

WorldFish Work on Fisheries, Fish and Health

Focal Areas

- 1) addressing the impacts of HIV and AIDS in fishing communities
- 2) reducing the impacts of water-borne diseases on fishing-dependent communities in inland waters
- 3) improving access of low-income consumers to fish as part of a nutritious and healthy diet
- 4) addressing occupational health issues in the fishery sector - e.g. through understanding vulnerabilities of women, children and poorer people (e.g. collaboration with FAO and ILO on eliminating child labour in fisheries, including health and safety considerations in ethical, sustainable international seafood trade).

HIV/AIDS and the Fisheries Sector – summary of current research programme

Some of the earliest recorded cases of HIV/AIDS came from Lake Victoria in 1982. Fishing communities constitute one of the highest risk groups for HIV/AIDS, yet few programmes have specifically targeted these communities. The WorldFish Center, together with FAO, is implementing a regional programme on Fisheries and HIV/AIDS to strengthen capacity in the region to develop solutions to the problem and to enhance the contributions that fish and fisheries can make to human and economic development.

The programme is carrying out research and development activities in selected fishing communities in eight sub-Saharan African countries. Through surveys and participatory qualitative work, we are assessing key risk factors among highly vulnerable groups, including female fish traders, migrant fisherfolk and youth. Programme partners, which include NGOs and national research institutions, are piloting business-based interventions that will address some of these risk factors such as lack of services in remote fishing camps and transactional sex in the context of fish trade.

Output areas

The Programme will deliver outputs in three areas:

1. Improved knowledge base on the trends and risk factors of HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector;
2. Viable investment options to reduce vulnerability and increase mitigation capacity in the fisheries sector and generate benefits for populations at risk in wider society;
3. Improved policies, institutions and processes for dissemination and investment in best practice.

Technical focus areas

- Insights into mobility & migration patterns and analysis of and interventions to address vulnerabilities (including to HIV/AIDS) of female fish traders along selected fish value chains.
- Analysis of nutritional impact of fish on selected target groups (households using aquaculture, urban poor, People Living with HIV using ART).
- Supporting institutional change to bridge gaps between the fisheries and health sectors.

In all eight countries, research activities are being implemented through local institutions such as the Department of Fisheries, National AIDS Councils, Universities and NGOs.