

***Studies on KAP (Knowledge, Attitude & Practice)
and on the Dynamics of HIV/AIDS in Fishing
Communities in Cameroon
with references to a similar study undertaken in the
Chad Basin (Borno state, Nigeria)***

Implementing Institution:

*Research Station for Fisheries and Oceanography, Limbe, Cameroon
NIFFRI New Busa and Borno SACA, Nigeria*

Main Researchers:

*Chiambeng George Yongbi (Cameroon)
OVie, Donli and Pate (Nigeria)*

1.1. Purpose of study

Context Cameroon

- Marine fisheries employs about 200,000 people of which 125,000 (62.5%) belong to the artisanal sub-sector (87% non nationals: Nigeria, Ghana, Benin etc),
- Per caput fish consumption is 17.9 kg and contribution to GDP is 5.2% (primary sector);
- Unfortunately, fishing communities are not in the picture as a highly vulnerable group in the national response to HIV/AIDS;
- In Cameroon 90% of cases of transmission are through unprotected sexual contact (heterosexual), 10% mother to child and blood transfusion;
- Women have higher prevalence rates (CDHS, 2004):
 - For adolescents (15-24 aged) it is 4,8% women & 1,4% men;
 - General population: 6,8% for women against 3,9% for men;
 - urban – rural: 8,4% & 4,8% women against 4,7% & 2,8% men respectively.

The purpose of the project:

To build a strategic response to HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector through knowledge and capacity building.

1.2. Main Research Questions

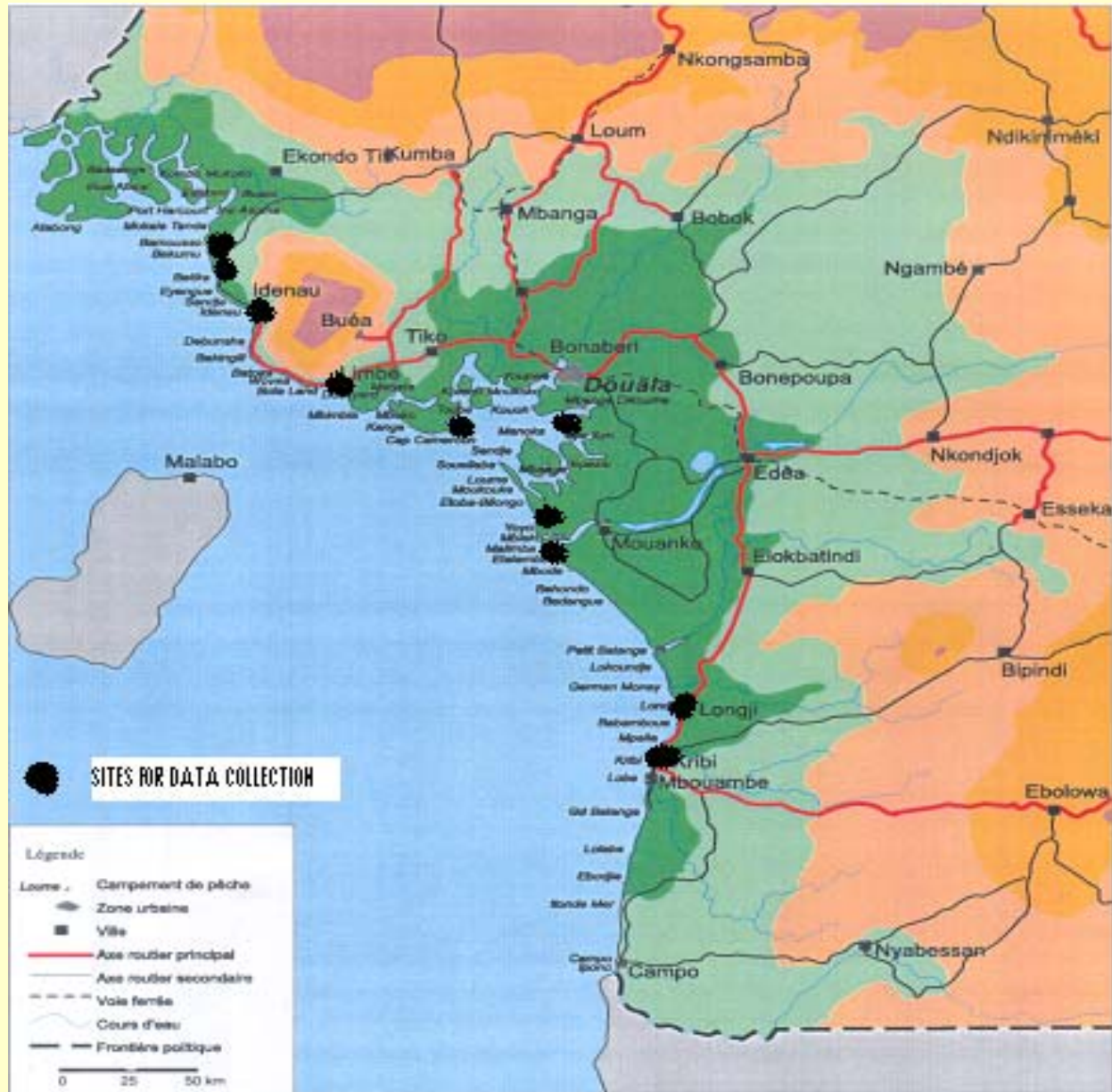
- 1/ What priority interventions should be carried out in the fisheries sector and how best?
- 2/ What are the risk factors involved?
- 3/ What possible problems can hinder the project achieving its main outputs? And how will these problems be resolved?
- 4/ How will the project contribute to the objectives of the overall program (Fisheries & HIV/AIDS in Africa: Investing in Sustainable solutions)

1.3. Target Communities & Groups (Cameroon)

- a/ **Community:** 10 fishing communities in the 5 divisions (Ndian, Fako, Wouri, Sanaga Maritime and Ocean Divisions) which cover the Cameroon coastline;
- b/ **Groups:** Fishermen, fish processors, fishmongers and traders, youths of different nationalities (Cameroonians, Beninese, Nigerians, Ghanians, Mali, Tchad and Togo mainly); with a separate analysis of mobile traders in fishing communities

1.4. Selection Criteria (Cameroon)

- a/ **Region:** 2 fishing communities per division;
- b,/ **Scale and Range of fishing:** average to very high scale, then wide range ;
- c/ **Nature of community:** Rural, semi-urban, urban;
- d/ **Ethnic:** Diversified (Most are with multinationals: Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Mali, Cameroon) or majority nationals;
- e/ **Economy:** Most have fishery and partly fishery based economy;
- f/ **Proximity to counseling and treatment centers:** far and others close;
- g/ **Availability of previous works:** very few had some previous data.



2.1. Activities Undertaken

- **Component 1: KAP studies with respect to HIV/AIDS in the fishery sector in 10 communities in Cameroon”**
- **Component 2: Studies on the Dynamic of the HIV/AIDS in 2 fishing communities in Cameroon”**

2.2. Methodology

The research methodology comprised two Phases: *Planning phase* and *Execution phase*

A/ Planning Phase

- Preparation of plan of process and set up of field team;
- Search and Collection of secondary data on the fisheries chain and on HIV/AIDS;
- Contact with local authorities and advocacy;
- Capacity building, adaptation and pre-testing of PA tools;
- General Assembly meeting in the various communities to sensitize on the project;
- Triangulation II (Team members, fisheries experts) for take off of activities.

B/ Execution Phase

- KAP (10 fishing communities)

- Standardized pre-coded questionnaires, Focus group discussions (FGD) and key informants interview guides (semi structured interviews);

- Dynamics studies (2 fishing communities: Idenau and Londji)

- In-depth interviews, community meetings and,
- Use Qualitative and gender sensitive participatory data collection tools (see SFLP/FAO tool and planning guide) in FGD with various socio-professional groups.

2.3. Results

KAP Studies

A. Cameroon

- Fisheries sector actors

- a/ Incomplete Knowledge on the mode of transmission (misconceptions on witchcraft and mosquito bites), prevention of HIV/AIDS and stigmatization of sero-positivity of infected persons.
- b/ Inadequate and low use of condoms especially during casual sex with partners (Male condom use: 67%; matrimonial status: single: 54,3%; enclaved communities:38%); age: <29yrs of age 52,8%, 30-39 of age 33%, > 40 age 14%); Female condom use: 10%
- c/ Low level of testing especially in enclaved communities;
- d/ High rate of extra marital sex (45.52%) amongst the married/cohabiting increasing risk of infection and a higher number of partners for those from secondary school levels of education;
- e/ Age of first sexual intercourse is 15,8 years, and many cases of adolescent pregnancies;

- Mobile traders:

- 59% have extramarital sex; and 36% with regular partners;
- 21,7% with people using their services;
- 29,2% with PSW;
- 6,8% often without a condom,
- 38,15 % always with a condom;
- 40,48% in exchange for goods.

- Sex workers:

- **They are** highly mobile and moving between fishing camps, urban and rural areas and brothels in cities like Limbe, Kribi, Douala, sex workers coming from Nigeria, Ghana

2.3. Results (2)

B. Nigeria

Fisheries sector actors

- a/ For household interviews: 69.1% were permanently resident in their communities
 - 30.9% mobile occasionally;
 - 91.2% stay away for less than three months (mobility)
 - while 8.2% stay away for more than 3 months;
- b/ High awareness but low and Incomplete Knowledge (transmission, prevention) and high levels of stigmatization of infected persons.
- c/ Food insecurity in households during lean fishing seasons is 87,8% and accompanied with prevalence of diseases like typhoid, cholera/diarrhea, pile and malaria;
- d/ Perception of risk is very low: 21,3 % perceived at one time that they were at risk and 15% thought they were highly at risk
- e/ There are Important problems of insecurity in the area, erratic education and health system in the surveyed fishing communities, lack of roads, and basic services;
- f/ Inadequate availability and low use of condoms especially during casual sex;
 - Male condom use: 22%;
 - Female condom use: not available
 - Condom use during last sexual intercourse: 14,3%, 21,6% and 16,4% during the last sexual encounter with:
 - (i) partners/spouses, (ii) boyfriend/girlfriend and (iii) casual partners respectively

2.3. Results (3)

Nigeria

- g/ Low acceptance (religious leaders) of condom use
- h/ Low level of testing: with only 7,2% of interviewed tested
The reasons given by those that have not tested are varied and include the fact that they did not want to know (7.5%); it is not necessary (83.5%); cannot afford the test (6.5%); 2.5% gave no reason.
- g/ High rate of extra marital sex: 55.7% of the respondents had multiple sexual partners. Though the age group between 15 and 35 years were those found with higher sexual partners no significant differences were found
- h/ For transactional sex: 57,7% admit that there is transactional sex; 4,3% have engaged in sex for money or goods; 12,3% occasionally do so.
- i/ For Sex Workers : 4,7% are from within the community; 26,6% from other localities in LCB; 14,7% from other parts of Nigeria, 2,5% from other countries.
 - Sex workers are attracted by the many single migrants in the area and the fisheries economy
 - Sex workers have a low use of condom because of the disparity in price of sex with condom and sex without condom, the former attracting only N500 while the latter attracts N1500 and above

2.3. Results (4)

Cameroon

Dynamics studies

Causes of Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS are seen at three levels;

- Macro-level: weak negotiation capacity in marketing of fishery products; declining resources (increased mobility and migration) and weak policy; poverty and loss of job due to conflict between artisanal and industrial fishers etc
- Meso-level: the prevailing low schooling, poor capacity building in fisheries related activities, the absence of social cohesion (support network is weak), poor environmental sanitation etc.
- Micro-level: they are different for different socio professional groups and are linked to the livelihood strategies in the communities (fish mongers, fish processors, fishermen, boat owners, the presence of sex workers,etc). (Easy access to cash, masculinity in males,)

- **Major Recommendations (Cameroon)**

1/ KAP studies

a/ Urgent actions need to be taken and should be led by the community and religious leaders:

- to assure full knowledge of HIV/AIDS;
- increase risk perception with privilege should be given to the populations of enclaved rural communities

b/ Social marketing and information on correct use of condoms to be organized in all communities.

- Find a strategy to ensure constant availability of condoms:

Major Recommendations (Cameroon)

-Test different intervention approaches like:

- Use of (i) youth clubs, (ii) sexworker groups, (iii) making use of fish wholesalers supply chain actors and other traders who reach isolated fishing camps throughout the year,

- Female condoms distribution as a way to address equities and hyper masculinity and contribute to empower women in the fisheries sector;

c/ Voluntary Testing be promoted and extended with use of mobile units in communities lacking these facilities and ensure access to care and treatment + work on stigma;

d/ Involve youths and couples in the fight against HIV/AIDS (problems of intergenerational sex, youth pregnancies, orphans and vulnerable children employed in fisheries) through youth clubs and peer education training;

e/ Organise specific actions towards mobile traders and the semi permanent groups who have higher risk behavior;

f/ Address transactional sex through specific work is needed with sex workers.

2/ Dynamics studies

• Strengthen the resistance of these communities to avoid infection with HIV/AIDS: with emphasis on:

a: Bridging groups and links between:

- urban and rural centres; (all actors in the fisheries sector + migrating sex workers from Douala, Nigeria, kribi, Limbe and link with tourism sector and youth prostitution)

- fishing communities along the coast; crossing borders (stigma of migrants, Idenau).

b. Demography, economy and influx of mobile groups; Youths;

- Poor groups looking for economic opportunities in fishing communities;

- Influx of other mobile groups (mobile traders, hawkers);

c. Migration in fisheries and the response to HIV/AIDS; Different types of migration; Need for synchronised trans-border initiatives).

- D. Improve basic social and institutional infrastructure (water supply, roads, healthcare (HIV/AIDS and other health services etc);
- E. Put in place initiatives to enable individuals and households reduce their reliance on livelihood strategies and lifestyles that make them susceptible to HIV/AIDS (e.g. through savings and livelihood diversification) and lastly
- F. Promote social cohesion by encouraging formation of community groups based on common interest and reinforcing existing initiatives

Other outputs:

- Collaboration with PPSAC: participation in planning workshop 2nd phase
- Social marketing expertise and to be agreed upon direct support to fishing communities in the area of peer education and condom (male and female) supply (improve availability)

Major Recommendations Nigeria

- Need for a multifaceted form of intervention involving multiple stakeholders with emphasis on link between commercial sex work, fisher folk, multiple movement and low level knowledge on prevention, transmission and care; and support for HIV and AIDS
- Need to facilitate capacity building efforts for cooperative unions and market place associations (already existing organisations in fisheries) to serve as advocates in the fight against stigma and discrimination, engagement in high risk behaviours and the spread of current and correct information
- Access to condoms must be improved particularly through local sources
- Need to strengthen the capacity of coordinators such as Project Manager, BOSACA, LACAs, Peer Group Educators, Youth Volunteers, Trade Union officials and provide life saving skills to Persons at risk (women, youth, orphans and vulnerable children)

Major Recommendations Nigeria

- Train all involved in prevention, treatment, care and mitigation on findings of gender linked vulnerability and ensure gender mainstreaming in implementation of HIV/AIDS response
- Need to mainstream HIV/AIDS into the fisheries sector;
- Strengthen the existing health delivery infrastructure to accommodate issues of STIs and HIV/AIDS: (establishment of HCT centers, ARV centers or collection points by SACA etc)
- Establishment of comprehensive Testing and Treatment Centres at different locations in the area with the involvement of stakeholders (the local councils, the state government, women and youth associations etc)
- Encourage the formation of Community Home Based Care initiatives to assist in nutritional supplementation advice and treatment regime adherence, among others
- Introducing HIV/AIDS into the Curriculum of the fisheries colleges as part of the General Studies
- Need to undertake a general prevalence and incidence survey in the whole region to provide strategic baseline data for national and development partner interventions.
- Undertake a study on the impact of the infection on the fishing industry, specifically the various communities and sectors in the Lake Chad Basin

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND
ATTENTION

Sampling Sites