



AFRICAN UNION
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES**



POLICY BRIEF

ENHANCE CAPACITY BUILDING, TRAINING AND SKILL ACQUISITION OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE VENTURES

Preamble:

This Policy Brief is the consolidation of the outcomes of the deliberations by the stakeholders at three workshops organized by African Union-Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resource (AU-IBAR) in 2019; a) 8th Session of Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) in Botswana, b) the workshop for African Women Fish processors and Traders Network (AWFISHNET) in Cote D'Ivoire, and c) the expert consultative workshop on identification of priority actions for effectively integrating women and women in fisheries and aquaculture value chain and business development in Gabon. The Policy Brief has been prepared in collaboration with the Policy Research Network for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa (PRNFAA).

I. Summary

The African fisheries and aquaculture sector has been faced with numerous challenges due to lack of manpower development which has resulted in the low level of productivity being recorded in the subsector in recent past. Weak human and institutional capacity continues to be a key constraint for positive reform of the fisheries and aquaculture sector; evidently, this hampers policy making, fisheries administration and research (African Union, 2014). Majority of the continent's women and youth lack necessary technical skills and are deficient in business aspects of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The youth in Africa constitute 60% of the total population and as said in the African Development Report of 2015 that they are a valuable resource if equipped with necessary skills. The fisheries sector as a whole employs 12.3 million people as full-time fishers or full-time and part-time processors, accounting for 2.1% of Africa's population of between 15 and 64 years old; of these, women accounted for about 27.3% of the total workforce, and they were directly involved in fishing (3.6 %), processing (58%), and aquaculture (4%) (de Graaf and Garibaldi, 2014). Furthermore, recent research by WorldFish, AU-IBAR and NEPAD Agency has revealed clear evidence of women and youth's involvement in many activities along the value chain of fish trade in Africa including post-harvest handling, processing, branding and marketing (African Union, 2018). Hence, a dire need to build the capacity of women and youth has a necessity for them to contribute effectively to the fisheries and aquaculture economies of Africa. Government policies have not been able to support efficient engagement of women and youth in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. It is therefore a necessity to enhance capacity building, training and skill acquisition of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture value chain. This will strengthen the capacities of the women and youth on different aspects of fisheries and aquaculture to engage efficiently for better profitability.

2. Key issues

- The African fisheries and aquaculture sector has been faced with numerous challenges due to lack of manpower development which has resulted in the low level of productivity being recorded in the subsector in recent past.
- Shortage of human resources with adequate aquaculture skills remains a major constraint in Africa (Anoh *et al.*, 2016).
- The population age structures in Africa are said to be among the youngest in the world (Ayilu, 2016).
- United Nations (2019) confirms that those under the age of 25 years account for 60% (AU-IBAR, 2017).
- In 2014 the African Union Commission underscored that, 60% of the continent's 1.03 billion population, those under the age of 35 constitute a valuable resource. If equipped with the right skills and given the right opportunities, this demographic group could help propel Africa onto a higher growth path (AUC-NEPAD, 2014).
- Women and youth constitute a large proportion of the Africa's human population. However, they are deficient in key skills and knowledge necessary for the development of fisheries and aquaculture business along the value chain. Inadequate technical skills and their deficiency in business aspects of fisheries and aquaculture lead to low profitability.
- Women are key actors in small-scale cross-border trade in many parts of Africa, representing around 90% of informal traders in Cote d'Ivoire, and almost all of those in Ghana, Togo and Benin (Ayilu *et al.*, 2016). However, these women are constrained by illiteracy and innumeracy. Lower levels of literacy are often seen amongst female fish traders compared to their male counterparts. This reflects girls' frequent involvement in the fish trade as children, limiting access to a formal education, and their common progression to establishing their own business or

- inheriting the business from their mothers (Anoh, 2016).
- If youth are provided with sufficient education, training and jobs, then the growth in their numbers could be highly beneficial for development (AU-IBAR, 2017).
- There is therefore a dire need to build the capacity of women and youth as a necessity for them to contribute effectively to the fisheries and aquaculture economies of Africa.
- It has been shown that women excel in whatever enterprise they are engaged in.

3. The main successes and/or actions to advance better involvement of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture

- Malabo Declaration “Reaffirmed African Heads of State and Government’s resolve towards ensuring, through deliberate and targeted public support, that all segments of our populations, particularly women, the youth, and other disadvantaged sectors of our societies, must participate and directly benefit from the growth and transformation opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods” (African Union, 2014).
- After the Malabo declaration in 2014, the African Union under the auspices of AU-IBAR facilitated the creation of AWFISHNET in Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania in 2017. Furthermore, AU-IBAR is supporting the creation of national platforms through AWFISHNET in all the African countries in order to increase women advocacy in decision making processes in fisheries and aquaculture. AWFISHNET provides a platform for women to exchange information and ideas and for showcasing their work.
- The 2014 Malabo Declaration made seven specific commitments to achieve accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods. One of the commitments is that of halving poverty by 2025 and one way to achieve this is by creating job opportunities for at least 30% of the youth in agricultural value chains in which aquaculture is inclusive.
- Such AU development frameworks as Agenda 2063 and the Malabo goals provide guiding instruments for empowering women and the youth to fully develop their potentials. Agenda 2063 has seven (7) aspirations for Africa and one of them is “Africa where development is people driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth” (African Union, 2018).
- AU-IBAR and NEPAD Agency have facilitated the creation and strengthening of non-state actor’s organizations within regional groupings in Africa (Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa and North Africa).
- As a result, some of the countries are building dedicated programmes in agriculture, that are specifically targeting development of fisheries and aquaculture, particularly in terms of training and vocational centres as well as funding schemes for youth.
- The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was adopted in Maputo in 2003 by African Heads of States and Governments as their commitment to further develop agriculture for its broad benefits. In order to make farming as a business, three outcomes were identified, namely productivity, competitiveness and regional integration. But these outcomes are further dependent on three strategic thrusts, and one of them is for CAADP to stimulate increased investment in knowledge infrastructure. Such knowledge infrastructure should produce the following outcomes: an education system producing workforce in science and technology and vocational training; research and development and technology transfer system; innovative firms and entrepreneurs; and networks and communities of practice to co-create knowledge and learning (Guimarães *et al.*, 2016).
- The Summit of the African Union held in July 2006 in Banjul, Gambia adopted the African Youth Charter (AYC) which is a political and legal document and serves as the strategic framework that gives direction to youth empowerment and

- development at the continental, regional and national levels (African Union, 2006).
- During the 8th Session of ANAF, a 2-Year Priority Action Plan for enhancing role of women and youth in aquaculture enterprise development was agreed upon. This includes strategies and new technical instruments for accelerating implementation of the 2-year Priority Action Plans. Key to these are (i) Capacity building as well as Research and Development; (ii) Mapping of potential areas for aquaculture (special zoning) where women and youth can engage in aquaculture; (iii) Encourage development of aquaculture value chain for job creation for youth; (iv) Promote Gender and youth specific incentives within aquaculture value chain; (v) Development of gender-inclusive bankable business plan; and (vi) Support organisation of women and youth in aquaculture in National Innovative Platforms (AU-IBAR-ANAF, 2018).
- The AU Policy framework and reform strategy has a policy objective on women and youth development which include knowledge-based gender and youth considerations in policies, laws and plans (de Graaf and Garibaldi, 2014).
- According to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goal 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”), the integration of a gender perspective into fisheries and aquaculture management and development also contributes to eradicating poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality, and empowering women. Gender-responsive interventions help meet these changes in policy, markets and technology (United Nations, 2019).
- The policy framework and reform strategy (PFRS) for fisheries and aquaculture aims at transforming Africa’s fisheries and aquaculture for food, livelihoods and wealth. In order to enhance fisheries and aquaculture’s contribution to socio-economic development of the continent, eight (8) policy areas were identified and one of them is awareness enhancing and human capacity. The objective of this policy is to increase awareness of the potential and importance of the sector and enhanced capacity of people and institutions in the African fishery sector to ensure the sustainable development of capture fisheries and aquaculture based on current and emerging trends, challenges and needs (AUC and NEPAD Agency, 2014).
- The approaches that have proven to work well in terrestrial crops can as well be replicated in aquaculture. One approach is to use Farmer Field School (FFS) approach or Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach. These approaches may be linked to existing national extension systems and frameworks. The JFFLS and the FFS approach integrates technical, entrepreneurial and life skills trainings. In addition, apprenticeships and mentorship opportunities with successful commercial farmers/ entrepreneurs can enhance the business acumen of youth. These approaches, along with the use of social media and online platforms (networking and knowledge) and applications for real-time market and price information transmission can facilitate youth access to information and networking opportunities (United Nations 2015).

4. Policy recommendations

- Enhance capacity building, training and skill acquisition of women and youth in fisheries and aquaculture value chain.
- Enhance awareness about the importance of fisheries and aquaculture to national development. (AUC-NEPAD, 2014)
- Capacity of producers and operators improved across Africa, including women and youth and for effective and wider participation in sector, to ensure improved capacity on handling, business, management, processing, bookkeeping (AUC-NEPAD, 2014)
- Develop frameworks that combine human and institutional capacity development and explicit private sector interventions to support market driven aquaculture development (AUC-NEPAD, 2014)
- Building the capacities of the women and youth on different aspects of fisheries and aquaculture business and other aspects of the value chain.
- According to Malabo Declaration, African should aim (i) to create job opportunities

for at least 30% of the youth in agricultural value chains; and (ii) to support and facilitate preferential entry and participation for women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities (African Union, 2014).

- Profiling of women and the youth for purposes of forming groups and cooperatives
- Capacity building must be done on focused trainings for various aspects of fisheries and aquaculture business
- Capacity building in institutions need syllabi improvements
- Put in place mechanisms to empower, strengthen capacity and promote and protect women's rights to participate in all aspects of marine, coastal and inland water fisheries governance, aquaculture development and seek to improve access of women to fish and fish markets. Knowing that the youth lack resources in form of start-up capital, once they have had their capacity in aquaculture business, they must be provided with starter packs
- Women and the youth must participate in decision processes at all levels as a way of empowering them
- Formal and non-formal education must be promoted as mechanisms for empowering women and the youth

5. Conclusion

It is necessary that countries should come up with deliberate policies targeting women and the youth so that their skills and expertise are enhanced to develop the fisheries and aquaculture industry and also promote their wellbeing for sustainable growth and development. Building the capacity of women and youth will enable them to use their full potential to develop the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Apart from improving their wellbeing, the economies of different countries will also develop apart from improving the food and nutritional security of the continent's population.

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