



Success Story

AquaFish CRSP: Sustainable Aquaculture and Fisheries for a Secure Future

No. SS-1

November 2009

Fish Farmers Association Models Success

Cluster enterprises offer fish farmers new marketing options

By Laura Morrison, James Bowman, and Hillary Egna

"We own our fish ponds." said Ambuli. "The group coordinates production and sells collectively."

In Kenya, aquaculture is mainly practiced by small-scale farmers who often face challenges in bringing their fish to market. To help farmers raising catfish fingerlings as baitfish for Lake Victoria fisheries, the AquaFish CRSP partnered in 2007 with the USAID Kenya Business Development Services program in a marketing assistance project. The goal was to teach farmers how to form cluster enterprises and successfully raise and market baitfish to the commercial fishermen who use juvenile catfish as bait for Nile perch. Of the first four clusters to form, the Bidii Fish Farmers Association (FFA) stands out as a model. Its membership has grown from 10 members to 25, including nine women. "We own our fish ponds," says Bidii Chairman George Ambuli. "The group coordinates production and sells collectively." Since May 2008, Bidii has been regularly selling catfish fingerlings to baitfish dealers.



Receiving their first batch of catfish fry to stock their aquaculture ponds is a joyous occasion for these new baitfish farmers from Western Kenya.

Bidii's task of setting up a cluster enterprise was relatively simple. With guidance from Moi University and the Ministry of Fisheries and CRSP funding, the group decided on a name, developed a constitution, and established a leadership structure. Under its governance structure, there are three executive officers: chairman, secretary, and treasurer. The FFA's revenue-sharing arrangement requires that 80 percent of revenue be returned to members while 20 percent is kept for administrative and other promotional expenses. Bidii currently holds two bank accounts. Future plans focus on developing a well-equipped hatchery and owning a feed mill to ensure a reliable supply of fish feed.

Ambuli is proud of his group. Their initial steps into the baitfish business in 2007 were rocky. "Our first three attempts to culture catfish failed with 100 percent losses due to poor management skills and improper



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feed. Three members withdrew. Knowing the fishermen on Lake Victoria needed baitfish, the remaining seven of us pledged to continue.” With hands-on training led by CRSP’s Moi University partners, Bidii farmers mastered fish propagation techniques and learned how to set up marketing links with baitfish dealers.

Bidii’s success has recently led to a partnership with the Women in Fishing Industry Project (WIFIP). “WIFIP helps women fish traders identify income generating activities,” says Jennipher Kere, Executive Director. “WIFIP seeks to engage women in aquaculture to provide additional household income and to support them during the annual fishing ban on Lake Victoria, when income is at its lowest.” Bidii cluster farmers are training women and others in fishpond construction and catfish breeding. Since 2008, their training has helped six new groups enter the baitfish business.



Women baitfish traders buying a fingerling catch from Lake Victoria fishers. These women, some of whom have taken up fish farming as a new income source, are now relying on farm-raised catfish fingerlings to sell to Nile perch fishers.

To view an AquaFish CRSP video on the baitfish project, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDi454ieqoY>



George Ambuli, Chairman of the Bidii Fish Farmers Association, receives an award from US CRSP researcher Jennifer Dennis of Purdue University.



Fish farmers belonging to the Visiki cluster, who were trained by members of the successful Bidii Fish Farmers Association, join together to construct a fish pond for raising baitfish.

For more information, contact the US and Kenya project partners:

US Partner

Dr. Kwamena Quagrainie
Department of Agricultural Economics
Purdue University
403 West State Street
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2056
Tel: 765-494-4200
Email: kquagrai@purdue.edu

Kenya Partner

Dr. Charles C. Ngugi
Department of Agriculture Resource Management
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844
Nairobi, Kenya 00100
Tel: 254-20-871-0901
Email: cngugi@africaonline.co.ke



This research was made possible by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Aquaculture & Fisheries Collaborative Research Support Program (AquaFish CRSP) under Cooperative Award No. EPP-A-00-06-00012-00 and by participating US and Host Country institutions.

AquaFish CRSP • Oregon State University • 418 Snell Hall • Corvallis OR 97331-1643 USA
web: aquafishcrsp.oregonstate.edu email: aquafish@oregonstate.edu