



MEETING REPORT

National Consultation Meeting Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in the Kafue Flats

Lusaka, 25th June 2010

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*National consultation meeting
Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in the Kafue Flats, Zambia.
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Meeting Report

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Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Investing in Sustainable Solutions



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Background

The WorldFish Center Zambia has been implementing research for development activities in the Kafue Flats in Zambia under the regional programme on Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in Africa. With permission and full support from His Royal Highness Chief Hamusonde and His Royal Highness Chief Nalubamba, an extensive socio-economic assessment and a series of pilot interventions took place in target fishing communities in the Kafue Flats. The WorldFish Center has been working through local structures and in collaboration with national partners including the Zambia Self Help Group Approach Programme (SHG) and Society for Family Health / New Start (SFH).

This report outlines the key points from the presentations and recommendations made at the national stakeholder consultation on the work conducted in the Kafue Flats. The meeting was held in the Taj Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka on Friday 25th June 2010.

Opening and Introduction

A total of 31 people gathered at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel on Friday 25th June 2010, to participate in the national consultation meeting. Among the participants were His Royal Highness Chief Hamusonde, Dr. Flory Mononi from World Vision DRC, and several delegates from Monze and Lochinvar.

The Director of Fisheries, Mr. Charles Maguswi, opened the meeting with the request for all participants to introduce themselves (see Annex 1 for list of participants). Mr. Maguswi proceeded to highlight the long-term collaboration between the WorldFish Center and his Department. HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector is a matter of national concern, and the Department of Fisheries has been taking steps towards addressing this by appointing a focal person on HIV/AIDS at the Department, by developing a workplace policy on HIV/AIDS, and by the recently developed proposal for Global Fund monies for internal and external mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS at the department and in the fisheries sector in Zambia. Mr. Maguswi expressed his appreciation for the activities implemented under the Regional Programme on Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in Africa and ensured his continued support to these activities. He invited participants to pay attention to the results from the study and interventions undertaken in the Kafue Flats, and to actively participate in the discussions.

Introduction of the project

The Coordinator of the Regional Programme, Mrs. Saskia Hüsken from the WorldFish Center Zambia, introduced the programme of the day and provided a brief background of the Zambia project component under this programme.

There is a double-connection between fisheries and HIV/AIDS: on the one hand, fisher folk are among the populations most at risk, while on the other hand, fish makes important contributions to nutrition, food security and incomes among vulnerable populations in wider society. The regional programme looks at how to reduce and manage the risk facing

fisher folk, and how to safeguard and strengthen the contribution of fish to national food security. In collaboration with FAO, the WorldFish Center is implementing this regional programme in eight project sites across Africa around three technical focus areas:

- Options for reducing vulnerability along the fish marketing chain;
- Enhancing nutrition benefits from small scale aquaculture and fisheries;
- Institutional change to increase investment in viable support options;

The approach applied by the WorldFish Center is to conduct research-for-development activities and pilot interventions through national and local partners in the eight selected sites, the Kafue Flats in Zambia being one of these sights.

Through the programme, cross-regional learning and identification of possible pathways for policy impact are being realized through sharing of lessons and by Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meetings. The first PAG meeting was held in Malawi in March 2009, with the technical focus on *Regional trends and perspectives on vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector*. The second PAG meeting was held in Benin in March 2010 with a focus on *Food and Nutrition Security in the context of fisheries and HIV/AIDS*. Reports and papers on these meetings and project outcomes are available from the programme website www.worldfishcenter.org/wfcms/SF0959SID

In summary, the following activities have been taking place in Zambia under the regional programme:

Technical focus area	Zambia specific intervention	Location
Options for reducing vulnerability along fish marketing chain	Assessment of mobility & vulnerability of fisher folk and female fish traders specifically. Piloting of 'fish trader +' model.	Kafue Flats fishery
Enhancing nutrition benefits from small-scale aquaculture and fisheries	Impact of fish consumption on nutrition and health status of PLHIV within local care and treatment context.	Lusaka + Central Province
Institutional change to increase investments in viable support options	Support to development of by-laws by fishing communities.	Kafue Flats fishery
	Supporting implementation processes of Fisheries Act & Fisheries Management Plans.	National
	Roundtable meetings at provincial level.	Luapula province + Western province

Findings from the assessment

Mr. Alphart Lungu, Research Analyst at the WorldFish Center Zambia, proceeded to present the main findings from the socio-economic assessment undertaken by the WorldFish Center in the Kafue Flats.

The research questions at the basis of this assessment are:

- What are the migration and mobility patterns of people residing and trading in the Kafue Flats?
- How do migration and mobility affect people’s access to health services in the Kafue Flats?
- What are the key HIV & AIDS risk factors for female fish traders in the Kafue Flats?
- What business-based innovations can reduce their vulnerability to some of these risk factors?

After outlining the context of the Kafue Flats floodplains and the methods used for data collection, a table was shown highlighting that 400 respondents were included in the study, with 199 females and 201 males. The study revealed that the main livelihood options include a combination of fishing and farming, fishing (95% by men, only 5% women engage in fishing), cattle herding, and fish trading (85% by women, only 15% men engage in trading). Other income generating activities in the Kafue Flats include fish processing (by women and girls), transporting goods, and beer brewing.

The study identified the following reasons for high HIV prevalence and vulnerability in fishing communities:

Demographic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rates of mobility & migration (3% from Tanzania, 8% from DRC, high incidences of local migration within the Kafue Flats) • Many young, single men in the sexually active age group • High influx of fish traders in fishing communities
Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor fish storage and much spoilage due to lack of ice • Poor fish marketing strategies by fishers (lack of designated landing sites) • High cost of transporting fish to the market • Availability of fish supply chains from elsewhere (competition leading to lower prices) • Low capital due to lack of credit facilities
Social/cultural factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender power imbalances: • Men have more control over and access to resources than women • Unequal power relations; poor negotiation skills for safer sex • High incidences of violence and abuse • Polygamy and multiple sexual partners • Prostitution and transactional sex (“fish-for-sex” phenomenon) • High levels of alcohol abuse • Poor access to health care services
Environmental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor water quality • Lack of toilets and sanitation • High prevalence of other diseases (cholera, diarrhoea, malaria) due to floods • Regular floods leading to food insecurity

The study moreover revealed that 74.5% of fisher men and fish traders are married, 10.8% are single or never married, 8.3% is divorced, 3.5% is separated, and 3% are widowed. In terms of literacy levels, it became clear that only 54% of fisher folk completed primary education, 9.4% secondary, 1% tertiary, and 12% had no education at all. As 40% of fisher

folk are youths, it is not surprising that 92.3% were found to be sexually active. As elsewhere in the country, the age group 15 – 30 are most at risk. Condom use is extremely low; 89% of respondents did not use a condom during their last sexual activity. While 73.5% of women considered themselves at risk of HIV/AIDS, 41.7% of women reported to refuse sex because their sexual partner wanted to use a condom. As general HIV/AIDS outreach services are lacking, the radio is the main source of information on HIV/AIDS.

The study further identified the following barriers to health care in the fisheries sector:

- Geographical barriers: distance to health care services
- Cultural barriers:
 - Cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes
 - Permission from spouse/guardian
- Social-economic barriers:
 - Cost of travel (sporadic transport services)
 - Limited income, lack of group savings & microcredit facilities
 - ARVs don't reach fishing communities
- Institutional barriers:
 - Very limited HIV/AIDS services and uneven coverage by Government / NGOs
 - Lack of integration across sector, remoteness
 - Little or no investment in the response to HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector
 - Lack of extension workers and mobile clinics
 - Poor communication and weak referral facilities at nearest clinic

Needs assessment and HIV/AIDS interventions

Following the study, further discussions with two target fishing communities (Nyimba and Namalyo) took place, including a needs assessment to confirm the vulnerability factors identified and to translate these into actionable needs. Needs identified by both communities included:

- Clinic or health post
- ARVs
- VCT
- Drama groups
- Peer educators
- Chlorine
- Condoms
- Community police post
- Schools
- Micro-credit services (group savings)
- Loans
- Business skills training

The communities identified HIV/AIDS, cholera, diarrhoea, malaria, poor water quality and poor hygiene as major health challenges. In collaboration with Society for Family Health / New Start, the WorldFish Center launched a series of HIV/AIDS and health interventions

including HIV/AIDS sensitization, mobile VCT, hygiene education, and increasing community awareness about reproductive health matters including STIs prevention and family planning. Part of this intervention included the formation of “health groups” with the purpose of disseminating HIV/AIDS information, conducting household visits to discuss health issues and hygiene, and conducting health promotions on condoms, family planning and chlorine.

Savings groups intervention

In response to the major economic related need expressed by both fishing communities, namely lack of access to loans, the WorldFish Center adapted the Self Help Group Approach to suit the needs of fisher folk. This part of the interventions focused on empowering economically disadvantaged poor women through the provision of skills training, income generating activities and access to credit. Business diversification was promoted as part of these interventions, in order to diversify livelihoods and reduce vulnerability. Using the already established “health groups” as a basis, a guided self-selection of most vulnerable men and women took place, leading to the establishment of 10 savings groups (4 male and 6 female). Members were taught how to save and borrow from within their groups, and at the same time, group members support each other in health matters including adherence to ARVs, counseling, reducing stigma and discrimination, and providing social support to each other.

This model, called the Fish Trader+ Model, has been piloted in the Kafue Flats and all steps involved have been documented. Challenges in implementation include:

- Illiteracy: makes it difficult for members to keep record of their savings and to absorb written IEC materials.
- Business diversification: fish trade prevails, difficult to find other business ventures.
- Mobility: when group members travel for their fish trade, they cannot participate in and contribute to weekly savings group meetings.

Observations from the pilot intervention include:

- Local women have now started trading in fish, making it more difficult for outside female fish traders to come in and purchase fish from the fisher men.
- The savings groups have lead to more social cohesion in fishing communities. Not only do member’s households benefit, but the community at large.
- By putting HIV/AIDS on the weekly agenda and by reaching out with information and advice to community members, the response to HIV/AIDS is strengthening and vulnerability reducing.
- By being member of a savings group, members benefit from “social insurance”. For example in case of a medical emergency, the group can assist by paying the transport costs to get to the hospital.
- Stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable people has reduced, since the savings groups promote openness, respect and inclusion.

Discussion and recommendations

Following the presentation of the model, the meeting facilitator highlighted that the WorldFish Center is in the process of monitoring the savings groups in the Kafue Flats, and that therefore only preliminary impact could be presented. She also highlighted that a guide for implementation of the Fish Trader+ Model is currently being developed, which will be shared with meeting participants and made available from the WorldFish Center office in Lusaka.

His Royal Highness Chief Hamusonde was invited to provide his feedback to the activities undertaken by the WorldFish Center. He thanked the work undertaken by the WorldFish Center and stressed the importance of having VCT services in parallel to ART, as diagnosing HIV/AIDS without the ability to have treatment, care and support services is meaningless to fisher folk in the Kafue Flats. The Chief also appealed to the Ministry of Health and the Department of Fisheries to collaborate and ensure joint outreach services to fishing communities. After these important remarks, the floor was opened for comments, questions and recommendations from meeting participants. In summary:

- The Ministry of Health must work in collaboration with NGOs that can help distributing ARVs to remote fishing communities, instead of just relying on centralised hospitals for ARV provision;
- Small clinics should be built in fishing communities as immediate response;
- In the harbour close to the ZAWA camp, a permanent VCT provision might be set up, as this is an accessible point that fisher men and female fish traders frequent often.
- Lack of health care services, including ARVs, must be treated as an emergency in fishing communities;
- Nutrition education should be included in the HIV/AIDS response targeting fishing communities, as a poor diet causes HIV to quickly progress into AIDS. The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) can assist with this. Malnutrition is very high among fisher folk, particularly among children;
- HIV/AIDS interventions must incorporate local structures such as fisheries management committees in mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities;
- For the Kafue Flats specifically, there is need for collaboration between all stakeholders active in the area to protect the people and the environment. For example due to invasive weeds, fish stocks and fish catches reduce, causing competition for fishing grounds, which in turn will impact on the fish-for-sex phenomenon;
- There is need for accurate HIV prevalence rates and related data from all people living and trading in the Kafue Flats area. Data from VCT activities need to be documented and forwarded to the appropriate national institutions (DHMT but also NAC) for M&E and planning purposes;
- The savings groups trained and established by the WorldFish Center using the “Fish Trader+” model have expressed interest to invest their savings in health products such as condoms and chlorine. It is recommended that SFH follows up on these

savings groups in the permanent fishing communities, for increased outreach to remote fishing camps through these groups.

These points will inform the further roll-out of the interventions in response to HIV/AIDS and poverty in fishing communities in the Kafue Flats and other fisheries in Zambia.

The meeting was closed by the Director of Fisheries, with a call for a holistic approach to the problems facing fishing communities and the encouragement to line ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders to collaborate and be proactive to implement activities to reduce the vulnerability in fishing communities in Zambia.

Annex 1:

List of participants to the National Consultation Meeting on Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in the Kafue Flats (25th June 2010).

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