheries management in a wider development context, recognising that collective-action institutions for resource management could also be used to mobilize finance and services in support of other aspects of peoples' lives besides resource management. The SFLP implemented two subregional pilot projects on fisheries co-management, one in inland waters (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Ghana) and one in the marine coastal area (Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania). This chapter gives an account of the experience from these activities, confirming the importance of the four enabling conditions mentioned above. It explains the SFLP approach to co-management, incorporating broader development functions and giving priority to an enabling legal framework and appropriate institutions, and shows how co-management can be effective and sustainable in the context of poverty (Konan, Njock and Allison, 2006).

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the two Pilot Projects. This is followed by an analysis of the role of policy and legal frameworks related to fisheries co-management. The SFLP experience of building effective institutions and linkages for co-management is presented next, followed by discussions on participation and incentives in the poverty context. The chapter ends with a summary of lessons learned for the design of future co-management programmes.

### **SFLP PILOT PROJECTS – RATIONALE AND PROJECT FORMULATION PROCESS**

The formulation process, rationale, components and objectives of the two Pilot Projects were based on the co-management strategy (SFLP, 2003; SFLP, 2004), which has been described in detail by Konan, Njock and Allison (2006). Parts of the present chapter draw on this work, as well as on the final reports of the two Pilot Projects (Konan, 2007; Njock, 2007). The two pilot projects were implemented in eight of the countries

TABLE 6  
Characteristics of the two pilot projects

Characteristics	Pilot project in inland waters	Pilot project in coastal waters
Types of species exploited	Endemic, low species diversity	Migratory, multispecies
Scale (size) and characteristics of the waterbody and ecosystem consideration	Artificial lake: well delineated and easier to manage exclusivity over a resource: no competition with industrial vessels	Vast coastlines: difficulty to define the boundaries of the area to be managed (other than by national boundaries). difficulty to implement MCS, which encourages free and open access to the resources competition over the resources by many exploitation strategies including industrial vessels
Actors (human resources)	Mostly nationals	Dominated by migrants: often mobile and more vulnerable
Opportunities for livelihood diversification	Agriculture Livestock	Agriculture limited; in general scarce opportunities to diversify livelihoods, except in more urbanised areas

covered by SFLP in both inland and coastal fishing communities. The Pilot Project implemented in inland waters from February 2003 to March 2006 covered artificial lakes in Burkina Faso (the Bagré and Kompienga dams), Côte d'Ivoire (Lake Kossou), Ghana (Volta Lake) and Mali (Lake Sélingué). The coastal waters pilot project, the implementation of which covered the period running from April 2004 to March 2006, concerned the Congolese coast, and parts of the maritime coast of Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania (see map in Chapter 1). While the two pilot projects had the same objectives and applied similar approaches, it should be recognised that there are important differences between marine fisheries and the inland water sector. Both projects were set in two different environments with regard to the nature of the fisheries, the ecology of the systems, the sizes of the waterbodies, the human resources available and the structure of people's livelihoods (see Table 6). Because of these specificities, the approach used in the implementation of the projects differed slightly.

The overall strategy applied by the Pilot projects was to promote improved resource management in conjunction with a development support process. As well as ensuring the sustainability of fishery resources in the lakes and coastal zones, a key objective of the two pilot projects was to contribute to poverty reduction in fishing communities. A co-management based approach was developed on the basis of the SLA analytical framework to assess and address the multiple dimensions of poverty in fishing communities and the principles of the Code, to ensure management actions were compatible with responsible fisheries principles.

The pilot projects' objectives were to be achieved, in a participatory way, through the promotion of a conducive policy and institutional environment for the communities within the framework of the on-going decentralisation processes and by granting powers to the communities both for the management of natural resources and for local development. (SFLP, 2005; Allison and Horemans, 2006). The pilot projects also worked at the national level to influence key policy and legal processes that could enable the required changes in local-level resource management and poverty reduction programmes and help build coherence between national fisheries policies and key development policies such as national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (see also Chapter 4). Moreover, when building institutions for fishery co-management, it was recognised that these needed to have local development functions as well as resource management responsibilities, if they were to overcome the problem of a lack of short-term incentives to participate. To effectively address poverty, participation of all socio-

professional groups was required, including vulnerable and marginalised groups. The SFLP approach to co-management thus attempted to explicitly incorporate micro-level participatory diagnostic processes to identify the nature of poverty and deprivation in fishing communities (Djangone *et al.*, 2003; Konan *et al.*, 2003; N'dia *et al.*, 2003; Wane *et al.*, 2003) and also to help develop the capacity of meso-level institutions to address these issues. By doing so, incentives for local communities to engage in co-management and responsible fisheries were created.

### **BUILDING AN ENABLING POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Since the advent of 'modern' fisheries resource management in Africa, in the 1950s, the centralised management of natural resources has been concentrated on decision-making powers in the hands of the government. Recent developments in policy and institutional frameworks have promoted responsibility-sharing between all the partners in general, and between fishing communities and government agencies in particular. The mandate for participation of the users of the resources has now been incorporated into national policies and legislative and regulatory frameworks in many countries around the world. In spite of the fact that the lakes and coastal waters remain the property of the State, room has been made for fishing communities to participate in decision-making creating a basic foundation for co-management. A large amount of the work published on co-management stresses the role of governments in supporting this form of governance (Pomeroy, 1995; Pomeroy and Berkes, 1997; Pomeroy *et al.*, 2001; Fleishman, 2006). This mainly relates to the provision of a supportive legislation and policy framework that defines and clarifies rights, rules and responsibilities of different partners, creates legitimacy and guarantees sustainability for co-management arrangements. Pomeroy and Berkes (1997) argue that one means of establishing these conditions is through decentralisation.

Since the end of the 1980s and the early years of the 1990s, many West and Central African countries have been involved in decentralisation. The idea behind this form of governance is that local administrations and authorities are better placed than the central government to identify and respond to the needs of the local communities and that it is the beneficiaries of government services (including the rule of law, rights to participate, the provision of infrastructure and services) who are best placed to identify local priorities and to hold local officials accountable in the use of public resources. For this to be achieved, governments have to put in place appropriate capacity and systems for implementation, including the institutional and legal framework and supportive regulations and guidelines to facilitate the process at the central, intermediary and local levels (Bonnal and Rossi, 2006).<sup>12</sup> All these initiatives relate to how to approach and handle poverty reduction and service provision to fishing communities in a development context. In addressing these issues in its studies, reviews and interventions, SFLP also incorporated consideration of environmental entitlements (including rights to land and water), equity concerns (including gender equity) and the mechanisms generating social exclusion (including conflict between migrants and residents). This process was conducted together with the setting up and the implementation of poverty alleviation policies with the support of many partners, through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Within the SFLP context, Bonnal and Rossi developed guidelines on decentralisation with the collaboration of national partners from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Niger and Senegal with the aim to facilitate the incorporation of the fisheries sector into national decentralisation initiatives. Thanks to the latter, the SFLP experience permitted cross-sectoral and inter level linkages between institutions.

<sup>12</sup> Documents on decentralization in several countries are available from the SFLP Web site: Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Congo, Guinea, etc.

However, in spite of this general decentralisation movement, real decision-making power and resources have not always been reallocated to local communities. There are several reasons for this including lack of capacity, both at the national level and at the receiving end in rural communities and centres. Fishing communities, often lacking organizational frameworks and structures, have not been able to ascertain and assert their rights and benefit from existing policies. Moreover, in the SFLP countries at the time of the start of the Programme, fisheries administrations and management were generally still centralised. The existing regulatory frameworks were not set up to support the participation of fisheries communities in fisheries management (Kinoussia, 2005). Within the existing decentralisation policy framework, new instruments permitting the creation of local management institutions that could cooperate with local authorities in fisheries management and local development were needed (Kinoussia, 2006). Considering the co-management approach adopted by SFLP, the notion of linking resource management and local development, including the access of fisheries communities to basic services, was particularly important.

The pilot projects supported fisheries communities and administrations in this direction by contributing to the creation of a legal environment that was conducive to co-management, and to participation in decision-making in local development. This involved either the development of new legal, administrative and institutional arrangements or, more commonly as it was practised in most of the SFLP countries, using and interpreting, as well as updating when required, existing laws and procedures to legitimise certain functions of co-management and ensure that fishing communities benefited from the delegation of decision-making power provided for within the framework of decentralisation.

An example from the pilot project on coastal fisheries co-management illustrates this process. A major activity carried out by the project was the review of the institutional and legal framework. This was done through a case study on participatory surveillance that was conducted in the four associated countries (Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania) with the aim of supporting those countries seeking legal recognition for their coastal fishing communities' participation in fisheries management, including monitoring, control and surveillance, and on the other hand to provide the pilot project with an approach and tools needed to involve these communities in the on-going decentralization process. The study highlighted some shortcomings and proposed amendments to remedy the situation. The workshops held in the various countries to validate the above amendments recommended that the fishery authorities take the necessary steps to legally recognize the fishing communities' involvement in fisheries management, including participatory surveillance. In Guinea where the process was developed more fully, local fishers' organizations known as the Landing Sites Development Committees (Comités de développement des débarcadères - CDD), the first series of which were established since the early 1990s, functioned until 2006 with no formal recognition by government despite the fact that they were playing a significant role in small-scale coastal fisheries' development and management (Cacaud, 2004; Njock, 2005). The pilot project assisted the Guinean ministry of fisheries in the process of legitimisation of the CDDs. For this purpose, the legal environment was updated by introducing the concept of participatory surveillance in the bill on the regulation of small-scale coastal fisheries, and by revising the statutes of the CDDs in such a way as to be able to introduce participatory surveillance in their mandate (Konaté, 2006). The process was sanctioned by the enactment of the ministerial decree No 676/2006 handing over the responsibility for coordinating the development activities of the fish landing sites to the CDDs, and the enactment of the ministerial decree No 677/2006 related to the guidelines on participatory surveillance. These actions help to translate *de facto* processes into the legal recognition of the rights of communities to participate in local decision making and local development. At the same time, as part of the decentralization process, the Government of Guinea has created

## BOX 4

**Conceptualisation of SFLP interventions addressing poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion within fishing communities**

- 1. Vulnerability: improved access to health services and secure fundamental rights**
  - Fishing communities are integrated in HIV/AIDS and other endemic diseases initiatives; and
  - co-management institutions take the lead to sensitise and involve fisheries community members and other stakeholders in the process (Congo, Gabon, Mauritania)
- 2. Marginalisation: institutional development with rights to work, rights of migrants and gender equity**
  - Migrants and women are members of socio professional and co-management
  - organizations and participate in decision making process
- 3. Poverty: diversification, education, micro-finance and partnership development**
  - Fishing management committees organise development initiatives forums to attract funding by NGOs (Burkina Faso and the Gambia)
  - Integration of the fisheries sector in PRSPs in most of the SFLP's countries
  - For coping with the poverty environment, fisher folk socio professional organizations found it useful and opportune to establish partnerships with micro finance institutions and to diversify their livelihoods in various non fishing activities including agriculture, livestock, petty commerce and handicraft. Trainings in literacy, basic accounting and organizational development they benefited from the SFLP played a facilitating role for that.

Adapted from SFLP, 2005.

Rural Development Communities (*Communautés rurales de développement* - CRD) which are territorial communities responsible for coordinating development activities, including fisheries related activities, at local level. Because of the weak decentralization mechanism of the fisheries sector, community organizations of small-scale fishers were not receiving enough support to benefit from the opportunities available at the CRD level (Cacaud, 2004). The result is that fisheries communities' participation in the local decision making process was insignificant. With the legal recognition of the CDDs as from February 2006 through the ministerial decree No 676/2006 cited above, this constraint has been overcome.

In ways similar to the example described above, and taking into account the link with decentralised development processes, the pilot projects supported the emergence of recognised local fisheries organizations that were multifunctional institutions addressing both resource management and poverty reduction. By highlighting the synergies between poverty reduction and sustainable resource governance (see Chapters 1 and 2) SFLP contributed to the mainstreaming of small-scale fisheries in local and national development policies that tackled poverty in its multiple facets, including marginalisation and vulnerability. Hence, the fishery communities became more audible and their concerns more visible better understood and better considered by policy makers and development partners. Other examples from countries involved in the pilot projects and other smaller initiatives (community and institutional projects) illustrate that trend (Angaman, 2007; Holvoet, 2007; Ndenn, 2007; Njock, 2007) led by dynamic and effective co-management institutions. These institutions address the three dimensions of poverty as it is stressed in Box 4 in actual examples that are found in most SFLP countries.

In the context of the SFLP, the policy framework affirming the principle of community participation in both fisheries management and wider local development thus becomes a prelude to the establishment of co-management institutions that address both poverty alleviation and responsible fisheries (SFLP, 2005).

In summary, the linkage between co-management and local development allowed community-based fishery organizations and fishery departments to link their resource management requirements with local development processes. This is a good example of how SFLP simultaneously addressed both the principles of the SLA and the Code. A major limitation of the work, however, was a lack of time and resources to build on these incipient achievements and to ensure that improved linkages with development processes at meso and macro-level translated into measurable gains in the form of reduced poverty and improved resource governance. In some cases, the required policy and legal reforms were not completed due to lack of time. Further support to these innovative and important initiatives is required.

### **BUILDING EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS AND LINKAGES**

Co-management involves delegation of authority by government to local institutions, which are defined by Pomeroy and Berkes (1997) as a set of rules actually used by a group of individuals to organize their activities. These activities may deal with political issues or be related to socio-economic needs of the communities. Co-management institutions take a variety of forms depending on the country concerned, the type of management function to be handled at the community level and the co-management goals and objectives targeted (Pomeroy and Berkes, 1997). The most common form, however, includes grass root structures including socio-professional organizations at the micro level made up mainly of the different components of the community (fishermen, women fish processors, village heads, fish traders, etc.) and multisector organizations at the meso level (local government, district, division) which include fishing communities representatives, local administration officers, NGOs and socio-economic institutions (micro finance and others) representatives. Advisory services may also be provided by central government institutions, or even by international organizations – e.g. inputs into research. In some cases, co-management structures act only as advisory bodies, and in others, they participate fully in decision-making processes. To be fully operational and efficient, these institutions must have legitimacy by government through the existing legal instruments, as explained in the previous section. The inclusion of the poor and other marginalized groups (women, migrants) into the co-management institutions is a key issue to address in the context of poverty reduction.

To identify priority concerns to address exclusion and marginalization, the SFLP used a mixed-set of analytical methods/tools including poverty profiling, stakeholder analysis and gender profiling (Pittaluga and Reyntzens-Mesquita, 2004).<sup>13</sup> The outcomes from these exercises were used as inputs into the formulation of the co-management pilot projects' activities. The institutions derived from project implementation were reinforced in order to assist the participants in acquiring the skills to work and collaborate with multifunctional development structures.

Cases developed in Burkina Faso (inland) and Guinea (marine) are used in the following paragraphs to illustrate the co-management institutions created and their linkages with wider development activities. The local fisheries institutions built up at the local level in the two countries represent the majority of resource users in their communities, have legal status and through their collaboration with NGOs, micro-finance institutions (MFIs) and institutions in charge of local development are establishing links between co-management and the development process including poverty alleviation policies implemented by specialised institutions (health, PRSPs,

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 2 for information on poverty and marginalization and Chapter 10 for information on gender analysis.



education, decentralisation, etc) (Konan, 2007; Njock, 2007). Therefore, they are a vital channel for representing their members, composed of resource users and other stakeholders, such as traditional authorities and local administrations. By so doing they have the opportunity of influencing the direction of policies and decision-making.

In Burkina Faso, two management committees were set up, one on Lake Bagré, and the other on Lake Kompienga (Konan, Njock and Allison, 2006). The two are good examples of cases where the fishing communities participate directly in the management of fisheries resources. The management committee comprises the territorial administration, the decentralised technical administrations, consular chambers, NGOs, MFIs, representatives of traditional rulers, and representatives of socio-professional associations. The committee has a legal and legitimate status. It has helped increase awareness among national authorities of the need to take into account the interests of fishing communities. The committee approves and validates the co-management plans and the rules of procedure, and creates specialized commissions to address specific management issues such as surveillance in fishing camps, creation of a local fisheries management fund, training of committees' members, protection of fish habitats by creating fish reproduction zones and the protection of the water banks. There also exist community-based socio-professional organizations and their unions. These structures have accreditations that make them credible representatives of fishing communities in their negotiations with other partners, administrations, MFIs, NGOs, etc. The fact that all co-management structures have legal status and legitimacy helped to restore confidence between the administration and the fishing communities, and to ensure the effective participation of the latter in the co-management process.

In Guinea, the formalization of the fishing communities' participation in fishery resource management led to the establishment of legally-recognised community based institutions (Kourouma, 2006; Njock, 2007). These bodies, especially the CDD, as explained above, carry out duties such as participatory surveillance, ensuring that the rules governing safety at sea are obeyed and conducting participatory monitoring and evaluation through *ad hoc* bodies recognized in the statutes approved by the Guinean authorities. These small-scale fisheries consultative councils give advice on matters related to fishery resource management and local development activities. The small-scale fishers are now no longer merely passive onlookers, but players in a participatory process: their representative bodies (social professional organizations and CDD), in conjunction with the Prefectoral and Regional Councils and the National Consultative Council, are entitled to participate in formulating fishery management measures for coastal areas, to monitor the implementation of such measures and to carry out participatory surveillance under the aegis of and in partnership with the National Fisheries Surveillance Centre (*Centre national de surveillance des pêches* - CNSP). The communities are now fully involved in decision-making in fishery management and other matters of interest to them. The legal recognition of fishers' right irrespective of nationality has resulted in migrant fishers becoming involved in fisheries management. The provisions covering their involvement in management are contained in the by laws governing the approved socio-professional organization.

Different positive achievements realised by various institutions and development partners in Guinea and Burkina and others SFLP countries illustrate the effectiveness of the local institutions established and show that they are able to carry out their mandate. If these outputs are to be sustained, the support from government must be continued in terms of institutional capacity building and other forms of supportive actions.

#### **ENABLING EFFECTIVE AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION**

Since the co-management experience is still in its early stage in most of West and Central Africa countries, it became necessary for the SFLP to initiate an institutional capacity building strategy so that the different partners involved, and fishing

communities in particular, can set up functional structures to enable them to participate effectively in the decision-making process while being able to protect their interests. As stated above, participatory appraisals were conducted to have a better understanding of the causes of poverty in fishing communities (poverty profile) and to ensure that marginalised groups (women, migrants) are included in the institutional process, while at the same time ensuring equity in their access to the resources and profit sharing. Three factors - illiteracy, difficult access to credit and weak organizational capacities of fishing communities - were found as the major reasons behind the low participation level of rural communities in decision-making, and especially in fisheries resource management. Therefore, SFLP focused some of its activities on community development issues, explored through the use of a large number of 'community projects' (see Chapter 1). The issues addressed in community projects concerned human capacity development, such as numeracy and literacy training (especially but not only of women), improving access to health information and services, and the development of technical skills (such as improvement in fish processing techniques, particularly fish smoking as a means of reducing post-harvest losses, and of support for alternative income generating activities). They also emphasised building social capital, for example through development of professional organizations, and modest investment in physical capital, such as development of community infrastructure (Njock, 2007).

Examples of achievements and lessons drawn from these initiatives include:

In the Burkina Faso case study, 570 persons, 60% of which are women, have learned to read and write in one local language or another through the adult literacy programmes offered by the SFLP. This was achieved through a participatory approach: an agreement had to be reached with the fishing communities on which language to teach. Around 18 adult literacy training centres were opened.

For the coastal fisheries pilot project, the migration phenomenon of fisheries communities makes building capacity initiatives more complex. In the countries involved, the majority of fishers are migrants. Literacy programmes organised by the pilot project had to take into consideration this element and adapt interventions consequently giving great attention to organizational development and building skills, and to co-management and local development related items including alternative income generating activities. The various topics covered involved nationals and migrants as well. In Congo, 522 micro-level players, 264 of which were men and 258 women, and 91 meso and macro-level players received the training provided under the pilot project. In Gabon, 655 persons, including 183 women, received training. In Guinea, 1 790 persons received training in various topics.

The improvement of the educational level and organizational skills of the beneficiaries had a positive impact on various aspects of their livelihood assets as it is discussed in the following points:

- *Improvement of the organizational capacities of fishing communities:* adult literacy programs helped to create new socio-professional organizations and improve the organizational capacities of the existing ones. Today, more than half of the managers of fishermen's and women fish processors' groups and associations in the pilot project sites are educated. Their facilitators have come to understand that the informal nature of their associations is a handicap to their activities. Therefore they have taken actions to have their associations legalised. Using their official documents, the associations were able to present their application to microfinance institutions, which resulted in their benefiting from training and loans. Moreover, capacity-building helped the stakeholders share the same vision of co-management and understand the link between this and the country's current decentralization and local development policies. 46 SPO were created in Congo and women made up to 46% of the membership. The process of their legalisation was underway at the time of concluding the Programme. In Gabon ten of them were created and registered with the fishery authorities. They are currently being granted legal

status by the Interior Ministry following the procedure required by the current legislation; women make up to 45% of SPOs' members and account for one third of the SPOs' boards while 22% of them are migrants. In Guinea, 86 cooperatives comprising both men and women have been granted legal status;

- *Improved information flow:* thanks to their new note-taking skills, the delegates of fishing communities who participate at the different meetings held with other stakeholders (projects, administrations, etc.) have more reliable reports. Information sharing has improved, as have the discussions ensuing from them. All these promote a better understanding of the issues at stake, as well as the involvement of one and all in the activities that concern them;
- *Emergence of a democratic spirit:* Before assigning members of the fishing communities to the different structures involved in co-management (management committees, specialised committees), community-based organizations discuss the profiles of their representatives and assign them on the basis of their skills and ability to defend their interests within the decision-making arenas. Birthright (traditional rights to deference/reference) is gradually being replaced by the promotion of competence and efficiency.

#### **INCENTIVES TO PARTICIPATE IN CO-MANAGEMENT, IN THE CONTEXT OF POVERTY**

The Pilot projects have helped create an enabling policy and legal framework for co-management, promoted effective institutions and linkages with decentralized government and enabled collaboration between key stakeholders at all levels, with participation facilitated by capacity building and targeted programmes to include the poor and vulnerable in co-management institutions. There remains only a need to ensure that users groups will continue to collaborate and contribute their time and effort to participating in the co-management process. These collaborative efforts depend not only on government support but also on the incentives that cooperation and participation offer. We recognise, with Kem Lowry *et al.* (1999) that “to the extent that people see their individual and collective efforts result in positive change, the prospects for continued cooperation are increased”. In the case of fisheries co-management, immediate returns to these efforts may not be visible. Indeed, it may be that, in the short-term, the costs are the only visible outcome of the establishment of co-management. These costs may take the form of reduced access to resources, the need for more rules regulating access, the need for investment in monitoring and enforcement, and for time in decision-making and consensus-building fora. To overcome these short-term costs, and sustain people's participation, either the expectation of future benefits must be very high, or some short-term incentives must be visible too. In other words, positive changes that are associated with a transition to co-management can act as incentives. This requires careful attention to the opportunities that collective action can provide in terms of addressing some of the capability and assets deficits that people experience, at the same time as resource management institutions are developed. The kinds of activities that can be associated with a co-management programme include:

##### **Enhancement of financial capital**

In Burkina Faso, access to the services of microfinance institutions provided in the context of building co-management is a good example of providing an incentive for the short-term costs that arise due to increased regulation of the fishery. Fishing communities that have undergone the adult literacy programmes, and in particular the women among them, have come to appreciate the implications of the new livelihood opportunities available to them as a result of their higher educational level (Barry, 2006). Thanks to capacity building offered by the Pilot project, they have become more receptive to sensitization campaigns organised by microfinance institutions on

the need to be better organized prior to be eligible to loan schemes. Also, negotiation skills gained from training activities made them able to convince their partners easier than before and to advocate their cases. From 2003 to 2006, the number of clients of the Fund to support women's income generating activities (*Fonds d'appui aux activités génératrices des femmes* - FAARF) increased from 12 to 120 women organized into a socio-professional organization and a fisheries product processors union. They have been able to benefit from loans of close to 27 million CFA (US\$50 950) which they used to improve their investments (purchase of fish, construction of ovens, acquisition of fish-smoking grills). They also spent part of these loans to diversify their activities into petty trading and most especially livestock farming (Njock, 2007).

In Guinea and Congo, two aspects are to be underscored:

1. The development of dialogue between the MFIs and the fishing communities has facilitated the access to MFIs for some communities although this practice is not yet very widespread. For instance, about half a dozen socio professional organizations (SPOs) in Congo have opened accounts with MFIs in Pointe Noire to support their co-management and other development activities. In Guinea, 36 individuals, men and women, and 43 groups in Koba, Kindiady, Doyéma and Kamsar have obtained credit from the MFI "Rural Credit of Guinea" (*Crédit rural de Guinée* - CRG). (Njock, 2007)
2. The establishment of savings and credit facilities: at the communities' initiative, financing facilities are emerging in the form of tontines (savings schemes). In Congo, a community bank<sup>14</sup> was formed in 2006 at the Base-Agip beach with the support of the pilot project and the national AIDS eradication council (CNLS). It has about 50 members. In Guinea, a similar facility is currently being set up in the form of a mutual credit association reserved for fishers. It goes by the name of the Guinea small-scale fishing savings and credit mutual association (MECREPAG) which, in December 2006, had funds amounting to 700 million Guinean Francs,<sup>15</sup> made up of fishers' own voluntary funds. It should be pointed out that MECREPAG is currently the main development tool of the national union of Guinean small-scale fishermen (UNPAG) (Njock, 2007).

All these initiatives did not exist before the pilot project. They are the outcome of the co-management process that assists people in organising themselves, and in coping with shocks within a hardship situation. These linkages between co-management and investment in human and social capital development have thus also helped people in fishing communities to secure funding from their own efforts to support co-management, reducing dependency of co-management schemes on external funding – a recognized problem for sustainability of this approach (Allison and Badjeck, 2004).

### Alternative income generating activities

Generally speaking, fishing communities, like all other rural communities, tend to diversify their activities to deal with the risks of uncertain returns from fluctuating fishery resources – if there are economically viable opportunities for them to do so and conditions that enable access to such opportunities (Allison and Ellis, 2001). The imperative to diversify is greatest when fisheries resources are overexploited and incomes from them decline, or become more variable. In such circumstances, enabling diversification can be seen as a fisheries management measure, and thus a key part of any co-management process.

In Ghana, as part of the co-management pilot project, different types of training were provided to fishing communities to help them overcome barriers to diversification.

<sup>14</sup> This facility is managed by the umbrella organization of fishing community members

<sup>15</sup> 1EUR = 6 050 Guinean Francs (December 2006)

These cover a wide range of activities like snail breeding, batik, cosmetics production, bakery and Kente weaving.

Promoting new income generating activities helps to improve the overall income of households, but, in the context of fishery management, their most notable effect lies in the fact that they create alternatives to fishing, thereby raising the opportunity costs of entering the fishing and opportunity income of leaving it. In Ghana, the new tasks within crop and livestock farming were largely undertaken by boys and young men, and trading and processing by the girls. Without improved access to these opportunities promoted as part of the co-management process, these young people might previously have entered the fishery, thereby accelerating its decline.

Income generating activities help to improve the productivity of women fish traders and women who process fish products for a living. They also help to reduce the exclusion of women in the production systems. Fishermen, on their part, acquire equipment, a fact that may lead one to think that fishing effort will increase as a result. However, what has often been observed is that the loans are actually used to purchase fishing materials that comply better with the regulations than those that are currently in use. In these cases, fishermen are investing in both their own livelihoods and in the responsible governance of the resources that sustain them. This is an indication that incentives for fisheries management can be fostered through the reduction of uncertainty and vulnerability

In Congo, cassava is now cultivated since the use of improved cuttings was promoted in the pilot project area. Community cassava fields were opened up by 60 beneficiaries. Market gardening has also been developed. In Gabon, the Ongam fishing community have established a community banana plantation; domestic animal raising was developed in the Lémé and Massamboué fishing communities and market gardening was promoted in the Cap Estérias fishing community. In Mauritania, mechanical repair and maintenance workshops for outboard engines have been set up and fishing net-making activities (traditional shoulder-held nets to replace the banned monofilament gillnets) have been developed; women have begun household rubbish collection and also provide food and accommodation for guests in the framework of mini-tourism initiatives.

All the above examples point to positive synergies between investing in development as a means to facilitate future achievement of resource management goals through co-management. In Burkina Faso, however, it has been observed that fishing communities that benefit from additional funding, for example through improved credit provision or income from improved access to non-fishery livelihood activities, tend use their loans and additional income first and foremost to procure equipment for fishing and fish processing activities, the latter in the case of women (Sangare, 2006; SFLP, 2006). The women spend 83% of their loans to improve their processing techniques and to increase their access to fish, and only reserve 15% for other non-fisheries related activities like petty trading, vegetable gardening and livestock farming. This last activity appeared to be the most profitable income-saving sector for fishing communities.

### **Vulnerability reduction**

Vulnerable people with uncertain futures are likely to have less incentive to participate in fisheries co-management that requires short-term restraint for long term gain. This is particularly the case in communities experiencing high levels of morbidity and mortality as a result of accidents at sea, and AIDS-related illness. In such cases, raising the community's awareness of HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases (STD), and addressing safety at sea become a key part of an investment in co-management.

Before the pilot project, between 2003 and 2005, there were 104 accidents in the pilot project area in Guinea, in which 136 persons died and 439 were injured, whereas in 2006, there were only 10 accidents, in which 4 persons died and 22 were injured. This sensitive diminution in the frequency and the severity of accidents at sea has been attributed in part to the training given to the fishers by the pilot project. The training concerned sea safety for artisanal fishers and the way to improve it. It is expected that the encouraging outcome of this activity will help to generate political will to address in a sustainable manner the small vessel sea safety.

In Congo, activities designed to prevent and control HIV/AIDS were carried out among the fishing communities. This was the first time they had been involved in all the activities undertaken by government and development partners in response to the national HIV/AIDS eradication strategy. Based on the satisfactory results obtained by the association for self-promotion of fishing community initiatives (AICP), Base-Agip's umbrella organization, under an HIV/AIDS prevention project funded by the national AIDS prevention committee (CNLS), fishing community members all along the coast have become youth workers and social communication providers using forum theatre techniques (SFLP Congo, 2006). This has increased awareness of HIV/AIDS-related issues; 2 374 persons have been alerted to the problem. Twenty-five vulnerable households at Base-Agip received support to diversify their livelihoods through activities jointly promoted by CNLS and FAO (Livelihoods Diversification Enterprise Development - LDED). In Gabon, cooperation between the pilot project and the national AIDS prevention programme (PNLS) resulted in an HIV/AIDS and STD awareness campaign in the project area, which reached 1 302 persons. This campaign has had a positive impact: AIDS is now talked about freely in these communities and many fishermen accept that it is necessary to take the HIV test. As a result, HIV screening has been carried out in Noya District and those found to be HIV-positive are currently being helped by the PNLS.

### **Incentives linked to policies**

In the SFLP co-management pilot project locations, more attention was paid to fishing community concerns by policy makers. This has been made possible through training in participatory approaches, such as the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA), provided for civil society technical partners (NGOs) and the public sector officers. For some pilot project activities, senior public sector officers worked as consultants to help influence policies for the communities' benefit. The development of multifunctional strategic partnerships for the benefit of the communities has also resulted in the fishing communities' concerns being reflected in local development where multifunctional institutions (IMF, health, decentralization, food security, PRSP, education, etc.) addressing both poverty reduction and resource management joint their assets for the benefits of fishing communities. The synergy boosted by the complementary actions of such institutions constitute an incentive for policy makers to support co-management because through that way they enhance their achievements in fisheries governance and poverty alleviation. For resource users, working with multifunctional institutions is vital because it gives them opportunities to be in contact with partners through which the complementary actions could help to improve different dimensions of their livelihood.

As a result of looking at resource governance through an SLA lens, SFLP has demonstrated that the transaction costs of a shift to co-management can be offset by parallel investments in poverty reduction. This has two synergistic effects. It helps to provide incentives for fisheries communities to participate in co-management, and it builds their capacity to do effectively. To achieve these synergies, it is necessary to move co-management programmes beyond a narrow concern for regulating access to

fishery resources, and to see community-based fishery management organizations as local development organizations, working in partnership with local government service providers and other stakeholders (including private micro-finance organizations, business advisory services, education providers and so on) to address both poverty reduction and responsible fisheries.

## **LESSONS LEARNED FOR FUTURE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN A POVERTY CONTEXT**

Based on the review of the case analysed, a number of lessons learned have been identified:

- To achieve the four necessary conditions in the SFLP co-management context, better circulation of and access to information within the socio-professional organizations, and in the co-management structures, help to build up the confidence of partners, increase transparency, and gives legitimacy to the decisions taken. The social equilibrium of rural communities is preserved, and the conditions for their common security are guaranteed. Although the ownership of the process is slow, it is nevertheless, gradually being internalised, and confers a special status on each party, a necessary condition for sustainable partnership. An appropriate communication system encourages community participation in discussions about policies and is the ideal tool to bring about change, a common approach, acceptance of development measures, social dialogue and the mobilization of resources for the benefit of the communities. Providing information to and raising the awareness of the decision-makers helps ensure that national policies and programmes, such as the national programme for the prevention of serious diseases (e.g. malaria and HIV/AIDS), poverty reduction policies (PRSP), and decentralization policies, take the fishing communities' concerns into account.
- The equitable representation of all the components of the rural communities in co-management institutions make it possible to take the views and interests of all parties involved into consideration in the co-management process. It also helps to ensure that the measures put in place have a sustainable effect on the lives of the most underprivileged social groupings. Nevertheless, one cannot deny the fact that the most vulnerable people may end up being excluded in the group approach, and this is why these groups must be given very special attention through the development of a gender and class-sensitive approach.
- Poor fishing communities have very few opportunities. They draw most of their livelihoods from nature, in other words, from fisheries resources. They therefore live from hand to mouth (short term survival methods), a fact that may end up compromising the co-management actions, the results of which are only expected to become evident in the long term. Capacity building activities (adult literacy, access to the services of micro finance institutions, income generating activities) help to open up new prospects that detach fishing communities from the resource to some extent. The promotion of new income generating activities also has this effect of reducing fishery-dependence, and uptake of such new opportunities is often enhanced by investment in increasing the capabilities of the poor. These kinds of interventions in communities can therefore work to garner support for the co-management process. However, financial support tends to encourage the acquisition of production equipment (fishing materials where the fishermen are concerned, and access to fish and improvement of the fish-processing techniques for the women). This is not always detrimental to resource management; it has been observed that when fishing communities manage fishing gear stores with the support of management committees, the fishing gears supplied comply better

with what is provided for in the regulations, and therefore contribute indirectly to the restoration of the resource.

- Capacity building lays the foundation for poverty and vulnerability reduction in fishing communities. A higher educational level (adult literacy) helps to improve their level of awareness and helps them to discover the value in giving of oneself, self-sacrifice and generosity, all of which qualities are necessary for social engagement. The enhancement of human and social capitals helps to increase the ability of individuals and groups to engage in the individual and collective valorisation process. It also helps them to have renewed confidence in themselves, and to mobilise themselves and get involved in projects of common interest like the management of fisheries resources.
- Even if it is true that fishing communities should be the priority beneficiaries of capacity building interventions in co-management, it is nevertheless true that the capacities of government officers and local community groups should also be strengthened, as they too, are learning new ways of working in a multistakeholder context.
- Functional and effective co-management institutions represent frameworks and tools for dialogue with multifunctional institutions dealing with the development process like decentralisation and poverty alleviation. They can influence the decisions of local authorities in order to ensure that fishing communities are provided with social infrastructures and obtain access to basic social services. In this way, the negative perception that communities have of their management committees because of their visible role in discouraging irresponsible fishing practices will be corrected through the provision of services that will help to improve livelihoods, while still promoting responsible fisheries.
- The sustainability of the co-management process can be achieved if the political and legal environment is supportive and provides rights for the communities to participate to decision making. Moreover, the setting up of co-management arrangements is a long time process requiring various supports from all the stakeholders involved and various incentives to sustain the process.

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## 6. Understanding the mobility of fishing people and the challenge of migration to devolved fisheries management

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### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of humanity, migrations always formed an integral part of people's life. During the last decades, the intensification of economic globalisation, the liberalisation of trade and considerable progress made in the fields of transport and communication has led to an significant increase in international mobility. West Africa is no exception to this world phenomenon.

The people of West Africa have a long tradition of mobility; evidence suggests that one in three individuals no longer resides in their place of birth (Randall, 2005). This general trend is also true for fishers and other fishing community members and migration has influenced the sector for many centuries. "Movement and migration are an integral part of most West African fisheries and fishing populations, be these inland, coastal or maritime fishing" (Randall, 2005, p 3). The forms and reasons for migration are many and there is a rich diversity of migratory lifestyles.

Randall (2005) conducted a review of fishing migration in West Africa comparing demographic literature and the fishing literature, and noticed that the latter "describes fishing migrations in ways that omit major issues that demographers would usually consider fundamental to analysis and understanding". These missing issues include, among others, the types of people who migrate and why, their educational level, the characteristics of their family of origin and the sibling group size (Randall, 2005).

Acknowledging that migration is one of the strategies that fishing communities often use in order to secure their livelihoods, the SFLP Pilot Project on costal fisheries co-management (see Chapter 5) carried out a migration evaluation study with two main objectives: (i) to understand the reasons and motives behind the movements of fishing communities in the region's coastal countries, and (ii) to appreciate what lessons could be learned in order to help formulate national and subregional fisheries management policies and plans that would integrate the migration component and take its role into account in poverty reduction and local development. The evaluation was based on case studies conducted by the project in the four participating countries (Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania) and in other countries in the subregion, two considered to be countries of emigration (Benin and Senegal) and one country of immigration (Cameroon). The evaluation used both literature reviews and censuses conducted in fishing community settlements. The social, economic and cultural impacts of the migrations were analyzed and strategies for including migrant fishing people in national policies were defined (Njock, 2007a).

This chapter is based on the findings of this SFLP's evaluation and looks into the patterns of migration and mobility among West African fisheries communities with

a view to analyse how resident and migrant interests can best be accommodated for mutual benefit in the context of resource management and poverty reduction. It attempts to shed light on who migrates and the reasons behind mobility and discusses integration of migrants in receiving communities and their roles in local production systems. The central question of how migrant and mobile fishers can become part of devolved fisheries management systems, which are generally based on extending stewardship to local communities, is addressed in the light of SFLP experience and lessons learned by the Programme.

## WHO MIGRATES AND WHY

### Internal vs. international migration

“Initially most populations migrated in response to the movements of fish, but both motives for migration and patterns of migration have become increasingly diverse in recent decades” (Randall, 2005, p 4). In the West and Central Africa region, coastal countries allow entry to migrant fishing communities from neighbouring countries without any restrictions (Njock, 2007a) and it would appear that this relatively open access to resources favours increased migration for fishing. However, as it is generally recognised, migrant communities are not homogenous and also within a single community a variety of fishing migration patterns may be found (Randall, 2005; Sall, 2006). By looking at disaggregated groups of actors, a better understanding of their movements and of the factors driving migration can be gained. In the context of marine artisanal fisheries, Atti Mama (2006) defined several forms of migration (see Box 5).

Spatially speaking two scales have to be taken into account depending on the magnitude of the movements: (i) *internal migrations* limited to within the borders of a country; and the (ii) of the transboundary or *international migrations* of fishing population in the search of a better wellbeing in other countries (Randall, 2005; Samba and Faye, 2006).

#### BOX 5

#### Definitions of different types of fisheries migration

**Internal migration:** Migration that takes place between fishing settlements within the same country in order to follow fish stocks or to take advantage of certain facilities or fish prices for during particular periods of the year.

**Short-term migration:** Migration that lasts for a few weeks but less than a fishing season.

**Seasonal migration:** Fishing people, sometimes including family members, that stay in foreign fishing settlements for one or two seasons and then return home for a certain amount of time.

**Long-term migration:** Fishing people that settle abroad for several years (20-40 years or sometimes more) but who always eventually return to their home country, independent of the length of their stay abroad.

**Permanent migration:** Second or third generation fishing people that end up being assimilated into the local population and in most cases also take the host country's nationality.

**Contractual migration:** Migration that is motivated by an employment contract that has been formally established in the country of origin. The duration of the contract may be for one or several years and the fisher makes visits to his home country during this period (circular migration).

Source : Adapted from Atti Mama, 2006.

### *Internal migration*

Short-term, long-term or permanent; it developed between one fishing settlement and another within the same country and several different forms have been noted. The duration varies according to country and the dynamic fluctuations characterising fisheries sector influence its patterns. One example of internal migration in Guinea with a seasonal character has been described by Solie (2006): from December to February, the Senegalese-Mauritanian upwelling affects the border area between Guinea and Guinea-Bissau and fishers from both countries are attracted by the then abundant catches of small-pelagics. This fish migration pattern also gives reason to fishers from Conakry to go to Cap Verga, Matakang or Koba in order to look for waters rich with fish.

There is no indication that the seasonal migration concerns women or children although it is generally well known that some fishers bring their wives to get help with cooking and/or post-harvest activities (processing and marketing of fish catches) and their children to work as crew members. However, when fishers migrate for longer periods, i.e. when the migration becomes circular or permanent, they generally move with their families. One illustrative example is described by Sall (2006) and concerns migration in Mauritania from the village of N'Diogo in the south to Nouakchott. Until the end of the 1970s, fishers used to migrate according to a fairly established pattern; they fished in the area of Nouakchott from January to April and then returned to N'Diogo for the agricultural season May-December. At a point, the return to the village for the agricultural season started to be perceived as a waste of time and the shorter trips away evolved into seasonal migration with temporary absences for up to nine months at the time. With the development of Nouakchott city and the urbanisation taking place (housing estate ghost towns developing around the capital), the N'Diogo fishers changed their migratory patterns further. Many fishers now had plots of land and the progressive process of getting installed in a new home made them extend their stays in Nouakchott from a few months per year to several years. Moreover, families were moved and parents, wives and children followed the household head to the capital. The continued development of Nouakchott also influenced the fishing, making it a more and more profitable business and eventually putting an end to regular home trips. Nowadays, only social visits are made (baptisms, weddings, funerals, religious events, etc) to the village.

This migration can thus now be called permanent. More and more of those in Nouakchott who were originally from N'Diogo have no longer any ties with the village. Today, more than a third of the population of N'Diogo has settled in Nouakchott with their families where they have better access to social services and facilities (health centres, drinking water supplies, schools for their children, etc).

Other forms of internal migration that are found in the region include the circular migration of the *Moussoums* fishers from Lake Chad who travel to the Cameroonian coast (Ngo Likeng, 2006), the fishers from the Saloum Island who move to the inland fishing ports of Senegal (Samba and Faye, 2006), and the Guinean inland farmers and pastoralists who settle in coastal landing sites in order to engage in fishing although they have no earlier fishing experience (Solie, 2006). These recent types of internal migrants without fishing experience are known by the term "new fishers" and they are playing an increasingly important role in many countries. In 1989, a population census among fishing boat owners in Guinea showed that 25 percent were neither *Soussou* nor *Baga* which are two ethnic groups historically associated with fishing in Guinea. In 2002, the new fishers in Mauritania represented 34 percent of the total number of fishers.

### *International migration*

International migration is usually a long-term phenomenon. Fishers from Benin, Ghana and Nigeria moved to the countries in the south of Gulf of Guinea (Cameroon, Congo

and Gabon) many years ago and some are there since several generations (Atti Mama, 2006). Those who work as crew on Ghanaian purse seiners have usually migrated under contractual arrangements. Others (gill netters, long-liners, etc) have done so under other conditions (Atti Mama, 2006; Ngo Likeng, 2006). Migrating fishers with employment contracts do not necessarily always work for the same employer but can, as noted by Randall (2005) and Ngo Likeng (2006), change fishing boat and type of fishing that they engage in from one season to another. In spite of long periods abroad, these migrants tend to keep in contact with their home countries by visiting from time to time, participating in religious or cultural ceremonies.

In the northern part of the region, from Guinea to Mauritania, a number of different migration strategies can be observed. Samba and Faye (2006) described the cases of the Senegalese fishers *Sérères Nyomikas* from the Saloum Island and the *Wolofs* fishers from Saint-Louis. For a long time and up until the early 1980s, the former used to migrate to the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea to fish during the dry season (January-June) and return to Senegal for the rainy season to work in the fields. However, Samba and Faye noted that, due to a decline in agricultural activities during the last ten years, the time spent in the foreign country had increased and that the earlier seasonal migrants had become permanent immigrants, some having spent more than 20 years in the host country. With regard to the fishers from Saint-Louis, they are generally contractual migrants, fishing in Mauritania under employment contracts of 4-5 months at the time. Most of them return to Senegal during the seasonal closure of the fisheries (July-September) or for religious and family holidays. According to Sall (2006), a new type of migrants has also developed in Mauritania. These are emigrants from other West African countries who are on their way to Europe but who stop to work, for shorter or longer periods, in Mauritanian fishing ports in the post-harvest subsector in order to finance their onward travel.

Not all international migration is permanent or long-term. Once settled in their country of destination, migrants may combine several different migration strategies and make shorter or longer trips away from their home base. Ovono Edjang (2006) observed that Beninese, Ghanaian and Nigerian fishers who lived in Cocobeach (Gabon) often made daily fishing trips into the close by waters of Equatorial Guinea. It was also noted that fishers based in Libreville moved seasonally (July-August-September) towards the northern part of the coast to fish bonga (*Ethmalosa fimbriata*). These seasonal movements were generally motivated by a wish to avoid management regulations according to which the bonga fishery around Libreville was closed during this period and not a strategy for following migrating fish stocks. Ngo Likeng (2006) also observed seasonal movements from one location to another by migrant fishers based on the Cameroonian coast.

### **The role of women in migration**

Migrants and migratory behaviour vary according to gender and women have a special status in the migration process. During short-term migrations, wives do not usually go with their fishers husbands. This is also the case among the Mauritanian *Imraguenes*, and for Ghanaians, Ivorians and Malians who on their way to emigrating to Europe have a stop over in Mauritania (Sall, 2007). In the absence of their spouses, women who stay behind take care of children and the elderly.

For long-term migration, many women follow their husbands on their travels. In some communities, women migrate with their husbands only under certain conditions. For example, according to Sall (2006), a married *Imraguen* woman who has not yet had her first child would not be authorised to migrate. Moreover, only boat owners or captains are allowed to travel with their wives. In the country of destination, the majority of women work in fish processing and marketing and hence support their husbands' work. Women may also contribute to the financing of fishing activities by lending their savings to fishers (Ngo Likeng, 2006; Ovono Edjang, 2006; Sall, 2006;

Samba and Faye, 2006). Some women become boat owners which facilitate their access to fish for processing and marketing. For those who do not migrate but stay in the home country, some of the money sent back by their husbands will typically be invested in small businesses allowing them to gain a certain independence during the absence of their husbands. In some communities, marriage between immigrant fishers and local women take place facilitating the integration of migrants into the host community. During long-term migration, it is not uncommon that fishers become polygamous. Also, among those who are not married, cohabitation and frequent change of partners is common. As has been shown in recent studies with regard to the health conditions in fishing communities, this life style is a concern considering the propensity of sexually transmitted diseases among which the most threatening is HIV/AIDS (Njock, 2007a) (see also Chapter 9).

### Children and migration

Children also take part in migration and those who travel, both boys and girls, are of all ages and could be fishers or fish workers (processors, canoe builders), training to become fishers or fish workers, of school age or younger (Sall, 2006). With regard to the fishers from Saint-Louis (Senegal) migrating to Mauritania, Samba and Faye noted that children went to the Koranic school in their new country. However, transferring from one place to another generally has considerable influence on children's education. There tends to be a lack of appropriate schools and education facilities in the often remote areas where migrants settle (Ngo Likeng, 2006; Sall, 2006). Even in urban areas and when parents manage to enrol their children in public or private schools, there is often a lack of monitoring and support that makes successful education difficult. Moreover, the frequent travelling, the often generally inauspicious fisheries environment and the – implicit or explicit – requirements for extra labour or help disrupt children's schooling and make them leave school prematurely to engage in fishing. Ngo Likeng indicated that some migrant fishers in Cameroon who sent their children to college in town had them live with local friends. Children who stay behind in their home countries tend to attend school but are deprived of the presence and support of their parents.

### Statistics on fisheries migration

In spite of the importance of fisheries migration at the level of national economies (employment, food security, etc), there are only limited statistical data available on the phenomenon, both in host countries and in the countries of origin. Barely a handful of countries have figures that allow for an assessment of the magnitude of migration (see Table 7). From these data, it can be noted that in most of the countries, migrants represent the majority of the fishers.

Information on demographic characteristics is generally lacking and there is, for example, no data with regard to migrants' family status or educational level. Only the data for Congo give some indication of the age composition; according to Boungou (2006), the migrant fishers are generally between 20 and 50 years old with an average age of 42 years. This average is higher than the overall average age of fishers in the

TABLE 7  
Percentage of fishers who are migrants

Country	Percentage	Sources
Benin	55	Atti Mama, 2006
Cameroon	81	Ngo Likeng, 2006
Congo	42	Boungou, 2006
Gabon	80	Ovono Edzang, 2006



more important fisheries centres in Congo, indicating that active fishers are relatively young. Boat owners and experienced captains are commonly found in the age group 60–70 years and play an important role for the training of young – often below 20 years of age – fishers.

### Reasons and motives for migration

The reasons why fishers and fish workers decide to migrate are various and relate to environmental, social or economic factors. According to Samba and Faye (2006), the following motivates Senegalese fishers to migrate:

- A fall in catch rates in Senegalese waters aggravating already difficult conditions, including the lack of land for agriculture around Saint-Louis and the increased salinity levels in the agricultural land of Saloum Island. The lack of agricultural land as a reason for fishers to migrate has also been mentioned by Ngo Likeng (2006) with regard to Beninese fishers. In fact, the Beninese, Togolese and Ghanaian coasts do not offer good opportunities for livelihood diversification into agriculture due to the erosion and scantiness of the coastal belt (Gbaguidi, 2000; Sedro, 2001; Yeboah, 2001) and this situation motivates migration.
- The possibility to save money when away from everyday family obligations, giving the opportunity to invest in productive assets and later on in real estate in the home country (Atti Mama, 2006; Ngo Likeng, 2006).
- Cultural habits; the fishers of Saint-Louis consider the Mauritanian waters to be part of their traditional fishing grounds and migrants maintain local social networks in Mauritania facilitating their settling in. Along the same lines of reasoning, Soli (2006) noted the facility by which the *Temne* of Sierra Leone have settled in Guinea thanks to their cultural similarities with the local *Baga* population.
- Generally severe living conditions with a lack of safe drinking water and no markets where fish can be sold profitably coupled with communication difficulties on Saloum Island.
- Search for high value species and new markets.

Solie (2006) and Ngo Likeng (2006) also noted that social and political conflicts can act as triggers for fishing people to migrate. Some examples from Guinea include the arrival of about one hundred Ghanaian fishers after the fall of Kwamé Nkrumah in the state coup in 1966 and the Liberian and Sierra Leonean fishers who arrived in 1989 and 1996, respectively, due to the war situations in their countries. In the 1960s, Nigerian fishers moved to Cameroon and other countries in the region to escape the Biafra war. More recently in Nigeria, the development of the petrol industry in coastal areas causes competition among different resource users (water, land, mangroves, etc) and fishers and fish workers sometimes chose to emigrate (Ngo Likeng, 2006).

With regard to internal migration from one region to another within the same country, Solie (2006) shows how the unbalanced regional development in Guinea has played an important role in making populations move from the interior of the country to the coast. By reviewing poverty indicators for different regions (Maritime or Lower Guinea, Middle Guinea, Upper Guinea and Guinea Forest region), Solie showed how the conditions conspired to attract populations from other regions to the coastal zone where the open access character of the fishery allowed them to fish, also without any in-depth knowledge of the profession. The sector also absorbed the unemployed and qualified people from other professions in search for work managing to find a way to make a living from fishing or related activities. Similar situations were found in the other six countries surveyed (Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Mauritania, Senegal). The fisheries sector thus plays an important role of a safety net for many migrants, including those who are not fishers or fish workers originally. Solie also claimed that the generally low profitability in agriculture and the price differences between agricultural and fishery products motivated coastal farmers to start fishing even when there was no such tradition in the family.

TABLE 8  
Reasons for migration

"Push" factors	"Pull" factors
Avoid social obligations	Better prices and stronger markets
Conflicts	Cheaper inputs e.g. gear, nets, fuel
Social pressure: remittances	Instrumental reasons e.g. earn enough money to get married, retire, allow for investments (fishing equipment, housing), etc.
Reduce consumption at place of origin	
Reduction in fish stock abundance	Better fisheries and fish stock abundance
Poverty	Better livelihoods: safety net
Political instability in countries of origin	(internal migrations)
Lack of socio-economic infrastructures	Better socio-economic facilities/infrastructure
Lack of alternatives activities to fisheries	Easy social integration (social and cultural networks)
Environmental degradation (draught, salification of agricultural areas, etc.)	

In summary, fishing communities that decide to emigrate do so for a number of reasons; either their difficult current situation pushes them to leave hoping for a better life elsewhere or there are factors attracting them to a new place, e.g. the possibility to increase their income or the access to new resources. These two sets of dual factors – "push" and "pull" – are summarized in Table 8.

## INTEGRATION WITH RECEIVING COMMUNITIES

As briefly mentioned above, fishers who migrate can generally be classified into two main categories according to whether they leave home as unattached – free – migrants without prior employment engagements or whether they are contractual migrants having a contract with a crew hirer or a boat owner in the country of destination. Their belonging to one or the other group predetermines the type of relations they will have with the recipient community.

### Unattached migrants

The unattached or free migrant counts on being able to use existing social networks of compatriots who have already established themselves in the new country for settling in with the host community. This scenario was cited by Samba and Faye (2006) with regard to Senegalese fishers in Guinea, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania and is in fact the most common migration strategy along the West African coast. Solie (2006) explained that, in Guinea, the new migrants would be given host families who would help them, against the performing of chores and minor tasks, to find work while waiting to be recruited as crew on fishing boats. According to Ngo Likeng (2006), Ovono Edzang (2006) and Atti Mama (2006), the newly arrived migrant would be introduced to the traditional chief or village head against the payment of a symbolic tithe. This system of payment would indicate that the open and free access to resources is a relative concept. If the migrant failed to respect the procedure, a conflict could ensue. Ngo Likeng (2006) reported that, in Cameroon, it turned out that the tithe was not paid to the traditional chief but collected by a group of more or less permanent foreign migrants. By doing so, they did in fact strip the locals of their traditional authority over the resource – a right established according to informal resource management systems – and the act not only jeopardised the relation between migrants and locals but also severely threatened the sustainability of the resource.

### Contractual migrants

With regard to contractual migrants, two examples illustrate current practices. The first one concerns the company system that owners of Ghanaian purse seiners practice, employing foreign fishers for 4-5 years at the time who return home at the end of

their contracts (Ngo Likeng, 2006). During the contractual period, visits to the home country are rare. The second example is described by Sall (2006) who explains how Mauritania, since the early 1990s after the political problems with Senegal in 1989, has a contractual system for Senegalese fishers who want to fish in Mauritanian waters. These contracts must be established by a person who physically or morally is Mauritanian. The migrants entering the contract are allowed to stay in Mauritania from December through to August, i.e. for nine months corresponding to the fishing season. These migrants generally return to Senegal at the end of the season or for religious holidays. As is also the case with the Ghanaian contractual migrants, fishers can change the boat or manager that they work for from one fishing season to another. During their stays in Mauritania, the Senegalese fishers live in “fishing camps” that are set up along the coast and where the majority of the fishers are migrants. The camps are often isolated and the difficult living conditions – no safe drinking water, no electricity, no health services, etc. – do not encourage married fishers to bring their families; wives and children instead often go to live in Nouakchott or Nouadhibou.

### **Stopover migrants**

Soli (2006), Samba and Faye (2006), and Sall (2006) noted that, in addition to the fishers who are directly involved in catching fish and the fish processing and marketing women, there is a vast number of other migrants of varying nationalities in most Mauritanian landing sites. These migrants mainly work in post-harvest activities such as fish salting, drying and brining, sorting, gutting, filleting and scaling of fish, selling ice and salt, and maintenance of equipment, or they are small shop owners or traders. Among these migrants, there are many who intend to continue their trip to Europe but who stay for shorter or longer periods in Mauritania in order to recuperate and maybe get reorganised after having been sent back to Mauritania from unsuccessful migration attempts via Morocco or Algeria. For them, and for others involved in post-harvest and auxiliary activities, the fisheries sector represents a lifebelt preventing them from falling into the poverty of their surroundings.

## **INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS**

### **Life in a new community**

According to the literature available on fisheries migration, integration of migrants into recipient communities is not always easy. Several authors explain that most native and foreign communities live next to each other but do not work together or collaborate. They do not belong to the same society and hence do not share the same concerns. As a consequence, there are misunderstandings that often lead to conflicts, and marginalisation and exclusion of immigrants (Njock, 2007a). There have also been reports of religious types of conflicts within immigrant communities, brought across from their home country and escalated to a point where diplomatic interventions by consular authorities have been required. This situation has occurred among Senegalese immigrants in Mauritania (Sall, 2006). Fortunately, however, most conflicts among fishing people can be resolved thanks to the internal dynamics of the community (Akoma Poathy, 2006; Sall, 2006; Fregene, 2007).

The overt or latent conflicts involving migrants are often associated with shared exploitation strategies. According to Atti Mama (2006), conflicts do generally not occur when immigrants and natives use different gear. On the other hand, conflicts can be aggravated if there is competition for access to the same resources. The exploitation of the resources of the Cameroon Estuary involving Cameroonian *Mousgoum* fishers and foreigners represents such an example (Ngo Likeng, 2006). Generally, native fishers tend to claim that foreigners use destructive fishing practices and they also blame them for depriving local fish processors of their production by giving priority to their foreign wives, who in turn resell the fish to local traders but at prices that are

felt to be high (Solie, 2006). In spite of this generally difficult state of affairs, there is evidence of positive developments, although as isolated cases. In Cameroon, for example, crews of mixed nationalities have been observed (Ngo Likeng, 2006) and in many countries natives and foreigners inter-marry. This could be a sign of improving integration between migrants and host communities. In the countries that participated in SFLP's PP2 on coastal co-management (Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania), this positive trend was translated into the establishment of socio-professional associations and consultative groups consisting of both local and foreign migrants. Some of the latter held posts in the new organizational structures that were put in place (Njock, 2007a). However, continued support from the fisheries administration and those involved in local development would be necessary in order to sustain these initiatives.

### *The host government*

The relationships between native and migrant fishing people are not the only aspects that need to be addressed if better integration of the two groups is sought; there is also reason to assess the role of governments. Several factors could be considered in this respect. For example, many of the fishing camps where migrants live lack virtually all basic social facilities and services: education, health centres, safe drinking water, etc (Djangone *et al.*, 2003; Konan *et al.*, 2003; Ndia *et al.*, 2003). While promoting the system of fishing camps in Mauritania, the government has not made the effort to provide even the most basic services (Sall, 2006). In fact, a lack of confidence in the local government on behalf of immigrants is reported in all the countries studied (Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal). Migrants often feel that they are – rightly or wrongly – harassed by the immigration authorities, the police and the fisheries surveillance administration. Moreover, they feel threatened by the initiative taken in many countries to develop the coastal area and consider themselves being the prime victims of such activities. In 2003, a community of migrant fishing people were evicted from the Owendo area (Libreville, Gabon) because of an extension of the harbour (Angoue, 2004). For the same reason, migrants in the Dockyard harbour in Limbé (Cameroon) and in the Pointe Noire harbour (Congo) are also likely to lose their dwellings, their smoking ovens and workshops (SFLP, 2004; Ngo Likeng, 2006), a development that is likely to increase their level of vulnerability. The evicted fishing people are admittedly offered new plots but this has not diminished their frustration since they were not informed beforehand of the measures of which they are becoming the victims and they do not have the financial means needed for relocating to the allotted area.

Hence, both external and internal factors must be taken into account simultaneously in order to allow for a more harmonious integration of migrants into host communities. This can be achieved through the establishment of a fisheries management system that incorporate the concerns that migrants have and, at the same time, make them participate in the decision-making process.

## **FISHERIES GOVERNANCE AND MIGRANTS**

### **The role of the government**

Without doubt, migrant fishers and fish workers contribute to the economic development of their host countries by creating additional employment within the sector, by transferring technologies to local fishers and by supplying local markets with high quality fishery products and generating export earnings. While being conscious of their status, suffering from marginalisation and exclusion, they rightfully expect recognition on behalf of their host community and the authorities of their new country as well as a certain level of social equity in the various aspects of community life (Rawls, 2003; Fraser, 2005). In its capacity of facilitator and arbiter,

it is the responsibility of the host government to take the initiative to legitimise the status of immigrants. This process would need to start by the reestablishment of confidence on behalf of the migrants vis-à-vis the government since, as mentioned above, many have little trust in the authorities of the host country. This confidence restoration process would require a dialogue between all concerned with a view to stimulate a higher degree of unity among partners (Pomeroy, Brenda and Harkes, 2001). Other actions that would also be needed in order to achieve cohesion include the improvement of migrants' access to basic social services and their inclusion in decision-making processes.

It is thus a question of finding mechanisms for improving the involvement of migrant fishers in the formulation and implementation of fisheries management policies, and in local development and poverty reduction strategies. This can be achieved through the creation of policies that are inclusive and promote participatory resource management. In the workshop on fisheries migration that was organised within the framework of SFLP's PP2 in Mauritania in March 2007, it was recognised that the strategies needed in this respect have to be adapted to the situation in each country with regard to the status of the general political framework and its current dispositions for decentralisation and participation (Njock, 2007a).

### **SFLP's impact with regard to integrating migrant fishing people in resource management and local development**

According to findings by Atti Mama (2006), it would appear that development activities carried out in a number of countries in the region during the last few decades targeting small-scale fisheries communities generally favoured nationals and systematically isolated migrants. This situation started to change in 2000 thanks to support by SFLP. The Programme sensitised fisheries administrations of the importance of including all groups within a community, without exceptions, in local development activities (FAO, 1999).

Fisheries migration studies conducted by the SFLP PP2 showed that fisheries policies and laws do not generally make specific reference to migrants. These instruments do instead include provisions for the creation of consultative committees in which fishing people can be represented through their membership in fisheries socioprofessional associations (Kinfooussia, 2005; Sy, 2005; Akoma Poathy, 2006; Konaté, 2006). Some of these local associations also include foreigners and could hence constitute a vehicle for migrant participation.

Most countries participating in the SFLP exercise have recognised the necessity to legally allow for the participation of small-scale fishers and fish workers in resource management and the need to adapt their national fisheries legislation accordingly (Njock, 2005; Njock, 2007a). Such revisions of the legal provisions were seen as opportunities to address the integration of migrants and, for example, in Guinea the approach was followed successfully leading to a formal recognition of fishing communities and also implicitly to the involvement of migrants in resource management and local development. To varying degrees, similar developments have been noted in other countries. Also in cases where the legal recognition of communities as partners in management has not yet taken effect formally, a tangible change has been achieved in practice as fisheries administrations now tend to consult and involve both natives and immigrants in questions related to the fisheries sector (SFLP, 2005a; SFLP, 2005b; Ngo Likeng, 2006; SFLP, 2006). Migrant fishing people also benefited from a number of activities initiated by the SFLP PP2, including the strengthening of their capacities and knowledge in areas such as literacy, hygiene and health, environmental management, organizational development, lobbying and negotiation skills (Njock, 2007a). These activities constituted important incentives in the empowerment process.

### **Rights of migrant fishing people**

The UN Migrant Workers Convention that came into force in 2003 defines a number of standards and principles that aim to protect the specific human rights of migrants. It also specifies what is required of national governments of both sending and receiving countries, in order for these rights to be protected. In addition to confirming basic human rights, a number of articles in the convention are particularly relevant to migrant fishing people, e.g. article 9 presenting migration as a right in itself and articles 27-30 giving migrants and their children the right to equal access to social security, medical care, housing and education as nationals of the receiving country. Article 33 gives migrants the right to be informed of their rights and obligations under the law of the host country and article 39 specifies the right of mobility and to choose residence within the new country (OHCHR, 2003).

The concerns that regard migrants' right to basic social services have been discussed in the sections above. They form part of the co-management process that, in the context of the coastal countries of West Africa, aims at the responsible and sustainable management of the resources at the same time as fighting poverty in the communities that exploit these same resources. The planning and introduction of co-management mechanisms have to be an inclusive process and avoid the marginalisation of vulnerable groups, women and migrants. The process needs to be supported by an appropriate legal and regulatory framework which gives fishing communities the right to participate in decision-making on issues of their concern. Experiences show that the adoption of laws and regulation may be a lengthy process. However, the co-management mechanisms can be put in place in anticipation of their legalisation by the government (Pomeroy, Katon and Harkes, 2001). This was the approach used by SFLP. The Programme also promoted livelihood diversification activities in communities within the framework of co-management and governments were sensitised with regard to the need to include fishing communities in decentralisation policies and poverty reduction programmes (Njock, 2007b, Thorpe, 2005). The activities implemented did not overlook the migrant fishers and fish workers; in Congo and Gabon, SFLP's integration strategy contributed to the inclusion of migrants in national programmes for the fight against HIV/AIDS (Njock, 2007a).

### **LESSONS LEARNED FOR THE FUTURE**

Fishing communities are complex entities with regard to living conditions, composition, social organization and the strategies they apply in order to ensure their livelihoods. One of these strategies is migration and this phenomenon is as complex as the fishing communities themselves. All through the above analysis, a better understanding of the reasons behind fisheries migratory movements along the coast of West Africa have been sought by reviewing different aspects of this mobility, e.g. scale, magnitude and duration. The improved knowledge is needed to inform fisheries management policies and poverty reduction strategies in fishing communities. The main conclusions are:

- Among the many reasons that make fishing people migrate, economic factors (search for markets, opportunities to save for future investments, security lines, etc) are without doubt the most important ones.
- Migration constitutes an opportunity both for the host country (contribution to local and national economies, and to food security) and for the country of origin (fund transfers from abroad).
- The establishment of measures for the protection of the specific rights of migrant fishing people can constitute an opportunity for introducing local co-management mechanisms.
- The lack of detailed information on the characteristics of migrant fishing people and on their economic importance constitutes a handicap when it comes to the formulation of policies supportive of fisheries migration.

These lessons-learned lead to three main recommendations:

- A political environment supportive of the protection of migrant fishing people's rights should be promoted.
- Regional research for the generation of data and information needed for policy formulation should be supported.
- The experience of SFLP with regard to institutional capacity building in the context of participatory fisheries management should be consolidated.

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## 7. Microfinance, capacity building and livelihoods diversification

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### INTRODUCTION

The understanding of the potential role of credit and financial services in poverty reduction has evolved considerably since the experiences in the 1950s and 1960s when the concept was introduced based on a perceived need to satisfy a lack of formal credit available to small-scale farmers. During this first period, governments and aid organizations engaged in programmes extending credit to rural families, generally through their male household heads. The design of the credit programmes was based on the perception that poverty could be overcome by making subsidised credit available for increasing productivity and adopting modern technologies and thereby raising incomes. In the 1980s, the focus changed and rural women involved in small businesses became the main target for support programmes, now often run by NGOs. However, the rationale and contents of these programmes were similar to the earlier ones and problems of high default rates and less than expected successful outcomes continued (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002; Verstralen, 2005).

Along with the changed view on poverty and the poor, recognising the multidimensional characteristics and heterogeneity (see Chapter 2), the rural credit concept evolved into a more flexible approach and a tool for helping poor households to achieve their priorities and reduce vulnerability in addition to increasing incomes (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002). A new type of agents developed for the delivery of the more flexible microfinance services needed; ‘microfinance institutions’ (MFIs). MFIs are generally independent non-government institutions, providing loans, saving schemes, insurances and other financial products to poor communities, usually on commercial terms. Alongside these new institutions, informal financial systems continue to exist and fill important roles. These include individuals specialising in money lending, lending among family members, friends or work colleagues, saving schemes administered by deposit collectors, and various forms of group finance (Verstralen, 2005).

However, both the new MFIs and the traditional informal financial services sector have weaknesses. One major concern is that the microfinance offered by MFIs does not reach the poorest. With regard to informal services, they are not without conditions and access may not be available to everyone. Moreover, the informal sector has limited capacity and is particularly weak in providing support in situations of widespread covariant shocks affecting many community members at the same time (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002; Verstralen, 2005).

As in other rural communities, the demand for financial services in West African fisheries communities is diverse. Most fishing people are engaged in microenterprises or wage labour. Men are often crewmembers, not owning their own boats or equipment, and many fish processors and traders – who often are women – work at the lower end of the market chain.

The first credit programmes specialising in fisheries were often supported by a government fisheries department, NGO or development project. As with other support programmes, they were focused on providing credit for productivity increases, i.e. improved gear and increased fishing inputs. Women, the poorest and other

marginalized groups were often excluded with credit schemes focusing on fishers and boat and gear owners. Today, a number of MFIs have succeeded in reaching poor and marginalized groups with innovative financial products and processes, while also being financially viable. There is, however, still room for improvements and further development of products and services that will assist the poor in the fisheries sector.

This chapter discusses the economic environment of the poor and analyses the need for financial services in fisheries communities. SFLP supported several microfinance initiatives through its field projects and an account of SFLP experience is provided, showing how microfinance can be an important bit in the jigsaw puzzle of poverty reduction and responsible fisheries. However, the microfinance services need to be appropriately designed and targeted to be effective.

### **POVERTY AND THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT IN FISHERIES COMMUNITIES**

The economic environment of poor rural communities can be characterised by two main features: monetary transactions are often in very small amounts and there is a high level of insecurity and risk with regard to money flows (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford 2002). In small-scale fishing communities, poorer groups include fishers operating without having their own gear who are dependent on income from the often small portion of the catch that constitutes their salary. Relatively few fishers own fishing equipment and canoes or other boats. Most fish processors, vendors and transporters are microentrepreneurs or workers buying and selling fairly small amounts of fish with little investment in processing or marketing equipment. In particular female owned businesses tend to remain small with few substantial assets. Income patterns are often unpredictable and variable according to fishing seasons, and income and expenditure flows rarely coincide (Verstralen, 2005, K. Holvoet personal communication, 2007).

Fishing people are vulnerable to hazards at the household level, e.g. sickness, premature death, insecure employment conditions and non-successful fishing trips, as well as to risks in the surrounding environment such as natural calamities, resource depletion and national economic recessions or crises. These factors shape their need for and use of financial services and foster risk spreading strategies. Often savings and credit are used as substitutes for insurance and these three categories of financial services are interrelated. Generally in poor rural communities, risk spreading takes place through the diversification of economic activities and the establishment of financial relationships within a wider network of individuals, groups and agencies (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2000; Tietze and Villareal, 2003).

In fishing communities, there is often a particular need to support diversification of economic activities in order to lessen the fishing pressure on heavily exploited fishery resources and to reduce the dependency on these resources. By promoting and supporting livelihood diversification out of the fisheries sector, benefits generated by fisheries management can be reinforced and the vulnerability of fishing people reduced. In addition to strategies for accommodating 'excess' fishers and help them engage in alternative activities – in other sectors or in related activities such as, for example, small-scale aquaculture or waterbased ecotourism – support to responsible investments in small-scale fisheries can contribute towards improved fisheries management. Microfinance can play an important role in both these regards as well as in helping fishing people to deal with vulnerability in a broader sense and thus increase their capacity and interest in participating in fisheries management (Verstralen, 2005, Doulman, 2004).

### **SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Until recently, financial services to fishing communities were almost exclusively provided by the informal sector. In addition to unregistered sources of credit such as money lenders, pawn brokers and traders, this type of services also include different

forms of ‘groups finance’ and ‘intermittent lending’ in which individuals can be both borrowers and lenders. This dual role and the flexibility of the system allow fishing people to anticipate lifecycle needs, emergencies and opportunities and create an informal but vital insurance network (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002; FAO, 2006a).

Group finance schemes are found in two principal forms, i.e. rotating savings and credit associations (RoSCAs) and accumulating savings and credit associations (ASCrAs). In these arrangements, group members collect savings together and lend primarily to each other. In a RoSCAs, members save the same amount each period and members take turns to borrow the accumulated amount. The arrangement comes to an end when all members have had their turn. ASCrAs are generally not time bound in the same way and savings are accumulated from members until one of them is willing to take the pooled amount on loan. The loans are used in variety of ways, for day-to-day needs, life cycle events and for economic activities (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002; Verstralen, 2005).

Intermittent lending on a non-profit basis is common among fishing people and takes place among family members, friends, work colleagues or from captains to crew members, or from fish processors and traders to their workers. Intermittent for-profit lending includes advance sale of fish by a captain or boat owner to a processor or trader. The cash loaned usually helps finance the fishing trip and the agreed repayment amount – the quantity of fish to be provided – tends to include a profit and a risk premium. Deposit collectors or ‘money guards’ are commonly operating both on a profit and non-profit basis, in the latter case generally keeping money for family members or friends. In many West African small-scale fishing communities, professional deposit collectors collect savings on a daily basis. There is generally no interest paid on these ‘saving accounts’; instead a fee is usually charged for the safe keeping of the funds (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002; Verstralen, 2005).

However, as mentioned above, informal services have weaknesses and cannot meet all financial services needs. Some of the main constraints include (from FAO, 2006a and K. Holvoet, personal communication, 2007):

- Access is often conditional and the services are not available to all. Considering the potential risk related to the high level of mobility in the fisheries sector, individuals are cautious as to whom they entrust their savings or extend credit. Social networks, personal relationships and reputation are important assets for accessing the services and there is likely to be bias against the more poor and vulnerable.
- Informal financial services can generally only provide smaller amounts of funds that may not be enough for more important investments in boats, engines or gear, although there are exceptions with boat owners organising special saving schemes for this purpose.
- Informal finance can usually not help fishing communities to deal with common risks in the economic environment. This would include for example threats related to natural disasters or resource depletion, i.e. events that affect the fishing community as a whole.

The early formal finance programmes – developed several decades ago – offered subsidised credit aiming at increasing small-scale fisheries’ productivity and developing the sector as a whole. These schemes were generally driven by fisheries departments and based on their development plans. However, results were disappointing and credit schemes were unsustainable due to high default rates and mismanagement. They were also biased towards boat and canoe owners, representing only a small and generally better off part of a fishing community. In addition, the subsidised credit schemes are likely to have contributed to capital intensification and increased fishing capacity without considering the potential long-term effects on fishery resources (FAO, 2006a).

## BOX 6

**Financial services in southern Lake Volta in Ghana**

According to an SFLP survey in 2002, relatively few fishers have access to formal credit from banking institutions in the coastal communities of southern Lake Volta in Ghana. Instead, fishers generally obtain credit from fish traders. The traders provide fishing inputs and the fishers ensure a regular supply of fish. Fish sold under these arrangements fetch a price that is 10 to 25 percent lower than the market price. Fishers can also obtain credit from net makers. Usually, a 50 percent deposit is required when purchasing a new net but a credit corresponding to the whole value of the net can be obtained for two to four weeks. Interest rates are charged for the credit.

Few fishers use money lenders since the interest rates are considered too high, as much as 10 percent daily in some places. Some villages operate their own welfare schemes where members deposit daily or weekly contributions. Loans can generally be obtained from these funds at an interest of 40 percent per month.

The Agricultural Development Bank, in collaboration with rural banks and private entrepreneurs, has introduced innovative microfinance schemes combining savings and loan facilities in a microfinance system approach called 'Susu'. This system is available to both men and women but was still not widely used when the SFLP survey took place in 2002.

*Source: Pittaluga et al., 2003.*

These failures, together with a deregulation of financial markets and an improved understanding of the financial services needs, stimulated the development of MFIs. However, the marginalisation, insecure rights of access to resources, dependence on uncertain production systems and the risky nature of many fishing operations make the fisheries sector unattractive to MFIs, which in many cases continue to be based and oriented towards urban commercial activities. While there are MFIs that include fishing people among their clients, and even those that focus exclusively on fishing communities, access to appropriate financial services remain unsatisfactory. Box 6 gives an example of local microfinancial arrangements available in southern Lake Volta, Ghana.

**SFLP MICROFINANCE EXPERIENCE**

The challenge and policy issue addressed in the SFLP microfinance component was how small-scale fisheries could be included in mainstream microfinance development for poverty alleviation and how microfinance should be designed in order to contribute to responsible management of fishery resources and not lead to, as had sometimes been the case earlier, increased fishing capacity beyond sustainable levels. More specifically, the overall learning objective was to improve the understanding of how microfinance could contribute to:

- Reducing vulnerability and hence increase the capacity and interest of the most vulnerable to participate in fisheries management,
- Promoting or supporting diversification out of fisheries by developing financial products for this particular purpose,
- Boosting responsible investments in small-scale fisheries by using fisheries management plans to guide the evaluation of applications for investment loans. (Holvoet, 2007).

While the exact process varied from one country to another, the overall SFLP approach to microfinance support was built around partnerships, capacity building and institutional support. The microfinance activities were implemented through individual Community Projects but were also included in the subregional co-management and

post-harvest Pilot Projects.<sup>16</sup> Through the Community Projects, the Programme disbursed a total of FCFA 53 million (US\$88 000) for microfinance support to three main types of microfinance activities: revolving funds managed by a community-based organization (CBO), revolving funds managed by a CBO but with management support from a local MFI, and microfinance services provided by local MFIs. Unfortunately, the Community Projects were generally of short duration and the Programme's had somewhat limited resources for monitoring at the local level. Hence, projects working directly with CBOs and setting up new revolving fund arrangements often proved less successful; reimbursement rates were low and conflicts occurred with regard to who in the group should benefit and receive credit. When the Programme started to work more through partnerships with local organizations, results became much more encouraging. Support was then primarily extended to already existing structures – informal microfinance groups within CBOs or MFIs – rather than to the setting up of completely new arrangements.

Extensive consultations with concerned stakeholder organization, e.g. MFIs, fisheries departments, NGOs and fisheries umbrella organizations, were held at the beginning of projects to seek partnerships and collaboration. In many cases, an initial process was started or supported by SFLP and then carried on by an NGO or MFI. In Senegal, SFLP supported the two Senegalese NGOs ADPES (Association for an Economic and Social Progress Movement) and FENAGIE-Pêche (National Federation of Fisheries Economic Initiative Group) in analysing the impact of a new experimental microfinance association that they had set up in Mbour in 1999 in collaboration with NOVIB (Dutch Oxfam affiliation). The association, MECPROPEM (Mutual Savings and Credit Association for the Promotion of Fisheries) was the first organization of its kind in Senegal and grouped fishers, fish processors and vendors together in a decentralised microfinance system. By tailoring its financial services to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries, MECPROPEM's membership grew rapidly and the initiative was expanded to other villages. In 2005, there was a network of twelve "MECs" spread out in fishing communities along the coast (Cissé, Sarr and Kébé, 2003; Fenagie-Pêche, 2007).

In Burkina Faso, the MFIs existing around the two lakes Bagré and Kompienga were initially reluctant to work with the Programme and the fishing communities since they had earlier bad experience of low repayment rates. With the facilitation of SFLP, a better understanding of the fisheries sector and its risks and opportunities was gained on behalf of the financial services providers. Credit was extended, in particular to women groups, for starting non-fisheries income generating activities, as well as for fish processing and household expenses. Some of the MFIs are now members of the co-management committees for the two lakes (Konan, 2007).

The Programme's microfinance activities were implemented as a central part of the efforts aiming at improving the integration of fisheries communities in local development with regard to, for example, access to basic services such as education, health, and social and family welfare. The enhancement of social cohesion and increased participation of marginalised groups in community groups and decision-making were other priorities of the local development theme (Holvoet, 2007). An example of the successful inclusion of vulnerable groups is the case of Cotonou, Benin, where an MFI called ID (*Initiative Développement*), with the support of SFLP, started to include HIV/AIDS victims among its clients. Through a partnership with a national NGO – Racine – ID could ensure that its clients received the medical and social services they needed and hence reduced the risk of extending credit to HIV/AIDS victims (FAO, 2006a). Also in Congo, in Pointe-Noire on the Atlantic coast and in Makotipoko inland, savings and credit schemes as well as organizational development training were included in the strategies developed by the National Aids Control Council (*Conseil national de la*

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 1 for an explanation of the overall structure of the SFLP projects and activities.

TABLE 9

**Examples of livelihood diversification activities in Ghana, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire**

Ghana	Mali	Côte d'Ivoire
Kente carpet weaving	Vegetable gardening	Agriculture
Snail culture	Handicraft	Production of pastry, juice and ice
Batik and dyeing		
Ornamentation		
Cosmetics and ointments		
Bakery (traditional bread baking)		
Tree planting		

Source: Konan, 2007

*lutte contre la Sida – CNLS*) for assisting households with chronic disease to diversify their economic activities (FAO, 2006a). Another pro-poor approach was used in the Gambia where simplified forms and didactic materials were developed in order for illiterate and lesser educated groups to be able to benefit from microfinance services. (Holvoet, 2007).

Through stakeholder consultations and the continued contacts at different levels, SFLP played a facilitator role for micro-macro and cross-sectoral linkages and created awareness of the need for microfinance in the fisheries sector. Through strategic partnerships, national seminars and exchange visits, the need for and requirements of pro-poor microfinance was communicated, at least to some extent, at the meso and macro levels in Benin, the Gambia and Niger. Exchange visits also allowed for experience sharing between communities and countries (Holvoet, 2007).

Microfinance was closely linked to the promotion of co-management, both as part of the broader development perspective that was incorporated in the SFLP co-management approach (see also Chapter 5) and more directly as a means to finance livelihood diversification. The loans taken by community members were used in a number of ways and varied between countries and locations. The use was influenced by the state of the local fishery resources – the better the state of the resource, the more investment in fishing activities – and the seasonality of fishing. The choice of what economic activities to undertake were guided by two basic motives: their feasibility and proven track record of profitability. Generally traditional activities that were known to the loan taker – or known of from others – were chosen. Table 9 gives some examples of livelihood diversification activities in fishing communities in Ghana, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire financed through microcredit.

In Ere in Chad, the Programme supported an already existing CBO, Walta, consisting of both fishermen and women processors and traders. The microfinance intervention was linked to responsible fisheries and allowed fishers to gradually replace their dugout canoes – used both for fishing and transport – with plank canoes. Those who did not own canoes earlier were helped to invest in this indispensable means of transport. Moreover, in combination with training and information on responsible fishing practices, fishing nets of the regulated mesh size were introduced. Thanks to microfinance, Walta was able to stock and supply these nets that had earlier only been available from traders at higher prices. The women members of Walta invested in Chorkor ovens<sup>17</sup> for smoking fish and were increased their profits thanks to reduced post-harvest losses and better quality products.

In some countries, post-harvest actors and activities were specifically targeted. In addition to the livelihood diversification angle, the Programme aimed at improving

<sup>17</sup> A so called improved traditional fish smoking oven, originally developed in Ghana.

access to microfinance services for the post-harvest sector with the intention to contribute to increased value added and incomes without intensifying the fishing pressure on scarce resources. In Gabon, for example, a fish value chain analysis showed the need for specific credits by different actors to increase their efficiency and improve access to, among other things, ice and transport. By applying a gender sensitive approach, gender issues were addressed at the same time. In Mali, savings and credit interventions were recommended to fund the different actors in the value chain and improve traders' negotiation capacity. This applied to both women and men but women were generally found to be more vulnerable in the context of changing market structures and globalisation (see also below and Chapter 10) (Tindall and Holvoet, 2008; K. Holvoet, personal communication, 2007).

The SFLP experience demonstrated that it is important to offer local flexible financial services and to combine savings and credit schemes. The participation of the poor is often made possible by allowing for appropriate grace periods and repayment in small but frequent instalments (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002). Interest rates and repayment schedules need to take the pattern of financial flows and risks in fishery activities into account. In Ere in Chad, the women group of the CBO Walta appointed a collector to make weekly rounds to members' houses to collect money for repayments. At times of financial difficulty, the repayment frequency was allowed to become more flexible but the overall loan reimbursement rate remained close to 100 percent (Heidrich, 2005). MECPROPEM in Senegal assesses credit risks according to different fisheries professions and targets its financial products accordingly (Cissé, Sarr and Kébé, 2003).

Insurance and other services could also be linked to the microfinance scheme (Verstralen, 2005). Savings are an important aspect and an often common misunderstanding is that the poor cannot save; they generally can although not in large amounts (Matin, Hulme and Rutherford, 2002). At the beginning, the group-based revolving funds set up by SFLP did not require the members to make savings. However, experience showed that microfinance schemes combining savings and credit were more successful. The principal of requiring savings before extending credit was generally applied by SFLP's partner organizations. It also proved important to offer saving and repayment schemes for credit that took individual needs into account. MECPROPEM in Senegal offered a variety of savings schemes (demand accounts, fixed deposits, project saving plans, secured savings) with different interest rates. An awareness campaign helped promote a savings culture in the fishing community and new credit products were developed according to the needs of the fishing community members. Another of MECPROPEM's strengths was its strategic location on a fishing quay in Mbour close to its target membership. In 2003, repayments rates were 98 percent (Cissé, Sarr and Kébé, 2003).

Successful microfinance schemes were developed based on traditional informal forms of financial services such as RoSCAs – also called “tontines” in West Africa – combined with stricter financial management and organizational support. The fundamental principle of individual loans underpinned by group responsibility and solidarity has proved to be a sound and appropriate form for savings and credit schemes in many instances. In Burkina Faso, the SFLP partner MFIs invested in training for their members in organizational development and financial management as well as in providing advisory services (Konan, 2007). However, motivation of group membership must be linked to shared problems and opportunities for solutions within the group context and group dynamic. The motivation of access to credit will stay an individual need and will not necessarily provide a basis for group dynamics and strengthening of the organization. In Niger and Nigeria, revolving funds caused conflicts and the association of professional MFIs had to restore confidence through training, and the introduction of clear policies and management procedures (Holvoet,



2007). When groups exhibit a sufficient level of social cohesion, peer pressure can be a strong support for compliance and success.

Along with promoting a savings culture, the support to the development of other capacities is important. Literacy is of great importance to successful microfinance support. The SFLP supported literacy training in the fishing communities of Bagré and Komienga in Burkina Faso. Some 570 fishermen and women fish processors participated in basic and advanced literacy training. In addition to being able to do their bookkeeping and better respect the repayment schedule of microfinance loans, the newly literate also noted advantages in being able to better follow the weighing of fish at the landing site and take notes in meetings. Many women experienced increased self-esteem which had a positive impact on their abilities to participate in associations, carry out economic activities and taking part in decision-making. The MFIs perceived clear benefits from literacy in terms of better reimbursement rates and promoted literacy training in relation to microfinance (Holvoet, undated).

In the Gambia, SFLP conducted a literacy programme adapted to the needs of women and women groups in relation to microfinance. A specialised curriculum was developed focusing on microfinance management, use of market information, use of mobile phones and health issues. The benefits of the training included improved independence, an increased tendency to send children to school, and easier access to government services and microfinance institutions (Holvoet, undated).

Business skills training for target beneficiaries always accompanied SFLP's provision of microfinance and organizational development support proved to be crucial to microfinance interventions. In Cameroon, training in organizational development for women groups resulted in the registration of the groups and changes in practices which allowed the groups more financial autonomy and to develop partnerships. Bookkeeping was introduced and maintained by women who had received training in accounting. In Tanji, the Gambia, more microfinance loans started to be used on business development when related training was provided.<sup>18</sup> Ten percent of the credit union members diversified into activities outside the fisheries sector. (Holvoet, 2007).

## **GENDER AND MICROFINANCE**

Small-scale fisheries in West Africa are characterised by a fairly clear distinction between female and male occupations although a more in-depth analysis often reveals a more complex picture. While women are generally not directly represented in the capture subsector, i.e. they do not go out fishing on the canoes and boats, it is not unusual that female fish traders finance fishing trips. Women are also generally active as fish processors and vendors, and can as such also finance fishing trips by advancing payment of fish. The system of fishing, processing and trading and of financial flows is however diverse and varies from one country and place to another. These relations and interactions need to be clearly understood before intervening in the sector in terms of providing microfinance (Verstralen, 2005).

In several SFLP projects, microfinance activities had an explicit gender focus. This was the case particularly in Benin, the Gambia and Niger where extensive studies on gender issues in relation to microfinance were carried out and gender-sensitive microfinance programmes were implemented. The use of credit is often influenced by gender issues. Due to women's often prominent role in fish processing and trade, the availability of financial services for women has a strong influence on this part of the value chain. SFLP experience also showed that women are more likely to invest in non-fisheries activities than men. In Chad (Ere) and Burkina Faso (Bagré) women spent 30

<sup>18</sup> The training covered, among other things, management of savings and credit cooperatives, roles and responsibilities of group members, gender in practice and in management of savings and credit cooperatives, processing and conservation skills and livelihood diversification (Holvoet, 2007).

and 42 percent, respectively, of their total loan amounts on investments in economic activities outside the fisheries sector. The corresponding figures for men were 15 percent in Ere and 16 percent in Bagré (Holvoet, 2007).

In some cases, men in fishing communities have more difficulty in accessing formal credit than women. MFIs that have experienced repayment difficulties when extending credit to fishers and that thereafter shy away from the fishing communities, may be more inclined to work with women groups when convinced to return. In Burkina Faso, where the Programme intervened to re-establish the relationship between financial service providers and the fishing communities, women and women's groups received far more credit lines than their male counterparts (Konan, 2007).

Gender aspects in relation to fishing communities are further discussed in Chapter 10.

### **LESSONS LEARNED FOR IMPROVING MICROFINANCE IN FISHERIES**

The microfinance element was a relatively small part of the overall scope of SFLP but constituted at the same time a critical complementary activity in the context of many of the other activities. Unfortunately, in several cases, the microfinance interventions were introduced at a fairly late stage in the Programme implementation process and there was generally not enough time to obtain clear results and to properly analyse and verify their relevance with regard to the learning outcomes that the Programme had aspired to. Nevertheless, the experience generated lessons learned contributing to a better understanding of the need and requirements of pro-poor microfinance in the fisheries sector for poverty reduction and responsible fisheries.

Poor and marginalised groups can and should be included in microfinance arrangements and appropriately designed microfinance initiatives can reduce vulnerability. In order to offer relevant financial services, i.e. mainly combinations of savings and credit schemes, a good understanding of the poverty context is necessary and the microfinance support programme has to be pro-poor and customer-tailored, specially targeting groups of the community that are commonly excluded from the local development process. The inclusion of poor and marginalized groups in microfinance is likely to facilitate their participation in other community based activities and can enhance their contribution to co-management arrangements.

A holistic perspective and partnerships were essential parts of the SFLP approach and local MFIs played a key role, also as partners in a wider sense in co-management activities. However, MFIs often need to improve their knowledge of the fisheries sector in order to develop appropriate financial products. SFLP was proactive in working with existing financial service providers and also played a catalytic role in creating contacts and links between different actors leading to improved access to microfinance for fishing communities. This role was also closely linked to the importance of empowering local community groups to enable them to better benefit from existing support structures. Organizational development and enhancement of skills – including literacy – are essential ingredients in an empowerment support package.

Diversification of economic activities is an important component in the efforts promoting responsible fisheries and improved fishery management. Microfinance has an important role to play in this context but needs to be combined with appropriate technical support and training. It should also be recognised that the wish and ability to diversify have boundaries which are influenced by risk perception and that new economic activities are likely to be more successful if related to existing and traditional livelihood occupations. Information and training are essential, also when credit is used for activities directly related to fishing, and microfinance should be seen as an integral part of local development and fisheries management. Only in this way can the full potential synergy effects of microfinance, capacity building and livelihood diversification be fully harvested and contribute to sustainable development and responsible fisheries.

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## 8. Innovations in communication enhance grassroots development

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### INTRODUCTION

Information and communication (IC) are fundamental elements in any development activity and cut across the whole process of problem identification, project formulation and implementation, and dissemination of results. Strategic IC actions are essential to any activity aiming at creating wider cross-sectoral and micro-macro linkages, and for influencing policies, institutions and processes at national and regional levels. Successful outreach and effective dissemination of messages and relevant results are important for local activities to have a wider and more sustainable impact as well as for contributing to the collective international knowledge on best practices.

The concept *communication for development*, implying “the sharing of knowledge aimed at reaching a consensus for action that takes into account the interests, needs and capacities of all concerned” (Servaes and Malikhao, 2004, page 4), dates back to the 1960s and IC components had become common in development projects by 1980 (Coldevin, 2001). The earliest and most basic form of communication for development is information dissemination and motivation for which broadcast media and radios have been extensively used. Coldevin, (2001) gives a number of examples of successful radio broadcasting programmes and campaigns in agriculture and the health sector in the 1970s.<sup>19</sup> It is still considered an effective tool because of its general availability. Communication for development activities involving the training of extension workers have often relied on “group media such as slides, film-strips, audio-cassettes, flip-charts, village theatre and video” (Coldevin, 2001, page 4 Part 1). When used by a facilitator, these media have the advantage over broadcasting that the information flow can be adapted to the audience and allows for interaction with the facilitator. These aspects became even more important with the advance towards interactive stakeholder participation in development planning and implementation in the 1990s. A shift from ‘teaching them’ to ‘learning with them’ occurred, taking local knowledge into consideration and building on existing strengths (Coldevin, 2001). The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) developed from these concepts (see Chapter 1). Another influential development is the rapid evolution of *information and communication technologies* (ICTs) – including in particular computers, internet and mobiles phones – that are increasingly being used as part of *information, education and communication* (IEC) actions in development (FAO, 2007; Stienen, Bruinsma and Neuman, 2007).

Effective communication is a key to effective participatory processes. IC are crucial to individuals in rural communities for making strategic livelihood decisions as well as for decision makers in organizations at the meso and macro levels working for poverty reduction (Chapman, Slaymaker and Young, 2003). In the context of resource management and responsible fisheries, effective communication is also an essential component of any co-management set-up. A study by Crona and Bodin (2006) in Kenya showed that social networks determined the communication patterns among community groups. The study illustrated how communication often occurs mainly

<sup>19</sup> E.g. the “Masagana 99” campaign in the Philippines in 1974 (rice production) and the “Man is Life” (health) and “Food is Life” (nutrition) in Tanzania in 1973 and 1975 (Coldevin, 2001).

BOX 7  
COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

*“If information and knowledge are central to democracy, they are the conditions of development”*

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, in an address to the World Bank Conference “Global Knowledge ‘97” in Toronto, Canada in 1997.

among individuals belonging to the same professional groups or group of fishers using the same gear type. While fishers often possessed good knowledge of “their” local resources, this information was rarely shared with non-fishers or fishers targeting other resources. Hence, the potentially more influential groups of non-fishers in the community had limited communication with the fishers and hence limited access to information for their decision-making. This structure of the communication network and the lack of cross-sectoral communication appeared to be a main reason for why the community had been unsuccessful in introducing community based fishery management. Unless communication channels can be made effective among different groups of the community, it will be difficult to achieve successful fisheries management (Crona and Bodin, 2006). Communication is however not always automatic and appropriate methods are needed to ensure information flows and participation leading to the wanted development results.

The use of modern ICTs offers a great potential to contribute to poverty alleviation and the successful implementation of technology supported interventions, e.g. web based price and market information systems for small-scale farmers, is already taking place in many locations in Africa and elsewhere (Stienen, Bruinsma and Neuman, 2007). However, ICTs require appropriate adaptation and effective adoption by local communities in order to contribute meaningfully to the improvement of livelihoods (FAO, 2007). Satellite connections and mobile phones are rapidly changing the access to internet in rural areas, but still only 4.7 percent of the population of Africa are internet users.<sup>20</sup> This can be compared with 42.9 percent in Europe and 70.9 percent in North America (Internet World Stats, 2007). Literacy is still not universal; the average literacy rates for Sub-Saharan Africa is 50.4 percent for women and 68.8 percent for men (1995-2005, UNESCO, 2007a). While modern communication media are important, they are not an aim in themselves and the importance of interpersonal communication and folk media must not be forgotten. A combination of “old” and “new” media, adapted to local conditions, is likely to be most successful (Servaes and Malikha, 2004; Stienen, Bruinsma and Neuman, 2007).

This chapter reviews the different IC dimensions of SFLP’s work. After giving an overview of overall Programme IC and outreach issues, SFLP’s community communication strategy is presented and SFLP participatory approach to communication is illustrated by a case study from Congo. Thereafter, the use of ICTs in small-scale fishing communities is reviewed and case studies from Guinea, Burkina Faso and Mali are presented demonstrating how technologies can be used effectively for communication led development in the context of poverty reduction and responsible fisheries. While it is argued that the Programme was less successful in its global outreach activities, important achievements were made at the local level with also some impact on national policies. IEC became a crosscutting theme in SFLP field activities and the Programme was successful in using a variety of communication techniques, ranging from social communication tools such as theatre-for-development

<sup>20</sup> An internet user is defined as someone with access to an internet connection point and having the basic knowledge to use web technology (Internet World Stats, 2007).

activities to GPS and modern technologies, for achieving its priorities. The experience shows the importance of giving IC sufficient attention in a development programme such as the SFLP, both with regard to consolidating results and outreach at the overall programme level and including IEC actions and appropriate communication tools at the community level.

### **SFLP COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND GLOBAL OUTREACH**

Although IEC actions became an integral part of the SFLP field activities and processes, SFLP did in fact not have a clear and coherent Programme-wide IC strategy.<sup>21</sup> Approaches and methodologies for different IC needs were developed and implemented as the Programme progressed. The different aspects in which IC were important can be divided into three main areas, i.e.:

- Programme outreach and dissemination of messages, based on SFLP results and achievements, to a wider audience.
- IEC in the context of projects, i.e. the enhancement of access to information and communication capacities at the community level as well as the strengthening of micro-macro and cross-sectoral linkages for information sharing and communication between community members, the Programme, and government and other development agents.
- Use of ICTs as part of Programme activities at the field level, e.g. GPS, radios and mobile phones.

While SFLP was successful in using innovative and effective approaches with regard to the latter two areas, i.e. the strengthening of IC capacities in communities and the use of ICTs – which are further discussed and illustrated by case studies below – its ability to disseminate and share results effectively with a wider audience was less convincing. Still, the communications team that was established within the Regional Support Unit (RSU) in Cotonou, Benin,<sup>22</sup> produced many useful and good products that drew on the field experience and were distributed widely in the Programme region. These included the *Liaison Bulletin* and *Info-Flash*, two regular publications available both in English and in French. A total of 23 issues of the *Liaison Bulletin* were produced containing some 100 articles on SFLP field experience. The range of issues was broad and all Programme countries contributed articles. *Info-Flash* was an initially monthly and later bimonthly newsletter giving highlights of activities, meetings and other Programme aspects that were of interest to those involved in SFLP in the region. Both publications were distributed internally and externally across the region. These publications were the Programme's main dissemination vehicle in the region and also used by the Programme's National Coordination Units (NCUs) to inform partners on SFLP. The RSU in Cotonou was also responsible for the set-up and running of a library and a Programme Web site (Cunningham and Holleran, 2007). Moreover, a number of practical guidelines and planning tools were developed, e.g. the Gender Training Manual and Community Project Formulation Guide.<sup>23</sup>

Other material produced by the programme – or with support from it – include videos and radio programmes, a book,<sup>24</sup> journal articles, and a series of short reports on pertinent issues: *New Directions in fisheries - A series of policy briefs on development*

<sup>21</sup> The term IC is here used as a generic abbreviation for Information and Communication and encompasses different aspects both at Programme and community level. Information, Education and Communication – IEC – is the combination of strategies, approaches and methods used at the community level for enhancing local capacities and capabilities to access and use information and knowledge.

<sup>22</sup> Chapter 1 provides more details on the overall Programme structure and organization.

<sup>23</sup> The *Liaison Bulletin* and *Info-Flash* issues as well as the different guidelines and manuals are available at the SFLP Web site: [www.sflp.org](http://www.sflp.org).

<sup>24</sup> Neiland, A.E. and Béné, C. (eds), *Poverty and small-scale fisheries in West Africa*. FAO/Kluwer Academic Publishers. 2004.

issues.<sup>25</sup> The policy briefs aim at contributing to improved awareness on issues relevant to the small-scale fisheries sector and are directed towards the wider development community. The themes selected for the briefs are in line with the principles of the sustainable livelihoods approach and include, for example, microfinance, literacy, gender and HIV/AIDS.

Some of the SFLP material and in particular the policy briefs have been somewhat criticised for not reporting more on SFLP experience but instead providing a general summary on the different subject matters. The reason for not drawing more directly on SFLP experience is linked to the fact that there was no communication component built into SFLP from the beginning. There was also a general lack of systematic monitoring and analysis of Programme results in a way that could be used for assessing impact and for reporting to a wider audience and at a global policy level. It is hence difficult to report on the effect of SFLP's information dissemination efforts and how exactly receivers used the knowledge acquired. Nevertheless, SFLP did contribute to increasing the regional and global awareness of small-scale fisheries and the sustainable livelihoods approach as well as of some specific issues such as the economic contribution of small-scale fisheries and HIV/AIDS in fishing communities. What may still be missing is empirically supported conclusions with regard to what results can be obtained by combining approaches for poverty reduction and responsible fisheries (Cunningham and Holleran, 2007). While this FAO Fisheries Technical Paper provides some of this analysis, more emphasis on information and communication aspects from the beginning of the Programme would have facilitated the process and enhanced the understanding of the lessons learned that have been generated.

## **COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

### **Institutional support and participatory communication**

Fisheries communities are generally rich in information about their own livelihood assets and strategies but may need to supplement and elaborate on this through social, educational and institutional communication<sup>26</sup> in order to fully participate in problem analysis, project preparation and implementation processes (Heidrich, 2001). Communication is a key to facilitate the process that many communities will have to go through to make positive changes for improving their livelihoods (Holvoet, 2007) and includes a two-way information flow between communities and the meso and macro-levels of development actors and decision makers.

SFLP's adoption of the SLA required communication approaches that were different from what had been prevailing in development in the fisheries sector, e.g. top-down environmental education, training and extension. By implementing the principles of the SLA, the Programme used participatory communication approaches that put people in the focus and built on existing strengths, included micro-macro linkages and were cross-sectoral. For the benefit of project planning and implementation, a community communication strategy was developed. This strategy was based on the introduction of IEC actions with a view to address information needs at the micro level (community), meso level (organizations working with the community, including the SFLP NCUs) and macro level (national policy) (Heidrich, undated). At the same time as attention was given to institutional support and reinforcing capabilities and capacities at different

<sup>25</sup> 15 Policy Briefs have been prepared, which are also available at [www.sflp.org](http://www.sflp.org).

<sup>26</sup> "Social communication establishes dialogue, plans community activities and enhances mobilisation within the community. Educational communication shares knowledge and skills in order to increase the efficiency and viability of livelihoods strategies. Institutional communication creates information flows for permanent dialogue and stimulates partnership between the various stakeholders, assisting the improvement of Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs)." (Heidrich, 2001, p.13).

institutional levels, innovative communication methods were used directly by the Programme and its partners in the planning and implementation of field activities.

Institutional support included training at the community level – community members and organizations – and for partners at the meso-level as well as for the Programme's NCUs. It complemented other field project activities and covered, among other things, documentation of and training in participatory methods such as PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) techniques for Programme, government and NGO facilitators and field workers (Heidrich, 2001). Technical capacity training and development of basic capabilities in literacy and organizational management for community members were integral parts of many project activities and also implemented as cross-cutting themes. This strengthening of educational communication skills, particularly for women, reinforced interactive participation and improved a sense of self-esteem and empowerment (Holvoet, 2007). Box 8 provides further information on literacy in fishing communities.

Social communication played a particularly important role in the Programme's success in creating dialogue and involving stakeholders, including the participation of marginalised groups. In the context of co-management – of fishery resources and of common market infrastructure – training in social communication was a key component, both for ensuring transparency at the start of activities and then throughout the process for improving accountability and guiding conflict management. Often the process begun in an environment where stakeholders did not communicate constructively but blamed each other for the degradation of the resources or lack of maintenance of infrastructure<sup>27</sup> as well as the ensuing conflicts. The building up of skills in communication, negotiation and facilitation of facilitators at the meso-level proved to be crucial for successfully introducing co-management, specifically for resolving disputes before escalating into larger conflicts. Social communication also contributed to ensuring broad based participation, including marginalised groups that otherwise may have been excluded.

The community communication strategy supported SFLP's overall holistic approach encouraging "the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, both 'vertically' from fishing people through to the administration, and 'horizontally' across sectors" (Cunningham and Holleran 2007, p. 45). Actions addressing micro-macro linkages were recognised as essential for achieving changes in overall policies in a number of areas including gender, inclusion of fishing communities in national development processes and access to resources. Direct actions at the macro policy level varied according to the local process and included studies, national workshops, regional fora, production of IC material or lobbying when such opportunities presented themselves (Holvoet, 2007). Close cooperation with strategic partners played an important role in achieving results.

Some of the Programme's most successful activities, e.g. addressing HIV/AIDS and participatory surveillance, were built around effective partnerships and appropriate communication methodologies, including strengthening of institutional communication between communities and decision makers at higher levels. In countries where there was a balance between institutional support activities and field projects, the Programme's influence at the policy level was stronger. Not all experiences can be documented in detail but by communicating micro-level evidence, macro-level policies and processes were influenced. Countries where such changes took place included Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, DRC, Guinea Conakry, Niger, Nigeria, the Gambia, Ghana and Sao Tome and Principe. Some examples include the inclusion of fishing

<sup>27</sup> This refers to Programme experience in Garoua, Cameroon.



## BOX 8

**Literacy in fishing communities**

Literacy is a key aspect of human development influencing people's livelihoods in a fundamental way. In fishing communities, literacy and numeracy are generally integral to every day life and are for example used for record keeping, in marketing and other business activities, and communication. In many situations, the access to information and resources are subject to literacy and numeracy skills. Such capabilities are often a prerequisite to be able to benefit from support programme or to improve livelihoods in other ways by, for example, understanding and exercising legal rights. In the more and more international market for fish and fishery products, fishing people increasingly need literacy skills to be able to access information, communicate and to benefit from commercial opportunities.

Studies undertaken by the SFLP in Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, the Gambia and Burkina Faso suggest that literacy rates in fishing communities are often lower than in other rural communities. Reasons for this situation relate to, among other things, the dynamics of fishing livelihoods – including seasonal migration – social marginalisation and limited access to schooling in remote areas. However, there are regional and local differences and the level of functional literacy and numeracy may be different from the literacy level that is defined within the context of formal school attendance. Informal notes on scraps of paper or the ability to use mobile phones are examples of functional literacy that may go unnoticed because it is not related to formal schooling. Depending on what the literacy skills are needed for, education in different languages may be needed and the language taught in schools and education programmes do not always match these needs. In West Africa, fishing people may want to know French or English in addition to local language literacy.

Where SFLP offered literacy and numeracy training to community members, some of the perceived benefits included better working community-based organizations (e.g. notes taken during meetings; increased communication between members and leaders; better financial management capacity and for elaborating action plans) and a generally higher degree of involvement, and information at the individual and household level (e.g. recognition of importance of children's education and medical consultations; access to information through documents and newspapers; improved relationship between women and men leading to more participatory decision making.

*Sources:* FAO, 2006 and Holvoet, 2007.

communities in national HIV/AIDS programmes in Benin and Congo, and the legalisation of participatory surveillance in Guinea (see also below) (Holvoet, 2007).

By implementing an SLA based communication approach, SFLP experienced how the IC capacities and capabilities of formal and informal institutions at the micro, meso and macro levels could be strengthened. At the project implementation level, the Programme learned – and applied this knowledge – that different approaches are needed at different stages of the development process and in accordance with potential issues and problems that exist or arise. In order to address such sensitive issues as risky sexual behaviour and prostitution in the context of HIV/AIDS preventions, SFLP and its partners used theatre-for-development (TfD) as a means for communication and the case of Pointe-Noire in Congo is described below. TfD was also used successfully in the SFLP co-management activities, in particular for participatory monitoring (see also Box 9).

## BOX 9

**Theatre as a tool for development**

To use theatre for passing on a message or explaining a concept is not a new phenomenon but something that has been used in various contexts for more than a hundred years. The technique is mentioned in the thesis *Theater as a Means of Moral Education and Socialization in the Development of Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839-1845* (Hurd 2004 cited in Wikipedia). The concept has also been used to give marginalised groups a possibility to express themselves and tell what they think. The Brazilian Augusto Boal called it “theatre of the oppressed” (Boal, 1977) and this form of *theatre-for-development* (TfD) is now being used by development facilitators.

TfD can be used for passing messages, education, participatory analysis and other processes when participation is desired but the issues are complicated and delicate or the social setting does not allow for talking about them openly. UNESCO has played a key role in promoting and developing the concept. A first workshop on TfD was held in Zimbabwe in 1970. Today many development agencies use the technique. More recently, TfD has been proven particularly useful for communicating, educating and informing on subjects such as combating HIV/ AIDS or promoting gender equality (UNESCO, 2007b).

**Theatre-for-development in Pointe-Noir, Congo<sup>28</sup>**

The community Base-Agip in Pointe-Noire is one of the most important fishing communities along the Congolese coast. It consists of some 3 000 inhabitants of which most are of Congolese origin but there is also a large community originally from Benin as well as immigrants from Angola, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, and Togo.

The community started to work with SFLP in 2001 and an organization development process led to the establishment of an umbrella organization for Congolese and Beninese socio-professional groups operating at the landing site. In 2003, Base-Agip was selected to participate in the Programme’s Pilot Project on co-management<sup>22</sup>. In the participatory project planning process, which included among other things a gender study, HIV/AIDS was identified as a serious risk to the sustainability of local livelihoods.

In August 2004, the National AIDS Control Council (*Conseil national de la lutte contre la Sida – CNLS*) and the SFLP jointly conducted a socio-behavioural survey on local prostitution in the Base-Agip fishing community. The survey complemented a socio-anthropologic study conducted by CNLS earlier in the year in five major towns but that had not included fishing communities. The aim of the survey in Base-Agip was to better understand the different forms of transactional sex and reasons for prostitution in the community. This information was then used for designing – in participation with all stakeholders concerned – actions aiming at reducing the vulnerability of fishing people to HIV/AIDS.

To facilitate the data collection and create an environment that permitted community members to share their knowledge and experience with the researchers, the theatre media was used. It was incorporated in the survey process from the beginning and played an important role in all stages of the work. Using the TfD guidelines developed by Boal (1977) as the starting point, a methodology appropriate for local conditions was adopted. The socio-professional umbrella organization was partnering SFLP and

<sup>28</sup> This section is based on articles in the Liaison Bulletin No 17 & 18 and a SFLP working paper (SFLP/RSU, undated a).

CNLS in this endeavour. First, an *introductory theatre* play was put on by the help of two TfD trainers from Brazzaville presenting the overall objectives of the survey. This initial play facilitated a dialogue with the community about the planned work and helped explain the need for support from the community in answering questions and sharing information. The next step was an *inspirational theatre* play that presented the theme of the survey and solicited volunteers for the continuation of the plays. Ten women and five men volunteered for the new Base-Agip community drama group.

From this point on, the two TfD trainers became facilitators, letting the community drama group take the lead in script writing and the casting of the play. During fifteen days the group developed and rehearsed their play before making a public presentation as part of the *awareness-raising theatre* phase. The play recounted a story about a boat owner who is spending time in the bar with his favourite fishmonger mistress after a successful fishing trip. In exchange for sexual services, he has given her privileged access to his fish catch but does not want to use a condom. At the end of the play, he tests positive for HIV. The focus of the message of the play – conveyed by the person playing the doctor – was the importance of practicing safe sex and how to care for people suffering from AIDS. Immediately after the play, a facilitator encouraged the audience to reflect on and discuss what they had seen.

One day later, the play was put on again but this time for the authorities of Pointe-Noire, including representatives of the fisheries department and district administration, civil society and local community organizations. This time the audience was also given a presentation of the results of the socio-behavioural survey that had used as baseline information for the theatre preparations. The theatre play presentation by the drama group made an important impression on the authorities who realised the significance of the problem to the community. This subsequently led to the inclusion of Base-Agip in existing government programmes and specific initiatives for fighting HIV/AIDS in fishing communities at the national level.

The Base-Agip drama group remained in place also after having completed their task in relation to the prostitution survey. Hence, in addition to having assisted in the process of analysing and addressing HIV/AIDS in the community, a new vehicle for social communication had been created. The parties concerned – the fishing community itself, CNLS and SFLP – saw this as an opportunity for future interventions and the TfD approach was used successfully in the implementation of the subregional SFLP Pilot Project on co-management project, in which the Base-Agip community also participated.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

### ICTs in fishing communities

*Information and Communication Technologies*, or so called ICTs, can be defined as those “technologies that facilitate communication and the processing and transmission of information by electronic means” (Marker, McNamara and Wallace 2002, p. 4). A laptop with internet connection is one of the more obvious examples but also radios, televisions and phones are included in the definition and the range of ICTs is rapidly expanding to include a variety of technologies allowing people to collect, store and share information.

ICTs are most likely changing the lives of all people in the world, although at various levels. Fisheries communities are no exceptions as technologies are increasingly being used by businesses, governments, development agencies and individuals within the fisheries sector. A range of electronic technologies is used for fishing (e.g. GPS and fish finding devices) but new applications are also increasingly being used throughout other levels of the fisheries value chain. One example is the communication of market and price information by community loudspeakers or mobile phones. Mobile phones can also be used for mobile-enabled payment systems, allowing transmittances and

use of e-money. Computerising fish markets can lead to important efficiency gains – both in administration and in the market functions – and also improve government's access to information for monitoring (FAO, 2007). ICTs can as well contribute to Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and data collection and thus support fisheries management.

In view of this rapid expansion, it would appear important to ensure that the ICT development is commensurate with poverty reduction and that the introduction and spread of new technologies in fisheries is directed at meeting the needs of the poor. The use of new technologies should be “integrated into participative, people-centred communications for development and knowledge sharing approaches” (FAO, 2007, p 3). Wisely used, ICT can contribute to not only income generation but also to reduction of vulnerabilities, and increased equity and social inclusion. Safety at sea can be improved by using ICTs for communicating weather forecasts and mobile phone and radios allow fishers to keep in contact with other boats and the shore. By involving communities directly in the production of radio and programmes and videos, ICTs become a powerful tool for communicating with a wider audience and for empowerment (FAO, 2007).

The SFLP used ICTs in a number of activities in support of pro-poor development and more responsible fisheries. In several countries (Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania), studies were carried out with regard to the possibilities of involving fishing communities in MCS. In Guinea, this idea was carried out successfully in practice and fishing communities were supported in creating a partnership with the National Fisheries Surveillance Centre (CNSP) and engaging in MCS in the artisanal fishing areas. In Cape Verde, the Programme assisted in introducing local radio for fishing communities.<sup>29</sup> In Burkina Faso and Mali, local radio stations were supported to become more participatory and relevant to fishing communities. SFLP also helped facilitate an expansion of the local mobile phone network to cover fishing communities in the Gambia and in Chad. Below follows brief summaries of the SFLP experiences of participatory MCS in Guinea and of community radio in Burkina Faso and Mali.

### **Participatory surveillance in Guinea**

In the fishing communities of Koukoudé, Bongolon and Matakang on the Guinean coast, a serious threat and obstacle to sustainable livelihoods was identified in the common incursion of industrial trawlers into the coastal fishing zone that was officially reserved for artisanal boats. The trawlers often destroyed the local small-scale fishers' net and damaged boats, in addition to exploiting their fishery resources. A study during the period 1995-1999 by the Boussoira National Fisheries Science Centre (CNSHB), showed that fish catches had been decreasing but that the industrial fishing fleet caught an increasingly large share (SFLP, undated).

In 2000, the fishing communities approached the CNSP, which is responsible for MCS in the Guinean coastal waters with the support of SFLP. The Centre – which also collaborates with CNSHB and the National Navy on surveillance issues – was rather sceptical at first to the idea that local fishers would get involved in monitoring and controlling their fishing areas with regard to illegal vessels. Nevertheless, with facilitation assistance from the Programme, a partnership between the communities and CNSP was established. The communities helped identify ‘informer fishers’, using education level as criteria. They were then trained by CNSP in the use of GPS, radios and mobile phones. This equipment was provided by SFLP for detecting trawlers at sea. A ‘logbook’ of infractions was also established where the date and time of the sighting, the name of the vessel and its position etc. were noted. In addition to the ICT

<sup>29</sup> SFLP assisted in establishing Radio Pedra Badejo, a community radio with participation of the fisheries sector and representatives of the fisheries association in the programming committee.

equipment, the informer fishers were equipped with life jackets, waterproof clothing and torches. If trawlers were spotted in the 10-mile coastal zone during their fishing trips, this was reported to one of the six CNSP bases along the coast (SFLP, undated, Diallo, Kourkouliotis and Breuil, 2003).

After two years, trawler incursions intercepted by CNSP in collaboration with local fishers had been decreased by 60 percent (SFLP, undated). CNSP patrols became fewer but better targeted. Fishers experienced considerably less damage to their nets and other equipment. There were also fewer accidents at sea caused by trawlers. The reported benefits for fishers also included increased incomes and improved community spirit and participation in community projects. However, there were still issues to be resolved and the system created at times jealousy among fishers since not enough equipment was available for everyone. Moreover, it was not possible to carry out night patrols although many incursions happened at night. Other problems reported included lack of communication and that fishers were not informed on the action that had been taken based on their reports. Nevertheless, the initiative has contributed to increased contacts between the community and national institutions that now recognise the communities as an important partner in the process of improving the national fisheries surveillance system (SFLP, undated, Diallo, Kourkouliotis and Breuil, 2003). In 2006, this role was legally recognised by the adoption of formal participatory surveillance guidelines (Njock, 2007).

### **Community radio in Burkina Faso and Mali**

Already before SFLP started its activities in 2004, the communities around Lake Bagré and Lake Komo in Burkina Faso and Lake Sélingué in Mali, had access to local radio stations. In addition to broadcasting news and other general programmes, these radio stations were used by the governments and aid agencies for passing on messages and communicating with the communities on important issues such as, for example, health and hygiene or how to fight locusts. The radio is a powerful tool in this respect. Communities tend to believe strongly in what they hear on the radio. Since the radio speakers are most often not known to them and hence do not appear to have any obvious self-interest in falsifying information or influencing the communities in one way or another, the radio is perceived as a reliable source of information (SFLP/RSU, undated b).

However, the existing radio stations did not specifically target fishing communities and programmes did not deal with issues related to fishing and associated activities. In relation to the subregional Pilot Project on inland fisheries co-management<sup>22</sup>, SFLP established partnerships with local radio stations in Bagré and in Sélingué with a view to change this situation. As a first step, the Programme carried out a review of the capacities and capabilities of the existing radio stations. This survey showed that the staff of the radio stations generally had a relatively low level of education and were not specialised in IC. In Burkina Faso, less than one percent had a high school certificate. Moreover, the local radio stations were usually operating with old and outdated equipment. In Mali, only one radio station (Wassoulou) had a telephone line and internet connection. This, obviously, constituted a great obstacle for interactive broadcasting. Eventually, based on their popularity with fishing communities and their willingness to produce more participatory radio programmes, four radio stations in Bagré and two in Sélingué were selected as partners. The production contracts that were established included support in the form of equipment and training in public broadcasting facilitation and audio production (SFLP/RSU, undated b).

The radio programmes developed were in both French and in local languages. Public broadcasts and round-table discussions were the most commonly used forms of products. The broadcast times were adapted to suit fishing people in accordance with their work schedules and broadcasts were generally announced in advance several

times in order to mobilise the listeners. In Burkina Faso, the programmes focused on good fishing practices and co-management. In Mali, the subject matters included the improvement of livelihoods, sustainable management of fishery resources and co-management, as well as illegal fishing.

The communities and local administrations were involved from the beginning in the planning of programme contents and messages, and in scheduling programmes. Fishermen, women processors and administration officials participated in round-table discussions and public broadcasts. This increased the communication and information flows at several levels and the visibility of the fisheries sector was increased. The radio programmes contributed to enhancing the communities' understanding of the need to protect the fishery resources and fish responsibly. Impact studies carried out by SFLP confirmed, through testimonies from community members, the communities' interest in radio programmes and in participating in their production. A woman processor explained, for example, that "one of the members of our group participated in a radio program and asked processors to follow her example, not to buy small fish and not to buy outside the weighing centres. The radio program got positive reactions from other women" (Holvoet 2007, p 104). Fishers also confirmed that the fact that one of theirs had talked on bad practices and fishing gear, motivated, informed and increased their awareness of the need to protect the resource (Holvoet, 2007). This may sound as a contradiction to what was said above on the influence of anonymity on communities' belief in radio messages but was nevertheless the experience of the Programme. The fact that the knowledge on behalf of radio station staff with regard to fisheries was considerably improved and relationships based on a certain level of complicity between them and the fishing communities were often established, probably influenced this aspect.

The radio programs were also used to inform the communities on microfinance, organizational development and diversification of income generating activities. As a result of hearing the radio programmes, communities in Mali created groups and organizations in order to have access to credit and were undertaking alternative economic activities such as vegetable gardening.

At the level of the institutions and macro-level actors, the impact studies documented the fact that radio programs had had a positive influence on the openness of the administration, at national, regional and local level, to cooperate with the fisheries communities. As stated in Holvoet (2007, p 105) "the radio programs have given a value to fisheries and given more consideration for the profession". Representatives of local socio-professional organizations that had been associated with the programmes and participated in public discussions were listened to and had easier access to representatives of the administration. The participation of fisheries communities in local radio programming made an important contribution to the integration of the communities in mainstream development. The participatory radio programs increased the feeling of ownership of the local development by the fisheries communities (Holvoet, 2007).

## **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION APPROACHES FOR THE FUTURE**

The SFLP operated in a large number of countries and locations, and implemented a complex integrated approach to practical research. The Programme covered a great variety of issues that were all critical for succeeding in addressing sustainable fisheries management in a poverty context. While the Programme was successful in some IC areas, e.g. in applying appropriate approaches at the local level, other aspects were less well covered. Thus, an important lesson at this overall level of development programme planning is that a comprehensive and coherent communication strategy needs to be incorporated from the very beginning of implementation of such an endeavour. The strategy needs to link monitoring with plans for communication

outputs and outcomes, and appropriate human and financial resources need to be included in programme budgets. It would appear particularly important to give thought to the integration of IEC in processes that are expected to lead to changes in PIP (Holvoet, 2007).

Through providing institutional support and implementing participatory communication methods in the field, the Programme was effective in enhancing the IC capacities of community and partner organizations contributing to outcomes at both micro and macro levels. However, the Programme experienced that communication is not always automatic. Many times considerable thought and effort has to go into defining and developing the right IC tools. On the other hand, a situation that appears to be at an impasse can sometimes be turned around with the help of the right approach and support. The main lessons learned from the TfD experience in Congo included the recognition of the importance of creating an environment of trust and complicity in order to allow for an analysis of sensitive issues such as sexual behaviour in the context of HIV/AIDS. The experience showed that by finding and adapting an appropriate communication tool – in this case the TfD – it is possible to overcome possible initial obstacles of distrust and misunderstandings, and engage the community in a local and widely shared problem. As a facilitator in such a process, it is essential to ensure that gender aspects are considered and that all socio-professional groups are included in the exercise, something that may require negotiation and lobbying.

The continuing evolution of ICTs offers an impressive range of possible technical solutions that can be used in development. It is however important to see ICTs as one solution, among possibly many others, and not introduce advanced ICTs indiscriminately. The introduction of new technologies will require training and support and there is a need to ensure that their use is appropriate in the context of equitable development and poverty reduction. The experience in Guinea with community participation in MCS is an example of how ICTs can be used for the benefit of both poverty alleviation and improved fisheries management. The initiative had many important outcomes, including increased social cohesion and community empowerment, and the creation of micro-macro linkages influencing PIP.

The success of the community radios in Burkina Faso and Mali showed how existing communication technologies can be made more effective with IEC support. Interactive programmes with the participation of community members and resource persons fostered new relationships and communication channels. The establishment of partnerships between the radio, specialised organizations and the fisheries communities contributed to this success. Partnerships facilitate the development and dissemination of programs and ensure continuity over time. SFLP contributed to capacity building of the radio stations and their staff and increased their awareness and knowledge of the fisheries sector (Holvoet, 2007).

In conclusion, it would appear that – in spite of the shortcomings of SFLP's overall communication strategy framework – the Programme has been successful in implementing IEC with lasting results visible in the form of reinforced institutional capacities and capabilities. Important experience in using appropriate communication methods in the context of projects addressing difficult issues was also gained. SFLP's interventions have in several cases led to sustainable changes in attitudes, policies and processes for the benefit of fishing communities. While it is not possible to document the magnitude of the impact of the interventions and their immediate results on fishing community livelihoods, it seems beyond doubt that there have been positive effects at the local level and that the attention given to IC aspects has contributed to poverty reduction and responsible fisheries.

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## 9. Responding to HIV and AIDS in fishing communities: case studies from Benin and Congo

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### INTRODUCTION

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to ravage the African continent – as well as many other parts of the world – in spite of medical advances and increased international and local attention to the issue. Globally, an estimated 33.2 million people were living with HIV in 2007. 22.5 million of these live in subSaharan Africa, which is “the most seriously affected region, with AIDS remaining the leading cause of death” (UNAIDS, 2007, p. 4)

Recent studies show that fisheries communities in many developing countries frequently suffer from HIV prevalence rates many times higher than those of the general population. Most studies suggesting high seroprevalence among fishing people refer to fishermen but it is acknowledged that both men and women, working together in related fish catching, processing and trading activities, are vulnerable (Allison and Seeley, 2004; Kissling *et al.*, 2005).

This vulnerability is considered to be related to the way fishing and fish trade activities are carried out and organised. It has been suggested that the particular dynamics of the sector make a number of supposed HIV/AIDS risk factors come together in some fisheries communities. Fishers are largely found to be in the age group of 15 to 35 years, an age group considered to be most vulnerable to HIV infection. Fishers are also often mobile or migratory which may change their sexual behaviour as they are away from more constrained home norms, and fishing is a high-risk occupation which could contribute to an attitude of risk denial. Having multiple sexual partners is sometimes seen as a sign of masculinity and alcohol consumption can be common, factors that also contribute to increased HIV/AIDS vulnerability. Moreover, fisheries communities have in many cases limited access to health services and the necessary prevention, treatment and mitigation measures are often missing or not adequate (Kissling *et al.*, 2005). However, it should be pointed out that these explanations as to why a high-risk subculture exists in some fishing communities are generalisations and that the HIV/AIDS risk factors are “complex and embedded in the economic, social and cultural contexts in which fisherfolk pursue their livelihoods” (Allison and Seeley, 2004, p. 223).

While HIV/AIDS has disastrous effects on economic growth and on the lives and livelihoods of affected people in general, high HIV rates also have particular implications for fisheries management and development. The 2006 report on the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (FAO, 2007) stresses that the issue of HIV and AIDS in fishing communities is not just a public health issue but also a fisheries development and management concern. The predicted impact on fisheries is first at individual household level as it reduces labour, both productive and reproductive and influences the productive capacity of the household. Less fishery income means also less input for investment in other income-generating activities (IGAs), and reduction of access to food. Often the next stage in an AIDS-affected household is the depletion of savings and sale of productive assets, resulting in increased vulnerability and

potentially leading to destitution. At the community and sectoral levels impacts are largely undocumented but when fishers, fish processors and fishery managers become ill it reduces management capacity, productivity and efficiency. Overall impacts point to an increased incidence of poverty and reduced likelihood of sustainable exploitation of resources whereby responsible fishing targets may be compromised (FAO, 2007)

FAO has recently been making efforts to bring agriculture and food security to the centre of the fight against HIV and AIDS. The FAO approved in 2004 a Priority Area for Interdisciplinary Action (PAIA) on AIDS to strengthen the intra and inter agency collaboration in responding to AIDS. In particular through the work of SFLP and its links to the PAIA, FAO has also been addressing HIV/AIDS in fisheries. However, generally, initiatives addressing HIV/AIDS specifically in the fisheries sector have been relatively few and have worked in isolation from national and global support and policies until recently. Moreover, many projects based their interventions on methodologies developed for farming or urban communities. Fortunately, this situation is changing and the need to consider fishing communities in policies and actions is increasingly being recognised by governments, international agencies and NGOs (FAO, 2007). SFLP contributed to this process by its work in West and Central Africa, particularly in Benin and Congo. In Africa, most studies on HIV/AIDS in fishing communities have focused on Lake Victoria where the disease was first discovered (Allison and Seeley, 2004). By applying the sustainable livelihoods approach, SFLP has brought new knowledge about HIV/AIDS in fishing communities in coastal and continental West and Central Africa.

This chapter reviews SFLP's work of identifying and addressing the prevalence of HIV in fishing communities in Benin and Congo. A brief overview of the subregional context in which HIV/AIDS exist is given and some of the main vulnerability factors relevant to fishing communities are pointed out. The chapter thereafter presents the approach applied by SFLP and the important institutional linkages, information dissemination and participatory processes that are important in designing and implementing effective responses to the threat to sustainable livelihoods and responsible fisheries that HIV/AIDS constitutes.

### **HIV/AIDS IN FISHING COMMUNITIES: VULNERABILITY FACTORS**

Fishing communities have been identified as particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, especially in low and middle-income countries where overall HIV seroprevalence rates are high. The links between ill-health and poverty are well known and, as mentioned in the introduction above, a number of factors related to the overall poverty context in fishing communities explain this situation, e.g.:

- HIV and AIDS tend to be highest where medical services are inaccessible. Lack of access to prevention advice and untreated sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can lead to higher transmission rates.
- HIV and AIDS tend to be higher where gender relations are highly unequal and where there are clear gender divisions of labour. This is the context in which 'transactional sex' often takes place.
- Social marginalization, poverty and vulnerability often lead to discounting the future and, among marginalized men, to hypermasculinity. It can also lead to the recourse to drugs and alcohol as means of coping, which – in turn – can lead to higher-risk decisions around unprotected sex and to increased levels of violence, including sexual violence against women.
- Where people face other risks due to poverty, vulnerability or a risky occupation (such as mining, fishing and logging), or when people live in a generally precarious situation (e.g. in a refugee camp or an inner-city gang environment) risks of HIV may be discounted, or risk-confrontation and hypermasculinity may be cultural responses, including having multiple sexual partners.

## BOX 10

**Arguments presented by the SFLP National Coordination Unit (NCU) of Congo to justify the need for a KAP study and integrated HIV/AIDS prevention in its sustainable livelihoods development activities**

“HIV/AIDS acts on the society in the same way it acts on the human organism. The virus destroys the different components of the society that can be organized to push socio-economic development process forward. Fishing communities are no exceptions. Living in areas with high migratory trends, they are particularly vulnerable to the epidemic.

The following factors can explain the particular vulnerability of fishing communities:

- Interactions between mobile populations (traders, both male and female, agents of law and order, workers on mission, transit travellers visiting for family reasons, professional sex workers) and sedentary populations (fishing communities).
- The existence of big markets in the communities along the Congo river, which encourages the movement of people between the two Congos.
- The fact that some fishing communities along the Congo river play host to refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Central African Republic.
- Lack of response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic invasion in the community.

In addition to these factors, there are the insecure living conditions of fishers. The majority of small-scale coastal fishers are foreigners made up of immigrants from West Africa, especially Benin. The latter live in makeshift houses and maintain a promiscuous lifestyle. Inland fishers are mainly indigenes living along the DRC border. In some communities, floods force the fishers to vacate their houses to live in camps.

Small-scale fisheries play an important role in the economy of Congo and in poverty reduction. If this sector were to develop, the development strategies would have to integrate HIV/AIDS control, which is the greatest threat to the health of the stakeholders. HIV/AIDS can cancel out all the efforts aimed at improving the livelihoods of fisheries-dependent populations, and hinder the sustainable development of the sector.”

*Source:* SFLP HIV/AIDS prevention in fishing communities project document (February 2003), quoted in Heidrich, 2004.

- Fishing communities are often mobile and migratory, a lifestyle that may impact on sexual behaviour and contribute to higher risk taking. (Allison and Seeley, 2004; Kissling *et al.*, 2005)

While the above list is a general summary of compromising factors often found in fishing communities, it is not applicable to all fishing communities and local situations are often complex. Nevertheless, in the main areas of SFLP's work in Benin and in Congo several of the explanatory factors appeared to be validated. As an example, the factors justifying the undertaking of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) studies on HIV/AIDS in the Congolese fishing communities are summarized in Box 10.

SFLP found that migration and mobility were particularly important factors contributing to high risk and susceptibility of HIV/AIDS infection in the West and Central African context. For many fishing people in the region, migration is an important livelihood strategy. This is particularly true for fishers although other socio-professional groups also migrate although generally to a lesser extent (see Table 10).

Though the statistics on migration in fisheries often refer to male actors it is known that an important number of female members of households are migrating.

TABLE 10  
Importance of employment and migration in the fisheries sector

Country	Number of fishers and fish workers (direct and indirect employment)	Proportion who are migrants
Benin	600 000 jobs in marine and continental fisheries 15% of active population	47 % of the marine fishers are migrants
Cameroon	200 000 employed of which 24 136 are coastal fishers	83 % of the coastal fishers are migrants (majority from Nigeria)
Congo	59 418 jobs of which 2 335 in marine fisheries (2002) 6.8% of the active population (2002)	44% of the marine fishers are migrants
Gabon	8 202 employed of which 4 298 in marine fisheries	80% of the marine fishers are migrants

Sources: Holvoet, 2006 (Benin), Ngok, Djamen and Jiongo, 2005, and Likeng, 2006 (Cameroon), SFLP, 2005 (Congo), and Mabounda, Ondo Megne and Rerambyath, 2005 (Gabon).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) states in its 2002 fact sheet that women account for 50 percent of migrants and women are increasingly migrating as individuals rather than as dependants of other family members (IOM, 2002). In fisheries it is probably less common that women migrate as individuals but when they do, women are often particularly vulnerable. There are also exceptions; in inland fishing communities surveyed by SFLP in Benin women were found to be very mobile, going to the market in Cotonou as well as to markets in neighbouring countries to sell their fish and pursue business opportunities (Atahouet, 2004). Women may be at risk of unsafe sex due to a culturally defined lack of negotiation power in sex, exposed to transactional sex due to limited access to resources and services and have a weak negotiation position in their professional roles – e.g. as traders or processors when buying fish from fishers – because of prevailing ideas of femininity and masculinity.

One of the common issues linked to migration and mobility is that it puts those left behind in risk situations and those returning had, because of less social control, more risk for HIV infection. The Inter-Agency Group on AIDS stated that mobile populations, including refugees and labour migrants, may be more likely to have unsafe sex due to: “isolation resulting from stigma, discrimination and differences in languages and cultures; separation from regular sexual partners; desire for intimacy, comfort and pleasure in a stressful environment; sense of anonymity; power dynamics in buying or selling sex; and lack of access to health and social services, information and condoms” (IAAG, 2004, pp 3,7).

It is also important to understand that hot spots or places of high prevalence rates are in this way in contact with zones where prevalence rates are low. Migrants from West Africa move to Southern and Central African countries where higher prevalence rates prevail, e.g. in Benin it was found that youths migrating to Gabon, where the estimated prevalence rate for the age group of 15–49 is several times higher than in Benin, returned for the New Year festivities, had increased risk of infection.

SFLP experiences in community surveys have documented the different types of migration and mobility and the need to distinguish the different risks for HIV infection. AIDS prevention, care and treatment in fisheries will thus need to include migrating and the non-migrating members of households with attention to gender issues in sexuality and with regard to the professional roles of men and women in the fishery product value chain.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> A broader overview on migration is presented in Chapter 6.

## SFLP WORK IN BENIN AND CONGO

### Scope and general approach

SFLP's work on HIV/AIDS took place mainly in Benin and Congo. The two countries both host important migrant fisher populations and many actors in the fisheries sector are mobile. The HIV prevalence rate has been estimated at 1.8 percent in Benin and 5.3 percent in Congo (national averages 2005; UNAIDS, 2006).

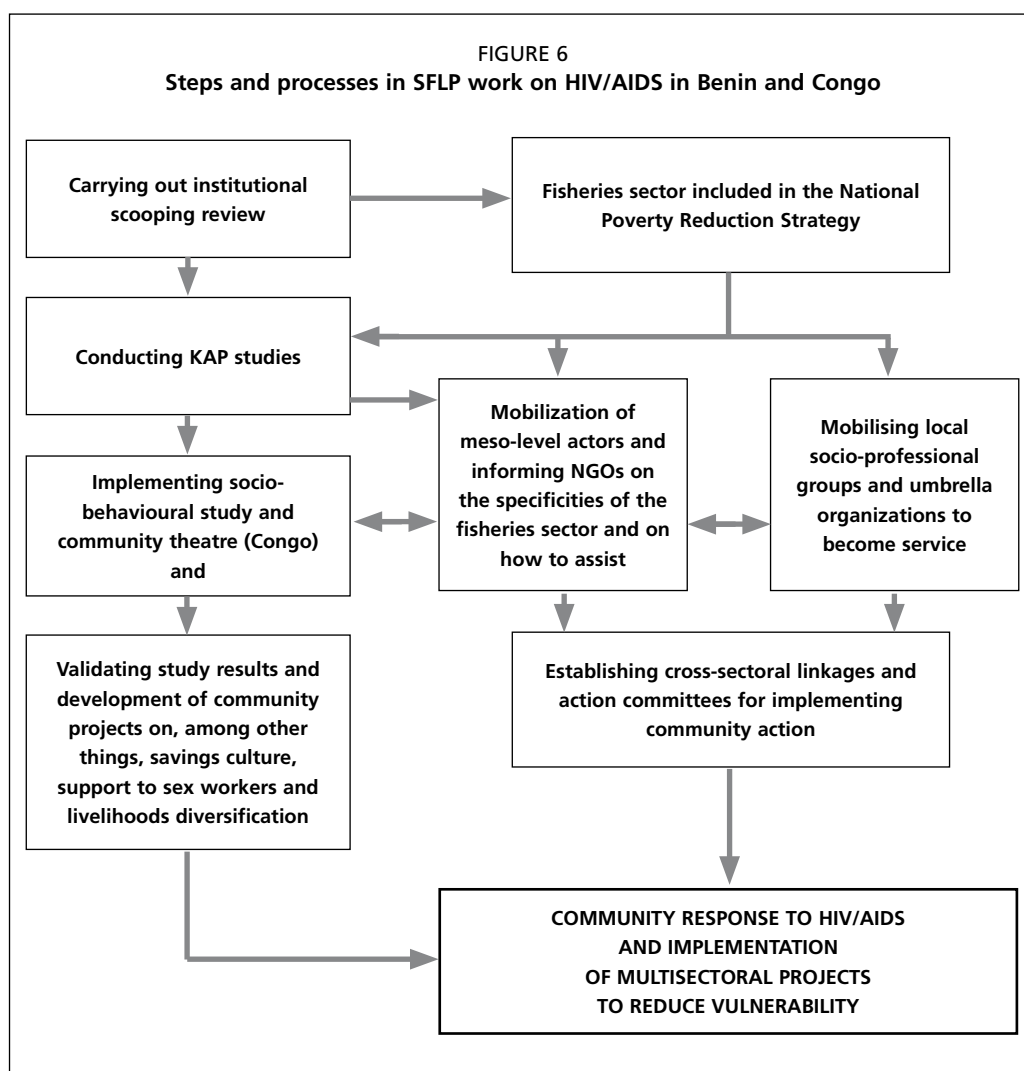
In Benin, four fishing villages initially participated in the Programme's activities, two where lagoon fishing is practiced – Kétonou (Ouémé Department) and So-Zouanko (Atlantique Department) – and two coastal fishing villages; Ayiguinnou (Mono Department) and Hio (Atlantique Department). The total population of these four villages is about 18 000 people. In Congo, the Programme started its interventions in Makotipoko fishing community on the Congo River, and in Bas-Kouilou and Base-Agip (Pointe-Noire) on the Congolese coast. In Makotipoko, there is a large regional fish market visited by thousands of people from Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries of the region. Pointe-Noire is the economic capital of Congo and Base-Agip is the most important fishing community on the Congolese coast with 3 000 inhabitants. In both countries, the number of participating communities increased over time as the Programme expanded its activities in collaboration with its partners (Atahouet, 2004; Heidrich, 2004).

The high degree of migration and mobility of fishing communities in Benin and Congo was a reason for SFLP to select to work in the two countries in selected communities. This situation required particular attention to institutional linkages and active participation of community members and stakeholders. SFLP' approach was based on the following considerations:

- Ownership by local and national partners is required for ensuring long-term support leading to sustainable results. Fisheries departments and relevant stakeholder organizations have to be involved from the start of the process.
- A solid information and knowledge base is needed to inform the process. A first set of data is needed early on for successful lobbying for support and partnerships among lead organizations.
- The process needs to be participatory with communities as active partners. Fisheries specific and locally appropriate responses to HIV/AIDS should be identified together with those most at risk. Vulnerable groups need to be empowered to actively take part in prevention, treatment and care, and mitigation measures.
- Interventions should not only focus on health but be multisectoral aiming at reducing vulnerability factors of those most at risk.

The main steps and components of the work carried out by the Programme to help establish a community response to HIV/AIDS are schematically depicted Figure 6 and can be summarized as follows:

- Brief scooping review of current situation and institutional set-up.
- Discussions with macro-level partners to ensure support.
- Carrying out of base line surveys (KAP studies).
- Mobilisation of meso-level actors to engage with fishing communities.
- Engaging with community based umbrella socio-professional organizations to take an active part in activity planning and implementation.
- Awareness raising on the specificities of the fisheries sector and training in PRA/SLA techniques for NGOs.
- Conduct of participatory diagnostic survey and triangulation meetings (*Benin*) and socio-behavioural study through Theatre-for-development (TfD) (*Congo*).
- Validation of study results and elaboration of community action plans.
- Establishment of cross-sectoral linkages and mechanisms for implementing community action plans.



Source: Adopted from Holvoet, 2006.

The process followed by the Programme in the two countries of intervention was somewhat different. The flow of information between the micro- and macro-levels was limited at the beginning of the activities in Benin but were strengthened over time with the help of an information and communication strategy. TfD was a major component of the participatory process in Congo while triangulation was used for the formulation of community action plans in Benin.

These key cross-cutting components of the process, i.e. institutional linkages and information, and participation and communication – through triangulation in Benin and TfD in Congo – are described in further detail below.

### Developing institutional linkages and the importance of information

At the inception phase of its work on HIV/AIDS in the region, SFLP undertook a brief institutional analysis in Benin, Congo and Cameroon<sup>31</sup> and found a general lack of visibility of the fisheries sector in national development policies and strategies. Together with other apparent institutional blockages, this was found to be a possible explanation as to why fishing communities were not specifically targeted for HIV/AIDS

<sup>31</sup> As mentioned above, SFLP decided subsequently to focus its work on Congo and Benin because of the important migration traditions between the two countries. Certain activities were however carried out by SFLP and its partners in Cameroon and Nigeria but will not be further described in this chapter.

TABLE 11

**Summary of main findings of the KAP studies conducted in Benin and Congo**

	Benin KAP study	Congo KAP study
Use of condoms	9% of respondents stated to always use condom. 37% do not use condom. 12% sometimes use condom. 1% use condom if asked by partner. 41% gave no answer.	Base-Agip: 61% of respondents stated to always use condom 36% do not use condom. 3% gave no answer Makotipoko: 52% always use condom. 40% do not use condom. 8% gave no answer.
Multiple partners	49% of respondents stated to agree with the habit of having multiple partners. 51% did not agree.	38% of respondents stated to agree with the habit of having multiple partners 62% did not agree.
Sex with professional sex workers	20% of respondents stated to have had sex with professional sex workers. 63% had never had sex with a sex worker. 17% gave no answer.	44% of respondents stated to have had sex with professional sex workers. 56% gave no answer.

Sources: Atahouet, 2005 (Benin); Mboussou, 2003 (Congo)

interventions and the fisheries sector not included in national HIV/AIDS responses. The SFLP interventions in Benin and Congo hence started with consultations at macro level. This involved key stakeholders such as the National AIDS Control Council (*Conseil national de la lutte contre la Sida – CNLS*) in Congo, the Global Fund, UNAIDS, and representatives of projects such as the World Bank financed Multisector HIV/AIDS Project (MSP) and the subregional Congo, Oubangui and Chari River Basin Initiative (World Bank funded interagency collaboration). The aim of these meetings was to create partnerships and to obtain commitment to the fisheries sector in order to ensure the longer-term continuation of HIV/AIDS prevention and control actions and funding for follow-up activities based on the SFLP work and base line studies.

Having obtained initial commitments for the process at the macro level, community mobilisation and KAP studies were carried out to assess the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices within the participating communities with regard to HIV/AIDS. In Benin, the study was carried out in partnership with the MSP and in Congo in close collaboration with the CNLS. The studies showed that while most fishing communities had heard about HIV/AIDS and had some knowledge of how the disease spreads, the awareness was generally far from sufficient to impact on their lifestyle and sexual practices (Atahouet, 2004). A brief overview of the results of the KAP studies is given in Table 11.

All the researchers involved in the KAP studies agreed that urgent action was needed to address HIV/AIDS in fishing communities and to ensure the integration of fisheries in national HIV/AIDS responses. After having presented and discussed the results of the KAP studies with key stakeholders, diagnostic surveys and participatory action planning were embarked upon in the Programme intervention sites (see also the sections on triangulation in Benin and Tfd in Congo below). These activities were implemented in close collaboration with the SFLP partners, MSP in Benin and CNLS in Congo, and NGOs and socio-professional organizations selected in consultation with the macro level partners. In the case of Congo, the fisheries umbrella organizations had been involved from the beginning and became a direct partner of the CNLS in the continuation of the work. The participating NGOs and organizations were trained in



analysis of vulnerability and policies, institutions and processes (PIP). They were also sensitised with regard to the fisheries specific HIV/AIDS context.

Communication activities were also conducted to inform a larger number of actors on the findings of the SFLP studies. The outcome of the surveys resulted in the publication of a training manual on planning HIV/AIDS control initiatives in fisheries communities. The production of this training manual was part of an information, education and communication (IEC) strategy on HIV/AIDS that the fisheries department in Benin developed. Compared to existing diagnostic material used by NGOs working with HIV/AIDS response in Benin, the new SFLP supported training material added migration, mobility and marketing analysis and profiling tools to better capture the risk situations relevant to fishing communities. The framework for formulation of community action plans also included tools for ranking risks and vulnerability factors according to subgroups within fisheries with special consideration given to gender issues and the roles of young girls, boys and widows. The English version of this manual has been tested by consultants in Malawi and its use was planned in Kenya, Cameroon and Nigeria at the time of the completion of the Programme.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, advocacy materials were prepared in collaboration with PAIA members in FAO headquarters and then used to mobilize national level HIV/AIDS response agency support to the fisheries sector in other partner countries as well, notably in Gabon, Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea.<sup>33</sup>

The activities conducted under the SFLP were focused on building and strengthening micro, meso and macro linkages. This helped to pave the way for SFLP and its partners to access and secure funding for HIV/AIDS control activities in other communities as well. In Congo the HIV/AIDS control initiatives was initially initiated in only three fishing communities, but soon it was implemented in 30 other fishing communities when funding increased. In Benin, seven additional community action plans were funded and four NGOs begun to provide support to fisheries communities, where initially no such cohesion had existed.

In Congo, it was observed that the response of the CNLS to HIV/AIDS control initiatives was prompt and largely based on the results of the KAP studies and the socio behavioural studies. This partnership and engagement at the macro level was a key to the success of the interventions. While SFLP steered the processes, admittedly it was the key players such as CNLS that influenced the outcome of the lobbying in favour of the fisheries sector. The explanations as to why CNLS could act so quickly on the needs of the fisheries sector include:

- CNLS has in each of the thirteen ministries an AIDS control unit with a clearly defined position in the ministry and budgetary allocation.
- CNLS is decentralised and at the departmental level, the councils are empowered to organise participatory planning exercises
- Special importance has been placed by CNLS on supporting community response activities and 40 percent of its funds are earmarked for this type of interventions. (Mbousou, 2004a).

At the meso level, it was observed that the main challenges were to motivate actors to move away from standard procedures and not to apply planning as it was undertaken in other rural-non fisheries communities. The answer to this was the use of triangulation and communication approaches.

### **Triangulation intervention through community meeting approach in Benin**

In Benin, the follow-up activities after the KAP study involved the triangulation process. Triangulation sessions are technical meetings where results of fieldwork is presented,

<sup>32</sup> The document Planning Guide Fisheries and HIV/AIDS is available at [www.sflp.org/fr/007/sida/guide\\_sida.htm](http://www.sflp.org/fr/007/sida/guide_sida.htm) (French version only).

<sup>33</sup> See national reports of the SFLP Pilot Projects available at [www.sflp.org](http://www.sflp.org).

discussed and analysed from different angles. This methodology was used in Benin for the development of community action plans. The process involved various actors from the fisheries department, civil society, fisheries umbrella organizations, health sector officers and, depending on the context, also leaders from the co-management committee and managers of microfinance institutions (MFIs).

The community action plans developed were largely made up of responses to risk situations that had been identified during the diagnostic survey, i.e. the KAP study. Examples of prevention, control, care and treatment activities include:

- sensitization activities for different subgroups of the communities on different themes specific to the fisheries sector;
- analysis and reflection meetings with regard to the existing relationships between high risk groups and what the best responses would be;
- special sensitization activities during festive periods;
- seasonal awareness raising for immigrants and emigrants;
- first aid training on how to treat wounds during fishing or fish-processing activities and education on the risks of HIV/AIDS contamination during fishing activities;
- training of peer educators on HIV/AIDS themes specific to the fisheries sector;
- social marketing of condoms and installation of new selling points;
- organization of voluntary testing followed by counseling; and
- organization of assistance from specialized centres for care and “community micro funds” to assist in access to treatment;

(APHEDD, 2005; Global Alternative, 2005; OCSSED, 2005)

The community action plans were then implemented by a village steering committee, comprising women and men from different socio economic and socio-professional groups and including youths. The committee also included resource persons, e.g. a local fisheries officer, a health officer from the local health centre and the village head. SFLP's partner NGOs played a central role in training and empowering committee members to manage their financial operation by maintaining petty cash book, bank book, activity monitoring book and minutes' book.

The community action plans led to some positive outcomes, mainly (i) a higher knowledge level of all socio professional groups on STDs, HIV and AIDS and increased awareness on risks and how to respond; (ii) the availability of peer educators to all socio professional groups; (iii) the increased sales of condoms and higher number of selling points, (iv) an important number of voluntary testing and (v) access to care and treatment and to the community fund for those who tested positive.

At the national level there was increased awareness of the problems faced by the fishing communities and the need for a multisectoral response taking into account the vulnerability factors of the sector and its actors.

### **Communication intervention through Theatre-for-development (TfD) approach in Congo**

In Base-Agip, Congo, TfD was used as a main tool of communication, both at the community level and to pass messages on from the community to meso and macro stakeholders. The theatre was a way of making sure that all socio-professional groups could be active participants in the research and planning. It was also viewed as an important communication medium to facilitate data collection and to create an environment that permitted community members to share their knowledge and experience with the researchers. TfD was also a means of achieving ownership of the results by the community and the basis for planning actions for community response.

The subject of the first and main TfD exercise in Base-Agip was a socio-behavioural study, carried out in 2004, that aimed at understanding the typology and organizational structure surrounding prostitution. This information was deemed a prerequisite by the

CNLS and the fisheries department to formulating any conclusive action that could reduce the vulnerability of HIV infection among community members. The study concerned the community as a whole because it involved all levels of stakeholders, including professional sex workers, occasional prostitutes, their customers, other members of the community, as well as representatives of the administration. The community drama acted out scenes depicting the results of each stage of the study as it progressed. The theatre was also presented to surrounding communities and improved in brainstorming sessions the awareness on the dynamics of prostitution, HIV/AIDS, the community's risk factors, and strategies for addressing it.<sup>34</sup>

The socio-behavioural study helped identifying a typology of women providing professional sex<sup>35</sup> services in Base-Agip: (i) sex workers who live in Base-Agip and receive customers at home, (ii) the free girls called "brothels" living in Base-Agip, (iii) the young girls of Base-Agip who are "living like white people"; and (iv) mobile prostitutes working, but not living in Base-Agip. Each of the groups has different characteristics in terms of degree of risk taken, motive for their activity and their type of clients. A summary is presented in Table 12.

The different types of sex workers exhibit different patterns with regard to how they move between the town, Pointe Noire, and the harbour in Base-Agip and also how they link different risk situations with different type of clients of different socio economic status. The rich and poor clients from within the fishing community and outside the wealthier "petrol sector employees and wealthy Congolese living in town" but also poorer groups in town, are linked. Hot spots in the harbour are linked with hot spots in town. The socio-behavioural study also revealed that the risk may vary according to the season for different socio-professional groups but all categories are at risk: boat-owners, crew, fishmongers and processors (Mbousou, 2004b). Box 11 presents some examples of situations in which transactional sex was found to take place.

Based on the improved knowledge of local conditions and structure of the professional sex worker sector, CNLS could intensify its interventions in the harbour and fund projects specifically addressing the risk situations and needs of professional sex workers and female fishmongers. The CNLS manual for training peer educators was revised and included specific risk situations for each socio-professional group and for the different groups of sex workers.

In addition to providing valuable inputs for HIV/AIDS control action plans, the socio-behavioural study also gave recommendations with regard to how to address vulnerability among high-risk groups. An SFLP study on the impact at household level of HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses that was undertaken in this context showed how the increased burden of both direct and indirect cost for care can lead to destitution of households' productive assets. The study documented how even relatively well-off families, having average monthly incomes of FCFA 300 000<sup>36</sup> and owning gear, boat and motor, could end up without productive assets as a immediate effect of costs for treatments. Loss of income due to illness and treatment costs obviously increases the vulnerability of households requiring support for finding sustainable coping mechanisms (Mbousou and CLNS, 2006).

In 2006, SFLP supported livelihoods diversification for highly vulnerable households. SFLP worked with the CNLS and specialised NGOs to mobilise communities to take responsibility for a participatory analysis of vulnerability and to assist in diversifying livelihoods. A multisectoral support group were created including the participation of the local HIV/AIDS action committee, NGOs and representatives from the agriculture extension services, a MFI, the community health service and the fisheries department.

<sup>34</sup> Chapter 8 gives a more detailed description of the Tfd process in Base-Agip.

<sup>35</sup> Professional sex work is defined as women who provide sex services in exchange of money.

<sup>36</sup> FCFA 300 000 = US\$600 (2006).

TABLE 12

**Typology of women providing professional sex in Base-Agip, Congo**

Category	Risks taken	Type of clients	Motive
Sex workers receiving customers at home and living in Base-Agip. Often fish processors.	Condoms available but can agree to unsafe sex with regular partners	Two or three regular partners, generally among boat owners and fishers.	Guaranteeing access to fish. Can offer services on credit and partners sometimes pay with fish they bring.
Free girls called 'brothels' <sup>1</sup> . Often young (under 30) single mothers and who not consider themselves prostitutes.	Tend not to use condoms.	Very different types and can be introduced into the night clubs and bars in Pointe Noire by their friends	Offer their sexual services for survival.
Young girls "living like white people".	Usually practise safe sex but in a few cases do have unprotected sex with partners who pay more.	Hang around night clubs and bars in Pointe Noire and offer services at higher prices to non-locals. May keep a partner within the fishing community to keep up the façade.	Attracted by the living standards of some groups (and "white people") in Pointe-Noire.
Mobile sex workers in Base-Agip	Practice both safe and unprotected sex	Customers in Base-Agip especially during the good fishing season  Work in mini hotels in Pointe Noire	Income generation.

Source: Mboussou, 2004b.

With the support of SFLP and sometimes in partnership with specialised NGOs, MFIs supported livelihoods diversification of highly vulnerable groups.

With regard to TfD as a communication tool and a means for community mobilisation, there were several notable outcomes from the theatre intervention in Base-Agip:

- A fishing community was mobilized to face the challenges posed by prostitution and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in their community;
- A community drama group was established either to dramatize other problems that could endanger the community, or to become a lobby group that can draw the attention of decision-makers to the aspirations of the community;
- The representatives of local policy-making bodies and institutions were informed and sensitized on the characteristics of prostitution in the fishing communities of Base-Agip and in Pointe Noire;
- The repertoire of the community response of CNLS and the SFLP was enriched with regard to how to conduct an awareness-raising survey (the role of TfD, the relationship between researchers and their respondents, the role of dialogue, etc.);
- Many radio and television programmes and press releases were produced on the problem of prostitution and HIV/AIDS in the fishing community;
- The community reached a new point of departure in its search for alternatives, especially through livelihoods diversification and a gender-sensitive micro-finance system.
- (Heidrich, 2004)

### **FUTURE PREVENTION, CARE, TREATMENT AND MITIGATION**

The SFLP experience showed the importance of working through partnerships and engaging both lead organizations at the national level and communities in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The pandemic is not only a local issue but a regional one because of the mobility and migration of people. Fishing communities are especially at risk

## BOX 11

**Testimonies on “Transactional sex and professional sex services”  
in Base-Agip (Congo)**

**Boat-owners’ vulnerability results from their privileged access to the resource:** during the “bad fishing” seasons, fish becomes very scarce and demand becomes higher than supply. Boat-owners favour some special customers over others in the supply of fish. These are either their wives or their mistresses.

*“... I am in charge of collecting money for my master. Sometimes, when I get to a woman who has bought fish, she may say that she has already paid my master. What that means is that, you know... If you try to get too many details about the transaction, your master may threaten to sack you ...”* (O., 36-year-old fisherman).

**Fishers or crew** are in contrast to the boat-owners, under greater risk during “good fishing seasons”. The fishermen are very much aware of the fact that the women exchanging sex with them, meet several of them, but very few protect themselves. *“... When we share out our money after a fishing expedition, I sometimes make 30 000 francs in one day. I give my family 10 000 francs and I pocket the rest of the money for enjoying myself. After drinking, I check out one or two “brothels” before going back home...”* (L., 28-year-old fisherman).

Sex workers and fishermen can also meet on the beach: Some fishermen fall into the trap of “brothels” at the beach. *“...some women here organize themselves to create problems for fishermen ... After sex, the woman will ask for 50 000 or 200 000 francs. The next thing, you will see the police and that means we have to give them the amount they ask for. The two obviously share the loot later ...”* (R., 38-year-old fisherman).

**Women fish processors** have their own peculiar problems with the sale of fish. To earn more, some sell their fish on credit to some credible business enterprises in Pointe-Noire. *“... When you sell on credit to some of these enterprises, you make a lot of profit; but you need someone to introduce you”* (O., 29 year old salted-fish seller). These women therefore look for partners in the enterprises to facilitate the sale of their fish.

**Some groups of fishmongers** have relations outside the sector as some women go to sell their fish along the railway line. To avoid trouble during the trip, they look for a military man to protect them so they can travel without paying for the journey and to ensure protection for their goods. *“... you cannot survive in that business if you have no military friend on the railway ...”* (A., 37-year-old fish smoker).

in this respect and fisheries departments need to be proactive and collect the base line information necessary to lobby for support from lead organizations and for the inclusion of fishing communities in national response actions. However, the base line information has to be complemented with specific larger scale studies in order to enable the sector to move beyond anecdotal arguments of high prevalence rates in the fisheries sector. The SFLP was successful in creating increased awareness and attention to HIV/AIDS in fishing communities by establishing the necessary institutional linkages and provide data. With the support of the Programme, HIV/AIDS in fishing communities has been increasingly mainstreamed into national responses and plans in the countries of the region and the particular risk situation of the fisheries sector was also given attention at the global level.

In the communities in Benin and Congo where SFLP’s interventions took place, the Programme documented the different forms of and reasons for transactional sex and how ‘hot spots’ can be linked through professional sex workers moving between town and fisheries landing sites. An in-depth understanding of the broader risk and vulnerability environment of the fisheries communities is important for planning

adequate control and mitigation actions. SFLP experienced how important cross-sectoral partnerships are. The response needed to control HIV/AIDS in fisheries requires joint efforts by different sectors and not exclusively the health sector.

Through its communication and triangulation intervention, SFLP gained valuable experience and disseminated 'good practices', e.g. the importance of ownership by national and local actors, and how partnerships with NGOs can allow for experience sharing and increased awareness of the particular characteristics of the fisheries sector. These characteristics have to be taken into account in diagnostic surveys and be reflected in response planning processes. In order to make the interventions sustainable SFLP emphasized the need to empower and strengthen the capacity of organizations and associations. Building on the base line information collected through the KAP studies, both TfD and triangulation proved to be effective means for mobilizing community members in participatory action planning processes. TfD was a particularly powerful tool for involving important numbers of actors, including women and vulnerable groups, and for making it possible to discuss sensitive issues such as HIV.

However, the Programme did also face some constraints in its work e.g. (i) there tended to be an element of 'elite capture' at the higher levels of committees and some socio-professional groups were not represented in the processes, (ii) the participation of women was sometimes low, even where quota allocations were in place (in Benin there is a required 33 percent female participation in HIV/AIDS committees); (iii) the existing stigmatization resulted in difficulties to reach families affected by HIV/AIDS, (iv) the capacity of voluntary testing, care and treatment centers was insufficient, and (v) prevailing taboos made it difficult to address gender issues in sexuality.

Major challenges remain with regard to mobilising national responses to gender issues with regard to HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector. Increased integration of gender and HIV/AIDS concerns in the fishery strategies and development plans are needed. To enable and enhance this process there should be training available for the fisheries departments and monitoring of gender and HIV/AIDS issues in fisheries communities should become a priority.

There are also other areas for which further interventions are needed and that were not covered by the Programme. SFLP did not, for example, address the vulnerability situation of individual members of households having suffered from HIV/AIDS related death, such as orphaned children or widows. However, there is need for specific attention and intervention in these situations in the fisheries environment. Young children are often involved in fisheries activities but at the death of a parent due to AIDS, they may risk no longer having access to fishing equipment and hence not be able to pursue their livelihood activity. This could lead to the adoption of alternative coping strategies, including transactional sex.

It is essential that future HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment interventions include aspects of a regional coordination and response to mobility and migration. SFLP contributed to the formulation of a regional HIV/AIDS project. The project is a result of perceived needs for actions on HIV and AIDS in fisheries. Lessons learned from the SFLP interventions and from southern African countries, as well as collaboration with regional economic organizations and subregional projects have been integrated in the new project document. This regional HIV/AIDS project aims at improving the knowledge base of HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector; its dynamics in the sector and the possible response and investment strategies that could best contribute to effective mitigation of impacts of HIV and AIDS in fishing communities. The project will also study how fisheries could make a contribution to the fight against the pandemic as provider of fish products and securing the production. It is hoped that this project will bring hope to West and Central African fishing communities that are currently victims of the HIV/AIDS threat.

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# 10. Mainstreaming gender in fisheries

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of gender – dealing with the socially, culturally and economically determined roles and relationships between men and women – is not a new idea in fisheries. It was first being introduced in the late 1980s and early 1990s until which time Women in Development (WID) activities had been the main approach for achieving more effective development. Realising that integrating women in the development process was not sufficient, a shift took place to tackling the issue of power relationships and the inequity in treatment between men and women. The gender approach recognises the different concerns of men and women in order to achieve equitable and sustainable development. Today, most large development institutions have recognised the need for gender considerations, and gender policies and strategies are commonplace. The promotion of gender equality is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals agreed on in 2000 for eliminating world poverty.<sup>37</sup> However, there is still some ambiguity as to what exactly gender means and much remains to be done when it comes to practical application (Bennett et al., 2004; FAO, 2006).

Until recently, gender analysis in fishing communities focused mainly on men's and women's different occupational roles, i.e. that men are usually fishing and women are to a large extent involved in post-harvest and marketing activities. While the role of women in the management and utilization of natural resources is generally acknowledged, it does not carry the same weight as that of men. Given that production goals have tended to be the focus of research and policy, the predominately male catching sector has remained the centre of attention (Bennett et al., 2004). However, with the shift to a multidimensional and more holistic definition of poverty and the increased focus on reducing vulnerability, gender has become more central to fisheries policy and development practice. A more in-depth analysis often reveals a more complex picture with multifaceted relationships between both men and women as boat owners, processors and sellers, as well as family members, community members and co-workers. Fisheries resource management must be linked to all levels of the capture, resource management and fish value chain in which both men and women have important roles to play. It is hence important to look beyond women as processors and men as fishermen.

Gender mainstreaming has been the main approach for addressing gender concerns in global development since 1995. The concept is defined by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated” (ECOSOC, 1997). However, some of the initial supporters of gender mainstreaming would argue that the approach has not been successful and that it is

<sup>37</sup> Goal No 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

at critical cross-roads at the moment. This may be because implementation so far has mainly focused on the institutional level, e.g. staffing and training of staff, policies and indicators, and more attention could be needed at the operational field level to make it happen (Mehra and Gupta, 2006).

The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) constitutes a valuable framework for analysing gender relations in fishing communities. While the SFLP did not prioritise gender analysis *per se* at the beginning of its activities, the Programme developed approaches and methodologies for gender over time and these were included as an integral element in the field programme. After a brief overview of the gender concept in fisheries, this chapter presents the SFLP gender analysis tool and mainstreaming approach and reports on the Programme's findings and achievements. The importance of taking a holistic and participatory approach and to work simultaneously at the community, meso and national levels proved essential for ensuring sustainable and equitable results.

## GENDER IN FISHERIES

In terms of gender, the most common picture portrayed in fisheries is one of women and men playing distinct roles with men fishing and women being involved in processing and marketing of the fish. This is largely true as a generalisation of professional roles. However, the picture becomes much more complex when the relationships between women and men are approached in detail, in different countries and in differing cultural contexts. In some countries, like Benin, Cambodia, Congo, Mali, and Thailand, women fish or collect fish on the lake in their own boats. In other countries, e.g. Uganda, it may even be a taboo for women to be on board a fishing vessel but they can own boats and hire men as crew. However, these women are generally few in numbers due to a lack of access to credit and the more established tradition of male ownership of boats. On the other hand, the majority of men work as crew; few men have access to enough funds to purchase their own boats (Allison, 2003).

Women are often responsible for ensuring the availability of working capital for fish processing and they are not expected to run out of working capital. Moreover, in the small body of social science literature that started to appear in the 1980s looking at the more intricate nature of male and female roles, women are described as providing key links in capital accumulation for reinvestment in fishing, such as in new boats and nets (Okali, 2006).

Still, in many natural resource based livelihoods, women tend to have a subordinate role even when they participate directly in production and other income generating activities. The most detailed information relating to the livelihoods of women and men in the fisheries sector is available for communities in developing countries that practice aquaculture. While all the literature points to the important roles played by women in aquaculture, virtually all also raise the same kinds of issues as are raised in other natural resources literature: women benefit little, if at all, in terms of remuneration, resource control, status and decision-making. Women's aquaculture tasks are widely reported to be especially convenient as they fit closely with their reproductive roles (Kusakabe and Kelkar, 2001). For this reason, and because they are undertaken by women, these tasks are often viewed as requiring little skill. In addition, the women involved are reportedly ignored by extension services and have minimal access to training and new technologies. It is only recently that questions such as "What role has aquaculture and fisheries development interventions to play in increasing women's capabilities, empowerment and social advancement?" are being asked (Brugère *et al.*, 2001; SFLP, 2003).

## SFLP GENDER STRATEGY: ANALYSIS TOOL AND MAINSTREAMING

As its pathway to supporting necessary changes for achieving gender equity, SFLP adopted a gender mainstreaming approach similar to FAO's gender strategy (see FAO,

2002). This approach, which was developed in parallel with the SFLP field programme, addressed gender concerns in a broad context by strengthening social capital and contributing to social cohesion. It took into account the process-based and strategic opportunity approach suggested by Mehra and Gupta (2006) who argued that by producing tangible and motivating results at the operational level, a gradual move of gender concerns to the bigger goals of cultural and social change and empowerment and equality can be achieved.

At first, a gender analysis tool was developed. The approach combined a gender analytical framework<sup>38</sup> with a livelihoods analysis, allowing an understanding of gender relation dynamics and the institutional context, and facilitating the negotiation for change in social, political and economic relationships between men and women as well as between youth and elder. The gender analysis process involved communities and community-based organizations (CBOs) and consisted of nine main steps (see SFLP Gender Training Manual):<sup>39</sup>

1. Negotiate and design partnerships with the community.
2. Collect data for gender profiles at household, community organization, value chain, and policies, institutions and processes (PIP) levels.
3. Analyse data, prepare gender profiles and visualise gender inequalities.
4. Validate the profiles and identify changes the community will engage in.
5. Elaborate a community gender strategy.
6. Prepare action plans for each of the CBOs.
7. Facilitate the development of a consolidated plan for organizational capacity building.
8. Prepare a consolidated community project.
9. Assess the project and start implementation.

Partnerships with community-based and meso level actors were an important part of the process. Questions related to inequalities between men and women are often sensitive issues in communities and an open discussion from the beginning, involving different groups of both men and women, is a necessary approach to gain acceptance. It was also found fundamental to negotiate partnerships with communities and meso-level actors and to instigate ownership of the process with CBOs and partner organizations.

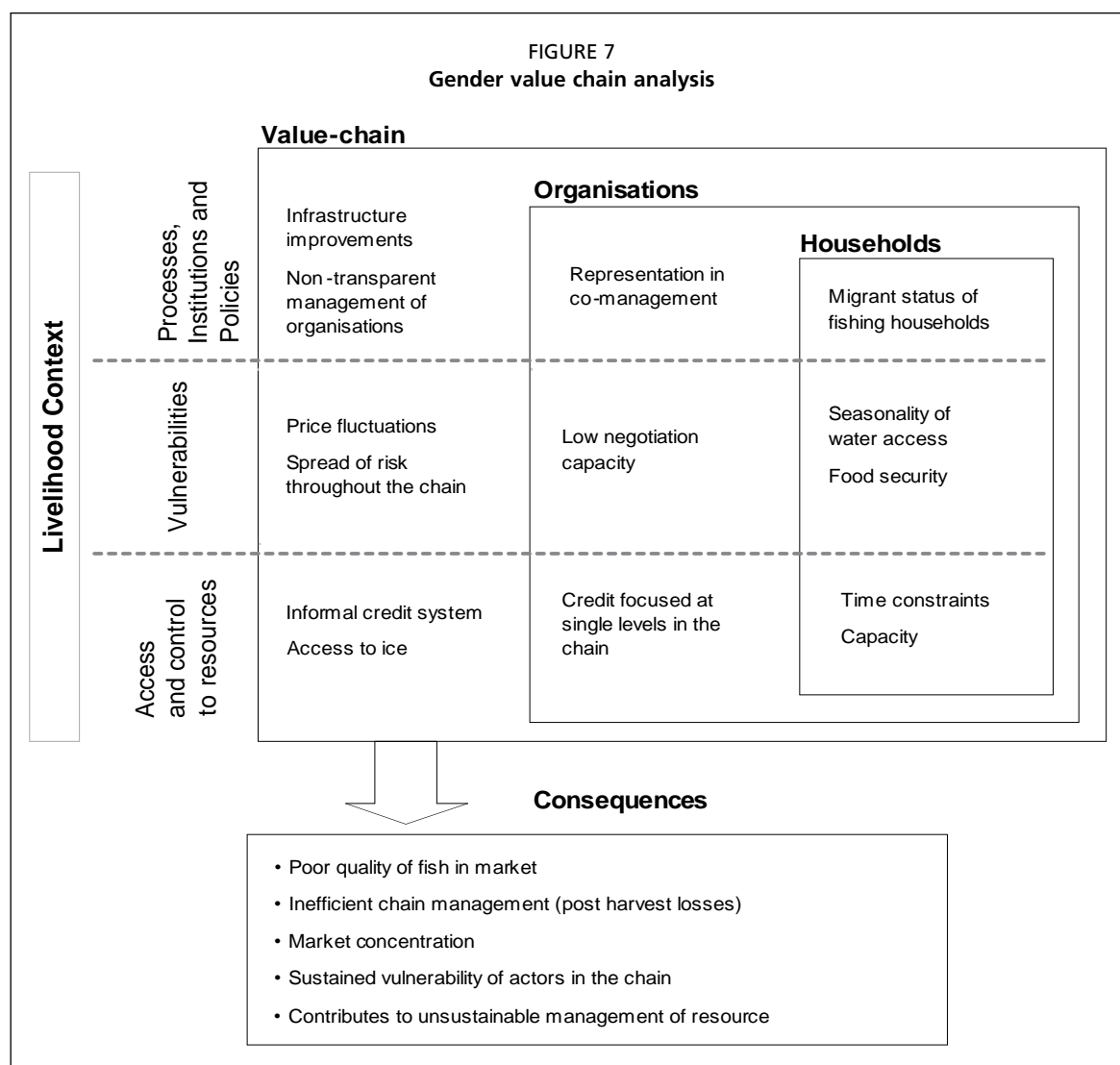
An important part of the tool was the value chain analysis where gender roles and relationships between male and female actors of different socio-professional groups were analysed. These roles and relationships were also looked at in the light of a changing environment, e.g. the globalization of fish markets. Institutions and policies, vulnerability factors and profiles with regard to access and control influence different actors' possibilities to change and adapt to external influences. Changes within the value chain will impact on organizations and households and the development will have implications for both women and men along the whole value chain, their livelihoods and ultimately the sustainability of the fishery resources. Some key aspects include:

- Infrastructure improvements are likely to be an advantage for male actors since they have easier access to ice and cold stores.
- Price fluctuations are impacting more on female actors (e.g. the paddle canoe collectors who are mainly women) as well as on poorer male actors.
- The risk at the wholesale level is often transferred to the level of fishers or female fish mongers who have less control over transport and have less capital.
- In informal credit systems and with regard to access to ice, women are often in disadvantaged position.

(Tindall and Holvoet, 2008).

<sup>38</sup> E.g. the Harvard Analytical Framework (HAF) and Moser Framework (Smith, March and Mukhopadhyay, 1998)

<sup>39</sup> KIT I, available at [www.sflp.org/fr/007/kit\\_genre/kitformation.htm](http://www.sflp.org/fr/007/kit_genre/kitformation.htm) (French version) and [www.sflp.org/eng/007/gender\\_approach/trainingtools.html](http://www.sflp.org/eng/007/gender_approach/trainingtools.html) (English version) (SFLP, 2003).



Source: Tindall and Holvoet, 2008.

The gender profiles would include information at different levels, starting with the community and community-based organizations (male, female and mixed), and households. Special consideration was given to vulnerability factors (trends with regard to the abundance of natural resources, population growth, seasonality patterns and external shocks) and the local situation would be analysed in larger a framework – in a sectoral, or national or subregional context – and paying particular attention to PIPs.

The gender profiles formed the basis, together with a process of feedback sessions, for the formulation of community gender strategies and CBO gender action plans. The action plans addressed both practical and strategic needs of men and women.

Secondly, incorporating the gender analysis in the gender mainstreaming process, SFLP promoted **horizontal and vertical gender mainstreaming**.<sup>40</sup> In practice, this meant that facilitators and gender specialists were active at the meso and the macro levels providing technical advice and guiding the social dialogue at the same time as project teams and their partners were accompanied in a “hands on” approach at the meso and local field level.

<sup>40</sup> See also Gender Guidelines KIT II available at [www.sflp.org/fr/guide\\_genre2/index.html](http://www.sflp.org/fr/guide_genre2/index.html) (Holvoet, Gnimadi and Tindall, 2007).

The vertical mainstreaming included a two-direction process: bottom-up and top-down. The “bottom-up” process started at the micro level (the community), where mainly social dialogue, communication initiatives and peer pressure (e.g. collective action) were used to mobilise support from communities and meso level actors (organizations working with the community). Practical changes were created through the implementation of community based action plans. These results were then, with the support from partners at the meso level, used to inform and influence stakeholders at the macro level (national policy). The “top-down” process started at the macro level and oriented and influenced changes at the micro and meso levels. This process, which requires consolidated gender profiles that were representative for different fisheries, was only implemented by SFLP in Benin and Mali. In Benin, SFLP used the shrimp marketing chain as an entry point for making a gender profile. Based on this profile, the need for improved quality control, training and monitoring in different parts of the value chain could be analysed and mainstreamed from a gender perspective.

SFLP experience suggested that it was best to handle the two processes, bottom-up and top-down, simultaneously and that the interaction between micro, meso and macro actors led to integration of gender in policies and institutions. Interventions were needed at the macro level to ensure political support for those changes initiated at micro level that required changes in institutions and regulations. It was important that experience and learning from the micro and meso level informed decision makers at the macro level. Figure 8 shows the different interactions between micro, meso and macro levels in vertical gender mainstreaming process.

*Horizontal mainstreaming* refers to the integration of gender in each phase of the project cycle at all levels (micro, meso and macro). Horizontal mainstreaming reflects and incorporates the need for interventions to be cross-sectoral.

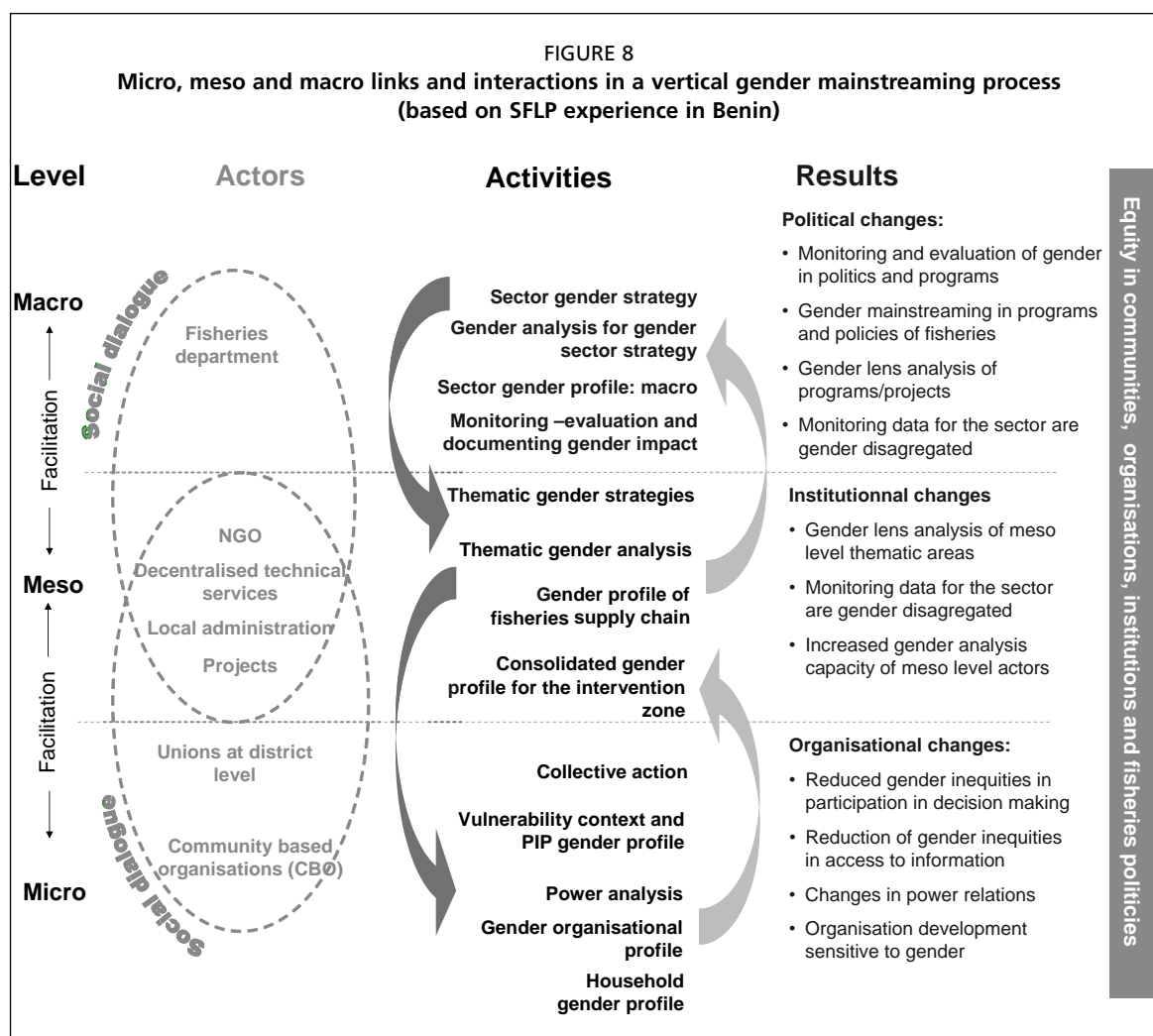
SFLP used a gender sensitive organizational development (OD) process to assist communities in creating a community development “vision” that incorporated gender. The process resulted in the implementation of collective actions and negotiations for social and political changes that included a gender perspective. Error! Reference source not found. illustrates how gender and OD were combined in the approach: the gender process at the left hand side and the organization development process at the right hand side are joined in the middle presenting the outcome of integrating both. The entry point was the community organizations through which changes could be achieved, both at the household/community and PIP levels.

SFLP often found that partner OD resource persons who were involved in the process needed better information on gender profiles and also guidance and training with regard to how to prioritise gender concerns and how to integrate these systematically in their work.

The use of a moderator and the creation of multiactor platforms at meso and macro levels proved to be an effective option for extending such support. While reminded by some that these platforms can become “battlefields within which mutually agreeable compromises are sought”, it is also true that “...mutual monitoring to safeguard the positive outcomes in line with the shared aims” (Kimura, 2005, p. 217) can result in positive development outcomes. SFLP experiences suggest strongly using such platforms. In, for example, the Gambia, Niger and Congo, they became the environment within which the gender agenda was discussed and also negotiated and implemented.

Other key approaches used by SFLP in the context of practical gender mainstreaming included:

- Social dialogue within and between community-based organizations and with partners for reducing discrimination and help prevent or manage conflict. Social dialogue made it possible to increase social cohesion and to negotiate changes in power sharing at the level of organizations and also have an effect at the household level.

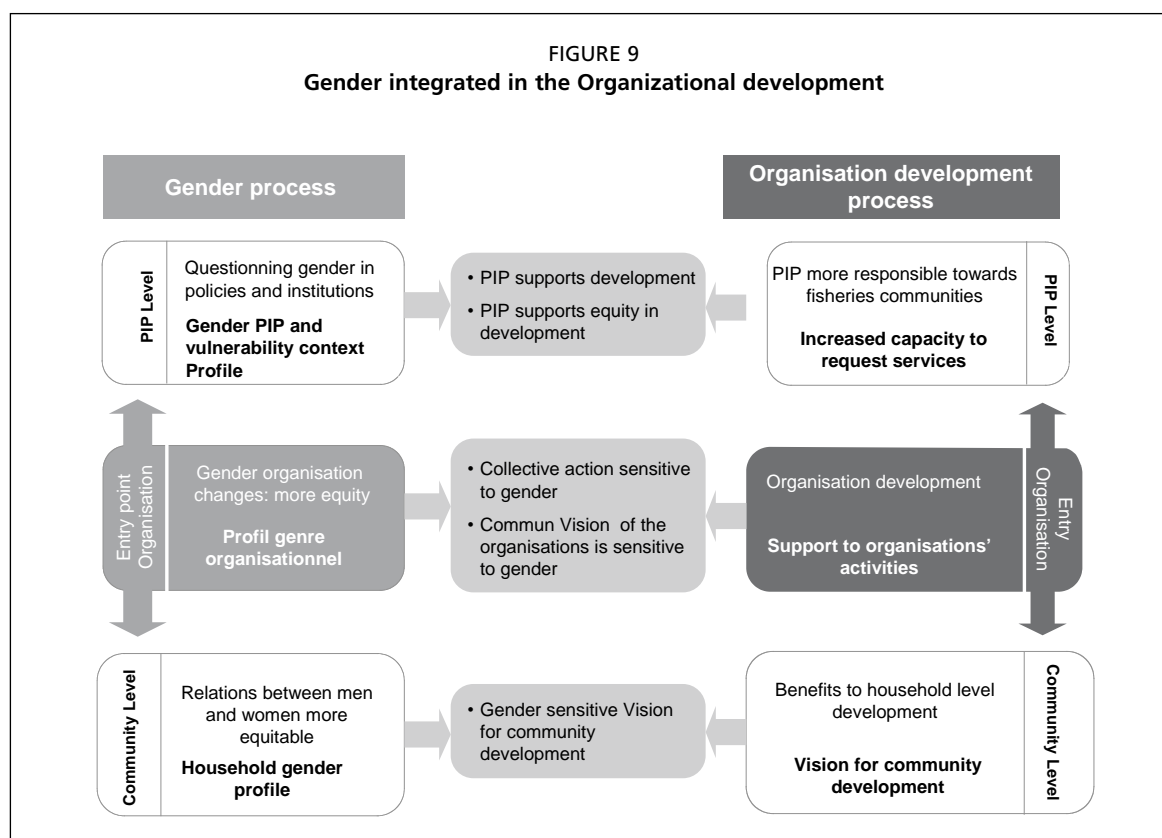


Source: Holvoet, Gnimadi and Tindall, 2007, p. 17.

- **Communication**, using tools such as radios, for facilitating the horizontal diffusion of achievements and its replication in other communities. A gender analysis of the communication strategy could reveal that changes were needed, e.g. in Burkina Faso on Lake Bagré, the radio program schedule had to be adapted and the interests of some community groups needed to be given more time and attention.
- **Participatory and transparent processes** in all community actions for the promotion of gender sensitive CBOs, e.g. in Congo the organization of a general assembly at the village level guaranteed transparency in the process of establishing committees. Meetings with village and local leaders on gender inequities made the leaders publicly commit to changes. It also made it easier to undertake and monitor positive actions for reducing inequities, e.g. informing women on meetings, guaranteeing the participation of vulnerable and poor groups in decision-making processes or programming activities on livelihoods diversification, etc.
- **Integration of gender** in activity plans of meso level actors and partners.

#### ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER

SFLP found that an important obstacle to equity in terms of access and control is linked to information and communication. Women and their organizations are often under-informed and have higher illiteracy rates. Because of these inequities and cultural values, women are often kept at the margins of development processes and are excluded from decision-making.



Source: Holvoet, Gnimadi and Tindall, 2007, p. 15.

In Tanji, the Gambia, SFLP found that illiteracy rates were higher among women than men. The high illiteracy and the fact that savings and credit cooperatives had no special provisions for illiterate clients increased women's vulnerability to becoming victims of fraudulent practices (Mattar and Mendy, 2006). Despite a higher membership of women in CBOs – there were twice as many female members as men – and a higher demand for financial services from women, it was found that women had only access to 6.3 percent of the total amount of credit given out in spite of having 20 percent more deposits in the savings and credit union than their male counterparts (Mendy and Njia, 2003; Gnimadi, 2004).

Case studies by SFLP in Congo, Gambia and Gabon documented how institutions and regulations revolving around access to resources favour men. In Makotipoko, Congo, extension services were found to often target subjects that interested men, hence leading to their higher ratio in participation (ADECOR, 2005). In the case of Tanzania, training sessions organized by the Freshwater Fisheries Institute, which required functional formal literacy, had lower attendance by women due to financial constraints and parents' belief that education is for men (Medard *et al.*, 2001). In Gabon, women – as well as migrant fishers – were found to be excluded from land ownership. This impacted negatively on their access to credit and savings services requiring collateral.

A study on gender and microfinance in relation to participation in fisheries resources management undertaken in two fishing communities on Lake Noukoué, Benin, indicated that women were not at all represented on the lake management committee (Djoï and Kakpo, 2004). In Tanzania, a random survey of twenty beach management units around lake Victoria indicated an 85 percent men and 15 percent women representation (Medard *et al.*, 2001). Even in areas where effort had been made to ensure the participation of women, it was often found to remain limited. In Mali, Lake Sélingué, women appeared to participate only in the communal fisheries committees (21–25 percent of members were women) and not at all in the management



## BOX 12

**The complexity of gender roles: narratives from SFLP studies in Benin, Niger and The Gambia**

- The fish supply chain is dominated by powerful men and women with capital. Actions by them (e.g. bulk buying and hiring the labour of poorer community members) can worsen the dependency of poorer post-harvest groups.
- Poorer socio-economic groups have little control over the fish marketing chain, operate with low profit margins and are more vulnerable than wealthier groups to decreases in catches and poor services in processing, conservation and micro finance. Their activities are less profitable because they have only access to poor quality fish and are unable to keep fish fresh since they lack ice and marketing information. Loans from micro-finance institutions serve more as revolving funds for marketing than investment loans for fishing and processing equipment, and both informal and formal credits are risky.
- Female entrepreneurs are more responsible than men for meeting household expenses but are less mobile, less educated and less involved in policy and management decisions than their male counterparts. Poorer women use revolving funds to meet household expenses in periods of poor catches and this reduces the funds available for business. The majority of female-owned fishery enterprises are therefore small and grow slowly, if at all.
- Women point to hostile male behaviour aimed at keeping them minor players in the sector. Male solidarity between wholesalers and boat owners allows men to monopolise the landed fish and, through male members of the ice plant management committee, to monopolise ice supply (*The Gambia*).
- All socio-economic categories use family labour, especially women's labour. This limits women's access to education, training and alternative income-earning activities.
- Men who are by division of roles excluded from processing or fish transformation and with no independent capital to buy own equipment for fishing are dependent on relations with female processors (*Benin*).

*Note:* Where no country is indicated the comment applies to all three.

*Source:* Sustainable Fisheries Livelihood Programme fieldwork, 2005 ; Gnimadi, C., 2004)

team holding the real decision-making power (Howard, 2006). In Benin, regulations stipulate that local institutions such as the local committees for HIV/AIDS control must have a minimum of 33 percent women in their management structures. However, lack of information and self-confidence among women led to the failure of achieving this target (Pades, 2007).

In addition to variations across countries, regions and cultural settings, the Programme clearly noted that gender issues and relationships also vary within communities and between subgroups of people. Women and men are not homogenous groups but individuals that share some – but not necessarily all – common characteristics. There are different categories of women and men, and their roles may vary in different contexts but also the value given differs, e.g. in the household, in the community and as professionals. In studies carried out by SFLP on women dominating fish marketing chains in Senegal and Cameroon, it was found that they used complex marketing strategies and that relatives were important as a source of capital, both for fish processing and trading. As a consequence, the professional relationships were not

purely market-oriented but were also influenced by domestic power-relations (Cherou, Yamina and Bellal, 2005; Nogaye Diop, 2005). SFLP documented practices of male and female entrepreneurs in Benin, Niger and the Gambia. The narratives included in Box 12 illustrate the complexity of the role and position of women in fisheries.

In Mali, work funded by SFLP documented that the relationships between actors in the fish marketing chain were influenced by vulnerability factors and by the increased globalisation of fish markets. Higher prices and increasing sanitary requirements are changing traditional roles and gender relations. In some cases, this leads to the exclusion of women and vulnerable groups. Women appear to be particularly threatened by such changes and when the number of active traders decreased, the number of female traders decreased more than the number of male traders. SFLP documented the gender profiles of the Selingué fisheries sector when intervening in different aspects of the fish value chain.

One important strategy for combating vulnerability in a situation of dwindling fishery resources is diversification of income generating activities (IGA). The gender analyses carried out by SFLP in the context of its Pilot Projects for co-management and the post harvest subsector showed that the barriers to equal opportunities for men and women in livelihoods diversification were different from one context to another. Some of the more common barriers found that especially women faced with respect to equity in livelihoods diversification included:

- Lack of access to micro finance.
- Lack of access to information.
- Low literacy and educational level.
- Weak organizational capacity.
- Limited opportunities, time and capacity to develop profitable IGAs.
- Constraints with regard to market access (access to distant markets, dependency on buyers from towns).
- Health issues because of higher rates of illness among women and their role in caring for sick family members as well as financing medicines and treatments.

In some situations, limited participation in decision-making and lack of access to resources as well as technology barriers for women and unavailability of technical training also constituted important obstacles to the development of IGAs. The analyses also revealed that a number of gender issues were relevant to the overall context, e.g. vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, conflicts and integration of migrants, justifying the need for conducting gender analysis before livelihoods diversification through IGAs is promoted.

## ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES

Through the application of gender mainstreaming, many of the issues identified in the gender analysis process – and described above – could be addressed through the formulation of field activities. Interventions included actions addressing female representation in organizations, more efficient and equitable information flows and redistribution of access to resources. At the level of community gender strategies and CBO action plans, the process helped communities to develop common goals and activities, leading to development benefits by addressing gender inequalities. Some examples of activities planned and implemented by communities are presented in Box 13.

SFLP's focus on partnerships and its close collaboration with in particular meso-level actors clearly influenced how development interventions were formulated and implemented by other organizations. In Table 13, an example from Congo is given of how one of SFLP's partner organizations agreed to change the focus of its interventions with regard to livelihood diversification after having assessed the work plan through a gender lens.

## BOX 13

**Community gender action plans****Equity measures and access to decision making processes**

In Tafouka, Niger, the village council of elders (*Comité des sages*) agreed that they would gain (in terms of access to donors, impact of development efforts and from the good ideas women developed for improvement of livelihood) by including women in their council. Women's groups and their participation in the council were strengthened. The effect was that the Tafouka community development plans were now sensitive to the needs and interests of women which in turn increased social cohesion and motivation of members of CBOs (250% increase in female CBOs). This led to the creation of a union and made it possible for the community to be a member of a national federation which supports grain bank based credit schemes and input supply shops.

In Burkina Faso, men and women agreed on changing the informal institution of access to landed fish and an agreement was signed between female CBOs and male CBOs. The social dialogue and the activities with the groups led to more equity in access to information. Women became involved in generating information and participating in radio programs, and hence the power relations in the fisheries community were influenced.

In Gambia, the board of the Fisheries service centre – FSC (providing ice, cold store facilities and processing facilities) and the credit union agreed that certain rules and regulations were causing exclusion and that these were based on inequities that were harmful to the chain efficiency. The leaders and the fisheries department agreed on analyzing gender issues and review credit union policies and services as well as the FSC policies. New boards and new policies were agreed on, all contributing to improved equity with regard to opportunities in fish processing and marketing (fresh, smoked and dried-fermented fish).

**Equity in participation in communication and information**

Women and their organizations often have less access to information due to, among other things, high illiteracy rates. In Bagré community in Burkina Faso, inter and intra group meetings were organized to contribute to better information sharing and new rules on feedback and sharing information were developed and adhered to within the groups.

In Congo, men agreed to include women in the theatre group. The subject (HIV/AIDS and gender) needed both male and female players and the participatory process of discussing the results of the studies and to come to an agreement on the script could not be done without integrating the vision of women. The participation of women contributed positively to their self-esteem and to their socio-professional organizations, which increased the women's motivation to take up responsibilities.

Social communication was an important aspect of the co-management process in Cameroon. The fact that women were under-represented during the first meetings of the process was discussed with the men. When the selection of social communication agents was brought up there was agreement that women should be equally represented. It was found that women were more interested in participating in management plan decisions and being part of the committees when they were clearly informed on the transparency and good governance principles that had been advocated during the social communication phase.

Source: SFLP field work

TABLE 13  
Reorienting actions on livelihoods diversification after a gender lens exercise

Before doing a gender assessment	After doing a gender assessment and the gender strategy taking into account
<p><b>Planned activities</b></p> <p>Promotion of cassava production by reproduction through propagation by cuttings of disease resistant varieties and diffusion to women to promote their IGA (attention to problem of paid labour and activity that will be open to all households)</p> <p>Assist marketing of cassava roots on Pointe Noire market</p>	<p><b>Planned activities</b></p> <p>Promotion of cassava production but oriented on processing to create more value added and give less constraints in terms of transport of produce to the market</p> <p>Technical evaluation of the needed technology and the access and capacity of male and female groups</p> <p>Economic analysis of investments in technology and propose ways on how households could invest and run the tools (eventual group investment) but individual marketing of product</p> <p>Analyse opportunity of grouped marketing to reduce direct and indirect cost to women</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of female CBOs to work together</p> <p>Intervention to promote savings and use of family budgets, assist accessibility of savings services</p>
<p>Gender inequities that were addressed through the activities:</p> <p>Reduced cassava production affects 70% of women and affects 30% of men</p> <p>Non availability of paid labour because of jealousy and fear for witchcraft affects 64% of the men and 36% of women</p>	<p>Gender inequities that were addressed through the activities:</p> <p>Workload of women (group action, technical evaluation taking into account women's strategic needs)</p> <p>Reduced profit margins because of lack of transport and exaggerated informal taxations along the road that affects mostly women</p> <p>Training ratio: 42% male, 31% female</p> <p>Number of organizations: 67% men ; 33% women (who are not registered organizations)</p> <p>Gap in responsibility of women in household expenditures and less capacity to save</p>

Source: SFLP field work.

Once implemented, interventions formulated with a gender perspective in mind contributed to changes in power structures and the role of women. In terms of what could be achieved with regard to such changes and empowerment, Table 14 gives an overview of the results of work in Burkina Faso as an example.

While the impact of SFLP's gender mainstreaming process was most noticeable at the community and meso-level, PIPs at higher levels were also influenced to a certain extent. The support to collective bargaining for fishing people's rights within CBOs and the strengthening of women's capabilities to express their own views within these organizations – involving both women and men – as well as the active role played by the Programme in collective action to enable women be appointed as officials in these organizations, by removing educational qualifications for leadership positions, are noteworthy.

## THE WAY FORWARD: TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN FISHERIES

The gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the SFLP was consistent with the call for holistic approaches within livelihoods programmes: people-centred approaches that require cross-sectoral, cross-ministerial and cross-organizational cooperation. Gender concerns exist at all levels – among households, communities, meso actors and at the national policy – and analyzing gender relations and mainstreaming become more effective if bottom-up and top-down processes are implemented at the same time.

TABLE 14

## Overview of empowerment and changes in power sharing in Bagré Chantier (Burkina Faso)

	Type of power	Changes in terms of power sharing	Impacts in terms of empowerment
Community and CBO level	Visible : Institutionalised decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Access to information</li> <li>– Reduced “elite capture” by the fact of female CBOs being united and consulting one another</li> <li>– Increase in equity in the gender organizational profile in terms of access and control over different assets and strategies</li> <li>– More transparency in the co-management process and attribution of credits</li> <li>– More effective participation of women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Political empowerment:</b></li> <li>– Women’s participation in the marketing commission</li> <li>– Women’s processors union organised</li> <li>– Women generate information and contribute to the meetings</li> </ul>
CBO and household level	Hidden : Influencing agenda setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased interest and room for women, very vulnerable groups and youth to express their opinion</li> <li>– More time available to participate in meetings and in the decision making processes</li> <li>– More solidarity (assistance to face problems and also understanding for the factors causing the problems)</li> <li>– Increased capacity of the poor to participate because of their inclusion in technical trainings and in literacy classes</li> <li>– Poor are not anymore considered as ‘without solution for their poverty’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Social empowerment</b></li> <li>– Increased time and capacity to participate in meetings</li> <li>– Women have more say on their mobility</li> <li>– Increased attention to the participation of poor and very vulnerable persons to the activities</li> <li>– Increased access to information and to decision making processes</li> <li>– <b>Economic empowerment</b></li> <li>– Increased solidarity through informal credit, credit committee assists the recovery of loans for the very vulnerable</li> </ul>
Household level	Invisible : Influencing opinion making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased social cohesion and less conflicts, more inclusion and less barriers (for fish mongers and women processors) to participation</li> <li>– Men consider women capable</li> <li>– Consultation and exchange of information at the household level</li> <li>– Increased self esteem by women, poor and youth</li> <li>– More equity in the gender household profile</li> <li>– The monitoring and control of the management agreement is not anymore considered as a ‘men’s business’ and women can participate in the co management process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Political empowerment</b></li> <li>– Male fishmongers included in the debate on fisheries and community activities concerning fisheries</li> <li>– Women generate information and participate in decision making</li> <li>– <b>Social empowerment</b></li> <li>– Increased respect and appreciation between fishmongers , fishers and fish processors</li> <li>– Increased know how for women: group management , technical issues, literacy, etc.</li> <li>– Increased time and capacity to participate in meetings</li> <li>– Men appreciate the participation of women in group activities</li> <li>– <b>Economic empowerment</b></li> <li>– Women contribute more to the food security of the household and to the expenses</li> </ul>

Source: Kaboré, C. 2006

Meso level actors are crucial in both processes. However, meso level actors often lack basic skills and need training on how to address gender concerns and assess the differential impacts of programs and policies on women and men. SFLP also experienced that they commonly needed support in how to plan and budget for gender assessments and how to use more efficiently the gender profiles produced through the assessments to guide the implementation and monitoring of gender sensitive action plans.

Establishing and maintaining cross-sectoral cooperation between organizations is difficult to achieve; organizational boundaries are often vigorously maintained and budgets carefully protected. However, partnerships are widely referred to as one way of achieving organizational learning beyond organizational boundaries and a means

to achieving the more holistic objectives of development such as gender equity. SFLP experiences draw particular attention to the benefit of investing in partnerships, communication and other special efforts, such as the use of facilitators, for maintaining the social dialogue between different organizations as well as for ensuring micro-meso-macro linkages. SFLP introduced multistakeholder platforms, comprising partners and other organizations with an interest in gender and in the Programme, as a communication forum in this respect.

The process of simultaneously addressing social cohesion and integrating gender through a organizational development approach that builds capacity for negotiating change and collective action proved effective. The need to address social cohesion is based on the fact that fishing communities can be characterised by the important differences that exist between different categories of women and men and the existence of different forms of exclusion and marginalisation because of conflicting interests between different socio-professional groups. Gender issues do not exist in a vacuum but are influenced by a wider context of power relations. More effort needs to be invested in creating an environment conducive to collective action in fishing communities.

The proposed way forward to achieve improved gender equality in fisheries includes increased application of gender analysis by fisheries departments. There is a need to develop sector specific gender strategies at the same time as engaging in overall mainstreaming processes and ensuring that gender equity is an integral part of the development objectives for the fisheries sector. To make the necessary funding available, fisheries poverty and gender objectives need to be reflected in national development planning strategies. Assisting fisheries departments to purposefully work towards equity, collect gender disaggregated data for planning and upscaling the approach, as started by SFLP in a number of countries, should be a priority for national and international development partners.

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# 11. Combining a focus on poverty reduction with responsible fisheries: SFLP's impact on development policy

## INTRODUCTION

The FAO/DFID Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP), implemented in partnership with 25 countries in West and Central Africa during the period 1999-2006, had as its overall goal *to reduce poverty among coastal and inland communities through the sustainable use of aquatic resources*. The Programme's philosophy was based on the understanding that there is a need for improved fisheries management in the small-scale fisheries sector in order to safeguard coastal livelihoods and that this should be addressed in a broader context of poverty reduction; fishery resource management and social development are intricately linked, particularly in a poverty context. Reflecting this vision, the design and implementation approach of SFLP were based on two main complementary frameworks: the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code).

The SLA is a broad, multidisciplinary approach with a view to promote a better understanding of and response to the multiple dimensions of poverty. It also provides a methodological framework facilitating the linking of small-scale fisheries communities to mechanisms that can influence policy issues, institutional frameworks and processes, and for strengthening assets – human, social, physical, financial and natural – and reducing vulnerability. The Code aims to facilitate the engagement by government and other stakeholders in more responsible fisheries exploitation and management, with due regard also for social equity, particularly relevant for the livelihoods of the most vulnerable groups in fishing. To do so it provides a reference policy framework with the principles and criteria applicable for the preservation, management and development of fisheries.

By putting the SLA methodologies and the principles contained in the Code into practice, SFLP gained valuable experiences with regard to how to reduce poverty in small-scale fisheries communities at the same time as introducing responsible fishing practices. This technical paper has given an account of this experience and the lessons learned in the process, presented by subject matters in the preceding sections. This final chapter aims at giving a succinct summary of the overall learning and impact of the Programme in a wider development policy context<sup>41</sup>. It sets out with an overview of the complexity of poverty and argues that the SFLP experience has enhanced the way poverty in coastal and rural communities is understood and has helped putting the small-scale fisheries sector higher on the agenda for poverty reduction and fishery resource management. The importance of good governance and political support are discussed. SFLP contributed to the recognition that governance and fishery management for the small-scale fisheries sector, in particular in a developing country poverty context, needs to be dealt with in a different way from how large-scale operations and the

<sup>41</sup> This chapter summarizes some of the discussions and arguments made earlier in this technical paper. It also draws on the SFLP Policy Brief series – *New directions in fisheries: a series of policy briefs on development issues* – and on some of the arguments and conclusions of the final evaluation of the Programme (Cunningham and Holleran, 2007).



fisheries sector as a whole is conventionally managed. Co-management – of fishery resources and social development processes – is the preferred governance regime, requiring attention to policies, institutions and processes (PIPs), micro-macro linkages and equitable participation. The Programme implemented co-management and post-harvest livelihoods pilot projects and proposed key strategies for how to create an enabling environment and address specific vulnerability issues. The starting point for all Programme activities was a good understanding of the poverty context and participatory planning.

### **POVERTY, VULNERABILITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

Poverty has conventionally often been defined in terms of income, (physical) assets and consumption. While these are still important components of poverty, the SFLP approach drew on the emerging broader definition of poverty including also the concepts of vulnerability and marginalization and taking a human rights perspective into account as proposed by the United Nations Social and Economic Council (ECOSOC): “Poverty: a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights” (ECOSOC, 2001, point 8).

Based on the SLA framework, the SFLP used participatory poverty profiling methods to guide its interventions. These analytical instruments help answer questions about who the poor are in a particular area, why they are poor and what specific actions are required to address their needs. Gender analysis and value chain analysis, i.e. looking at roles and relationships in the different parts of the fishery system, were other approaches incorporated into the programming processes.

The SFLP experience showed that the two dimensions vulnerability and exclusion are at the centre of poverty in West and Central African fishing communities. Incomes from fishing and related activities are not necessarily always low but tend to be uncertain and variable – according to seasons and daily catches – and wealth is often unevenly distributed among different socio-professional groups within communities. Boat owners and large-scale traders can be among the wealthiest while crew members and those without productive assets are found at the other end of the scale. Women are commonly poorer than their male counterparts.

Different groups within communities are exposed to vulnerability and marginalization in different ways to varying degrees. Migrant fishers, fish workers and their household members were often found to be more vulnerable than their host community counterparts (see Box 14). The internal and external threats to which fishing communities are exposed cover a wide range of issues. Interestingly, a finding from the SFLP poverty profiling exercises was that, for poor fishing people, the risk of resource degradation and the need to manage fisheries might not represent a main immediate concern. In fact, the results and the exploration of local perceptions of poverty pointed to other needs and threats, e.g. access to safe drinking water, health services, education and microfinance. This is typical in situations with high vulnerability since insecurity and uncertainty tend to reduce the incentives to save and to invest in future, which is what fisheries management is largely about. Poverty is also often closely correlated to isolation and lack of access to institutions and services. HIV/AIDS is a prime concern in many fishing communities that is further aggravated by the lack of adequate health services. The SFLP poverty profiles also showed that many fishing communities exhibit limited engagement in local development, low levels of social cohesion, lack of community organizational structures and weak political powers. This makes it difficult for small-scale fishing communities to influence their situation and it makes them vulnerable to unfair treatment and further neglect and marginalization. Limited collaboration between fisheries departments and other ministries at the macro level

## BOX 14

**Migrant fishing people**

West and Central African fishing communities have a long tradition of migration. The reasons for this mobility are many including the search for better fishing grounds and escaping poverty. Migrants bring skills and technical knowledge contributing to the local economies of their host communities. However, SFLP studies show that integration of migrant fishing people into recipient coastal communities is not always easy and that migrants are often subject of marginalization and exclusion from various aspects of community life. This impacts their ability to access social services, such as health and education, and to obtain land, and they often fail to participate in political and decision-making processes. Moreover, people who are mobile are often more vulnerable to ill health and infections. The mobility of fishing communities has been identified as one factor contributing to their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The marginalization and vulnerabilities of migrants directly impact on their possibilities and capacities to participate in fishery resource management and local development. SFLP worked actively to empower and strengthen the involvement of migrants. By carrying out detailed participatory analyses – poverty mapping, stakeholder analysis as well as specific migration studies – the Programme ensured that migrant groups, their characteristics and needs, were identified and taken into account in the planning and implementation of activities.

*Source:* FAO. In press. *Managing mobile and migratory fishing for development in West and Central Africa*. New directions in fisheries – A series of policy briefs on development issues. No. 11. Rome, FAO. (available at [www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html](http://www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html))

and lack of communication between fishing communities and regional and national development initiatives and actors further aggravate the situation.

Globalization presents both opportunities and threats to fishing dependent communities. Fish trade is becoming increasingly globalised and also the small-scale fisheries sector participates in international trade. The challenge is to ensure that the benefits from the increased opportunities are distributed in an equitable way. An important exercise carried out by SFLP was value chain analyses where gender roles and relationships between male and female actors of different socio-professional groups were investigated. These roles and relationships were also looked at in the light of a changing environment, e.g. the globalisation of fish markets. Institutions and policies, vulnerability factors and the degree of access to and control over resources, market outlets and infrastructure influence different actors' possibilities to change and adapt to external influences. Changes impact on organizations, households and individuals with implications for both women and men along the whole value chain, their livelihoods and ultimately the sustainability of the fishery resources. The SFLP experience showed how local and national – and international – processes are linked and how development opportunities and threats in fishing communities are influenced by external factors. Fishing communities, however, often have limited political power and cannot easily influence decision-making processes or request support.

The impacts of climate change on fishing communities are an additional burden to other poverty drivers that may be felt more severely in the future, increasing the level of uncertainty and vulnerability. Changes in water temperatures and precipitation affect the functioning of ecosystems and hence influence fish stocks. Rising sea levels and increased incidence of extreme weather events are likely to cause disruptions in already exposed coastal communities. Complex links between climate change, fisheries and other sectors will have indirect effects on fishing communities with regard to, for

example, the demand for water and financial resources. Exactly how projected climate changes, together with other internal and external influences – e.g. population growth and mobility, and continued globalisation – will affect fisheries and fishing dependent communities in West and Central Africa in the future will to a large extent be decided by the governance systems in place and the political decisions that will be made.

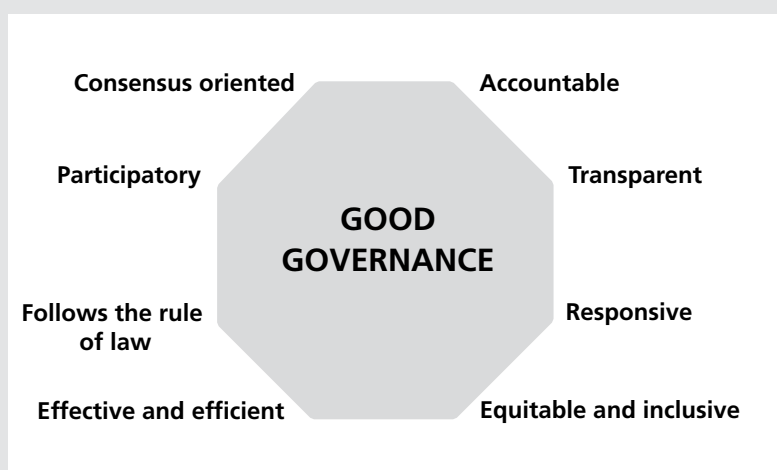
### GOOD GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL WILL

The need for good governance is at the center of both fisheries management and poverty reduction. Fisheries can only continue to support livelihoods in a sustainable manner if they are responsibly managed and to optimise the contributions of fisheries to poverty reduction requires good governance. Poverty reduction strategies are only effective when implemented within a framework of good governance. Defining good governance as being participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and following the rule of law sets the conditions and principles on which fisheries management and poverty reduction initiatives should be based (see Box 15).

#### BOX 15

#### What is good governance?

*Governance* refers to the way decisions are made and implemented. In relation to natural resource management it would include the “formal and informal arrangements, institutions, and mores which determine how resources or an environment are utilized; how problems and opportunities are evaluated and analyzed, what behavior is deemed acceptable or forbidden, and what rules and sanctions are applied to affect the pattern of resource and environmental use.” (Juda, 1999). *Good governance* can be described to have eight major characteristics: “participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.” (ESCAP, 2008).



Sources: Juda L. 1999. *Considerations in the development of a functional approach to the governance of large marine ecosystems*. In: *Ocean Dev Int Law* 30:89-125.

UNESCAP. 2008. *What is good governance?* Web site of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (available at [www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp](http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp))

## BOX 16

**The Code and its provisions for small-scale fisheries**

“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 and artisanal 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” (Article 6.18 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, FAO, 1995)

“Recognizing the existing rights of fishing communities is a fundamental element in building a successful fisheries management system” (Section 2.7.4 of the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries No. 10 on Increasing the Contribution of Small-Scale Fisheries to Poverty Alleviation and Food Security, FAO, 2005)

“When designing management measures, it might be appropriate to consider those which provide exclusive or preferential access for small-scale fisheries (Section 2.7.6 of the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries No. 10 on Increasing the Contribution of Small-Scale Fisheries to Poverty Alleviation and Food Security, FAO, 2005)

“A wider recognition of the importance of small-scale fisheries would also help to ensure that international trade regulations and agreements are more carefully structured so as to provide benefits to small-scale fisheries rather than resulting in their marginalization” (Section 2.8.4.1 of the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries No. 10 on Increasing the Contribution of Small-Scale Fisheries to Poverty Alleviation and Food Security, FAO, 2005)

*Source:* FAO. 2007. *Making global governance work for small-scale fisheries*. New directions in fisheries – A series of policy briefs on development issues. No 9. Rome. (available at [www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html](http://www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html))

The need for good governance applies to all levels of decision-making and implementation processes. Hence, governing fisheries involves much more than applying fisheries laws and policies. A fishery system is governed by factors affecting the rights and livelihoods of the people who fish, the trade in fishery products and services, the environment the fish live in and the national economic and political context within which the sector operates.

In the international arena, changes in governance regimes have been significant during the last decades. Many of these developments are of direct relevance to small-scale fisheries communities, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), sustainable development frameworks (1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – UNCED – and Agenda 21; 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development – WSSD), the signing up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), commitments to work through national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), human rights conventions, food safety standards, and international trade agreements (World Trade Organization – WTO). In the fisheries sector itself, the Code – together with its related instruments and guidelines – is the main guiding instrument for governance (see Box 16).

These international developments are driven by an appreciation of local situations and are in turn influencing national and local level governance. However, the translation of global governance principles to strategies and actions at the national and local levels depend, to a large extent, on the willingness and ability of governments to reform and

implement changes in PIPs. Calls for improvement in governance, in particular in developing countries, have prompted many governments to initiate democratization and decentralization processes and to promote the rule of law and social equity. These processes, however, are still incomplete due to lack of political will, administrative capacity and/or financial resources.

The results of the SFLP poverty profiles showed how fishing community livelihoods are affected by factors and governance at higher levels, i.e. district, regional, national and international. There are also significant cross-sectoral linkages as livelihoods are often diversified. This calls for a need to establish micro, meso and macro linkages, i.e. linking communities with regional and national actors and initiatives and ensuring a two-way communication between the different levels. In order to achieve sustainable improvements at the local level, changes in PIPs are essential. Small-scale fisheries management and development issues need to be mainstreamed in national development policies and PRSPs in order to gain long-term sustainability. However, unfortunately, it not being reflected in national statistical systems, the real role and importance of small-scale fisheries in livelihoods and in terms of social and economic contributions are often not known by decision makers. This has a negative effect on the level of political incentives to invest in the sector.

Recognizing the weaknesses of conventional economic assessments with regard to small-scale fisheries, SFLP developed a methodology for reporting on the fisheries sector considering a wider range of economic and social impacts. Particular attention was given to recalculating the contribution of the fisheries sector to economic growth and GDP by including added value created by fisheries related secondary and tertiary activities (in particular fish processing and trade) commonly not included as a fisheries contribution in national accounts.

SFLP also contributed in other ways to raising the profile of the fisheries sector. The Programme reemphasised the sector's importance in food security and its potential to contribute to poverty reduction (see Box 16). By its work on particular vulnerability aspects, the attention to, for example, HIV/AIDS was increased at national, regional and international levels leading to changes in policies and new field level initiatives. Hence, within the global development system, SFLP has helped to increase awareness of small-scale fisheries and contributed to the shifting governance paradigm with regard to small-scale fishing dependent communities to include a more holistic, poverty focused and participatory approach. Increased awareness and visibility of the small-scale fisheries sector is fundamental for gaining political support for assistance and changes in PIPs. Moreover, it can be noted that although SFLP did not directly address governance per se – at least not using this terminology – many of the principles contained in the definition of good governance (see above) were central to the Programme's philosophy and approach. This was reflected in particular in SFLP's co-management initiatives.

## **CO-MANAGEMENT**

Conventional fisheries management tends to be centralised and implemented by command and control measures by fisheries departments. This top-down structure has also tended to be the system for national governance in general; for rural development as well as other sectors. However, as noted above, during the last few decades – and since the end of the 1980s and the early years of the 1990s in the West and Central African region – countries have been reforming their governance systems and moved towards decentralisation. This opens up for the possibility to introduce co-management arrangements in the natural resource sector, i.e. management systems relying on participation and collaboration among governments, fishers and other stakeholders.

While also implementing a large number of community focused activities at the national level, the main direct efforts made by SFLP on fisheries management were

## BOX 17

**How do fisheries contribute to local economies, food security and poverty reduction**

The fishery sector plays multiple roles in the national economies of West and Central African countries. A high proportion of these benefits are generated by the small-scale sub-sector which plays an important role in food security and poverty alleviation. The fisheries sector contributes to poverty alleviation and food security in several different ways. *Poverty alleviation* takes two different forms: poverty reduction and poverty prevention. Fisheries contribute to *poverty reduction* through wealth creation at the household level, as a rural development engine at the community level and by generating economic growth at the national level, including contributions to GDP, government tax income and foreign exchange earnings. The role of fisheries in *poverty prevention* refers to how the sector can help people stay out of or not fall further into poverty by providing a minimum standard of living and a safety-net function. This role is particularly important for small-scale fisheries in developing countries.

*Food security* is “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FSN Forum, 2007). Fishing contributes to food security directly – by producing highly nutritious food, i.e. fish – and indirectly, through the generation of revenues that can be used for buying food

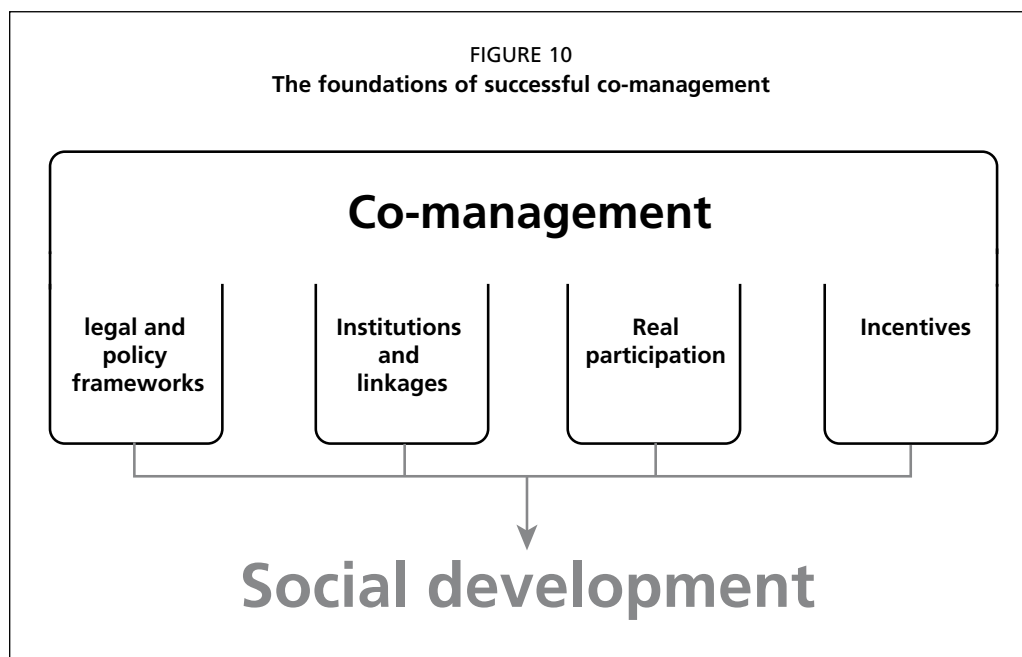
*Sources:* Béné, C., Macfadyen, G. & Allison, E.H. 2007. Increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to poverty alleviation and food security. *FAO Fisheries Technical Paper*. No. 481. Rome, FAO. FSN Forum. 2007. Glossary. *Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition Policies and Strategies*. Web page. FAO. (available at [www.fao.org/fsn/resources/glossary.html](http://www.fao.org/fsn/resources/glossary.html))

carried out through two subregional pilot projects on co-management, one in inland waters (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Ghana) and one in coastal areas (Congo, Gabon, Guinea and Mauritania). While there had been earlier co-management initiatives in the region, they had tended to have a focus on improving fish stock management only. In line with the improved understanding of vulnerabilities and marginalization, the SFLP co-management projects used a more holistic approach embedding the need for fisheries management in a wider development context.

The SFLP experience confirmed findings from other co-management initiatives from around the world showing that successful and effective co-management systems are based on four interrelated pillars:

1. an enabling policy and legal framework, and continued government support;
2. effective institutions and linkages;
3. real participation by resource users and other stakeholders, avoiding elite capture and exclusion of minority groups; and
4. incentives for individuals to participate.

The need for an enabling environment, legal framework and political support relates to some of the discussion on governance in the section above. By reviewing current legal structures, SFLP found that while it was necessary in some situations to develop new legal, administrative and institutional arrangements, it was also often possible to use and interpret existing frameworks. However, SFLP's experience showed that even in situations where authorities had been formally decentralised, real decision-making power and resources had not always been reallocated to local communities. This was often due to a lack of information and capacity, both on behalf of fishing communities



and government representatives. Hence support to capacity and capability development had to be extended to communities and institutions in order for decentralisation to become effective.

An important part of this process was linked to the building of institutions and ensuring that the necessary linkages for communication were in place. Without functioning organizational structures at the local level, there are no effective recipients of the decentralised powers. A co-management committee may be created, constituting a forum for interactions among the co-management participants. To ensure community participation on the committee, communities need to be organized in a way that promotes equitable representation of diverse community interests. SFLP helped to establish and legalize local socio-professional organizations as well as umbrella associations as the basic institutional building blocks for the co-management arrangements. The attention given to obtaining official recognition of community groups and organizations was found to be particularly critical in order for community members to ascertain their rights and gain access to decision-making processes.

While some segments of the involved communities were already members of community groups and socio-professional organizations, others were found to lack the capacity and capabilities to self-organize. By providing, among other things, direct organizational development support, and literacy and numeracy training, more equitable participation was promoted. Notable outcomes from these activities included not only an increase in the number of functional community organizations but also in organizations benefiting from additional external training and microfinance service support, improved information flows within communities and the emergence of a democratic spirit.

The importance of creating incentives for communities to participate in co-management is directly linked with SFLP's approach of directly combining fisheries management with social development. When improving fisheries management, benefits in the form of increased catches and/or profitability are rarely seen immediately. On the contrary, introducing more responsible and sustainable fishing practices commonly means decreasing fishing effort. It may also imply investment in new more selective gear and participants in co-management initiatives need to spend time and effort on participating in the system. In particular for poor fishers and fishing households, this may not appear attractive, or even feasible, if no compensation for costs in the form

of forfeited production and time is provided. Recognizing that vulnerable people with uncertain futures are less likely to participate in fisheries co-management, which requires short-term restraints for longer-term gains, special efforts were made to address vulnerability factors identified by the communities themselves, such as HIV/AIDS, and lack of access to microfinance and diversification opportunities.

### ADDRESSING VULNERABILITIES

From the discussion above on the SFLP poverty profiles, it transpires that small-scale fisheries communities face a multitude of threats. By analysing poverty in a participatory manner a somewhat different picture from what may have been expected emerges and in order to enable fishers to engage in fishery management, it is essential to reduce their vulnerability by addressing other needs they identify. These needs include specific areas for action but also encompass addressing structural and organizational issues through PIPs and micro-macro linkages. The approach needs to be cross-sectoral including the use of strategic partnerships because constraints to achieving poverty eradication in fishing communities are found both within the sector and outside it.

### HIV/AIDS

Fishing communities have been found to be particularly vulnerable to *HIV/AIDS* because of a number of interacting factors, including high mobility, access to daily cash, sub-cultures of risk taking, and availability of commercial sex in many fishing ports. These factors are related to poverty and marginalization and the often limited access to health and education services in coastal and rural communities further increases the threat. As fishing communities and their specific needs are commonly not included in national poverty reduction strategies, they are less often targeted by development interventions. In spite of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities and the cause and effect pattern that exists, fishing communities are hence rarely receiving adequate attention by HIV/AIDS prevention, care and mitigation programmes. At the same time, the threat of HIV/AIDS is not usually mentioned in fisheries policies and plans in spite of the effect the disease has on fishing communities and the social and economic contributions of the sector.

SFLP worked with actors at micro, meso and macro levels to raise the awareness of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities in Benin and Congo and to gather long-term support for the fight against the disease. Participatory diagnostic surveys and socio-behavioural studies were carried out and partnerships established with NGOs and development agents at district and national levels. Special communication activities were carried out; in Congo, Theatre-for-Development (TfD) techniques were successfully used to mobilise the community, facilitate interaction with and among community members and to communicate results to local leaders (see Box 18 for more on *Information and communication*).

In addition to showing the importance of engaging with lead organizations at the national level as well as local communities in order to be successful and sustain the efforts in the longer term, the SFLP experience pointed to the importance of regional collaboration. HIV/AIDS is not a concern maintained within national borders but a regional one because of the mobility of fishing communities. SFLP contributed to the formulation of a regional HIV/AIDS project that has subsequently received funding and started, building on and continuing the initiatives started by SFLP<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> "Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in Africa, investing in sustainable solutions" is a programme funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and executed by FAO and WorldFish Center. The West and Central Africa component, managed by FAO, has a budget of US\$1.5 million over a period of three years.



## BOX 18

**Information and communication**

Information and communication (IC) are key elements cutting across all stages of any development process and the choice of IC strategies, methods and tools will have a decisive effect on the direction and results of most initiatives. The rapid development of IC technologies (ICTs) – i.e. technologies that facilitate communication and the processing and transmission of information by electronic means – has transformed today's economies and our daily lives; mobile phones and the internet, among other things, have become basic tools for communication. New technological applications are also being used across the fisheries value chains. Some are specialist applications with a particular role in fishing such as sonars for locating fish. Others are general purpose applications such as Global Positioning System applications (GPS) used for navigation and location finding, mobile phones for trading and emergencies, radio programming targeted at fishing communities and Web-based information and networking resources.

Effective communication and information sharing are key to effective participatory processes and SFLP took a broad approach to IC in its field activities. The Programme's community communication strategy was a holistic approach involving a wide range of actors, both vertically from local fishing communities to national administrations and horizontally across sectors. Communication methodologies varied according to target groups and objectives and included a large selection of tools. The use of TfD in the context of addressing HIV/AIDS in Congo is an example of a successfully chosen communication methodology (see above).

SFLP also productively used ICTs in its interventions. In Burkina Faso and Mali, local radio stations were supported to become more adapted to the needs of fishing communities. In the Gambia and Chad, the Programme supported the expansion of the local mobile phone network to also cover fishing communities. When introducing participatory monitoring, control and surveillance in Guinean waters, GPS, radios and mobile phones were used successfully by local partner fishers.

A responsible use of ICTs can contribute to enhanced livelihoods and sustainable development. However, it is important to recognize that there are also risks and potentially negative impacts arising from the introduction of technologies. Their introduction and promotion should clearly support the needs of the poor and promote equitable development and more responsible fishing.

Source: FAO. 2007. *Information and communication technologies benefit fishing communities*. New directions in fisheries – A series of policy briefs on development issues. No. 7. Rome, FAO. (available at [www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html](http://www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html))

**Microfinance**

Also with regard to *microfinance* for fishing communities, SFLP sought partnerships and worked closely with already established microfinance institutions (MFIs). Not uncommonly, MFIs associated fisheries with high risks and could also be reluctant to extend credits to fishing people because of previous bad experiences. There was hence a need to support capacity building both in fishing communities and within MFIs. In communities, organizational development, numeracy and literacy training, business skills development and technical training were provided. MFIs were sensitised with regard to the special needs of fishing communities and vulnerable groups within these communities and encouraged to develop microfinancial services tailored to small-scale fishers and fish workers.

Successful microfinance schemes were commonly developed based on the concept of "tontines", the traditional informal rotating savings and credit associations.

Microfinance products combining savings and credit facilities and providing flexible repayment schemes suitable to the reality of fishing people were generally found to be the most appropriate ones. An example of how microfinance products can be tailored to the needs of clients is the MFI in Benin that entered into partnership with a national NGO providing HIV and AIDS-affected households with psychological and social assistance, health care and access to antiretroviral drugs in order to be able to better support its clients with the disease.

In many of SFLP's interventions, the microfinance activities had an explicit gender focus. Women often play a prominent role in fish processing and trade and extending microfinancial services to women can have a strong impact on this part of the value chain. In some of the Programme's partner countries, gender analysis were carried out and gender-sensitive microfinance programmes developed, including support to, for example, literacy programmes for women (see also Box 19, p.164).

### **Diversification**

The SFLP microfinance activities were closely linked to the co-management projects, both as part of the wider social development focus and as support to *livelihoods diversification*. Although many coastal and lakeside communities are dependent on fishing and related activities as a main source of income, rural households in developing countries often use complex strategies and a combination of activities to secure their livelihood outcomes. SFLP experience showed that people who are able to diversify their income generating activities are better off than those who do not.

As fish stocks decline, fishing households may need to diversify their livelihood activities. The decision to diversify into new income streams – temporary or more permanent – can also be an independent, anticipatory, choice based on an assessment of one's own or household assets (or resource-related factors) and on the nature of the activity to be undertaken. Diversification has also often been used as a strategy by policy makers and resource managers to decrease the number of fishers. However, the success of such 'job substitution' approaches is doubtful. Diversification needs instead to be seen as part of broader approach targeting sustainable livelihoods where households are given the means and opportunities to create a 'household income portfolio' that is suitable for their particular needs. Successful diversification programmes need to be based on an understanding of who fishers are, what their livelihoods are, and what influences them. As with other activities addressing poverty, diversification should be seen as one component among others of a broader integrated and participatory approach.

### **THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE**

This technical paper has given an account of lessons learned generated during SFLP's ambitious undertaking to address poverty reduction and promote responsible fishing in 25 countries in West and Central Africa by putting SLA and the principals of the Code into practice. This last chapter has attempted to put some of the overall experience into a wider context of development and point to key learning from the Programme.

It is clear that SFLP has had an impact on development policy, more so on specific issues – e.g. HIV/AIDS – at the national level in some countries of the region but also more generally in the international arena. As development policy and the paradigms it is based on evolve over time, influenced by a number of factors, it is difficult to discern the exact role and magnitude of SFLP's contribution in the overall picture. Nevertheless, it is evident that small-scale fisheries are now benefiting from substantially more attention than some ten years ago and that their role in food security and poverty reduction is increasingly Recognized. The conference on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries organized in Bangkok in October 2008 by FAO and the Government of Thailand in

## BOX 19

**Gender in West and Central African fisheries**

Conventionally, the most common picture of gender roles in fisheries portrays men as fishers – going out on boats to catch the fish – and women as fish sellers and processors on land. While this generalisation of the professional roles of men and women is largely correct, a closer examination of gender in fisheries reveals a more complex situation according to countries and cultural contexts. In some countries, like Benin, Congo and Mali, women fish or collect fish on the lake in their own boats. In other countries, it may even be a taboo for women to be on board a fishing vessel but they can own boats and hire men as crew. As fish buyers, it is not unusual that women finance the working capital for fishing trips against a guaranteed supply of fish when the catch is landed.

Still, women are often excluded from decision-making processes and resource management arrangements and have more difficult access to financial and other resources than their male counterparts. SFLP found that an important obstacle to equity in terms of control and access is linked to information and communication. Women tend to have higher illiteracy rates and their organizations are under-informed. Hence, women are often kept at the margins of development processes.

SFLP recognized that gender concerns exist at all levels, i.e. among households, communities, mid-level actors (NGOs) and at the national policy level and, in addition to local gender action planning, gender awareness training was an essential activity component at all levels. The Programme also noted that gender issues and relationships vary within communities and between subgroups of people. There are different categories of men and women and gender analysis needs to be part of a wider assessment of marginalized groups. Women as part of vulnerable groups need to be empowered in their roles and provided adequate support, e.g. literacy training, microfinance services, organizational development and access to decision-making processes.

Source: FAO. 2007. *Gender policies for responsible fisheries*. New directions in fisheries – A series of policy briefs on development issues. No. 6. Rome, FAO. (available at [www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html](http://www.sflp.org/briefs/eng/policybriefs.html))

collaboration with SEAFDEC and WorldFish Center and with support from a number of important donors<sup>43</sup>, is one testimony among others of this development.

SFLP increased the awareness of SLA and of the Code. Interestingly though, DFID – the main promoter of SLA early on – has moved its development focus to governance and the concept of sustainable livelihoods is not playing the same prominent and visible role in policy statements as it did a decade ago<sup>44</sup> (DFID, 2008). Other development partners have moved in the same direction with major donors and international financial institutions tending to base their aid and loans on “good governance” conditions. This does not mean that SLA has no role to play, or that it has not had a role, but possibly the contrary. As was seen in the discussion above, the principles on which good governance is based and those of the SLA are clearly compatible and the use of SLA is likely to have contributed to the development of the governance paradigm. It should also be noted that some of the maybe more novel components of SLA when it was first introduced have now gained general acceptance, e.g. the way poverty is defined and

<sup>43</sup> See the FAO small-scale fisheries Web site at [www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/ssf/en) which also contains information on the Conference.

<sup>44</sup> DFID's third White Paper is entitled: Making governance work for the poor (see [www.dfid.gov.uk/wp2006/default.asp](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/wp2006/default.asp)).

understood, and hence the need to explicitly talk about or use SLA may be superseded. Moreover, there have always existed different interpretations of the SLA and different agencies have used it or similar approaches under different names and with different emphases (Hussein, 2002).

The Code continues to be an extremely relevant document for fisheries governance throughout the world. It is also continuously being complemented and expanded by the development of additional guidelines, instruments and agreements. However, in spite of its universal character, the Code has a certain focus on single-species fisheries and high-seas fisheries management, i.e. marine industrial fisheries, probably because it was developed in parallel with the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and that most of the fisheries known to be at unsustainable levels at that time fell into these categories. For some developing countries where multispecies small-scale fisheries are a dominant part of the reality, the Code may hence appear less relevant (Westlund, in press). SFLP helped overcoming this apparent constraint and was instrumental in showing the usefulness of the Code principles in a developing country and poor community context. At the same time, the Programme contributed to the development of specific technical guidelines for small-scale fisheries<sup>45</sup> as well as the increased overall attention to the importance of the subsector as mentioned above.

As has already been mentioned, SFLP was an unusually ambitious programme and while a number of important achievements can be demonstrated and a foundation was laid, a lot remains to be done before it can be claimed that sustainable livelihoods and responsible fishing are now the norm in West and Central Africa. It is now the responsibility of national governments and international development partners to reconfirm their commitment to poverty alleviation and responsible fishing by learning from SFLP's experience and building on it for the future of small-scale fisheries communities in the world.

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<sup>45</sup> See FAO. 2005. Increasing the contribution of small-scale fisheries to poverty alleviation and food security. *FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries*. No. 10. Rome, FAO. 79pp.

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# Glossary

## CO-MANAGEMENT

A process of (resource) management in which government shares power with resource users, with each given specific rights and responsibilities relating to information and decision-making.

*Source: FAO Fisheries Glossary ([www.fao.org/fi/glossary/default.asp](http://www.fao.org/fi/glossary/default.asp)) based on OECD (1996), Synthesis report for the study on the economic aspects of the management of marine living resources. AGR/FI(96)12.*

## GENDER

The relations between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is not determined biologically, as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men, but is constructed socially. It is a central organizing principle of societies, and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution.

*Source: FAO, 1997. Gender: the key to sustainability and food security. SD Dimensions. May 1997 ([www.fao.org/sd](http://www.fao.org/sd)).*

## GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

An aggregate measure of production equal to the sum of the gross values added of all resident institutional units engaged in production (plus any taxes, and minus any subsidies, on products not included in the value of their outputs). The sum of the final uses of goods and services (all uses except intermediate consumption) measured in purchasers' prices, less the value of imports of goods and services, or the sum of primary incomes distributed by resident producer units.

*Source: United Nations Statistics Division ([unstats.un.org/unsd/cdb/cdb\\_dict\\_xrxx.asp?def\\_code=63](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cdb/cdb_dict_xrxx.asp?def_code=63))*

## LIVELIHOOD

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living.

*Source: DFID, 1999. Sustainable livelihoods guidance sheets ([www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance\\_sheets\\_pdfs/section1.pdf](http://www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance_sheets_pdfs/section1.pdf)). Based on Chambers, R. and G. Conway, 1992. Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. IDS Discussion Paper 296. Brighton, IDS.*

## MICROFINANCE

Microfinance means providing poor households with financial services (credit, savings, insurance, etc.) that allow for small transactions and sums of money.

*Source: Based on 'What is microfinance?', the Microfinance Gateway ([www.microfinancegateway.com](http://www.microfinancegateway.com)).*

## MICRO-, MESO- AND MACRO-LEVELS

- The **micro-level** means the fishing communities themselves. The main actors at this level are the households, basic community groups and structure, and community-based socio-professional organizations.
- The **meso-level** refers to the local development arena and includes organizations and their field workers working in and with the fishing communities. These actors

are generally decentralised technical services, local administrations, NGOs, other associations and trade unions, including also community-based organizations.

- The **macro-level** implies the national policy context. At this level, decision-makers including representatives for fisheries departments or ministries, other government bodies, national NGOs and private sector organizations are found.

*Source:* [www.sflp.org](http://www.sflp.org)

#### **MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE (MCS)**

Activities undertaken by the fishery enforcement system to ensure compliance with fishery regulations.

*Source:* FAO Fisheries Glossary ([www.fao.org/fi/glossary/default.asp](http://www.fao.org/fi/glossary/default.asp))

#### **POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES (PIP)**

The institutions, organizations, policies and legislation that shape the livelihoods of artisanal fisheries communities. The idea of PIP goes beyond the social, political, institutional and organizational context of livelihoods to include the policy processes that influence livelihoods either directly or indirectly.

*Source:* SFLP, 2002. A primer on sustainable livelihoods in artisanal fisheries ([www.sflp.org/eng/007/pub4/aprimer.doc](http://www.sflp.org/eng/007/pub4/aprimer.doc))







This Technical Paper traces the experiences of the Sustainable Fisheries Livelihoods Programme (SFLP) and its objective to reduce poverty in small-scale fisheries communities at the same time as introducing responsible fishing. The SFLP, a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and 25 participating countries in West Africa, ran from November 1999 to October 2006.

The document highlights important examples generated by the SFLP with regard not only to reconciling poverty reduction and responsible fishing but also showing how the two are mutually dependent and essential for sustainable outcomes. It provides a consolidated account of main lessons learned to serve as a source of information and inspiration for further work with small-scale fishing communities.



ISBN 978-92-5-106112-1 ISSN 2070-7010



9 789251 061121

TC/M/I0448E/1/11.08/1700