

FILM

Women in Small-scale Fisheries in Ghana - the unsung heroines

Executive Producer: Richard Kwadwo Nyarko; Duration 25 min 20 sec;

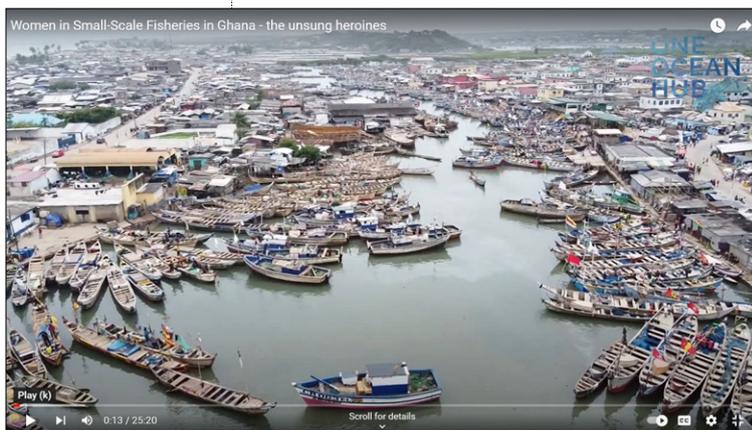
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“I’ve learned that I should do away with fear,” declares Juliana Anna Dogbe Kumado a fishmonger in Ghana and a participant in the One Ocean Hub workshop, “I can do as well as a man does and I can even do it better!” Her confidence, determination, and conviction shine through my laptop screen.

I am watching a YouTube documentary hosted by the platform, One Ocean Hub. This platform, anchored at, and led by, the University of Strathclyde, is funded by an agency named UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). In the African continent, One Ocean Hub runs programs in Ghana, Namibia and South Africa, taking a collaborative approach to address intractable ocean challenges.

This documentary showcases Ghana where the most pressing issues are those of overfishing and pollution due to a rapid decline of fisheries in the country. To address these issues, One Ocean Hub focuses on promoting co-management of marine resources, education and training for fishworker communities as well as promoting alternative and supplementary livelihoods. They do this in collaboration with research organisations, universities, government bodies, non-governmental organisations, civil-society organisations and human rights organisations.



One of the breakaway successes of the program is a Pop-up Law Clinic which is held as part of the workshops. Faculty and students from the University of Cape Coast offer support and run a law clinic, addressing any queries the women have. Through this clinic, issues that were previously not taken into consideration have come into public light. The two major issues include a gendered knowledge gap as well as the advantage that men take of this gap; and women’s experience of sexual and gender-based violence and oppressive roles.

Women in Ghana are involved in both pre-harvest and post-processing activities, the only thing they do not do is go out fishing. In fact, women in Ghana, known as ‘fish mummies’, actually own the fishing canoes and provide support in terms of capital, fuel, food and other necessities. Women are also responsible for marketing and processing the catch. Women in Ghana enjoy such economic influence to varying degrees, however the influence doesn’t translate into economic power. The program aims to address the issue by empowering women with financial and legal advice to transform their economic influence into power; it also aims to reduce the knowledge gap between men and women.

In the documentary, women open up about sexual and gender-based violence as well as the ever-increasing burden of childcare. We observe how the law clinic tactfully handles as many cases as they are able, referring women to specialized help when needed. Clearly, women’s identities extend beyond the care work that they do, and equally clearly, they have the determination to push against enforced boundaries and can emerge as economic powerhouses when empowered with the legal knowledge of their rights.

The film shows not just the issues faced by Ghanaian fisheries and the solutions that One Ocean Hub offers, but it also presents the many different faces, aspects and experiences of women in Ghanaian fisheries, focusing on their dreams and desires as well as their attempts to actualize their goals. ❏

The documentary may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7U5ZI8Qmr0&t=399s>



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write-ups should be brief, about 2000 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards

a sustainable fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.