

# Study time

**A study tour allows a group of women in Tanzania's post-harvest fisheries to visit and learn from their counterparts in Kenya**

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**L**ack of education and a lack of skills: these were the two issues that, in a workshop organized by the Mwambao Coastal Community Network in Tanzania back in 2015, women coastal East Africa had identified as the main barriers to value addition in post-harvest fisheries.

A year later, in order to address these challenges, Mwambao, which is a network linking coastal communities and other stakeholders in Tanzania, with support from the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), organized a study tour for women from nine districts in Tanzania—three from Zanzibar and the rest from mainland Tanzania. Accompanied by two facilitators from Mwambao and aided by the Kenyan NGO Community Action for Nature Conservation (CANCO), this group made a trip to Kenya in November 2016 to improve their knowledge on techniques of post-harvest value addition as well as marketing strategies, visiting the

Kenyan fishing communities of Jimbo and Kiruwitu as well as the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KEMFRI).

The group of women first visited the coastal town of Jimbo, where members of the Jimbo Community Conservation Project (JCCP) first made a presentation on their conservation efforts, and then, demonstrated the methods and materials they used for processing anchovies (known locally as *dagaa*), including sorting, cleaning, boiling and drying of the fish. A number of differences between the methods used in Tanzania and Kenya were observed. The participants felt that in Kenya, higher quality materials and better techniques were used, such as net-like plastic sheets for storing hand-picked anchovies ready for boiling. Following these discussions, the group visited the Jimbo community fish landing site, to see the different boats used by the community and the Beach Management Unit (BMU) for patrols, fishing and any potential emergencies. The Tanzanians were particularly impressed by the strong collaboration between the BMU and the community, evidenced, for example, by a fish market that is managed by the BMU.

Next, the participants visited the KEMFRI where they were shown current technological innovations designed to help communities

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improve fisheries activities such as fishing, marine-resources management and post-harvest processing. The participants were told about the operation and use of solar driers for processing, and also participated in classroom activities led by KEMFRI staff.

The group next visited the Kiruwitu Community Marine Conservation Project (KCMCP). Over the last ten years, with support from CANCO, the KCMCP has successfully implemented a range of conservation measures for coral reef ecosystems and sea turtles, conservation awareness, ecotourism and fish trading. Of particular interest was a successful community fish marketing initiative, with a direct market chain connecting, by air, the village to supermarkets and hotels in Nairobi. The market chain was facilitated by certain private companies who contributed finances and other forms of support to set it up. The success story of the KCMCP provided valuable insight into potential income generation opportunities.

Since the National Women's Fisheries Conference was just round the corner, CANCO invited the group to extend their stay by two days to be able to participate in the event. Held on 19 - 20 November 2016, the conference was a forum to explore and discuss commonly shared challenges and issues faced by women in the small-scale fisheries sector. Attending the conference, the group found that the issues they faced in Tanzania were, in reality, being faced by women in other countries as well. Common challenges included harassment of women, poor governance, lack of respect for women leaders and limited overall knowledge about post-harvesting techniques.

The following day—21 November—the group participated in the World Fisheries Day celebrations, organized by CANCO with support from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). The event was held in Tsunza village in Kwala County of Mombasa, and attracted hundreds of members of nearby communities. It was attended by political leaders and government officials, including the Assistant Director of Fisheries and the

representatives of the Blue Economy. Here too, participants discussed challenges faced by coastal communities in managing and accessing marine natural resources. Limited consultations with local communities, the lack of transparency related to large development projects, such as ports, railways and roads, and the challenges posed by the loss of fishing grounds were also discussed. The event included competitions and speeches, and the Tanzanian women had the opportunity to participate in mangrove planting.

The study tour taught the participants many valuable lessons: methods for improved post-harvest processing, the use of superior materials such as solar power instead of kerosene lamps, the role of the fisheries sector in community development and education, increased participation of women in all fisheries activities as well as successful collaboration between communities, including BMUs, and private companies for conservation and income generation.

While the Kenyan and Tanzanian communities both identified many shared challenges—acknowledging these in fact as challenges facing small-scale fishing communities throughout most of the Global South—the visit allowed a rich exchange of knowledge and solutions. In addition to the improved anchovy processing methods they witnessed, the Kenyan communities were also impressed by the Village Community Banks (VICOBA) set up for improved livelihood development of Kenya's fishing communities. As the study tour concluded, the Kenyan hosts expressed their hopes of being able to conduct a return exchange visit, with Kenyan participants travelling south of the border to learn from their Tanzanian neighbours.

Small-scale fishers, particularly women, continue to face significant social, economic and political challenges. Under the circumstances, such initiatives offer valuable opportunities to share knowledge, to look for common solutions, and to strengthen rights and livelihoods. ❏