

## **SECTION 2**

### **CASE STUDIES**

# **THE TOMBO VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION LTD**

## **CASE STUDY ON FISHERFOLK ORGANISATION**

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**FISHERIES PILOT PROJECT TOMBO (GTZ/MANRF)**  
**FREETOWN , SIERRA LEONE**

### **1. National setting**

The national fishery sector lies under the formal responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Fisheries (MANRF). The Fisheries Department of the MANRF is equally in-charge of industrial fishing, mainly carried out by foreign licensed companies and the artisanal fishery, which contributes to the bulk of local supplies of fish products (90%).

Due to overall political problems, Government so far has not spelled out a consistent sectoral policy, nor is there any coherent government based support programme to the sub-sector of artisanal fishery.

The only significant contribution to the sustainability and development of the sub-sector (artisanal fishery) has been provided by bilateral and multilateral development projects through FAO, EEC, GTZ, and Plan International, which have in the past and up to presently provided technical assistance in terms of technology development, know-how transfer, manpower development and material supplies on a considerable scale. Since most of the artisanal fishing activities are heavily dependent on imported materials (netting, engines, spare parts, fuel) the weakness of the national financial institutions directly impacts on the viability of the fishing sub-sector. It is therefore paramount to the artisanal fishery that the fisherfolks engaged in the production, develop forms of organisation in order to get the necessary recognition at Government level, as well as develop their own ways and procedures to facilitate the adequate conditions for their operations.

### **2. Local setting**

Tombo is a coastal settlement situated near the southernmost extension of the Freetown Peninsula on the North shore of Yawri Bay. Originally a tribal village of Sherbro fishermen and Krio settlers (since 1840), Tombo has over the years become a place of increasing immigration, hosting segments of virtually all ethnic groups of Sierra Leone. Consequently the population rose, especially due to massive immigration of Temne fishermen, from 368 in 1931 to 6,525 in 1981. The main reasons for this drastic influx has been the availability of rich fishing grounds and a non-restrictive attitude of the genuine population towards immigrant fishermen, as well as considerable improvement of the fishing techniques through the introduction of large planked "Ghana boats".

Since 1980 the presence of the Fisheries Pilot Project Tombo (FPPT) through the introduction of improved fishing gears, technical assistance and a continuous supply of fishing inputs at low cost, created a major pull factor for further immigration.

According to a census in 1989 Tombo had by then a population of 8,295 and it is estimated to be between 12,000 and 15,000 as of to-day. The socioeconomic transformation process which has gone along with this population development has left the original subsistence society far behind and unfolded a complex, semi-industrial fishing economy, based on commercialization and a high degree of division of labour.

Presently Tombo maintains a fishing fleet of 67 planked Ghana boats (with 40 hp petrol engines) engaged in ring net fishing of herring and bonga, and 33 canoes (six of them motorized) engaged in drift gill and set net fishing of small pelagic fish. The annual catch landed in Tombo has developed from less than 2,000 metric tons in 1980 to about 13,000 metric tons in 1991, which accounts for more than 25% of the national artisanal catch recorded.

Most of the fish product is processed in Tombo and supplied to local markets as well as beyond, to the Republic of Guinea. Processing is performed as dry smoking by the female members of the families who run and operate about 284 "bandas" ovens, most of them of the improved hybrid type.

There is considerable infrastructure of petrol stations, outboard engine mechanics, trade of consumption articles, and entertainment. However, the entire socio-economic setting remains primarily mono sectoral, thus heavily depending on the local fishing industry.

### **3. History of the organisation**

The dramatic economic growth of Tombo has not been accompanied by a corresponding development of social infrastructure. The lack of safe water and sanitation facilities came to a pathetic culmination in 1977 with the outbreak of a cholera epidemic which resulted in the death of hundreds of people. With the inception of the Fisheries Pilote Project Tombo (FPPT) it was the first time that the infrastructural deficits which had been aggravated by the population explosion would be addressed in a systematic and strategic manner.

In the following years the project developed a basic infrastructure in the area of health and sanitation:

1980	Assignment of a health inspector to Tombo upon request of the project
1980 - 1983	Construction of a water dam and water supply pipeline to the village
1981	Construction of public latrines (in conjunction with EEC)
1982	Waste disposal programme
1985	Construction of Village Health Centre (with contribution of the community).

In the course of these developments it had to be observed that addressing infrastructural deficits of the community would not just focus on the public health infrastructure alone, but had to take into consideration the entire community needs and also initiate appropriate structures and procedures of maintenance and administration.

Over the years, Tombo has also developed new administrative structures. Village headman and village area committee who make up the administrative and political set-up according to the British colonial system of public administrating which is still prevailing in the Freetown Peninsula, were in no way prepared to control and guide such a compact settlement like Tombo. Moreover with the gradual phasing out of Government responsibilities and services due to overall economic erosion of the country, Tombo has been virtually on its own to cope with the situation.

The elders of Tombo, in an attempt to provide governance of the almost uncontrollable settlement, established a Village Committee, comprising the elders of all major resident ethnic groups, through which inter-ethnic conflict was prevented and social peace maintained.

With the commitments to communal infrastructural development of the FPPT, in 1985 a Community Development Section (CDS) was created within the project, in order to incorporate communal institution building as a support measure within the overall project approach.

As an initiative of the project, a co-operative society of boat owners had been formed earlier as a membership organisation of beneficiaries for project assistance, like the supply of fishing materials at low cost. Through a voluntary surcharge on 10% of the sales value of fishing material sold to this group, a fund was created which should serve as a communal contribution to further infrastructural development projects.

The Village Committee, originally designed as a quasi-political body to control social conflict, was re-defined as Village Development Board (VDB), emphasizing on administrative handling of development and maintenance issues in the absence of governmental responsibility.

Leadership training workshops were conducted to enhance attitudinal change towards more communal devotion and responsibility and to develop basic skills in administration and democratic decision making.

#### **4. Growth and development of the organisation**

Five years (1985 - 1990) of community oriented work of the VDB, with the guidance and significant funding of the FPPT has made Tombo a place with, compared to national standards, extraordinary infrastructure, continuous maintenance and improving communal development.

Although the demand for social infrastructure is far from being met, communal development, compared to the past, i.e. the time before the inception of the FPPT, Tombo now shows a level of infrastructure which can fairly sustain the present population on a basic level:

- the Health Centre takes care of patients, as well as frequent ambulant services,
- it provides necessary vaccinations in co-operation with the Ministry of Health (MOH),
- it makes available an uninterrupted supply of most of the important drugs and other medical materials,
- it carries out health observation campaigns together with the local health inspector, and other sponsors,
- it reaches out to neighbouring villages with medical care.

The health centre is staffed with a druggist/dresser, a nurse, a midwife and it operates a drug revolving fund.

### **Sanitation**

A Ministry of Health, (MOH) Health Inspector has been assigned to Tombo upon the request of the FPPT since 1980. With his commitment and frequent sponsorship of FPPT/EEC, Plan International and the World Health Organisation (WHO), the sanitation conditions have been improved significantly over the years, although the problem of sanitation is far from being solved.

- about 120 public toilets have been constructed
- sewage control and water drainage has been introduced
- dump sites identified and random disposal of waste controlled
- sanitation standards of food sales and selling areas are monitored
- information on health education and environmental health is delivered to the community.

The **water system** supplies safe water of drinking quality to 68 water taps (most of them privately owned). It has been maintained with the assistance of a plumber assigned by the respective Government Ministry and material supplies of the FPPT.

**Staff quarters** housing the four MOH employees have been constructed by FPPT.

An **office building** contains space for the CD Section as well as for health inspector, VDB plus three additional rooms for other communal institutions and a community meeting room, the health centre and office building have been provided with solar powered electrical system.

The **school** of Tombo which originally consisted of only one classroom has received an additional building of 2 classrooms and teachers and principal's office. (Plan International and FPPT contributed to this realisation in 1987/88).

A **community hall** has been constructed by FPPT with a financial contribution of the VDB in 1988/89. As a multipurpose building it is used for general meetings, additional school classes and commercial entertainment on weekends and public holidays.

In this process of infrastructural development the project strategy has mainly focused on organising and training villagers to fulfil necessary tasks of administration and decision making, as well as to mobilize the community for development and maintenance tasks on self help basis.

It must be said that the success in gaining support of the community as a whole, whether in terms of financial or labour contributions has been rather remote. Furthermore the legitimacy and capability of the VDB as a voluntary and informal group of elders and opinion leaders more or less initiated by the project, appeared questionable. Its sustainability after the phasing out of the FPPT as anticipated in mid 1993 thus became insecure.

Furthermore through the direction of the German Government, project retail activities of fishing gear had to be discontinued for reasons of introducing more market oriented approaches which would not undermine the Structural Adjustment Programme policy currently being introduced in Sierra Leone. As a result not only low price availability of fishing gear would cease to exist but also the 10% sales remittance scheme (social contribution fund) as major financial source for the VDB was bound to phase out.

In view of organizational weakness of the VDB, the previous domination of the CD Section/FPPT in communal activities and remote funding resources, the village development organization of Tombo had to go through a process of change and adjustment, which should bring about a sustainable type of village based organisation, capable of handling administrative maintenance and development affairs of the community. Thereby non-interference with Government defined tasks of public administration had to be observed, as well as support of relevant groups of the community to be gained.

## **5. Present set-up of the organisation**

After a considerable time of exploration and preparation, in June 1991 the Tombo Village Development Association (TVDA) has been registered as a limited company by Guarantee.

The major characteristics of the Association are as follows:

- The TVDA is a non governmental non profit but charitable organisation.
- The TVDA is duly registered under the Companies Act. Cap. 249 and provides all necessary legal organisational and accountability standards as spelled out under the Memorandum and Articles of the Association.

- The objective of the TVDA is the maintenance and development of communal infrastructure of Tombo such as educational and health facilities, roads and market, water supply system and community hall.
- The TVDA has a membership of 848 up to date, comprising residents of Tombo of all sectors and segments of the Tombo community, ethnic and professional.
- The TVDA is represented through a Board of 25 elected members including a president, vice-president and treasurer.
- The daily affairs of administration, creation of communal awareness and project implementation are carried out by a fully employed manager and secretary, together with working committees comprised of ordinary members of the TVDA with professional background.
- The TVDA charges contributions for services rendered as sole source of income; therefore the TVDA must from time to time rally for financial support for the implementation of major and micro-projects on self-help basis.
- Contributions from all sources towards self-help projects are strictly accounted for and acknowledged.

### **Projects implementation 1991/1992**

- off shore repair site construction (with FPPT assistance)
- wharf elevation (phase 1) (with FPPT assistance)
- internal road surface maintenance (with FPPT assistance)
- rehabilitation of old primary school building (with FPPT assistance)
- Waterloo Tombo road rehabilitation (with FPPT assistance)
- Tombo football field lay out (by Village Development Association)
- market re-location
- traditional birth attendants workshop (MOH)
- adult literacy class (Plan International)
- 4 weeks health camp (Voluntary Workcamp Association of Sierra Leone).

As a prelude to the official certification of the Association, over a period of more than three months the community had been addressed with several workshops and information campaigns on the aims and legal conditions of the Association. For that purpose, a local lawyer was contracted, who later on supervised the election procedures and was later retained as solicitor of the Association.

Immediately after the registration of the Association the VDB was dissolved and an interim board took over the affairs of further educating the population on the nature of the Association, campaigning for membership and preparing the first election of board-members of the TVDA.

After the installation of the Board of the TVDA, the most urgent tasks were to employ a suitable manager to secure the daily operation and to design and implement an organisational structure

and procedures of administration as far as they were not prescribed in the respective legal documents.



The following organisational structure has been adopted by the TVDA:

**TOMBO VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION LTD**  
**T V D A MEMBERSHIP elects board**

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS President	
Treasurer	Vice President
22 BOARD MEMBERS	
elect	

Employs

TVDA MANAGEMENT MANAGER	
ACCOUNTANT	SECRETARIAT/CASHIER
Chairs	

TVDA COMMITTEES

HEALTH & SANITATION	TECHNICAL	FINANCE	EDUCATION CULTURE	PUBLIC AWARENESS
CLINIC	WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM	BUDGET FINANC.	RE SCHOOL ADULT LIT.	COMMUNITY HALL
GARBAGE DISPOSAL	WHARF	PLANNG (PROJECTS)	SPORTS (FIELDS)	DONOR + SPONSOR RELATIONS
TOILETS SEWAGE	MARKET ROADS		THEATRE DANCE CHOIR	

(installed by the board)

The organisational chart displays four segments (levels) of the Association.

### **TVDA membership elects board**

Unlike a cooperative society, membership of the Association is not restricted to a certain professional or interest group, but rather open to all inhabitants of the village no matter what professional, ethnic or religious segment of the community they may belong to. Therefore membership can be obtained by any person of 18 years or above who has been residing in Tombo for the last three consecutive years. Membership has to be approved by the board and has to comply with the legal requirements of the Articles of the Association. Besides a minimal registration fee, there is no further membership contribution required so far. Members take part in Annual General Meetings, board elections (every three years) and are expected to participate in activities of the Association. They may be assigned as committee members. Up to date the membership of the TVDA has reached about 870.

### **The Board of Directors**

The board comprises the elected representatives of the various groups within the community, organised within the membership of the Association. The major groups so far:

**Ghana boat owners, Yelefu boat owners, fish processors, traders, wood cutters, Muslim congregation (religious leader), Christian congregation (religious leader), the women, the youth, the elders, the ethnic groups, the indigenous.**

The board is the overall decision making body of the Association. However, its functions are limited on the one hand by those of the manager who is in-charge of the day-to-day administration and supervision of implementation of board of directors' decisions and TVDA policies, and on the other hand by those of the committees (policy design and implementation).

Only the treasurer is signatory of the Association (together with the manager) whereas the president's role is limited to representation and mediation (chairman of the board) to play.

The manager/accountant and secretary/cashier are employees of the Association on a full time scale, with salary and social benefits.

The manager is charged with the day to day administration, implementation of policies as approved by the board and the executives of development projects and maintenance schemes. He has signature to the Association funds, together with the treasurer. He accounts for funds (as accountant) but does not handle cash.

## **The Committees**

Committees have been established to assist the manager and the board. Committee members are proposed by the manager to the board for approval. However, the manager can reject committee members if sponsored by the board in case of lack of expertise or commitment to the Association. Committee members have to be technicians. Their contribution is their expertise and commitment in order to rationalize the decision making process on subject matters, working out suitable and realistic policies and help in the implementation of projects, maintenance and operation of communal facilities.

## **Finance and Accountability**

One of the most crucial problems of Tombo's Development Organisation is the availability of financial resources and the proper handling of the funds involved.

According to past experience

- communal development is depending on continuous funding. In a commercialized community like Tombo, this cannot be substituted by voluntary provisions and contributions, be it labour or money. Voluntary contributions are irregular and cannot be anticipated, therefore don't secure any continuous operation or financial planning.
- an Association like the TVDA has to restrict itself to financing its operational costs (salaries, lawyer, office, etc...). These funds must be generated through utilization of Association owned assets and facilities.
- any other cost as maintenance of communal infrastructures and development projects must be financed through fund generation and services rendered by respective facilities (hospital, school, market, etc...). For significant investments, fund rallies and external funding (donors, sponsors) are necessary. It must be observed that major investments (schools, roads, clinics etc.) would create too much of a burden on a self help organisation and pose the risk of failure, which usually undermines the organisation. Major investments are genuine tasks of Government which cannot be substituted by self help - more so because self help organisations don't have any mandate of revenue collection.

## STRUCTURE OF THE TVDA BUDGET

### INCOME

INTEREST ON  
FUND DEPOSITS

service charges  
market  
wharf

water rate  
(of TVDA mandated  
operation of  
water supply system)

remainder of 10%  
social contribution (coop)

outboard diesel engine  
hiring scheme

income from commercial  
operations of community  
hall

donations, contributions

### EXPENDITURE

OPERATIONAL COSTS  
(salaries,lawyer,office  
costs,travelling,social  
occasions)

maintenance costs \*  
market  
wharf cleaning

maintenance of dam  
water taps

DEVELOPMENT FUND

Projects as proposed  
(Technical & Fin. Committees)  
and approved by Board

\* Village health centre is operating its own fund (drug revolving) which also makes provision for basic maintenance.

The Tombo school is presently launching a video centre for educational and entertainment purpose (education committee). Funds generated through this activity and contributions from the Parent Teachers Association are to provide for maintenance of the school building.

## 6. **Assessment of the organisational set-up**

The organisational structure of the TVDA has been worked out and tailored for the specific conditions in Tombo and as such reflect the needs and experiences within the community. However, it is the opinion of the author that some of the underlying rationales of the structures and procedures might be applicable elsewhere, since the problems and constraints to be solved don't prevail in Tombo alone.

### **Decision Making**

It has been one of the major aims of the set-up to rationalize decision making. Common experience in most African countries' cooperatives of abuse of institutions, utilising them as tools to facilitate individual or group interests of traditional, elected or self acclaimed leaders cannot be combatted through replacement of people but rather through improving transparency and rationality of decision making. Therefore policies and projects are worked out and proposed by subject matter specialists in committees under the chairmanship of the manager rather than by the board comprised by elected representatives of the community who might not possess a qualified judgement on issues like technical layout of a water system or organisation of a health campaign.

The increasing involvement of technical know-how should serve as a deterrent to abuses like politicking and mishandling of funds.

### **Management**

There is a need for organisations like the TVDA to have a person in-charge on a continuous and permanent base. Day to day management and administration as it occurs in a complex set-up like Tombo cannot be handled by unqualified and voluntary members even though they might be committed. The idea that self help organisations shall generally function on the basis of voluntary staff contributions often times forget the simple fact that the relevant people of a society usually are quite occupied with their personal business.

In order to minimize the eventuality of a business manager engaging himself in fraudulent practices, precautions can be taken by setting criteria for nomination:

- the manager is no indigenous - therefore lacking of backing in case of irregularities,
- the manager is a long term resident and house and business owner - thereby providing financial security and personal interest in the development of his environment,
- the manager has a sufficient educational background. Special training in management should be provided by sponsor,
- the manager has no personal quarrels with opinion leaders/elders of the community as well he is not biased with specific segments of the community. For that he can be considered neutral and serve even as a mediator in case of communal or board conflicts,
- although major decision maker in implementation and day-to-day business, he does not handle physical cash of the association.

## **Accountability**

Accountability standards are imposed by law regulating the financial affairs of the organisation (Act of Incorporation). This mainly prescribes a documentation of income expenditures and all other financial transactions (account system) and an annual audit.

Accountability is also an important issue to receive social support of the community/members. For that reason external accountability must be maintained in order to enhance the confidence and cooperation of the community. It is therefore not sufficient to maintain an orderly record system but furthermore there must be transparency of where funds are going. Money collected for maintenance therefore must be strictly used for only that purpose. It will surely not be appreciated by any community if service charges would be used for staff salaries of the association rather than for the continuation and improvement of these services.

## **7. Conclusions**

The experience of the Tombo Development Organisation shows that the generally suggested bottom up approach for self help organisations is not always in place. Under the conditions of immigration and the emergence of settlements with new developing rationalities specific support measures have to be provided to facilitate a basis for further community based, self sustaining institutions.

In the case of Tombo we believe that the previous change to village based responsibility for communal development and self reliant handling of organisation and management coincides with a change in the population development of Tombo. Over the last few years a much lower mobility (seasonal migration) has been observed. The fishing fleet has remained virtually stagnant. These observations suggest that Tombo now might enter a new phase of a rather stable settlement of which massive immigrations would belong to the past. It would be only under these conditions that the achievements made so far could be secured and an effective self governance could be maintained.

**As for success or failure - only the future can show.**

# **DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERFOLK ORGANIZATION BY THE ASSISTANCE OF INTEGRATED FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN SHENGE REGION, SIERRA LEONE.**

by

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Integrated Fisheries Development Project - Shenge SIERRA LEONE

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Sierra Leone is a coastal country lying between latitudes 6'55 and 10 North and longitudes 10 and 13'18 West on the South-East coast of West Africa. The climate is hot (30°C) and humid 80-90% with marked rainy season from May to September and dry season lasting for the rest of the year.

Sierra Leone has a coast line of approximately 350 km with three main estuaries: the Scarcest in the North, the Sierra Leone river in the West and Sherbro in the South.

It has a surface area of 32,000 km<sup>2</sup> bordering with Liberia and Guinea. The population of Sierra Leone (1985 Census) is 3.7 million. There are 12 main ethnic groups and of these, the Temnes in the North and the Mendes in the South are the largest as they constitute about 60% of the total population.

### **1.1 Present status of fisheries:**

The fisheries of Sierra Leone can be divided into three sub-sectors:

- a. Industrial fisheries (or commercial trawler operations)
- b. Inland fisheries
- c. Artisanal fisheries (marine and fresh water)

The marine fisheries resources constitute a biomass of 1,000,000 tons with a maximum allowable catch of 300,000 tons (1984 Research Survey USSR/SL).

The industrial fishing sub-sector is dominated by foreign fishing vessels which are represented ashore by local companies and agents. Total annual marine fish catch (1985-90) was recorded as 170,397 metric tons and the shrimp catch was 2,607 metric tons.

Inland fisheries are largely conducted during the dry season when the rivers are low and in areas where fish becomes isolated in pools and lakes. Fish catch in inland fisheries ranges between 11,000 to 16,000 tons per year.

The artisanal fisheries consist of small-scale inshore fisheries based largely on villages along the coast. A survey in 1972 identified 554 landing sites mainly located in the North

of Sherbro Islands and are clustered in the four broad areas of the Bullom Shore, Freetown Peninsula, Shenge Peninsula and Turtle-Sherbro Islands. The fishing fleet consist of 6,396 canoes ranging from one-man dugout canoes to 12-men planked canoes. Fishing gear used in this sector consists of hook and line, ring gill nets, set and drift nets, cast nets and beach seines. Average annual catch in the artisanal sector is about 46,142 metric tons (MANR, Fisheries Division).

It has been estimated (DR Domahina IMBO, 1990) that about 18,500 people are employed in the artisanal fishing sector of which 16,000 are full-time. Total involvement is estimated to be 50,000 people in the Primary and Secondary aspects of this fishery and of these women represent more than half of the participants.

## 1.2 Government policy and support for fisheries development

The Government of Sierra Leone, through the Department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has been pursuing a constructive policy for the development of fisheries and specially the artisanal fishing sector. Policy objectives stipulate Government's awareness and its efforts for material increase in the domestic production of fish and other aquatic resources by establishing necessary infrastructural facilities, establishing credit, marketing and distribution system. Furthermore to improve the efficiency of small-scale fisheries Government also promotes research and provides training in the fishing sector.

In these considerations, a number of projects were identified and implemented in order to foster development in the artisanal fishing sector. Amongst these projects are:

- a. GTZ funded Tombo Fisheries Pilot Project implemented in 1983.
- b. EC funded West North-West Artisanal Fisheries and Community Development Programme started in 1989 but was preceded by the Pilot Project implemented in 1983 at Yeliboya.
- c. FAO/UNDP funded Integrated Fisheries Development in Rural Fishing Villages, Shenge Region started in 1985 with a second phase was from 1991.

All these projects have an element of fishermen's organisation involving a process of cooperative development, with a view to ensuring the continuation of project activities when external support ceases.

## 2. **cooperative institution development under fao integrated fisheries development project in shenge region**

The Integrated Fisheries Development Project (SIL/89/007) started its operations in early 1985 and is now scheduled to the end of 1994. Funded by UNDP and the Sierra Leone Government, it is executed by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Forestry.



The project has been providing technical assistance for improvement of fish capture, processing and marketing of fish, improvement of public health care, and rural sanitation conditions. The project also extends assistance for supporting the artisanal fishing industry by supplying scarce fishing inputs, equipments, and credit through development of a sustained fishermen's organisation in the region.

## 2.1 Socio-economic condition of Shenge Region

Shenge is situated in the Southern Province of the country, in Kargboro Chiefdom under Moyamba District. The region consists of 13 fishing villages located on the Shenge Peninsula.

Shenge Peninsula is composed of red sandstones, about six meters high which is rapidly being encroached upon by the sea. The sublittoral bottom North of Shenge point is muddy and is about two meters deep. The shallow bottom West of the point consist of reefs, rocks and sand. The immediate beaches are quite sandy and narrow and are used for fish landings. The sandy parts are less than 25 meters at the lowest tide and almost completely covered at high tide.

Geographically, Shenge is isolated from other parts of the country. The nearest town and District Headquarters (Moyamba) is about 55 miles by road. The road was recently up-graded with funds provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The other feeder roads connecting various fishing villages located between 2 to 17 miles from Shenge are in bad and deplorable condition. The nearest fish trading centre is Tombo, located about 20 nautical miles by sea. Few and limited private transports are now plying (weekly trips) between Shenge and the capital, Freetown, a distance of 175 miles.

The Chiefdom headquarters is in Shenge village having a secondary school, a primary school, and a dispensary. The FAO Fisheries Project Office is also situated in Shenge village.

The population of the 13 fishing villages in the Shenge Peninsula is 8,000 and is composed of Temnes, Sherbros, and Mendes. Fishing is the principal economic activity and the operations of artisanal fishery in the region is dominated by Temne people. About 11% of the population is literate (can speak and understand English). The other professional activity is agriculture and 3 to 5% of the total population is engaged in farming activities in the area.

The fishing fleet in the region is made of 413 fishing boats which includes Ghana boats, Yellefufu boats and dugout canoes. About 1745 fishermen are engaged in fishing using mostly hook and line, set net, ring net and drift nets. The annual catch is approximately 13,000 tons. The common species are bonga (70% of total catch), guanguan, catfish, tenny, mackerel, snapper and lobster.

Usually, the womenfolk in the fishing villages are engaged in processing and marketing of fish. About 1410 fish processors are involved in fish processing and marketing.

About 90% of the total catch is processed (smoked) and marketed. Fish traders from terminal markets of Moyamba, (55 miles), Bo (124 miles) and Kenema (160 miles), who visit Shenge every week are the principal buyers of the fish being processed in the area.

The volume of fish catch fluctuates in accordance with varying climatic conditions. In general, seasonality in fish capture affects the price of fish and in turn the income of fisherfolk. The extreme bad months for the local fishing community are July and August when fishing and the associated activities of processing and marketing of fish are seriously affected by incessant rainfall.

### **3. Development of shenge central cooperative society**

Cooperative movement in the Shenge region was initiated by the FAO/UNDP, Integrated Fisheries Development Project. Nine cooperative societies were organised in 13 fishing villages and eventually the Shenge Central Cooperative Society was formed in December 1986 which is an apex cooperative society.

In the process of cooperative development in the region, 1985 to 1987 may be regarded as the period of pre-cooperative development when much of the works accomplished were concerned with the extension-motivation and organisation of an institutional basis for a cooperative set up in the area.

The Shenge cooperative was established with the ultimate objectives of improving the welfare of local fishing community through a process of natural cooperation by mobilising credit and other resources among its members. The project has been encouraging the cooperation to grow as an independent and viable cooperative organisation so that it can sustain its operations according to the need of the community in future.

The development as well as the sustainability aspects of the cooperative enterprise were also viewed as important considerations in order to accommodate and implement the UN Capital Development Fund (CDF) assistance funds committed for the improvement of artisanal fishing endeavours in Shenge region.

Indeed, since 1988, considerable efforts were initiated in the areas of institution building, capital formation, members education, credit extension and enterprise development which ultimately resulted in building the foundation of a sustained fishermen's organisation in the region.

At present, the Shenge Central Cooperative Society has 10 primary Village Cooperative Societies in 13 fishing villages in the region. It is managed by a board of directors made up of representatives from local fishing community, project, and the ministries involved in the process of development. The cooperative set up has 700 members: fishermen, fish processors but also members from other professions.

### 3.1 Institutional development

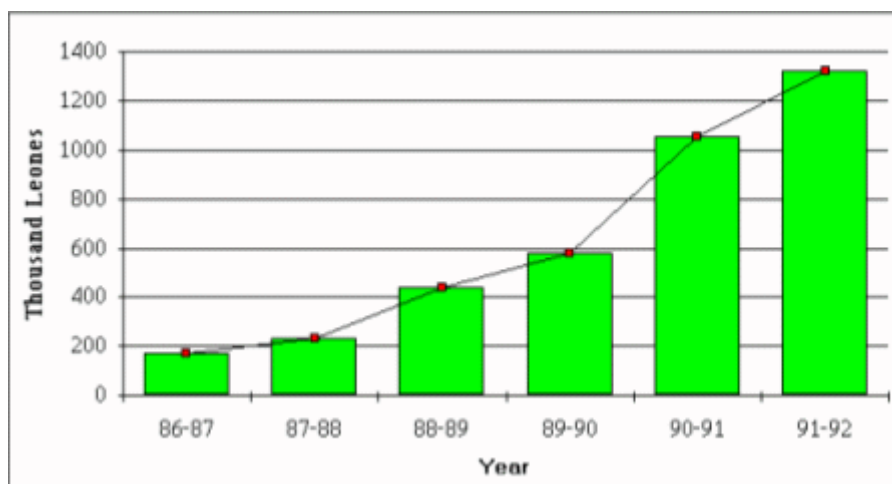
The components which were taken into consideration and emphasised in the process of institutional development of the cooperative organisation were memberships, members education, management training, and capital formation. Enrolment of new members was encouraged through motivation drives followed by intensive educative programmes initiated by the central society. The objective was to foster knowledge and understanding of members about the need, importance and potentiality of this fishermen's organisation in the local community which ultimately resulted in increased participation and higher degree of group work in the primary cooperative set up.

Management training was imparted by the technical staff to the personnel who were employed by the Central Cooperative Society since 1989-90 financial year in order to manage the operations of input procurement, finance, sales and credit extension of the cooperative society.

The managers of the primary cooperative societies were also trained on basic knowledge of cooperative management, bookkeeping and credit to be able to manage the functions of primary cooperative units.

In the context of capital formation, the central society emphasized the collection of rural savings (in the form of shares) from the members through a savings scheme incorporated in the Annual Development Plan of the cooperative society. In this effort, an average of Leone 250,000 of rural savings is mobilised from the fishing villages to the central society every year.

The accumulated savings (share contribution) of the society is Leone 1,321,407 (as at June 30, 1992) and the growth in savings collection is shown in the following graph:



### 3.2 Business development

According to the need of the community, the cooperative has been operating in two major areas:

- Input distribution
- Credit extension

Until June 1988, the only item of the input distribution package was fuel (petrol and kerosene) which usually tied up almost 70% of the working capital of the society and which contributed about 92% to the annual revenue of the cooperative.

In the area of credit extension, a short-term credit package is in operation since late 1986 80,000 Leone approximately 25% of the working capital potentials of the cooperative society was disbursed as credit during 1987-88 financial year. The recovery was not very encouraging due to lack of management and extension awareness.

Under such circumstances, objective planning for the development of the existing business became necessary in order to address the following operational problems:

- the risks involved in sole trading of fuel in terms of supplying, transportation and storage.
- financial limitation owing to shortage of working capital in the business.

Accordingly, a policy of diversification as well as expansion of the existing business was adopted in 1989-90 financial year, which not only would reduce the risks involved but would cater for additional funds for potential investment opportunities in the line of business. This approach involved implementing an input distribution scheme by establishing a Central Retail Store and the supply net work for various consumer items which are needed by the local community. Additional fund for this venture was acquired through encouragement for

increased savings, reinvestment of dividends by the members and also through introduction of a special deposit scheme for prospective outboard engine buyers.

Eventually, the Central Cooperative Retail store was established and started functioning in September, 1989. It represents a unique institutional approach to stabilise as well as to make the supply of necessary consumer good available to the community.

The cooperative store is now dealing in 100 different items whereby everyone from the bread maker to ultimate consumer in the community is now benefitting from the services provided by the cooperative. The turnover in the retail business amounted to Leone 20,526,007 during 1991-92 operational year and contributed 73% to the annual gross earnings of the society.

**Table 1.** Annual Turnover of the Retail Business of the Cooperative Society

Financial year	1988-1989	1989-1990	1990-1991	1991-1992
Turnover, sales (Le)	1,320,740	6,063,841	11,442,148	20,526,007

Side-by-side, the cooperative also continued its efforts of retailing fuel which is essentially needed by the local community in the domestic, fish processing and fishing sectors. The cooperative has been supplying 12,000 gallons of fuel (petrol and kerosene) on average, to the fishing community every year.

In order to expand the input supply net work, a plan for establishing five satellite Village Retail Stores is in process which will ensure the supply of necessary consumer goods at the doorsteps of the villagers in the fishing villages.

In a situation of scarce supply and increasing cost of necessary fishing inputs, the extension of credit has become a priority area in which the cooperative now extends sufficient institutional efforts to finance the growing credit needs of the community in order to support artisanal fishing endeavours in the villages.

Based on the results and the experience gained from the experimental short-term and medium term credit package implemented during 1988-89 and 1989-90 operational years, the cooperative has now formalised the operations of the credit extension programme by institutionalising the following credit lines:

- Short-term credit (up to six months) for small-scale investments on fishing input, processing and marketing of fish and other income generating activities. Loans are extended to members under collateral/personal/group guarantee arrangements.

- Medium term credit (up to 12 months for investments on fishing inputs and equipments - motorisation). Loans are extended to members under security and personal/group guarantee arrangements.

Apart from the response of the community to potential credit needs, the disbursement in the short-term credit package has increased every year with increases in the size of individual loan requests because of continued inflationary effects on general business activities. This tendency was creating pressure on the capital outlays of the cooperative and as a result the cooperative restrict the extension of loan in the short-term credit line maintaining a maximum 25% allocation of the available working capital fund for this purpose.

In the medium term credit line, so far 21 outboard engines were disposed to members under existing credit terms of the cooperative society.

The performance of these credit lines in the cooperative set up is quite encouraging with excellent recovery rates. The trend of loan disbursement (annual), and the recovery in the credit lines of the cooperative is represented in the following table:

**Table 2.** Credit disbursement and recovery rates

Credit Line	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Short-term	80,000	140,000	105,000	611,760	1,636,215
Medium-term Disbursement	-	3,135,000	2,221,100	1,036,800	
Recovery Rates	-	96,2%	93,0%	96,7%	93%

In consideration of the growing need of credit and the trend in which members of the community are now more attracted by and accept the formal credit package, the cooperative now plans to decentralise a component of the short-term credit extension programme to the primary societies in order to make loan services available within the reach of average members of the fishing villages.

### 3.3 Profitability and growth

Although the prevailing conditions of the economy have been difficult (the fretting effects of inflation and devaluation), the cooperative has managed to make productive use of the society's capital fund to generate as well as to maintain a progressive flow of revenue every year. The initiatives for diversification and expansion of the business line have contributed to increasing the earning capacity of the business by reducing risks resulting from uncertainty in the fuel supply sector

The contribution of each business line to the annual gross earnings and the extent of profitability of the cooperative business as a whole is represented in the following table:

**Table 3.** Annual profit of the Shenge Cooperative

Business	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92
Fuel Supply	96%	98%	92%	24%	67%	21%
Consumer Input Supply	-	-	4%	64%	27%	52%
Credit Extension	2%	2%	4%	12%	6%	27%
Gross Annual Earning	176,179	130,735	254,312	615,532	2,243,246	3,589,749
Net Profit	171,578	87,537	175,060	402,156	1,692,345	2,280,195

The worth of the total assets of the cooperative is Leone 9,236,414 (as at June 30, 1992). The average annual rate of return on total assets is 25%. The cooperative has been offering a reasonable amount of patronage dividend to the members from its net earnings every year.

However, the financial resources contributed by members have been utilised to the extent possible to support on-going operations as well as to finance other prospective areas of investment and eventually, the cooperative has manifested a steady growth followed by growths in the membership, in total assets and operations of the organisation.

#### 3.4 Operational problems.

The main problem relating to the development of business actually emerges from the macro economic situations of the country. The extent of inflation coupled with a series of devaluations, have been causing continuous increases in the general price level and as a result, it was difficult for the cooperative to keep on financing the on-going operations and at the same time to finance incremental investment needed for expansion of the existing business. The additional income generated from the operations in a given time happened to be used for the same level of operations because of interim increases in the price level. Such limitations led to a constrained growth in the working capital fund of the cooperative by restricting the potentialities of the business for its expansion in the areas of credit extension and consumer input supply.

#### 4. **Performance and Sustainability**

Continued efforts in the institution building and business development have ultimately developed this cooperative venture into a successful fishermen's organisation in the region which is now capable of taking care of the interest and needs of the local fishing community.

In a nutshell, the following points may be attributed for the success of this fishermen's organisation operating in Shenge Region:

- Support and assistance from the Integrated Fisheries Development Project in the formation and operations of the cooperative organisation.
- Proper planning of financial and operational activities (Annual Development Plan and Budget) and adoption of effective monitoring measures as well as periodic evaluation of planned activities to determine the rate of progress.
- Intensive members educative programmes to foster members understanding and to develop group cohesiveness in the primary cooperative set up. This finally resulted in establishing a smooth inter-personnel relationship between the primary and the central tiers of the cooperative.
- Appropriate management training imparted to the personnel engaged in the management of operations which eventually established an effective and centralised management base having control on procurement, sales, and credit extension activities of the cooperative.

In consideration of sustainability, the activities which were taken care by the cooperative are concerned with the improvement and strengthening the elements of institution building, generation and utilization of fund resources, and continuation of services which favour community and fisheries development.

Measures were taken to re-structure the management and administrative set up of the cooperative organization. The employees, so far recruited, are trained to develop skills required for efficient management of its operations. Further more, the cooperative has been registered with the Cooperative Department under the Ministry of Trade and thus it became a part of the national system. The Government is now responsible for the sustainability of the cooperation through the working of concerned ministries in the related areas of management, audit, inspection and training.

Under existing conditions of the economy, the fund resources so far mobilized and generated by central society are not adequate for expansion of the business in consideration of the growing needs of the community. But implementation of the CDF assistance schemes in cooperative organization will help it to acquire additional working capital required by the cooperative.

Continuation as well as accessibility of consumer goods services to the fishing villages will depend on the improvement of road (feeder road) conditions and development of public transport system in the region. The supply of fishing inputs and extension of credit will be continued by the CDF assistance through the short-term and medium-term credit lines of the cooperative society.



## 5. **Conclusion**

The Cooperative Development Programme of the Fisheries Project has been successfully materialized by establishing the cooperative institution which is now operational, viable and equally beneficial to the local fishing community. However, in consideration of the existing macro-economic situation of the country and the geographical isolation of the area, in which this fishermen's organization is functioning, yet is much to be achieved. The project and the Government will need to assist and support this enterprise for its continued development and growth.

## **CASE STUDY ON FISHERMEN ORGANISATIONS AT KABACK**

by Aboubacar OULARE and Fode Aly CAMARA

### **1. Geographic situation**

Kaback Island is located between 13°19 and 13°25 longitude South and 09°16 and 09°24 latitude North. It is 21 km long, 6 to 8 km wide, and lies at around 35 km South East of Conakry. Kaback is a flat and low island; 90% of the land rise less than 6 m above sea surface. It consists of verdant meadows, muddy in places with sand belt cutting across from the North to the South. Rice fields cover almost 25% of arable land and ensure the supply of this commodity to Forecariah prefecture and at times Conakry. The island has a tropical humid monsoon type climate. The annual total rainfall is on the average 4 m. A third of this falls during the months of July-August. Temperatures vary from 23 to 31°C (with an average of 27°C). The population is around 8,000 inhabitants of which 600 are fishermen. Total annual fish production is between 5,000 to 7,000 tonnes. The IDAF Programme in 1988 identified and formulated an integrated artisanal fisheries development project in Kaback. This project which is funded by UNDP became operational in 1989 and its headquarters is located at Matakang a small village some 4 kilometre South West.

### **2. Description of the national situation**

In pursuance of article 2 of ordinance 005/PRG/88, of 10 February 1988 on the general status of cooperative or pre-cooperative type organisations in Guinea Republic, villagers associations are defined as duly registered voluntary organisations with a socio-economic objective of people living in the same neighbourhood, and sharing common interests. Their aim is to promote, harmonize or coordinate all socio-economic and cultural activities geared towards the well being of its members and that of the village community. These village groups could be turned into cooperatives depending on the importance of their economic activities and their capacity for social organisation.

Based on this definition, we can say that village associations are small-scale voluntary organisations, self-promotion organisations which could maintain themselves through their own means the functioning of which is under the responsibility of its members who define its objectives and goals. Indeed the Kaback has helped in the setting up and functioning of such organisations on the island.

### **3. Description of local situation**

For the past three years there have been a number of major structural changes in Guinea which could help reinforce the role of the Kaback fishing project as a testing pilot project for artisanal fishery. One of these changes is the creation of Kaback project. The Kaback project has an integrated multidisciplinary team of specialist technicians and extension agents which provides technical backstopping to the fishing community. The team is the Fisheries Development Unit (FDU) which is attached to the Office for the Promotion

of Artisanal Fisheries (OPPA) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MARA). OPPA supervises and coordinates projects of the artisanal fishery sector in Guinea. In addition to its major supervisory and coordination functions, OPPA has established a network of 14 field teams of four members each (five at Conakry and in zones where there are important fishing activities) in order to help promote artisanal fisheries locally.

This network of teams is directed by area leaders. Their main task is to help fishing communities and projects in the field. The Kaback project provides training to these teams and expects that the officers of OPPA who come for training at Kaback will constitute very positive elements for the work in the field.

#### **4. Development of village development council**

At the beginning, the partners of the project in each village were the district committee, the council of elders and the village head. Although they were representing local interests, they could not adequately facilitate the emergence of new reports among villagers. It was therefore necessary to involve more persons in each village so as to create a momentum which would motivate all social groups and sectors of activity. Thus to reach immediate and long term goals, the project started by backing the creation and organisation of new community structures more favourable to full participation of villagers in changes that concern them. This participation is concretely translated by the active involvement of villagers in the identification of problems, in taking of decisions, organisation, planning, implementation and carrying out of activities during which they will gather basic data to promote the integrated and self-sufficient development of their community.

##### Early creation stage of Village Development Council

The provision of credit is a major component in the project. The methodology and strategy to be followed to implement the participative integrated approach proposed in the project document, could not have been applied without the permanent reflection and assessment which went together with the implementation of the joint credit system. The Village Development Council (VDC) is a structure geared towards self development of the community and was identified as a privileged partner in decision making concerning development strategies for the village.

To be a member of the VDC one needs to belong to a founding family of the village; be above 20 years old, or be actively involved in fishing or one of its secondary activities. There are also representatives of women groups, foreigners and of the state apparatus within the VDC.

The VDC of each village was backed for the acquisition of fishing inputs by a credit committee comprising: the national director of the project; Economic Units Committees coordinator; Economic Units Committees credit director; chairman of the VDC; a member of the VDC; district chairman.

At the beginning, one could not talk of a mini-project since no study on identification was conducted and the implementation of these mini-projects depended on reimbursement of the credit allocated for the financing.

An assessment of the early stage of the organisation of VDC indicates that almost all the results considered satisfactory were related to the credit system. The implementation of the system exposed the FDU to the real needs of the communities and the population have been taught how to handle them. Furthermore, representativity of the various social groups in the villages did not in itself sufficient impact on the mobilisation of various associations for the implementation of activities. Thus, at the request of the various basic groups, another reorientation led to the creation of Economic Unit Committees (EUC) depending on the types of economic actors for the follow up of activities relating to their felt needs. VDC and EUC have been instrumental in the identification and realisation of mini-projects.

## **5. Description of the present situation of the organisation**

In addition to the Economic Units Committees (EUC) VDCs exist in Matankang, Konimodia and Khounyi communities. VDCs are supposed to be the interaction institution between the community and the project to ensure continuity and perennity of results acquired during the project. We feel that this is possible because the VDCs represent not only the traditional power and the state but also fishermen, fish smoking women and wholesale fish mongers and young people, in short a cross section of the community. Through their interaction with the community, VDCs also have responsibility for coordinating actions conducted by villagers for their own development. Consequently, they presently share with FDU the management of the credit system, the initiation and the coordination of mini projects for community development or for promotion of fishing and the management of VDC funds.

One of the most essential tasks for VDCs is to develop contacts with different target groups, leaders or other economic actors who are members of the community. This communicative approach can be felt: at the individual level; the family level; during meetings of people belonging to the same environment or involved in identical economic activities; and during meetings with traditional, political authorities, etc...

At the level of basic groups, many items come into play when backing economic actors to make their activities profitable: the possibility to improve or develop production through the acquisition of adequate fishing equipment for fishermen; the possibility to avoid heavy losses after the catch through the acquisition of adequate processing equipment; the possibility to improve the marketing system by supplying to the community transportation means for traders. In most of these instances the VDC has played a major role.

Similarly the level of EUC, the VDC has been instrumental: to bring and help EUCs benefit from technical and financial support necessary for the development of their activities; to help sensitize and train EUC members; to ensure the management of village shops connected to the various economic activities of EUCs; to facilitate external relations; to

identify and implement, in line with budgetary facilities, all other socio-economic activities for the community.

## 6. Evaluation of FDU and VDC performance

The FDU has been useful in organising people in order to foster the development of representative communities at village level capable of leading to the active commitment of fishermen and other villagers as well. The VDC on its part has been an undeniable support structure in helping the community attain certain immediate objectives like:

- the commissioning of different backstopping institutions for fishing activity and community development;
- searching of additional financing for the purchase of new inputs for fishing according to the needs expressed by economic actors;
- increase of financial resources to boost the funds for running, equipping, and community development as well as the village credit fund. Present beneficiaries of these funds are villagers as well as FDU members.

To ensure VDC is armed to accomplish its tasks the project provides backstopping e.g. organises courses to familiarise leaders of basic groups with credit management methods, the implementation of a self promotion scheme for basic health; etc..

Furthermore, the Project has set up a system of data gathering on artisanal fishery and in collaboration with the Fisheries Research Centre in Conakry taken into account the existing capabilities of the project.

These information will be very useful when members of EUC should intervene as advisers to VDCs to back them up in defining, programming and managing village level activities as well as equipment funds and village credit fund. During the present period there was particularly a need to ensure that some of these existing infrastructures were correctly managed and maintained by villagers.

However, at the request of and with the participation of VDCs other infrastructures of a productive and social nature were implemented or started. These include:

- commissioning of an electrification grid for the village of Khunyi, Konimodia, Matakang as well as Matakang lighthouse;
- organisation and monitoring of cereal stocks in three villages and installation of rice threshers;
- technical backstopping for the construction and running a primary health centre by Matakang VDC.

Another activity financed by the community development fund is installation of a communication radio which contributes in reducing the isolation feeling of the inhabitants of the island.

These mini-projects were fully financed on revenues accruing from fishing inputs and deposited in the community development fund of each village.

Besides, infrastructures should be envisaged in the field of production (landing site improvement, water tank, ice productionconservation) as well as in the social field (water points, sanitation, schools, dispensaries, improvement of housing). These achievements should seek right from the beginning the active participation of local structures in order to reinforce self development idea. To ensure the perenity of present activities, fishermen contribute towards generators running costs. Out of the total contributions, a portion is reserved for depreciation of equipments. VDC members revised the rules previously applied for selection of beneficiaries of the joint credit to improve on the repayment. By the same token EUC members were able to work in depth with basic group leaders, whom they trained in economic analysis (for example on recurrent charges and the break even point that fishermen should target if they don't want to be indebted for nothing).

The role of the State to provide the necessary conditions for the proper functioning of the organisation after it has been established, and its legal articles of association defined. Nevertheless, the VDC could run the risk of failure if its members are not well educated the management of the properties is not kept and if the technical backstopping given the VDC is inadequate of the VDC is not permanent.

## **7. Conclusion**

During phase I, the project had a major socio-economic impact on the Island of Kaback which was manifested in an increase of fish production; an improvement of revenues of the population and a considerable reduction of rural exodus. Furthermore, the reputation of its national team with other fishermen communities and artisanal fishery development projects in Guinea is highly appreciated, judging from the ever growing number of local visitors interested in the methods devised by the project. The Kaback experience is also now being implemented in other projects in the country.

# **PROMO-PECHE COMPANY: FISHERFOLK ORGANISATION IN THE ARTISANAL FISHERY SECTOR IN GABON**

by Jean François RENAUD and D. David

## **1. Introduction and national setting**

At national level, deep sea fishing is practised along the coasts of the country that is over a length of 700 kms. There is also a sizeable continental shelf with very good prospects for fishing but quite poor marketing opportunities apart from Libreville (located in the coastal North) since 75% of the catch (except shrimps) is processed there. The national capital Port Gentile harbour, which is the major port for shrimps, plays a secondary role, since it is not linked to the rest of the country by road. The same applies for lagoon areas that are spread down to the South (Fernan Van, Agile, Ndogo, Banio) and which are isolated on the coast and have access problems to the sea because of the surf.

As a result of the above, almost all the problems that are likely to be confronted on a national basis with regards the exploitation and marketing of fisheries products is concentrated in the capital.

## **2. The fisheries in Gabon**

Fishing in Gabon exists in six major forms:

- industrial fishing with trawlers and angling;
- fishing of shrimps;
- artisanal angling in large plastic boats 12 m long (Gabonese shipowner and Sao Tomé labour);
- artisanal fishing in canoe in estuaries and on the coast (Nigerian, Togolese, Beninese) with nets and tackles for deep sea;
- fishing in lagoon (Gabonese) with nets or tackles for deep waters;
- fishing for bonga which is usually smoked mainly by Nigerians. This fish is caught with encircling nets.

It is to be observed though, that there are few indigenous fishermen, less than 2,000 out of the estimated 6,000. They are mostly present on lagoons where they practise a sort of seasonal fishing for sweet water carps in the dry season, and for the rest of the year they engage in subsistence fishing. High sea fishing which can be practised all year round is largely left to foreigners. But as almost everywhere, these fishermen are very individualistic. This does not facilitate any regrouping nor training which could improve their activities and methods.

For a producer and at the same time a big consumer of fish, Gabon remains a country where imports are quite important: 15,000 tonnes imported as opposed to 21,000 locally produced (data 1984), for a country whose local potentials could by far be adequate, since maximum sustainable catch is estimated at 56,000 tonnes for a biomass of 140,000 tonnes.

This is largely due to the fact that fishing equipments and fuel are no longer tax exempted, and only major fishing companies have the possibility to purchase their supplies in the sub-region. They are thus able to make on fuel for example, some savings that can reach 50% of costs but their production, which is not diversified, is not much appreciated by Gabonese consumers. Unfortunately, artisanal fishermen who produce both for local and export markets do not have this possibility to save on costs and are, therefore, at a disadvantage. They are therefore inclined towards the informal trade where they can get very high selling prices.

For the consumer the implication is that fish prices are quite high compared to his purchasing power and conditions of hygiene are not always met. Therefore imported frozen fish which comfortably meets conditions of hygiene and cost, sells more favourably than the local product. Even fishermen who try improve on their activities with the help of the Artisanal Fishermen Regrouping Centre of Owendo also have financial difficulties and are less motivated to involve themselves more into the sector.

### **3. The birth of the Owendo centre and its operation**

The Owendo Centre is peculiar in the sub-region. First of all, a few words on its historical background. EEC, Italian cooperation and Gabonese government financed an artisanal fishermen regrouping centre in Libreville, Gabon, the construction of which started in January 1983 to be ended in February 1984. Final cost at that time was about 2,450,000 ECU or 840 million F CFA.

It was managed from May 1984 till August 1985 by the Forestry Commission and a technical assistance; from September 1985 to November 1988 by a private company", Centra Peche". In 1988 PROMO-PECHE company took over the centre from the former company which was unable to meet its commitments with the Ministry of Forestry.

The causes of the failure of the project are many, but for the Owendo Centre to succeed on the basis of initial planned objectives,

- statistical estimates of production as provided by experts who conducted the basic study in 1981 (in 15 days) had to be accurate. Furthermore, the Owendo Centre should have the absolute monopoly of the sale of the whole artisanal catch taken in the estuary of Libreville (except bonga) and/or succeed in convincing all artisanal fishermen to renounce their individual trade and traditional links with women sellers in markets and sell all their production to the centre.



It was still is a pure illusion to believe that you can force fishermen to deliver their product to a given centre unless this centre is managed by themselves or it offers them prices and advantages(credit, free ice etc...) higher to those offered by women sellers. Unfortunately the centre was proposing low prices (market price list) and a lot of promises (work permit, credit, tax free fuel) have never been met.

The reasons for the success of PROMO-PECHE in this context are many, but they can mostly be explained by the will of its leaders and the integration of the company into the national fabric. As a matter of fact PROMO-PECHE is a Gabonese limited company with an equity of 20,000,000 F CFA, registered as small or medium scale company which for more than four years struggled to develop fishing by:

- playing a commercial role of buying and selling fresh fish for the local market under good hygienic conditions;
- exporting fresh fish product towards Europe (between 5 to 15 tonnes a month),
- setting up and managing with its own proper finance a credit scheme on two revolving lines of credit of an amount of 70 million F CFA to assist fishermen; and
- managing canoes for Gabonese shipowners.
- Indeed, the company has released 270 million F CFA in grant to fishermen to help them renew their engine or net through a system of reciprocal trust and a clearly defined contract;

Though a private company, PROMO-PECHE has always based its action on consultation with the Ministry of Forestry and the Department of Fisheries in order to keep intact the initial understanding which helped create the centre namely to be of help to fishermen. Morally speaking a selfless engagement to help artisanal fishermen but without incurring loss to the company.

The three preferential directions of the Company's actions are to help in the development of artisanal fisheries, assist Gabonese nationals and improve exports. This is because industrial fisheries although it has good yields does not interest PROMO-PECHE. The trawlers involved do not bring in the exportable quality and anglers also do not bring in fish that can justify export considering the total tonnage needed.

Fishing by canoe in estuaries and on the coast does not bring in sufficient fish to satisfy local demand, and it cannot develop either because of trawling and the use of small mesh nets laid by bonga fishermen who destroy immature fish, however PROMO-PECHE still maintains this activity with those who have been working with it right from the beginning through credit lines; but export or wholesale markets could not be envisaged. The company ensures a regulatory role on the market by stocking when the fish is brought in, while maintaining normal prices.

- it has a great flexibility;
- it is the backbone for a relaunching of not growing of artisanal fishing using boats by nationals;
- it deals with a quality of fish which although it is not locally eagerly sought after, is in great demand on export markets.

It's only drawback is the distance between the fishing port and fishing grounds. Canoes leave Libreville or Port Gentile located in the north for fishing grounds in the south which they reach 36 hours later, in order to fish for two or three days. This leads to: high running costs (fuel, ice food supplies etc); and premature wear and tear of propelling equipment as the canoes are not made to carry huge cargoes. All this ends up by negative or disastrous operating balance sheets. Owners lose between 80 and 180,000 F CFA every month (after deduction of depreciation costs).

#### **4. Planned activities**

PROMO-PECHE in the endeavour to continue its help to artisanal fisheries in Gabon, increase its exports, better utilize its potentials for internal credits has decided with some Gabonese shipowners to unite their efforts towards export, and to create a complementary backstopping centre to that of Owendo in southern Gabon.

Preliminary studies indicate no risk of saturation of the market as France alone could absorb 200 tonnes of fish every month; and the additional 35 tonnes per month this proposed action will bring could be very easily disposed of at current market conditions.

Furthermore this initiative could among others: open up an enclaved region; create job opportunities and employ skilled labour; enhance national interest for this type of fishing and maybe enticement for nationals to become fishermen; indirectly have an impact on other economic operators (airlines, forwarding agencies...).

## **FISHERFOLK ECONOMIC INTEREST GROUPS IN SENEGAL: A DIAGNOSIS.**

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### **1. Survey of the maritime artisanal fishery in senegal**

In Senegal the fishery sector plays an important role in the national economy, notably for the resulting added value but also for the job openings it offers, the supply of animal proteins, and the currency contributions.

The artisanal fishery is by far the most important sub-sector. It employs 35,000 fishermen (out of the 45,000 globally recorded) on board the 4,500 operational canoes (i.e. likely to sail). Nearly 90% of the canoes are motorized. The fishing techniques used are extremely varied: handlines, fixed and drifting gillnets, beach seines, purse seines, surrounding gillnets, racks, and longlines.

The related activities (fish trade, artisanal processing, repairs and maintenance of the fishing equipment, building of canoes...) create numerous jobs onshore, nearly 150,000 which represents 10% of the total active population (CHABOUD and KEBE, 1990).

The added value resulting from the maritime artisanal fishery is about 72 billion FCFA representing 62% of the total added value produced by the fishery sector in Senegal (BRENDEL et al., 1991). Far from being based on an economy of subsistence, it greatly contributes to the supply of local factories (this branch represents 20% of the added value induced by the sub-sector) and thereby to the equilibrium of the balance of trade. It is also an important component in the national policy for food self-sufficiency. Assuring over \_ (250,000 tons a year) of total landings Oceanographic Research Centre of Dakar - Thiaroye (CRODT, 1991), it covers a relatively important part of both the rural and urban populations' needs of animal proteins.

The dynamism of the maritime artisanal fishery sub-sector results from the combination of several factors.

#### **1.1 Exceptional natural conditions**

The Senegalese coast is 700 km long, from Saint Louis to Roxo Cape. Traditionally, five geographical areas stand out from the North to the South: Grand Côte, Cape Verde, Petite Côte, Sine Saloum and Casamance.

The resources exploited by the artisanal fishery are concentrated on the continental plateau. The total area comprised between the isobathes 0 and 20 m is estimated at 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> (REBERT, 1983).

The marine environment is characterized by two distinct seasons:

- between May and November the hot waters of the Gulf of Guinea flow up Senegalese open sea. During that period the waters have a relatively low productivity;
- the cold season starts from November and is mainly characterized by the up-welling cold water caused by the trade winds. These masses of water are very rich in nutrient salts enabling a heavy increase of animal and vegetal biomass.

The presence and abundance of the species exploited by maritime artisanal fishery depend largely on these seasonal phenomena and their importance.

### 1.2 A long standing fishery tradition

There is a population of skilled fishermen, dynamic and primarily orientated towards marine activities. These fishers mainly belong to three large communities: Wolof of Guet Ndar (Saint Louis), Lébou of Petite Côte and Cape Verde, Sérère-Nyominka of Saloum Islands. Only the people from Guet Ndar get their incomes exclusively from fishing. Within the other ethnic groups, most of the fishermen are farmers. The fishermen's spouses who do part of the farmwork are also involved in the landings valorization activities (artisanal processing and marketing of fresh fish.)

Migrations have become part of these fishing communities' way of life. They move along the whole coast as far as Guinea, which enables them to have a considerable influence on the other maritime populations (CHABOUD and KEBE, 1990).

### 1.3 An ability of adaptation to changes

Two major changes occurred in the canoe fishing since 1960: the motorization of canoes initiated in the 1950s and from 1973 the introduction of the purse seine (CHABOUD and KEBE, 1986). These changes have greatly contributed to the increase of catches in the past years. Between 1981 and 1989, the quantity of fish landed increased from 137,000 to nearly 250,000 tons (BAKHAYOKHO and KEBE, 1991; CRODT, 1990; 1991). Moreover the fishermen have introduced and developed ice canoes (canoes equipped with ice boxes. They are used for line fishery and stay at sea for more than three days). This technique together with the use of the echo sounders, the compass, and the longline led to a greater exploitation of high value species.

Therefore the Senegalese maritime artisanal fishery sub-sector is actually to technological innovations.

#### 1.4 An important market

The population growth, nearly 3% followed by a rapid urbanization justifies the importance of the local market. The increase of catches, mostly that of small coastal pelagics has brought about a spectacular development of fresh fish trade. Artisanal processing is practised at all places where artisanal fishery is landed of which it absorbs about 40% of the landings. In some areas (Casamance) this rate can reach 70% (CORMIER-SALEM, 1990). Far from being a marginal activity, a simple use of surpluses, it has evolved side by side with the production in the past decades (DURAND, 1982).

The marketing of the maritime artisanal catches is achieved by a good many traders and processors whose organization and methods might be qualified as informal because most of them are beyond administrative control. It is done in two ways; the marketing of fresh fish by the fish mongers who supply in priority the local market; the marketing of processed fish through a very important artisanal processing industry and some traders who supply both the national market and that of the other African countries. As far as the fresh fish is concerned, there is a steady demand abroad for the species priced on the international market: cephalopods, shrimps, soles, crawfish, and groupers (CHABOUD and KEBE, 1989).

#### 1.5 An adequate institutional setting

Different departments take part in the planning, management, and control of activities related to the maritime artisanal fishery, the development of which is considered as a priority by the authorities. The Department of Marine Fisheries (DOMF) in the Ministry of Marine Affaires (MCMA), is responsible for implementing the management and development policy of maritime fisheries. Three development projects are being carried out:

- the Ziguinchor Artisanal Maritime Fishery Development Project Economic Cooperation Central Bank (ZAMFDP) started in January 1987 with the financing of Economic Cooperation Central Bank (ECCB) and the European Development Fund (EDF) (1.684 billion FCFA). The objective during the first phase was to train young fishermen in various fields (fishing techniques, preventive mechanics, fish hygiene, management) and at the same time help them acquire the tools of production. The second phase aims mainly at the operators of the artisanal fishery sector (fisherfolk, women processors, fish traders, mechanic, black smith...);
- the Programme of Assistance to the Artisanal Fisheries in Senegal (PROPECHE) was established in 1989 with the help of Canada (4.6 billion FCFA). Its goal is to support self development efforts by the artisanal fishery operators: distribution of credit, and support to private initiatives through its SERVI-PECHE component; the improvement of fishing techniques, gears, existing processing technique, and experimentations of new ones through its component ATEPAS;
- the Little Coast Artisanal Fisheries Development Project (LCAFDP) started in 1988. Its main goal was to provide equipment to fishermen, fishmongers, and carpenters through line of credit domiciled with NBFCS (2.740 billion FCFA).  
The MCMA is also helped by two structures:

- a scientific structure, i.e. CRODT which is part of the Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research (SIAR) under the responsibility of Ministry in-charge of Rural Development and Hydraulics (MRDH). It is CRODT's responsibility to follow up the evolution of the fisheries and to propose development and management schemes taking into account both biological factors and socio-economic constraints;
- the structure for the Protection and Supervision of Fisheries in Senegal (PSFS). Let us mention that the area of the 6 nautical mile is exclusively reserved to artisanal fishery.

As for the planning of the sector, the Ministry of Economy Finance and Planning (MEFP) together with the ministries prepares the studies necessary to the elaboration of the four year plan and makes financial provisions for its been carried out. It follows up the projets, the carrying out of the scheme and monitors the results. The Institute of Food Technology (IFT) which depends on the Ministry of Industrial Development (MID) research on the improvement of fish processing and packaging techniques.

Lastly, the fisheries policy is enforced through two organisms:

- the Bank for Encouragement of Fisheries and Related Industries (BEFRI), was created in 1967. Its funds come from the tax levied on fishing licences, and taxes related to the delivery of fishmongers' cards. It supports export sea products, finances research and market survey programmes, participates in the financing of infrastructures and grants subsidies to fisherfolk organizations;
- the Centre for Assistance in the Motorization of Canoes (CAMC) was established in 1972. Administered by the DOMF, it is responsible for the distribution of duty-free outboard engines and spare parts. It is also in charge of the management and supply of maintenance satellites and the reparation of engines set up in the major landing sites. Since 1985 the CAMC is incorporated in the CAPAS. Moreover, the fuel used by the fishers is subsidised.

As far as the financing is concerned, the Senegalese National Bank for Agricultural Credit (NBFCS) was created in April 1984 within the framework of facilitating the implementation of the National Agricultural Policy (NAP). It is mainly expected to provide rural people with an appropriate credit system to satisfy all their needs. It is the paying agent for LCAFDP and ZAMFDP line of credit. The NBFCS and PROPECHE have signed an institutional agreement protocol for the creation of a credit suitable for the artisanal fisheries.

Despite its astonishing results, the sub-sector is facing a number of difficulties. The economic agents badly lack funds for the exploitation of fishery resources. Access to credit is difficult in spite of the efforts made by the NBFCS. Periodically there are problems of supply of spare parts for the reparation of outboard engines. As for the valorization of landed products, there is inadequate conservation procedures (handling on board canoes and during the landing) of

distribution channels and fish processing facilities. The quality of the products on sale is therefore affected.

## **2. Background on the formation of the associative organizations**

The present organization of fishers is the result of a long historic process of the evolution of the cooperative movement in the Senegalese rural world.

Community structures have existed well before the emergence of fishery cooperatives for example temporary associations composed of fishermen who left the countryside in the periods when sails were in common use. The material and financial management was usually entrusted to an appointed authority. Presently these structures, also called companies, are in decline. As far back as the 19th century, fishing communities were composed of several families in the same area in order to face important investments such as the purchase of beach seines (GRUVEL, 1908). This kind of association still exists in the secondary centres of Cape Verde, Petite Côte, and Sine Saloum; collective fishing still exists in some landing centres but this does not mean a permanent sharing of the means of production.

First attempts at the formal organisation of fisheries date to the colonial period. The Indigenous Companies of Providence, Assistance and Mutual Loans (ICPAML) (created by decree in 1910) constitute the starting point of cooperative fishing movement in Senegal. The real fisherfolk cooperatives date from World War II. In 1948 there were five self-administered cooperatives: three in Saint Louis, and two in Dakar (HATHIE, 1991). After many unsuccessful attempts to set up cooperative associations, the colonial administration created in 1952, »The friendly society of Senegalese fishermen using motorized canoes« financed by a loan of 30 million FCFA from the Farming Credit Central Bank (FCCB) and a subsidy from the local budget (6 million FCFA).

Two business firms that sold outboard engines on credit to individual fishermen, largely contributed to the establishment of cooperatives. Considering the indebtedness and the repayment difficulties, the latter firms, i.e. New Commercial Company (NCC) and Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Occidentale (CFAO) encouraged the creation of organized structures that offered more guarantee.

Between 1960 to 1970 there was a confusion between the fishing cooperatives and those set up in the agricultural sector. The fishermen had to form pre-cooperative groupings called RIA in order to learn cooperative principles for two years.

In 1964 there were 48 cooperatives comprising 4,200 fishermen (HATHIE, 1991). The common management of all the rural cooperatives was assured not by fisherfolk organization, but rather by the ONCAD and the BNDS. Despite the fact that fishery has its own characteristics which are different from those of agriculture. After the first ten years of independence, the cooperative movement in the fishery sector was at deadlock. In 1970, a restricted interministerial order cancelled the debts of the fishing cooperatives and decided to create new ones this time under the authority of the DOMF.

The first sign of the reform were shown through the creation of the CPA. These grass roots organizations whose main aim were to accelerate the equipment of fishing units with engines comprised henceforth only professional fishermen. They were financed by the BNDS until 1972, when the Senegalese-Canadian project (CAMC) for motorization of canoes was set up. This project was mainly expected to supply outboard engines and spare parts through the channel of an appropriate structure (CAMC) and a system of cooperative credit.

By favouring the supply of engines and different materials to fishermen, the CPAs have greatly contributed to the development of the artisanal fishery. However, they have not escaped the problems faced by agricultural cooperatives. The fact that the authorities have limited their role to supplies did not favour the emergence of a cooperative spirit. They offered occasions for interest groups (notables, politicians, fishmongers, fishermen, etc.) to meet and exchange opinions. The CPA has had a rather theoretical autonomy and an inefficient supervision.

The second phase was characterized by the formation of secondary cooperatives, i.e. groupings of CPA in the form of national, regional, and departmental unions. With setting up of the CAPAS in 1975, their field of activity has been extended to the marketing of the products from the artisanal fishery. Within the framework of the self management initiative which started in 1979, the regional unions of cooperatives were made responsible for the distribution and recovery of debts. The experience of the management of Rufisque, Kayar, and Joal fish trade centres by the departmental unions were not particularly successful owing to the lack of or the inadequacy of information about the social substratum. (networks of personal and intercommunity relationships).

The development of the cooperative movement in general has been hampered by the diversity of texts of the cooperatives, the duality in the administration of the rural and the urban sectors, and their non adaptedness to present conditions. The reform that occurred with the law 83-07 of January 28, 1983 recommends groupings of smaller size. The established cooperative system has three structures:

- a multi-functional and multi-sectorial cooperative in every rural community;
- a multi-dimensional and multi-functional village section (village or district level);
- the groupings of multi-functional and mono-sectorial producers (by activity and by product). The Economic Interest Groups (EIG) fall into this category.

This reform of the cooperative movement proved inefficient since the deep causes of the crisis had not been well identified. In fact, it has resulted in a marked decline of the cooperative movement in the fishery sector. The experience has shown that the specialized cooperatives (fishing, stock rearing) can hardly flourish in a multi-sectorial setting where the agricultural cooperatives play the key role.



The numerous deficiencies noticed at the level of cooperatives as forms of groupings, led public authorities to introduce a flexible and more efficient type of organization. Thus the law 84-37 of May 11, 1984 was promulgated, modified by the law 85-40 of July 25, 1985. It is coined in the spirit of the French decree 67-821 of September 23, 1967 on EIG. In fact the idea of EIG originates from a peculiar economic and political situation characterized by the withdrawal of the state. The international economic crisis of 1970s made it compulsory to set up new development strategies in order to reduce the macro economic imbalances. From 1979, Senegal initiated a stabilization plan followed in 1980 by an economic and financial recovery plan. In 1985 a short and long term adjustment programme was adopted with a view to alleviate the burdens of the state.

The NAP and the NIP, conceived in this framework aimed at favouring private initiatives and promoting unpaid employment. This period coincides with the crisis of the cooperative movement.

### **3. Development and evolution of the EIGs**

In the rationale of the law 85-40, of 25 July 1985 the establishment of such a legal framework which favours the creation of EIG, aims at supporting efficiently any development action undertaken in every economic sector. The concern of the legislator is to enable the poor to organize themselves and carry out economic activities and also to have access to the institutional credit. A simple agreement signed between two or several physical or moral persons is enough to create and organize an EIG.

This type of organization among others:

- encourages a moral and legal personality to merge into a single entity without being obliged to have an authorized capital;
- encourages groups to function like a trade company exempt from the tax on industrial and commercial profit;
- facilitate access to credit;
- helps to achieve some community objectives; and
- to mobilize savings.

For various reasons, the primary producers gave a mitigated answer to those initiatives of the authorities and most of them were hesitant to join these new structures.

According to the notables, the EIGs will deprive them of the authority and privileges granted to them by the cooperatives. They objected to it, challenged openly the authorities and led a campaign in favour of village sections. The majority of the fishers (rejected from the organization and functioning of cooperatives) suspected outside interventions and were therefore on the alert.

The inductive actions adopted by the public authorities as well as the socio-economic environment however favoured the emergence of EIGs. These actions included establishment of the NBFCS, exemption of duties and taxes on the fishing material, and the renewal of urgent and important equipment.

The procedure followed for the formation of EIGs is very simple. After the constitutive general assembly, four copies of the EIG statutes and of the minutes of the meeting were made. Then follows the registration at the department of taxes and estates (stocks and shares credit). The documents prepared by the regional fishery office is then deposited at the court in order to obtain a trade register. Next, a current account can be opened at the NBFCS with an amount of 25,000 FCFA, as a prerequisite to obtain loans. The organization has a limited duration determined by the parties concerned. Contributions are not compulsory and can take various forms. The purpose, the name and the address, must be written in the contract of the organization.

In Senegal, the fisherfolk EIG was formed in euphoria. It has grown in number as well as in form.

Large groupings (of about 100 persons) were initiated at the beginning, in 1987. They represented 53% of the associations formed in that period and 30% of the overall groupings (HATHIE, 1991). These organizations were not formed by affinity, and had been influenced by the previous cooperatives, some of which had simply changed to EIG.

Very quickly they gave place to smaller EIG (20 persons at most) composed of friends or people of the same age group. Despite their cohesion, those organizations faced some problems: absence of uniformity between personal objectives and those of the EIG difficulties of the circulation of information due to the mobility of its members, absence of a true joint liability.

The problems of organization and functioning of those EIGs as well as the blockage that followed led most of the group leaders to create their own EIG (2-5 members of a family). That way the family or the eldest son keeps his power.

Several EIGs composed of persons in the same trade (fishers, fishmongers, women processors, carpenters...) were created in the different landing centres on the Senegalese coast. The authorities have initiated the creation of some federations in order to ensure a better coordination of these groupings and the enforcement of a common policy for seeking financing research. The National Federation of Fisherfolk (NFF-EIG), set up on August 6, 1990 in Joal, is composed of all the EIGs of artisanal fishers. The National Federation of Fishmongers of Senegal EIG is more recent; it was created on June 15, 1991 and is composed of nearly 807 members, all fishmongers living the country.

These two federations are in fact the inevitable intermediaries for the main actors of the Senegalese artisanal fisheries (public authorities, NGOs, donors...). They have been initiated with the objective of caring for the interests of the different agents involved in the system.

Presently there are 1,158 EIGs composed of almost all the artisanal fishers along the Senegalese coast. The chart below shows the evolution of the number of fishermen's EIG in the seven maritime areas in 1989 and in 1991.

Maritime areas	Number of fishermen EIG	
	1989	1991
Saint Louis	?	476
Fatick	26	36
Kaolack	-	4
Thiès	35	67
Dakar	13	57
Louga	-	4
Ziguinchor	91	164

#### 4. Present situation of the EIG

The present trend with the development projects, is the formation of small sized EIGs. The EIGs financed by the LCAFDP have average 13 fishermen. The EIG is administered by a committee of generally eight or nine persons: a president, a secretary general, a treasurer general, and their respective assistants, two or three auditors. In the case of smaller EIGs (family type), the committee is reduced to two persons (the president and the treasurer). The president has a managerial function. He coordinates the activities and ensures that the engagement of the EIG is respected. The treasurer general collects personal contributions and attends to the follow up of credit repayment. The organs of the EIG are: a general assembly and a board of managers. Normally the assembly, being the supreme organ comprising all the members must meet regularly. The decisions taken are enforced by the board.

The main characteristic of the EIG now is a total absence of economic vocation. Its function is limited to seeking funds to purchase equipment and working capital. The functioning of the EIG is based on the joint liability of its members to any act of the EIG. Theoretically, this concept of liability, basis of the credit guarantee system, is clearly defined. The financial liability of all the members has been established in order to meet the risks of insolvency of borrowers. Debts are incurred with the agreement of all the members of the EIG. Thus there is an effective responsibility of each member during the recovery of credits. As for its efficiency, the joint liability could not adjust itself to the socio-economic, and cultural situation characterized by an individualism which does not prevail within the family boundaries.

Its weaknesses appeared through the repayment difficulties. To avoid being liable for the debts of the other EIG members - even though they have paid theirs, some fishermen prefer to

pay the least possible. As a result, they no longer deposit their savings with NBFCS for fear they might be used for repayment.

## **5. Working balance sheet of the fisherfolk EIG**

### **5.1 Assessment of performances**

A limited number of EIGs, especially comprising young people, seized the new opportunities offered to form associations and obtained credits, which enabled them to buy their own fishing units.

Available information indicates that between 1984 - 1988, 52 EIGs of Saint Louis, Thiès, and Dakar areas received 62 billion FCFA; between 1989 and August 31, 1992 within the framework of the agreement signed with PROPECHE, 478,537,451 FCFA were given to 343 EIGs (90 from Saint Louis, 45 from Thiès, and 208 from Dakar); from 1988 to August 31, 1992 77 EIGs (987 fishermen) were financed on the line of credit of LCAFDP and received 373,331,857 FCFA; between 1988 and the end of June 1992, 50 fisher EIGs received 269,175,458 FCFA from ZAMFPD.

The main force of the organization lies in its ability to mobilize funds, and as shown above important funds are granted. to EIGs and this contributes to the development of solidarity, an important element in artisanal fishery. However, the dispersion of financing requests does not guarantee credit granting. While the EIG has helped to break the monopoly of decision making by a minority as was the case with cooperatives the grouping of the fisherfolk EIGs into National Federation gives a more important negotiating power, thus the NFF-EIG represents a privileged channel of cooperation to start reviving the sub-sector.

### **5.2 Analyses of constraints**

The EIG results from two different and sometimes divergent logic (State and primary structures) in a peculiar political, economic, and social environment. The new philosophy aims the development of private initiatives and undertaking from within the primary producers. A change of attitude is necessary at the level of each individual at a time when the state is disintegrating from direct intervention to providing a liberal environnement for citizens to operate. The public authorities created the EIG for precise purposes: to enable populations to organize themselves, to have access to credit if possible, to create conditions where local initiatives could express themselves, to promote alternate non salary employment.

However, the artisanal fishers' objectives are different. Confronted by the needs for equipment and the impossibility of self-financing, the creation of an EIG is another alternative to have access to credit. They consider those organizations as legal and administrative formalities to fulfil before getting the advantages expected. Consequently they transpose all the social reality with its social inequalities, organization and internal dynamics. Thus by their own logic their adhesion to the EIG is a fulfillment of public authorities' will to see the idea of primary groups self management triumph. In fact, it is the same logic that gave birth to cooperatives, which is at the origin of EIGs. These organizations have been imposed on the fisherfolk from the top without

any preliminary information or field training in order to arouse an active participation and adhesion of the fishermen.

Generally, the persons who gather into EIG belong to different informal groups sustained by family relationship, religious or political affinity. Their loyalty to these groups is often stronger than any attachment to any other associative organization. The EIGs are the victims of those informal groups' infights for authority and power. Certain EIGs still bear the idea that prevailed in the former cooperatives. They contain the germs of the causes that led to the inertia of these organizations; the monopoly of power by the political and religious notabilities, important size, theoretical joint liability, etc...

Apart from the rare meetings devoted to repayment problems, the EIGs do not carry out any other activity. The economic vocation, in other words the self-promotion and self management objectives as defined by the state are still good intentions. Although, the saving, production, marketing, and processing functions are mentioned in the formal declarations, it is only the credit function which is actually achieved. However, let us mention that emigration appears as a major constraint if the EIGs want to ensure the marketing of the products landed by the members.

In its conception and operation the EIG does not seem to integrate the socio-economic reality related especially to the management of fishing units. The production is organized individually, for example it is not the EIG's responsibility to ensure the supply of inputs, and the selling of the products landed. The heads of fishing units, who generally are also heads of families, some retired men who no longer go to sea, are the main centres of decision. The true fishermen, simple members of the crew are not always integrated to the EIGs.

The mobility of the members along the coast does not favour the flow of information especially in large sized EIGs. Furthermore, the joint liability system did not work well. This explains the crisis and the lethargy of large sized groupings. With the predominance of family type EIGs, the joint liability does not mean much any more. In fact, the sums lent to individual fishermen even though they enjoy the family liability at the same time. The fishermen stand by the loan but not by the repayment. The theoretical rate of the unpaid credits (in relation with the outstanding debt of the capital and interest) for credits granted by the LCAFDP is estimated at an average of 50% whereas the actual rate is estimated at 38%. To be efficient the joint liability should be enforced within the framework of the solidarities that really exist in the area.

The deficiency in the supervision of EIGs by the appropriate authorities is due to the great number of the groupings and the lack of motivation of fishing agents. Members have not been made sensitive to the importance of savings and to the role EIG could play in the development of the sector. The necessity to use formal procedures (bank, administrative red tape) is another weakness of the EIG.

## 6. Conclusion

From this quick diagnostic balance-sheet, it appears that the organization of Senegalese artisanal fishers has been deeply altered in its evolution. In many cases, the political and economic environment were determinant in the turn taken by the organizations. Significant changes appear with the achievement of independence, following the debt crisis within the movements and the disengagement of the state.

To adapt to an unfavourable recession, there was a change from fisherfolk cooperatives to EIGs, while keeping the same habits notably individualism, family ties and the constant resort to the informal. Despite the improvements that have occurred as a result of the EIGs, there still remains much to be done regarding the organization of artisanal fishermen.

The family is the basis of the social structure as far as Senegalese canoe fishermen are concerned. The production ratios are often expressed in terms of lineage relation (seniors-juniors). Therefore one can rightly wonder if the family EIG, the most widespread form, is not the adequate associative structure for the Senegalese maritime artisanal fishery.

The family EIG has many advantages: greater cohesion, family liability, guarantee of continuity and autonomy of decision. But this type of organization does not provide the youth, who are true producers, a say in the affairs. Even though they are members of the EIG, they are informed about its functioning and are not involved with decision taking. The head of the family is the sole manager of the fishing unit and he is in fact the only centre of decisions. Under these conditions, it is not certain that these young people having succeeded in organizing and equipping themselves without any outside help, will accept to put their incomes together with those of adults. Some of them have taken advantage of the new opportunities to form associations to free themselves of some social constraints.

The ideal would be the organization of the young fishers belonging to the same fishing unit into EIGs. They will then be in charge of the management of the grouping and thus of the fishing unit. They will be more inclined to initiate some basic economic principles and put their savings in banks. But this change implies the loss of power by the head of the family and the objection to the present social order. Any innovation in this sense will be resisted by those who have power now (heads of families).

The fishing unit nucleus from which the production is achieved, might then constitute the basis for any associative organization in artisanal fishermen environment.

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# **CASE STUDY ON "FISHERMEN ORGANISATIONS" REVOLUTIONARY COOPERATIVE REGROUPING OF ROBERTY AND EWE-CONDJI, GRAND-POPO BENIN**

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## **1. Introduction**

Organisations covered in this study are Revolutionary Cooperative Groups (GRVC) of Ewe-Condji and Roberty areas respectively set up in July 1980 and May 1981 by the Artisanal Maritime Fishing Project (PPMA) in the rural local Government of Grand-Popo, Mono province, in the Republic of Benin.

These two structures have been selected because out of the 27 cooperatives financed on the Benin coastal area by PPMA between 1980 and 1984, they have developed almost under similar conditions, but the rate of loan repayments were different 17% for the former and 87% for the latter. The present work is however a retrospective analysis for none of these units has been in operation since April 1985. The present study will therefore concentrate on the development of these units to that date and attempt to present their actual operational conditions.

## **2. Summary description of the situation of the country at the time of inception and development of the units considered**

In Benin Republic, artisanal maritime fishing could be defined as fishing practised along the coast by fishers using canoes of variable dimensions, usually under 20 metres, motorized or not motorized. They are often equipped with fishing gears like beach seines, surrounding nets, gillnets, lines, etc...

From 1980 to 1985 annual productions in this sector increased from 3,000 to 3,800 tons. Annual need though stands at 10,500 tons of fish and to satisfy demand the country imports frozen fish.

A survey conducted in September 1980 by PPMA showed that in Benin artisanal maritime fishing occupied 2595 fishermen using 350 boats of which 50% are motorized. They live in 50 scattered villages in the coastal belt. The three major centres around which artisanal maritime fishing activities thrive are Ouidah, Grand-Popo and Cotonou where can be identified a fishing community mostly composed of Beninese (Plah, Mina, Fon, etc.), Ghanaians (Kéta and Adan) and a few Togolese (Mina).

The maritime fisheries resources base is quite limited (22,000 tons all types added) and comprise mostly of fish like Sciaenidae sp., Sparidae sp., Lutjanidae sp., Ehippididae sp., Carangidae sp., Pomadasyidae sp., shellfish, and mollusc.

Fishing activities are practised by fishermen whereas processing and marketing activities are left exclusively to their wives and fishmongers who control processing techniques as well as the distribution network.

After the 30 November 1974 proclamation which drove Benin into the socialist development path based on Marxism-Leninism. Benin's policy for rural development was notably characterized by the revolutionarisation of peasants, centralized planning of production, and socialisation of means and modes of production.

These became imperative objectives to be observed by all actors of rural development as prescribed by the Benin Republic People's Revolutionary Party (PRPB). To meet these objectives the central committee of the PRPB requested all Regional Action Centre for Rural Development (CARDER) to set up and popularize GRVC and Socialist Experimental Agricultural Cooperative (CAETS) in their jurisdiction.

Besides the constitution of the People's Republic of Benin adopted on 26 August 1977 defined in article 18 the major forms of ownership and types of production of the five major types of production ownership, cooperative ownership ranked second after ownership by the Revolutionary State

This law defines further in articles 20 and 21 that:

«The state will particularly facilitate, promote and quickly develop the cooperative sector.»

«The state will actively help farmers to develop production and will encourage them to gradually organize themselves in cooperatives of various types based on free consent principle.»

The political context of the country was very favourable to the creation of cooperative units and the objective of the political power as far as technical job was concerned was "to free rural masses from feudal and capitalistic domination.

It is in view of all these directives and prescriptions that the programmes of CARDER and agricultural mobilisation campaign organised by staff of the CARDER every year, envisaged mostly popularisation of GRVC and CAETS, and gave priority to these units in the framework of its involvements in the field.

Thus, many cooperatives were created without any due basic principle, steps were rushed on and farmers regrouped just to enjoy the financial assistance aid donors were offering through the government.

Quotas with respect to cooperative to be created were imposed on rural development officers and they were evaluated on the basis of how many cooperatives were created whether the latter are viable or not.

Funding of these cooperative units was carried out by the National Fund for Agricultural Credit (CNCA) through the Regional Funds for Mutual Agricultural Credit (CRCAM) and Local Funds for Mutual Agricultural Credit (CLCAM) whose objectives were to collect and manage rural savings and give loans to their members under conditions set by their articles of association and regulations.

A study of Benin's marine artisanal fishery was conducted by United Nations Equipment Fund (UNEF) in 1979. Following the recommendations, the Ministry of Fisheries initiated PPMA.

The project had the following objectives:

- increase fish production,
- organize fishermen along the coast by freeing them from domination of big proprietors through the GRVC and supply them with fishing equipment,
- initiate fishermen in those units to simple methods of rational management of their business,
- set up basic units for maintenance of equipment, ensure permanent training of fishermen through on the job instruction,
- help GRVC market their products.

To reach these objectives the PPMA obtained funds from various sources: UNEF came in for an amount of 153,000 US\$, while the West African Development Bank contributed an amount of 180,000,000 FCFA. This financing permitted fishermen to receive loans at 8% interest rate. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded technical assistance and training of cooperative members whereas Benin's national budget catered for payment of professionals, supply of offices and equipment.

Management of the project was entrusted to an office called Office for Technical Assistance to Fishing Cooperatives (STACCOOP) which comprised of the national directorate, a technical division which took care of fishing equipment installation, an economic division in charge of finance and collection of outstanding debts, an extension division in charge of training and cooperative education and a supplies division in charge of supply and storage of materials.

STACCOOP was therefore the administrative organ for the monitoring of cooperatives and represented them vis-à-vis CNCA, administrative authorities and technical services. It also managed the accounts of the cooperatives and was quite often involved for ordinary management decisions.

The strategy adopted by STACOOOP for setting up of cooperative consisted of:

- organisation of sensitisation campaigns in fishermen villages in collaboration with CNCA and CARDER officials,
- drafting of the list of volunteers joining the cooperative,
- installation of management organs during a constitutive general assembly,
- opening of current and saving accounts at CRCAM or CLCAM,
- agreement for loans to be granted in form of materials and equipment for fishing,
- adoption of a mode of sharing net revenues which foresaw:
  - 20% for remuneration of cooperative members
  - 20% for depreciation of materials
  - 20% for statutory reserves, emergencies and discounts
  - 40% for repayment of loan.

It is, however, important to note that at the level of all cooperatives that have been created and monitored by PPMA, once the 20% for remuneration of cooperative members are deducted, the remaining revenue is paid into an account towards reimbursement of loans. Theoretically, this payment should include the other three posts but it has always been considered solely for repayment since revenues obtained were inadequate to finance other items.

STACOOOP ensured training of fishermen regrouped in the following fields:

Technical: Training centred on improvement of techniques for assembling of purse seine, in the field experience having shown that most fishermen are quite conversant with fishing techniques.

Mechanical: Engine users were initiated to small repair on outboards and proper blending of fuel.

Management: Brainstorming days were organised at the Pan African Centre for Cooperative Training for field workers and for the three major officers to be found in cooperatives (chairman, treasurer, and secretary) on the central theme of motivation, organisation and management of cooperatives.

### 3. Description of the local situation at the time of inception and development of the two fishermen organisations

Roberty and Ewe-Condji camps are located in the former rural district of Grand-Popo and are separated by almost 800 metres. The rural district of Grand-Popo is located in the southern end of the Mono Province. It is composed of seven communes subdivided into 45 villages. The major activity is fishing. Where ecological conditions are favourable, dwellers grow maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, beans and engage in market gardening etc... The three communes flanking the coast (Grand-Popo, Agoué and Avlo) are those where fishing activity is intense.

As recommended in the texts promulgated for administrative reforms at that time, administration of the Grand-Popo district was carried out by the Revolutionary Committee for Local Government Administration (CRAD) led by the head of the district and the members were head of services in the locality. The Rural Development Officer is the second vice-chairman while being also the chairman of the district committee for economic affairs. In this capacity, the CRAD had to take part in sensitisation campaigns organized in fishing villages for setting up of cooperatives, the bequeathing of fishing materials and to lend support for settlement of disputes or difficulties these cooperatives happen to face.

One has to note though that Grand-Popo went through some bad experiences in relation to fishermen cooperatives. They are:

- \* the Grand-Popo Cooperative created in February 1959 registered in June of the same year had a staff strength of 62 men and 22 women. It could not meet its fixed objectives following a lack of proper organisation, motivation and in view of the high interest rates charged (12% in 1959), and
- \* the Cooperative Group of Grand-Popo comprising ten fishing units was created in 1964 following the training of 35 Grand-Popo fishermen by Senegalese fishermen and received from the Dahomean Development Bank. This group particularly enjoyed the easy supply of fishing materials offered by the shop opened in Cotonou thanks to assistance from the Cooperative Union of Norway.

Just like cooperative groups set up during the same period in Sème, Cotonou and Ouidah, that of Grand-Popo also failed and stopped its activities before the end of 1965. This was due to lack of cooperative spirit, abandoning of line fishing which was considered not very profitable for shark fishing and frequent loss of materials at sea. It is worthy to note in passing that between 1979 and 1984, nine GRVC's were set up and financed in Grand-Popo in the six camps spreading between Agoué and Ewe-Condji only 15 km apart from each other.

### 3.1 Characteristics of Roberty camp

Limited to the East by Ewe-Condji and Yondo-Condji to the West, in the South by the Atlantic Ocean and to North by Benin-Togo inter state highway, Roberty camp spreads over almost 150 metres. The population of the camp is estimated at almost 200 persons (women and children included) and is mainly composed of Ghanaians and Togolese who speak Kéta and Mina languages. They have very strong inter marriage links. The religious life of this population is strongly imbedded into the voodoo cult, in this camp there is a resident fetish priest whose influence on development of the cooperative was beneficial. He is the chairman of the GRVC and almost all the duellers of that camp are devotees of his fetish.

The surf and the wild nature of the sea in the area influence tremendously fishing activities and the useful life of outboard engines and boats. In this camp there are almost 50 fishermen who use several types of fishing gears like gillnet, beach seine, sardine net, and purse seine. Usually they are not well to do and most of them use as paid labour for the benefit of parents or friends fishing gears that are put at their disposal. Apart from the smoking ovens that each women have in the yard, fishermen wives regrouped in cooperative under the project "Fishermen Wives Cooperatives" boast of a fish smoking centre equipped with chorkor ovens for processing fish products. They sell these products on Djoda Market in Togo (almost 15 km away), at Comé (25 km), at Djoda (85 km) and at Dantokpa Cotonou market (90 km).

Education of most children to secondary school level is maintained but they do drop out very early to devote themselves to fishing activities. Apart from fishing dwellers of the camp grow vegetables, cassava, maize, etc... and equally raise pork, goats, cows, etc...

### 3.2 Characteristics of the Ewe-Condji camp

Limited to East by Hounsoukoè camp, to West by Roberty camp, to South by the Atlantic Ocean and to North by Benin-Togo interstate highway and the feeder road leading to Grand-Popo town, Ewe-Condji camp sprawls on almost 300 metres and has around 250 inhabitants (men, women and children) comprising Beninese and Ghanaians speaking Kéta, Mina or Plah. Among them can be found many fishermen repatriated from Gabon in 1978 who use nets of former boat owners. In this camp the religious life of fishermen is also very much influenced by the Voodoo cult. The fetish priest does not live on the beach but the influence he exerts on fishing activities is quite important.

More striking than what happens in neighbouring fishing sites are the particularly rough nature of the sea at Ewe-Condji which constitutes a great handicap for fishing and often some boats capsize, fishing gears are destroyed and some times lives are lost. In this camp there are about 60 fishermen who use the same types of fishing gears as those met at Roberty. The catches which often are pelagic species are sold directly on the beach to women who concentrate exclusively on processing and marketing of fish which they sell on the same markets as Roberty women.

Most children attend school but very few reach secondary school levels. They drop out quite early and prefer to devote themselves to fishing activities. Besides fishing and related activities, fishermen in this camp and their families engaged in agriculture like growing, cassava, sugar cane, maize, and vegetables, in addition they raise pigs and poultry.

#### **4. Background of the creation development and evolution of the two organizations**

##### **4.1 Roberty GRVC**

Long before the sensitisation campaign organized by the PPMA in view of the setting up of fishermen GRVC, Roberty used two beach seines and gillnets called "Tounga".

However, in 1980 following sensitization and motivations meetings organized in the village by STACOOOP that 15 fishermen from the camp came together as a GRVC in order to take advantage of PPMA materials and become owners of the materials when they finish repaying the loan. Nonetheless these fishermen hesitated long before presenting their list to STACOOOP officials because they wondered whether they would own the materials once they finish repaying the loan. After STACOOOP officials gave the guarantee they committed themselves.

It is to be noted that these 15 fishermen had very close family links among themselves: father, sons, brothers, cousins, uncles. The chairman had three sons, two nephews and three brothers-in-law in the group. This constituted to our mind an element of the group.

Their fishing unit included a boat, a purse seine, and an outboard engine at a total cost of 2,904,240 FCFA. The GRVC effectively launched its activities in May 1981 and was expected to pay instalments at 242,035 FCFA every third months for three years. But first, as is normal practice in the environment, when you have new fishing gear, members of the GRVC sought the advice of the oracle, "Fa" to know which ceremonies they had to do, the sign of the organisation and taboos to be observed especially for the boat. It is after that prerequisite they learnt, the GRVC boat's day of birth was Thursday and as such it should not go to sea on that day. But STACOOOP officials did not want to take that into account because according to them there is a certain number of days reserved for fishing every month to allow them to pay for the credit at the time stipulated. The four occasions STACOOOP officials forced the GRVC members to go to sea Thursday, their boats capsized and they almost lost all their fishing gears, as such they never went to sea again on Thursday.

After the relevant rituals lost the GRVC started its activities in good conditions and went through a period of fame. STACOOOP was supplying fuel and took care of repair in case of engine breakdown.

The administration of the GRVC was ensured by a board comprising a chairman, a secretary and a treasurer who were assisted by two councillors and an auditor. The chairman was a school certificate holder, the secretary and two other members of the GRVC were educated and took care of management of the organisation.

For the GRVC, the primary objective was to quickly repay the credit and become owners of their equipment, so they worked in an atmosphere of mutual understanding with determination. By the end of December 1982, Roberty GRVC was the only organisation to have paid regularly its instalments and made some saving to guard it against time of hardship. It was also in that GRVC that the monitoring institution noted that funds were not squandered and principles of cooperative management were adhered to.

But such a situation could not go without arousing the jealousy of members of neighbouring GRVC who tried to discourage them and lured them to follow their example by telling them that even if they repaid the credit they would never become owners of their equipment. Therefore difficulties start piling up for the organisation: voodoo charming, misunderstanding, indiscipline, suspension of certain members, frequent breakdown of engine, lack of operating funds which seriously hampered the momentum the group developed at the beginning.

It can be said that Roberty GRVC had been stable only for the first two years of its existence but it could be considered as the organisation that fared best during the period under review since it had repaid 87% of 15 credits by the end of April 1985.

#### 4.2 Ewe-Condji GRVC

Because of the sensitization and motivation campaigns organized in Ewe-Condji village by the PPMA in 1979 and with the prospects of shaking the yoke of former boat owners who were employing them, 15 fishermen of this village got together and benefitted from an equipment credit in form of fishing gears. Among these fishermen also there was a very strong family link.

The credit awarded allowed them to obtain a boat, a purse seine and an outboard engine for the total sum of 4,613,964 FCFA to be repaid within three years through instalments of 384,497 FCFA which fall due every quarter.

Just like other groups, the Ewe-Condji GRVC was administered by a board composed by chairman, secretary and treasurer assisted by two counsellors and an auditor. Within this board, the chairman was an illiterate, the secretary and two other members could hardly read or write and two other members could hardly express themselves in French. This situation didn't augur well for the heaping of the organisation management books.

The group started its activities in July 1980. As usual it consulted the oracle to ensure a good future and find the sign and relevant taboos. The rituals prescribed by the oracle were correctly performed. In spite of all these precautions this group was one of those who experienced the greatest number of difficulties. In fact most members of the group were using the fishing materials of individuals who were disgruntled and obviously they wished ill to the group.

Few months after they had started their activities two members, a brother-in-law and a half brother to the chairman were expelled because they were unreliable, often drunk at



work and did not respect regulations. A third member withdrew voluntarily and a fourth was expelled because he did not go to sea and demanded the same rights as other members because apparently it was through his doing that the group could get the equipment. Some time after these exclusions, two other members of the group died due to diseases. The nine members remaining recruited seasonal workers who helped them to operate the equipment but they were never considered as members of the group.

We should however add to all these happenings, the cases of capsizing and engine breakdown which were quite frequent in spite of the presence of a UN volunteer, a master fisherman and that of some very good fishermen from Roberty who came and help them from time to time. At one time monitoring officials wondered whether these fishermen were real professionals or whether they were under the spell their former employer cast at them. The fact remains that the GRVC had many difficulties that were no longer obliged to resort to taking small loan from certain fishmonger who hoped to be paid back some day.

At the end of its activities this GRVC could pay only 768,994 FCFA out of a total credit of 4,613,964 FCFA which had been tied down for five years, and one can wonder if the credit granted was not higher than what the group could afford to repay.

It is important to note though that at the beginning of its activities the monitoring of this group left much to be desired because the officer in charge had other responsibilities at the level of the CARDER and could come only sporadically to check the accounts of the cooperative. For almost a year members of the cooperative evolved some what anarchically and its management was characterized by fraudulent sale of fish and wanton distribution of revenues and the squandering of funds which led to upheavals and misunderstanding within the group.

We could mention the following factors characterized the evolution of the group: incoherence and misunderstanding between members, bad management of revenues, perpetual engine breakdown, deterioration of the fishing equipment, frequent capsizing and unfruitful fishing trips which resulted in high debt for the group.

The table below gives a summary presentation of the situation of the two organisations.

Cooperatives	Number of members	Date of launching of activity	Amount of credit FCFA	Amount repaid FCFA	Rate of reimbursement
Ewe-Condji	15	July 1980	4,613,946	768,994	17%
Roberty	15	May 1981	2,904,402	2,582,815	87%

## 5. Present situation of the two organisations

As indicated in the introduction, these units have ceased operation since April 1985 and it has to be mentioned that since PPMA is no longer functional nothing has been done to revitalize them. However, on 25 August 1992, our investigations provided the following results.

### 5.1 At Roberty

Already in 1983 when the GRVC activities started declining a member deserted the group and went to Gabon where he practised fishing for three years after which he came back to settle in the camp since 1986. Presently all fifteen members who had been part of the GRVC are around in the camp. Their boat is broken but net and engine could be revamped. They cannot work together again as an organized unit and now they operate three beach seines and private gillnet. Some grow vegetables and cassava occasionally.

### 5.2 At Ewe-Condji

Only six members of the group are still around in the camp, three left (one in the Congo, one in Nigeria, and the third went to an unknown destination). Those who are present help owners of beach seine operate their equipment and grow vegetables, cassava and sugar cane. The fishing unit they operated as cooperative members is beyond repair; the boat is broken, the outboard engine is irreparable and the net abandoned on the beach is severely damaged.

It is worth noting that the Mono CARDER contemplates the revitalization of fishermen groups in the Grand-Popo area. Preliminary work at the grass root level identify 22 lists of fishermen groups. As of 25 August 1992, 17 lists had been processed and of which only eight meet the criteria for credit.

Among these requests, they are some which emanate from fishermen camps concerned by this case study. At Roberty, two requests were formulated by members of the former GRVC who formed two separate groups to obtain additional materials although they are no longer working together. The organizers gave their approval because of their former records and because they only requested additional materials. At Ewe-Condji, the chairman formed a group of his own, the secretary did the same and other members joined other fishermen to form two other groups. None of these were selected because the organizers felt they were at the origin of the failure of their group.

This intervention the Mono CARDER is contemplating could give a new impetus to the Roberty GRVC activities if only errors made in the past could be taken in to account by the organisers as well as by members of the GRVC.

**6. Evaluation of the performance of the two organisations and reasons for their success or failure**

From the above presentation it is clear the GRVC of Roberty is considered as the one which recorded a relative success at the time the PPMA was still in existence, whereas the Ewe-Condji GRVC left much to be desired.

The reasons for this situation are many and could be summarized in the next three points:

a) At national level

- the Marxist-Leninist ideology which imposed the creation of cooperatives without considering realities of the environment,
- in principle, cooperative should be formed at the initiative of fishermen themselves and not on the basis of instructions from the government that monitoring agents are requested to implement throughout. That is why cooperatives created in those conditions quickly turned out into an off shoot of the administration.

b) At the technical monitoring level

- most cooperatives were set up without any sound feasibility study and steps were by passed; fishing department officers received instructions to create cooperative on the field, since the financing aspect was taken care of and the number of cooperatives to be created was fixed,
- the principal theme at the core of sensitization exercise was the credit,
- monitoring officers were entrusted with the collection of credit and were considered on that basis by fishermen as law enforcers or tax collectors instead of motivators and extension workers as they should appear,
- a reticence and a certain uptight feeling were observed in the behaviour of field agents in front of rituals related to fishing activities whereas it is common in that environment to adapt protective fetishes and a fisherman could not venture to sea without protecting himself from evil. Also cooperative members always found tricks to by pass the monitoring group and use the funds of the group to perform rituals,
- collaboration was not very close between the cooperative counsellor of the CARDER in charge of Grand-Popo area and the PPMA officers for the monitoring of the cooperative units,

- most officers in charge of monitoring these units were not well trained in cooperative management and they were not very motivated. They concentrated more on collecting credits than on the technical job,
- the socio-economic study conducted before the creation of the PPMA took into account data of a good fishing season obtained by the Ayiguinnou village cooperative, Grand-Popo area (1978-1979). It was inferred from these data that a PPMA cooperative could have annual turnover of 7,000,000 FCFA. This guided the determination of instalments to be paid as reimbursement for the credit. Results at the end of the fiscal year showed that these data were exceptional and no cooperative could reimburse the credit based on these forecast.

But already in 1982 and 1983, a drop in fish production was observed along the Benin coast such a situation should have been used to readjust some what the instalments that were determined for paying up the credit.

A quick analysis of figures from the Roberty and Ewe-Condji GRVC help to say that reimbursement was effected with 80% of net revenues and not with the 40% stipulated in the credit agreement.

- The pattern for sharing of revenues did not go well with the fishermen who thought that the 20% left to them could not allow them to satisfy their immediate needs, especially when they realized that their counterparts who operated private owners materials were earning more money than them. (38% from private owners compared to 20% within the cooperatives),
- the engine repair unit was based within the STACOOOP directorate at Cotonou 85 km away from Grand-Popo and the mechanic came to Grand-Popo only twice a month; and when engines broke down, cooperative members had to contact STACOOOP management and wait at times several days for the repair to be done. This often discouraged them and had a negative impact on their revenues,
- another shortcoming was to spread instalment on the four quarters for the year where as the engine operated by the GRVC could be used profitably only for six months in a year. In spite of their insistence cooperative members were not supplied with another engine.

#### c) At the level of cooperative members

General observation was that most fishermen who came together did not feel like cooperative members. Some considered themselves much more like employees of the Revolutionary state and were very sceptical about the idea that the materials would be left to them after loan repayments. Furthermore they are often confronted with problems of organisation and management because they were not used with accounting procedures and with handling huge sums.

At Roberty, determinant factors were the cohesion which always existed among the members, and the personal influence of the chairman who was previously a member of one of the cooperatives that failed in Grand-Popo. He was also owner of fishing equipment and as such he knew how to earmark funds for each item and he did not want the failure of his former cooperative to happen again.

From the evaluation made by the fishermen themselves on their performance within the GRVC it comes out that many of them think that their objective had not been met, their status did not change fundamentally. However, some of them were able while they were still members to build their own house in local materiel this to them constituted a form of emancipation compared to the situation of those who had not been cooperative members. However, they have preferred to have houses built with more durable materials. Some of them even succeeded in getting married and built more or less stable family.

If they did not have engine failure and lack of operating fund that affected them during the last four months of activity they could have paid all their loan and become owners of their equipment because effectively the PPMA management was preparing to officially hand over to them the equipment when they finished paying up.

One could also wonder if there was not the nefarious effect of demotivating talks by neighbouring GRVC of Yondo-Condji and Nicoué-Condji on that of Roberty, because there was only four months left to Roberty GRVC to finish paying its credit when some cases of indiscipline which were never heard off started coming from the youth.

It is surmised that the poor operational condition of Roberty GRVC was due to the following causes:

- charming by neighbours after the good results over the first two years,
- difficulties of fuel supplies observed towards the end of their activities,
- frequent engine failure recorded as from the end of the second year of activities,
- lack of operational funds

The following factors however contributed to the success of the Roberty GRVC:

- good revenue management,
- understanding, solidarity and cooperation which existed among members,
- commitment and determination of members of the group at work,
- implementation of a good organisation of work within the group,

- lastly motivation stemming from the fact that they would become owners of their equipment.

At Ewe-Condji, in particular the chairman did not have any authority when it came to cases of indiscipline, misunderstanding, and squandering of funds. The fishermen were not well trained in management and cooperative training was virtually taken care of by STACCOOP because it was quickly discovered that the fishermen who were being used by former owners were not used to handling funds. The GRVC was almost left to itself during the first year of activities and this created a false start which it could not redress afterwards.

According to the fishermen of that camp, their problems can be summarized as follows:

- frequent cases of boat capsizing because the boats were not stable. They were not associated or consulted for the selection of the boat type and the net was too big and too heavy for the boat,
- there was no competent mechanic on the spot and they had to wait for the mechanic of the project who was based in Cotonou. Each time the boat capsized, the engine broke down,
- fuel supply was difficult as this was usually in short supply at the Grand-Popo filling station,
- they had many cases of voodoo problems, spells were casted, jealousy was strongly experienced, and they resorted to fetish priests for rituals which were very expensive,
- it is known to everybody that most fishermen live from hand to mouth. Contrary to cooperative members of Roberty, those of Ewe-Condji were not able to build their own houses even in local material nor were they able to buy coconut plantation. However, most of them got married, some had many wives and children.

The following elements could be mentioned as having influenced the GRVC development: incoherence and misunderstanding among members, cases of charming provoked by former owners of equipment they abandoned to join the cooperative, poor maintenance of fishing equipment and poor revenue management.

## 7. Conclusion

Recent history teaches us that all the Beninese government's attempts in regrouping and financing artisanal maritime fishing failed, where as private initiatives in the regard remain stable and continue to grow normally. Potential beneficiaries assume that loans given government are gifts and that they will not be worried in case of non-repayment.

The informal channel for fishery financing works better and it would be interesting for the State to provide a climate for informal structures to work better. Another aspect not to be neglected is that socio-economic studies conducted by PPMA were not realistic.

At Roberty and Ewe-Condji, as in all units created by the PPMA, the credit covered 100% the cost of materials needed by fishermen. There was no self financing contribution from cooperative members. Some did not repay their equity shares as provided in the statutes. Only joint guarantee was requested. No material guarantee was requested and beneficiaries of the credit did not sign any document in front of any authority to compel them to pay or be sued if need be. It is obvious that the way the whole process was engineered did not make cooperative members feel responsible.

A major conclusion from these case studies is that rather than Government imposing a type of regrouping on fishermen it should rather create a conducive environment for the fishermen to voluntarily groupe themselves to achieve some specific objectives.

# **VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES AND FISHERIES CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES IN COMMUNITY FISHERIES CENTRES IN THE GAMBIA**

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## **1. The national setting**

The Gambia is bounded on the North, East and South by Senegal, and on the West by the Atlantic Coast. The River Gambia with its source in the Fouta Jallon highlands in Guinea runs along the entire length of the country from East to West dividing the country into approximately two equal halves; the North and South Banks.

Administratively, the country is divided into five divisions, each sub-divided into districts, all totalling thirty-six districts. The district is composed of several villages each having compound units (i.e. the family unit with extended family members and other relatives). Each division is headed by an appointed civil servant, the Commissioner. The districts are headed by Chiefs (the traditional "Seyfo"). At the village level, the "Alkalo" is the village head. While the Chieftaincy is now-a-days elected, the Alkalo is either elected or more customarily, inherited. Whereas the Alkalo's responsibility is limited to the village, the chief's powers are administrative and spread through the district.

The national population of 800,000 (1990) is a youthful one with about 44% under 15 years of age. About 80% of the population is Muslim with the other 20% dominated by Christians. Several ethnic groups exist with majority (42%) being Mandinka, followed by Wolof and Fula (16% each) then Jola and Sarahuleh together with other minority groups.

In terms of production, the family is the basic unit and includes relatives and strangers. Farming is the dominant occupation of the people, the majority lives in the rural areas cultivating cash and subsistence crops. Groundnuts is still the major cash crop on which the economy relies heavily. However, a larger proportion of the arable land area is placed under subsistence agriculture involving such staple crops as maize, millet, sorghum and rice along with others. Small scale animal and poultry rearing are practised but until recently, have been based on prestige, and a measure of wealth among rural people.

Horticulture and vegetable gardening form part of the major engagements of women in the rural area during the dry season. In the coastal areas, apart from vegetable gardening, women are mainly engaged in artisanal fisheries activities involving the evacuation of fish from canoes; fish processing and fish trading.

The fisheries sector has two main components - Artisanal and Industrial. Gambian participation is primarily in the artisanal sub-sector which provides about 95% of the locally consumed fish supply. Industrial fisheries, up to now, is primarily dominated by foreign trawlers



operating in Gambian waters, with few local fishing companies which depend largely on artisanal landings. Although the artisanal sub-sector has a potential to increase its contribution to the economic and social development within The Gambia, its development is constrained by numerous factors. These relate mainly to poor shore - based infrastructural development, inefficient and environmentally damaging processing techniques, a lack of skilled Gambian fishermen, low levels of credit availability, and limited village level organisation of the fishery. These and other constraints influenced Government's identification of these objectives for the sector during the first National Development Plan (1975 - 1980):

- a 10% annual growth rate of total production;
- improvement in nutritional standards;
- rational long term utilization of coastal and inland fisheries resources;
- increased employment;
- increased net foreign exchange earnings.

The objectives of the second plan (1981 - 1986) remained the same with greater emphasis on privatisation within the sector. These objectives were reviewed for the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) of 1985 - 1989 and the present Programme for Sustained Development (PSD) conceived to consolidate the economic reforms that were started under the ERP and to forge ahead with a policy of continuous adjustment with growth. Thus the present objectives of the sector are:

- to develop artisanal and industrial fisheries, and increase Gambian participation, especially women entrepreneurs;
- to increase access to markets in the sub-region, Europe and the Middle East, to increase foreign exchange earnings;
- to improve institutional capacity for the management of the fisheries resources;
- to improve the legal and economic environment of the sector with a view to enhancing its contribution to the economy;
- to develop alternative renewable resources through further development of aquaculture.

Donor interventions aimed at assisting in achieving national and sectoral objectives were received from the EEC, the Italian, and Japanese Governments. All these major donors financed multi-million dalasis programmes in the artisanal fisheries sub-sector in order to increase employment and improve living standards in the targeted project areas, maintain or increase per capital fish consumption rates, and to generate foreign exchange earnings from export of fresh

and processed fish. These programmes were also aimed at increasing the level of participation and control of the fishery by Gambian Nationals.

## **2. The local setting**

Villages in The Gambia are comprised of big compounds with several households.

The "Alkalo" is the village head, and he is normally the descendant of the founder of the village, or more unusually, he may be elected by the elders of the village.

Traditionally the Alkalo is the primary contact person for both government and non-government agents. He was responsible for the direction and coordination of all village matters in association with few village elders, he selected at his own discretion. He allocated land to outsiders and acted as the judge in settling disagreement and disputes at the village level.

Villages have inform groupings including youth, women, family and peer groups which are based on family ties, age, gender, religion, etc. The activities of such interest groups include social economic, cultural and recreational.

However the interest and benefits of such groups are virtually limited to the group and may be biased in certain domains. Therefore collective action in terms of community development activities was often minimal and difficult to coordinate in the absence of a unified approach. However, individuals are quite willing to assist each other in personal undertakings such as building houses and clearing farm sites.

In all the fisheries project villages, farming is still the dominant occupation although fishing has shown to be a more profitable occupation despite the initial high cost of investment to set up a fishing unit.

Many youths are turning to fishing as a source of living. At the coastal villages women have proved to be very industrious, taking care of the home and family; farming during the wet season, are involved in the vegetable gardening and artisanal fisheries activities. The Artisanal Fisheries Development Project (AFDP) has vegetable garden components in which women, some of whom are also fish processors in Community Fisheries Centres (CFCs) have formed associations of gardeners and use excess water from fisheries project wells to irrigate the garden. Garden harvests are either consumed directly or sold in the village markets. Food crops are also planted in backyards for subsistence but are also sold out for cash.

Houses are mainly constructed of mud bricks and other locally available roofing materials. However these are gradually being replaced by cement blocks and corrugated roofs, particularly in the coastal areas.

Water supply is mainly obtained from local wells but with the coming of fisheries projects piped well water is available at all project sites. In some of the village project sites water is supplied to the village.

All fisheries project villages have laterite road links to main roads and all fisheries centres have feeder road connections. Most of the roads have been provided or updated as part of the projects and have eased transportation.

Electricity supply is not available in the villages except for few private generators. Lighting is obtained by use of candle or kerosine, and power is obtained mainly from batteries to operate radios and television sets while existing refrigerators use kerosine.

Village populations range from about a few hundreds to several thousand people and are dominated by the mandinka tribe in most project villages with a fair proportion of Wollof, Sarere, Jola and few minority groups. Senegalese operators can be found in virtually all fishing villages some of whom are long time residents.

### **3. History leading to the formation of the organisations**

#### **3.1. The Fisheries Centres Management Committee**

In pursuance of the above mentioned policy objectives for the sector, Government with EEC assistance began in 1978 to implement the first phase of the Artisanal Fisheries Development Project (AFDP I) on a pilot scale in the coastal fishing villages of Gunjur and Batokunku, Tujereng. The project included the construction of community Fisheries Centres (CFCs) with infrastructural facilities for the beneficiaries in the project area and beyond. AFDP II followed AFDP I in 1987 involving the coastal fishing villages of Brufut, Kartong, Sanyang and Tanji. As a result, six CFCs were established one in each village, and managed by Fisheries Centre Management Committees (FCMC) for self sustainability. In addition, training programmes for fishermen and fish processors were initiated.

The members of the CFC Management Committees also received training on how to manage the Centres; the facilities as well as the activities. Training was also offered in areas of bookkeeping, numeracy and literacy.

In February 1987, the Government of Italy provided funds for the development of artisanal fisheries in two inland fishing villages namely, Cambodia and Tankular in Kiang West District (IAFDP I). The same facilities and training programmes as provided for in the EEC project villages, were also provided by the Italian project. The 2nd Phase; IAFDP started in 1990 and included six additional inland fishing villages; Albreda, Barra, Bintang, Jurunku, Salikene and Tendaba.

Japanese Government intervention in Artisanal Fisheries Development was in the form of technical assistance and in the supply of fishing equipment and materials. The Japanese programme (JICA) includes training programmes for fishermen, there by addressing a key policy objective of Government to increase Gambian participation in the artisanal fisheries sub-sector.

However, in 1991, the Government of Japan provided funds for the development of the artisanal fisheries of Bakau which includes the construction of a CFC, an ice plant, cold storage facilities and a landing jetty.

With each of the development projects (EEC, Italian and Japanese) the Fisheries Department provided extension agents in each project village to assist the local groups in the management of the affairs of the CFC's, while the Director of Fisheries was the director of the projects. Prior to the projects, all the village sites had a relatively low absorptive capacity in terms of the local peoples participation in fisheries activities. Local infrastructure was relatively poor, fishing inputs low and a generally low level organisation existed, particularly with regard to collective participation in Community Development activities.

### 3.2 The Village Development Committee (VDC)

The VDC is the local village institution charged with the responsibility of handling development issues at the village level. As with most African countries, the departure of colonialism had left the bulk of the population living in the rural areas faced with numerous socio-economic problems of an unfavourable nature and which contributed to the widening of the gap between rural and urban areas.

Before the creation of VDC's the development scenario was also full of actors who operated according to their own goals and objectives about development. Development programmes have failed in the rural areas where they caused disappointment to the people who did not play part in the identification of the programmes as they relate to their needs. Coordination had been ineffective and funds mismanaged.

The VDC was therefore set up to be responsible for coordinating development activities at the village community level. It was believed that the institutionalization of such committees would facilitate and promote effective participation of the local people. In effect the VDC is the entry point and vehicle through which development packages reach the rest of the community.

The institution of village development committees originated from the Government's first national five years development plan of 1975-1980, in which emphasis was placed on the facilitation of popular participation in the planning and implementation of actions necessary to satisfy people's needs. Such popular participation was rooted in the philosophy of "TESITO" meaning "self help" or "self reliance" through self determination, and connoting a development strategy for the Gambia.

Thus the formation of VDCs represented "the practical translation of the government's policy on rural development decentralization to the grass roots, aimed at people becoming more responsible for their own development". Through the VDC government and non-government agencies work with local communities for the benefit of the village community.

At the national level, the Department of Community Development (DCD) was charged with the responsibility of assisting with VDC formation. The Department approached the matter through mobilization of its staff and other resources towards sensitization and training.

#### 4. **Growth and Development of the Organisations**

##### 4.1 The VDC

Following training and sensitisation activities by the DCD at villages, many VDCs were formed. Because funding of the activities of Department was a major problem, the Department limited its actions to only certain villages.

However many of the VDCs that were formed later collapsed due to organisational problems and the lack of management skills. Due to success demonstrated by a few VDCs and realising their potential role at village level, development agencies began to request for their formation in the villages where they operated. In fact some NGOs and other development agents began to make VDC formation a prerequisite for development intervention. They have therefore collaborated with the VDC to fund and effect VDC training and formation for the successful implementation of their projects.

The VDC assign sub-committees with sectoral responsibilities and the FCMC is one such committee in many of the Fisheries Project villages in which the VDC is represented.

Although the VDC has demonstrated effectiveness in dealing with development issues and village matters, it is also faced with problems and constraints affecting its proper functioning. These include the following:

- a. lack of recognition of VDCs by other NGOs and even some government agencies interested in sectoral development;
- b. no legal obligations for registering the existence of VDCs and therefore sometimes the decision of VDCs are by-passed by government and non-governmental agents;
- c. political intrigue into the affairs of the VDCs' i.e. politicians making claim of merits over the achievements of VDC's endeavour and where this is refuted, the entire VDC process is being undermined;
- d. lack of cohesiveness and general understanding of the VDC concept by its members.

##### 4.2 The FCMC

During the establishment of the first CFC at Gunjur, beneficiary involvement had been very limited at the planning and implementation stages of the project. Management responsibility was assumed by the Fisheries Department. Therefore when the villagers were called upon to take over the management, they showed little interest, at first believing that the centre belonged to Government. The Department was therefore faced with a difficult and prolonged task of setting up and gradually handing over the management of the centre to its users. The experience at Gunjur therefore brought about a change in approach.

Since the establishment of the Gunjur centre had been on a top-down approach, subsequent projects began to involve village level participation at the beginning. Thus early in the establishment of the other five coastal CFCs in the second phase (AFDP II), the inland project (IAFDP I and II) and the recent Japanese project at Bakau, the villagers were sensitized on the projects. This involved project and Department staff holding several meetings with villagers to explain the aims and objectives of the project and to request for village involvement. Project steering committees were set up at each of the villages involved included village representatives comprising the Alkalo, youth groups and some village elders. Every opportunity was exploited to ensure community participation. Villagers were consulted every time a decision was required, from planning to the implementation stage.

Shortly after completion of construction, the Centre management committees were set up at each village for the management of the centres with assistance from the Fisheries Department and project staff. The formation of trade associations was encouraged each constituted of the user groups which are represented on the FCMC. Fisheries Department had seconded Fisheries Field Assistants (FFA) at each of the project village to assist the fisherfolk on their activities and to work with the project team at the centre level. Village Based Field Assistants (VBFAs) were also recruited from the respective village to work more closely with local group, particularly women group. They called and organized meetings regularly and kept records and minutes of meetings, etc. The FFA and VBFAs also collaborated to facilitate; coordinate and monitor centre activities.

The centre received theoretical and practical training in the areas of fishing and fish processing. Business and Centre Management skills, Literacy and numeracy classes were also part of the training programmes.

The management concept is based on the idea of gradual devolution. The Fisheries Department runs the centres and gradually hands them over to Centre Management Committees. Each centre now has a management Committee comprising of representatives of all the trade associations at the centres. The committee has village or youth group representatives and the head of the village, Alkalo. The Committee is responsible for the overall management of the centre, repair of the buildings, allocation of equipment/facilities for rent, and construction of new facilities. They also record meetings and produce a monthly statement of accounts for the Department. This statement details expenditure on wages, repair and expansion, and income rents.

#### 4.3 The VDC in CFC

In the Gambia VDC involvement in development projects and programmes is much stronger in the inland rural areas than they are in villages along the coast. For the CFC in coastal villages (the EEC project villages) there is virtually no VDC involvement in fisheries, apart from the few village representatives; the Alkalo and youth groups, except for the village of Sanyang where there exists a strong VDC which is currently involved in the management of the affairs of the CFC. Unlike the EEC coastal villages, VDC participation in fisheries is very strong in the inland fishing villages.

Here, the VDC had been involved in project activities including management of the CFCs. The IAFDP project realized the pivotal role played by VDCs in enhancing meaningful socio-economic development at village level and therefore funded the training of VDCs in all the project villages. The aim of the training activities had been to enable individual members understand their specific roles and respective functions. It was also aimed at making the VDC as a whole to understand its roles and responsibilities in the general process of community development.

Prior to the training of the VDCs, confusion and role conflicts had occurred between the VDC and FCMC members over the management of the CFC in some project villages. This had resulted in ineffective management of the centres resulting in a slump in centre activities. The project therefore collaborated with the DCD to reorientate VDC members and to redefine their roles within the project.

## **5. Current state of the organisations**

The FCMC of most coastal CFC's are now on a strong footing towards management self reliance. With some years of experience coupled with training activities received, they have now come to better understand their roles and functions and are more aware of the needs and direction of the centres.

The committees hold regular meetings, at least once a month at which all the trade associations are represented. The individual trade associations also hold regular meetings to discuss issues of importance to them and the points are put on the committee meeting agenda. The items on the agenda are discussed and the outcomes taken back to the associations by their representatives. This way all the associations using the facilities have a say in the running of the facilities and how income from rental payments is to be utilized. Some of the FCMCs have sub-delegated the responsibility of over seeing the centre facilities to the presidents of the trade associations, who ensures cleanliness, report damages and some times collect the rent.

The revenue from rental facilities is collected and recorded. This is kept in cash boxes at the centre and utilized for the continued running of the centres including repairs and maintenance, and the construction and expansion of the facilities most in demand. Now that the coastal project has phased out the management committees are assuming greater responsibility for the centre management. However they are continuing to receive assistance from the Fisheries Department. The VBFAs have been absorbed by the Department but continue to work together with the FFA to assist in the running of the centres.

Many of the trade associations at the coastal CFCs have now developed a high sense of member collaboration. Some of these associations are very coherent particularly the women groups and have now established credit schemes through monthly contributions from members. Small, short term loans are given to members and attract a small interest which help to increase the associations lending power. Members also assist each other in their personal economic activities although they operate on individual basis.

With regard to the Inland FCMCs these organisations have a relatively short experience with CFC management. The running of these centres still largely depends on assistance from both the Fisheries Department and project staff. Problems have been encountered which demand for continued assistance. However, following training of VDCs in the project villages the FCMC and VDC roles have become clearer and the FCMCs now assume a relatively more independent management role. On the other hand, the VDCs are responsible for the management of the water wells provided under the project for the benefit, of the whole community. The VDCs also participate in the selection of fishermen trainees, they are guarantors of trainees and are represented on the FCMC. There has been replacements of some of the FCMC members in some villages and the centre activities are beginning to pick up again.

However, in all the fishing villages, VDC's were established well before the coming into being of the fisheries project. As a result, some villagers who by profession were fisherfolks had already been selected as VDC members. Some fisherfolk are also representatives of the Alkalos in political organisations.

These people usually have lots of influence and power, and tend to dictate or overrule other members of the FCMC. For instance at the coastal village of Sanyang, some members of the VDC impose their ideas on the FCMC, taking decisions when fisherfolk members are not fully conversant with the problems of the CFC. The VDC here feel they should control the revenues of the centre and take decisions as to how the money should be spent. Thus the maintenance of some of the centre facilities are delayed. Community workers including fisheries field assistants have also been removed from the village as a result of complaints from the VDGs.

At Tankular and Cambodia in the inland fisheries sector the dominant role of the VDC has also been significant in retarding progress until, the centres had to be revitalized following training of the VDC. Following this, the villagers are now taking a keen interest at the Cambodia centre and activities have since started to pick up again. However the Tankular centre is still dominated by the former 3 member FCMC. Additional members who are new on the committee do not play active roles in decisions, on the assumption that the centre still concerns mainly the 3 members. This centre therefore has continuously given poor results and still requires reorganisation if it is to perform better.

## **6. Success/failure**

Virtually all the six FCMCs in the coastal CFCs have now significantly developed management capabilities, have a better perception of the centres roles and their abilities to work as management teams. The CFCs are now all managed by the committees with greatly reduced assistance from the Fisheries Department whose role apart from monitoring the activities of the centres, is now mainly advisory. The training components received and directed towards the various categories of operators and the management committees, coupled with regular meetings, have greatly enhanced the capabilities of both management committees and trade associations.



Now that the project has phased out, the committees have increasingly developed experience and sense of responsibility in managing the centres.

Most of the centres have expanded the most demanded facilities from rental incomes and have put up extra facilities including shops for rentage and sheds for the repair and maintenance of fishing gears. These have been done without negligence of the repair and maintenance of buildings and other facilities. Some of the expansions have effectively improved the availability of processing space and have involved more people in centre activities. Rental collections are kept in cash boxes at the centre and when sufficient transferred to bank accounts.

All the centres have opened up bank accounts with three signatories for deposits and withdrawals. The field assistants help the committees in their cash accounting but in most of the centres this is now handled by the committees. They operate income and expenditure accounts and send copies to the Fisheries Department. Expenditures are decided at committee meetings and in line with priorities of the trade associations and the repair and maintenance needs of the centres.

The various trade associations have developed savings and credit schemes utilizing the cash boxes for savings. Individuals have personal saving boxes and this helps in their cash control and loans repayments. Individual operators maintain bank accounts and some members of the trade associations keep their own records.

The fishermen's training programmes have produced qualified fishermen who now operate their own fishing units and add to the level of participation of local people at the various centres. Catch landings of the centres have consequently increased although this is more remarkable in some centres than others. Although no real estimates are available it is assumed with some evidence that fish supply in the villages and around have increased substantially with the centres producing fish for both rural and urban markets, the centres also provide fish for export either directly or through industrial fishing companies. There has been significant improvements at the villages as many mud houses have been replaced with solid cement buildings and corrugated roofs. People and youths possess their own personal effects including radios, televisions sets, etc.

Many young men are building houses and marrying wives while some operators own cars and motorbicycles. Although these cannot all be attributed to the effect of the centres and people's involvement in fisheries activities, it is fair to say that the CFCs have significantly contributed to this.

All the centres are continuously attracting fishermen, processors and traders from around the country as well as from neighbouring countries.

As regards the inland CFCs six of these are still in their very early stages of development and the FCMCs are still young with relatively short experience. The project has not phased out yet and the committees are receiving constant support from both the Department and project staff.

However much has been achieved in terms of local people's participation. Due to the lack of experience by the management committees, several problems are encountered at the centres which will require to be addressed with caution. Despite this, the local fisherfolks are becoming more and more aware of their roles and benefits from the project centres.

In terms of absorptive capacity, the centres are continuing to attract local as well as other participants and the supply of fish is increasing. Many of the local companies and individual traders buy fish from here for distribution to both the rural and urban areas. However catches fluctuate seasonally.

With the fishermen's training programmes and the accompanying loans from the project and the credit unit of the Department, the number of fishing economic units are increasing.

Due to management problems existing in many of the centres, the fact that the committees are still young and lack of experience it will take sometime before the centres reach the level in the coastal areas.

As regards the VDC in some of these centres, they will continuously require to be reminded of their roles in the centres before they can effectively contribute to the effective running of the centres. Perhaps it is important to conduct common training programmes for VDCs and FCMCs.

## **7. Conclusion**

Of the six coastal villages the four village of Gunjur, Tanji Brufut and Sanyang virtually are self sustaining, requiring little financial support from Government.

The roles played by the Departments extension agents have been greatly reduced to a merely advisory capacity. The two smaller villages of Kartong and Batokunku still require some amount of assistance, support and advice from Government.

For the inland centres it is still too early to make a definitive statement as the fishing/operational phase has just recently begun. However, indications are that out of the eight centres, four (Barra, Albreda and Tendaba) will hopefully reach the level of sustainability by the time the project phases out in October 1993. The other four smaller centres which also have fewer facilities will require more work and support. For them, it will take more time and effort to reach our objective of self sustainability.

## **PORT USERS COMMITTEES IN CONAKRY: An Urban Analog to Village Development Committees**

by

Jan P. Johnson, IDAF Senior Advisor

Large fisheries development projects, especially rural ones, have sometimes benefitted when organized around the three institutional structures of:

- **Fisheries Development Unit**, a team of National technicians providing integrated, multi-disciplinary technical support to their local clientele;
- **Village Development Committee**, representing the main groups of villagers interested in the economic and social development of their community; and
- **Mini-Projects**, which are the activities which the Fisheries Development Unit (or other development agents) plan and implement in common with the Village Development Committees (or other local groups). In rural areas the range of activities most often includes mini-projects not only for matters related to fish production, but also dealing with community development.

In a rural setting community problems and fishing sector problems are inextricably intertwined, and neighbors more or less share the same difficulties. Thus the idea of an FDU helping a village to find ways not only to improve their fish production, but also the village water supply, the health center, and the school not only makes sense but can be highly effective.

In an urban setting, however, the users of the sea generally live interspersed with all the other, much more numerous inhabitants of the city. Inside a city, residential community development aspects as such don't appear to be really relevant activities for fisheries agents nor even integrated fisheries development projects. In the city, however, there is the professional fisheries community, whose members have urban mobility and individual interests, and governmental interests, but who nonetheless share certain common interests centered around the landing site or harbor.

City authorities seeking ways to help artisanal fisheries can't do too much about fishing techniques and boats, about what happens at sea. They can, however, have a lot of beneficial influence on what happens at the shore-side operations base, at the landing site. Indeed, many port users tend to feel that "the authorities" should take care of and pay for solving the ports problems. In these days of structural adjustment, however, the government has no money. It is thus up to the users, with official support, to bring together the resources needed for the development of the artisanal landing sites.

This document reports on some of the very initial but also very promising results of using a problem-solving, participatory, and largely self-help approach in working with groups of artisanal landing site users in Conakry.

This approach has been based on:

- A generalist team of national fisheries officers trained in rapid participatory investigation methods and simple logical framework analysis.
- Port User's Committees, composed of representatives from all the professional groups using an artisanal fisheries port.
- Mini-projects, which in the present situation were designed with technical assistance from the IDAF team in Conakry.

### **HOW THE FIRST PORT USER'S COMMITTEES IN CONAKRY GOT STARTED**

The IDAF team in Conakry had just done all the preparations for starting training of Guinean fisheries officers in problem identification and mini-project planning when two very interesting things happened.

The first incident was the arrival on the scene of a team from FAO HQ, headed by Judith Appleton, which carried out several weeks of Rapid Rural Appraisal style studies in association with the UNDP/FAO Kaback artisanal fisheries project and the IDAF team in Conakry, on the nutritional status of Kaback's fishing communities. Returned from Kaback, the nutrition RRA team gave such an absorbing presentation of their methods and their results that they were asked, and kindly agreed, to give an unscheduled two-day training session in RRA methods for government officers and others in Conakry working with artisanal fisheries.

The second incident, coming right on the heels of the RRA training session, was a request from Mme. Kaba Rougy BARRY (Mayor of the Commune of Matam, a sub-division of Conakry) for suggestions on what she could do to help artisanal fisheries in her part of the city. The government artisanal fisheries agency, OPPA, and the IDAF team in Conakry responded with the observation that the Mayor's comparative advantage for action would be in doing things to improve the situation in the artisanal landing sites active in her commune.

It was rapidly decided by common accord that IDAF would supervise an action/ research/ training operation in Matam with the following objectives:

1. Establishing a base-line description of the situation at each of the four artisanal landing sites in the Matam district, complete with list of priority problems identified by the landing site users, and a brief comparison of the relative advantages and disadvantages of possible solutions to those problems.

At the same time that this work was taking place, it was repeatedly emphasized with all participants that neither IDAF nor OPPA had any money to pay for any mini-projects.

Consequently, any resulting development action would be done with the resources of the port users themselves, or with other partners which might be arranged.

2. Using the occasion to train government fisheries officers in the application of Participatory Rapid Appraisal techniques in carrying out the baseline studies and problem identification.
3. Profiting from the opportunity to adapt the PRA tools which we had seen used for agriculture and nutrition to fit the somewhat different needs and situation of the artisanal landing sites.
4. In the light of results from the field work, advising OPFA and the Mayor's office on promising lines for action.

### **ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE PRA BASELINE STUDIES.**

In the course of preparing the baseline studies, it became evident that, while several of the artisanal ports had active elements of fishermen's coops, or women's groups, or even representatives of the Harbor Service and of Customs, none of these smaller ports had an organization which effectively looked out for the maintenance and operation of the port as a whole, much less their development.

Even in the largest of the artisanal ports, where an artisanal fisheries investment project of several millions of US dollars was underway, there was no organization or even a forum where the actual users of the port could make known their needs and points of view.

Thus, once the Baseline Description and Problem Identification document was prepared and published for each port, the PRA teams were obliged to present and explain the studies in a series of both general meetings at the landing sites, and in smaller sessions with individual user's groups, such as boat owners, fish smokers, merchants, etc.

In the course of these discussions concerning the results of the baseline studies, all parties concerned came to agree on the potential usefulness of a local committee to coordinate development and maintenance at each of these small ports. The port of Boussoura was selected for the first pilot effort to organize an official Port User's Committee (Comité pour la Développement du Debarcadère - CDD in French).

## THE EXPERIENCE WITH BOUSSOURA PORT

In July, 1992, the PRA team and the Boussoura users looked at the following distribution of professions, and decided on the proportion of representation indicated in the table:

### BOUSSOURA PORT, CONAKRY: CENSUS OF PORT USERS AND DISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATION IN PORT USERS COMMITTEE, JULY 1992

PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	NO. OF REPRESENTATIVES	MALE/FEMALE REPRESENT.
BOATOWNERS	42	2	2/0
FISHERMEN	144	4	4/0
FISH SELLERS	30	2	0/2
TRADERS	111	5	3/2
FISH SMOKERS	40	2	0/2
TRANSPORTERS	33	2	2/0
HARBOR OFFICE	2	1	1 non-voting advisor
FISH DEPT.	2		
POLICE	5	1	1 non-voting advisor
CUSTOMS	3		
TOTALS	412	19	13/6

Each of the professional groups then selected their representatives, who attended the first official meeting of the PUC on 16 July, 1992. In the same meeting the committee selected from among themselves an Executive Bureau of five members (including one woman), with the commissaire of police and the Port Officer as non-voting advisors.

At the same meeting the PUC selected as their immediate priorities for action the installation of lighting to discourage bandits at night, and arranging to connect the harbor to a supply of drinking water from the city mains.

For the next few weeks the PRA team for Boussoura worked with the PUC to develop plans and pro-forma quotations for these activities... until the high tides of August completely inundated Boussoura port, and the PUC made very urgently known that their new and by far first priority was the physical salvation of their harbor from erosion by the sea. In their terms, drinking water and lights were not very important for a landing site which could be washed away by the next big storm.

By way of explanation, it needs to be said that Boussoura is built at the head of a hard-bottomed, gradually sloping channel which gives fishing and transport canoes the opportunity to load and

unload at almost any stage of the tide, an advantage found nowhere else on the south coast of the Conakry peninsula, where at all other ports during the low tide cycle one is obliged to wade through knee deep mud to get between canoe and the shore.

On the negative side, Boussoura landing is totally open to wind and waves from the south. Moreover, the construction some years ago of a governmental outboard motorization center and an oceanographic research center at the backs of Boussoura's fishermen and transporters has crowded the port's users onto a narrow strip (10 meters at its widest) of badly consolidated and actively subsiding fill at the water's edge. Thus Boussoura port, being nibbled away from behind and from in front, was in very real danger of physically disappearing.

Re-orienting, the PRA team engaged two young civil engineers from a local NGO, *Entre-aide Universitaire Pour le Développement* (EUPD) to do a hydrographic study of the bottom. PRA and EUPD subsequently prepared preliminary plans for three successive modules of rock dike construction backed by earth fill which could both protect the landing from erosion and waves, and at the same time increase the available working space at the port from its present 600 m<sup>2</sup> to more than 2000 m<sup>2</sup>. Each of the construction modules is estimated to cost from 20-30,000 USD, for a total of about USD 100,000.

Such costs clearly surpassing the local resources of the port users, these preliminary plans have been brought to the attention of the Coastal Environment unit at the University of Conakry. Financed by French Cooperation, this unit has begun to take an active interest carrying further the studies needed for developing the protections of the port, and in finding a financial partner to help pay for the construction work.

Satisfied that effective efforts were being made to do something about the physical disappearance of their port, the PUC came back to the question of how to encourage the bandits who congregated each night in their port to congregate elsewhere, the best solution appearing to be a lighting system. But given the reality that the absence of city electricity is often more common than its presence, a special system was needed.

The PRA team offered to loan the Boussoura PUC a 12 volt system based on truck batteries charged from city current when it is present, the PUC to re-imburse the 500 USD cost of the system if they decided to keep it after a 2 month trial period. The trial period past, the PUC very definitely wanted to keep the lighting, and, with the consent of boatowners and local traders, have instituted a system of modest user's fees on the canoes landing at Boussoura (about one US dollar per landing) and small monthly fees to the shoreside traders to pay for the capital and operating expenses of both the lighting system and other small improvements which they desire.

At present the Boussoura PUC operates effectively with the "recognition" of the mayor's office, while the specific legal structure for such port users groups is being worked out.

## THE EXPERIENCE WITH BOULBINET PORT

Boulbinet, by far the largest of the artisanal fishing ports in Conakry (1610 users according to the PRA census), and the best protected anchorage due to the natural configuration of the large site, has been seriously neglected for the last 15 years.

Located next to the national government offices, it had been planned for many years to move all of the fishermen out to another harbor 3 km away being prepared by an investment project. It has now been realized that the new harbor, which is just being finished, does not, as presently constructed, correspond to the operating needs of the artisanal fishery. It is thus no longer official policy to oblige all the fishermen to move there from Boulbinet. The government was accordingly interested in having a PRA baseline study, problem identification, and PUC formation undertaken in order to try to deal with some of the immediate problems of cleanliness and order in the port.

The PRA team published their baseline study on Boulbinet in August 1992, discussed the findings with users in September, and proceeded to start organizing activities for a Port User's Committee in October.

In Boulbinet, however, the large number of users, the variety of non-fishing port activities, the long-running feud with government over their potential eviction from the well-protected harbor, and a fear (many times denied) that a Port User's Committee might be intended to replace the representatives of various existing government agencies or cooperatives, contributed to making the establishment of a PUC for Boulbinet a much slower, more drawn out, and at least up to now, less satisfactory action than at Boussoura. Another important factor may also be that in the Commune of Matam (Conakry), a strong Mayor and her chief of staff were strongly behind the formation of the Boussoura PUC, while in the Commune of Kaloum (Conakry) the mayor's office is neutral.

A PUC does now exist in Boulbinet, but it has difficulties. The Port Officer had from the beginning expressed his concern that the PUC might try to replace his function. Partly to allay this fear, the PUC membership decided to select the Port Officer as chairman on the grounds that nothing in the port could be done without his authority and support.

The first priority retained by the Boulbinet PUC was linking into the city water supply, for drinking and for washing. This was to be attained by collecting cash contributions from all the users which would cover all the costs of installing a water meter, water pipe, and water taps. The investment and operating costs would then be recovered by the PUC selling water to users in the port for 50 FG/ 20 liters (compared to the present 200 FG/ 20 liters presently paid to commercial water haulers).

However, after some months, the money collected is still not enough to cover the USD 800 cost of the initial installation. The PRA team often has great difficulty getting in touch with the Port Officer. By far the greatest share of the funds which have been collected have come from the women fish smokers installed in the port, who have an urgent need for water to wash both their fish and themselves.



(The OPPA/ IDAF women's team, in addition to the efforts of the PRA team, has for some time been actively working with this women\_ group to develop a project including improved fish-smoking, credit, and functional literacy training with outside donor assistance. This may partly account for the greater confidence and participation of the women in the water supply activity. )

It has thus been decided to do the water mini-project in association with the women's groups, rather than with the PUC as a whole. It is possible that, once this first mini-project is successfully completed, the other users of the port will come to have more confidence in the approach.

It is also possible that the open and participatory PUC approach is seen as too threatening for some of the invested interests in the relatively large and complex port of Boulbinet, and that a PUC in its present form will not be "accepted" by the port of Boulbinet in its present state.

### **CLIMBING OVER THE GARBAGE TO GET TO COLEAH PORT**

After the PUC of Boussoura (Commune of Matam) was well established, the Mayor of Matam wrote thanking OPPA and IDAF for their assistance to Boussoura, and asked that urgent attention be given to the plight of the Coleah landing (for which an OPPA/ IDAF PRA baseline study had already been undertaken and published), where users have to literally climb over piles of trash two meters high to get to the beach. There is no effective trash disposal system in that section of Matam, so everyone dumps their garbage on the fishing beach.

While OPPA and IDAF were debating how to politely and diplomatically inform the Mayor that the two pilot operations of Boussoura and Boulbinet were all that could be handled for the moment, the users of Coleah got together with the fisheries officer responsible for their section (who had been trained by IDAF) and formed their own Port User's Committee, informing us only afterwards.

The Coleah PUC then proceeded in two weeks to collect the USD 200 from the 140 users of this small port to pay the city garbage service to haul away the accumulated trash. The PUC then proposed that the city trash service install two of the large portable trash bins at the entrance to the paths leading to their beach, but the trash service has no new portable bins. The trash service has , however, made available two badly rusted bins which can be repaired for about USD 400 each.

The PUC is presently seeking, and appears sure to succeed in finding, a local partner among the various Embassy small project funds to help them repair the trash bins and thus complete the solution of their most urgent and pressing problem.

## **REFLECTION ON THE LESSONS LEARNED**

Not surprisingly, the Port User's Committee approach seems to work best where the port users have an urgent problem of their own for which the PUC offers an organizational solution within their financial reach, and where community authorities give their full support.

In Boussoura, the threat of the physical disappearance of the port has been tremendous unifying influence, as has the need to reduce the bandit population at night.

The support of the government PRA agents at Boussoura to the official priority initiatives has been very good. They have, however, sometimes not been aware of other priorities which although rather urgent and important, are not always verbally expressed to government officers. For example, the people at Boussoura constructed a makeshift latrine with burlap sack walls to shield the modesty of women users, an activity which was not really noticed by the PRA agents concentrating on lighting systems and beach erosion.

This reflects perhaps a mid-way point in a change of operating styles, where the PUC members are learning to actively request assistance and services, and the PRA team is getting used to the idea that the most successful mini-projects originate with their clientele.

In Boulbinet, the water supply, although desired by all, appears to be critically important only to the women fish processors, who are the ones who so far have been willing to pay their own money for it. If the PUC had been organizing a credible mini-project to protect the users of Boulbinet port from being forced to move out, it would probably have received strong and universal support.

On the contrary, at present several sectors of the Boulbinet users still voice concern that the PUC is a government trick which is the first step in trying to move them out. Boulbinet is also a large and complex operation where the non-fishing sector represents a considerable economic income for a number of people. The PUC appears to be seen by some as a possible disturbing influence in a well-established state of affairs.

The most encouraging example is, of course, little Coleah, which practically on its own decided to quite successfully imitate the example of its sister port of Boussoura only 2 km away.

The lesson, and not a new one, seems to be that commonality of problem creates unity of purpose.