

TRY Oyster Women's Association

GIRLS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRADUATION CEREMONY

The graduation ceremony of the fifteen students in the Skills Development Program was held at the TRY Center on 19th April 2013. Invited guests invited at the ceremony included the parents of the graduating students, friends and board members of TRY Association. The country Director for Action Aid was invited as a special guest of honour for the occasion because Action Aid The Gambia Office was the major sponsor of this graduating class. Certificates were awarded to the graduating students by the country Director of Action Aid, Dr. Kuje Manneh and Ms. Maria Dacosta, TRY Association board Chairperson. The students performed a drama about teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and how to SAY NO to men and boys. This was followed by an inspection of the items produced by the graduates and a reception consisting of snacks prepared by the girls themselves.

The items produced by the girls were put on display and included tie and dye and batik, soap-making, and soap powder and handmade bags. Also, the students were taught on how to make certain food items during the training.



Group Photos of Graduates



Bags



Soap Powder



Tie-dyes

The United Nations Development Programme {UNDP} in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment funded a training programme on value addition, food safety and hygiene at TRY Association centre. The Programme was facilitated by Fatou Janha and Dr Banja who served as facilitators. A total number of 300 women were trained from the fifteen shellfish communities benefitted from the three-day program. Also, as part of the training activities, three members of TRY Association who went on a study tour to Senegal, shared their knowledge and experiences gained from the tour to their counterparts. The three members are: Ms. Isatou Jatta, President of TRY Association, Ms. Sabel Mendy from Old Jeshwang and Ancel Jatta from Faji Kunda community respectively. Visual aids were used by the three women for effective dissemination of information and knowledge sharing to their women counterparts followed by questions and answer sessions. In conclusion, the training was a great success. Figure 1 shows the women participants at the training.



TRAINING AT THE CENTER

INSEAD Social Entrepreneurship Conference

April 26th and 27th, Fatou was invited and sponsored to attend the 2013 INSEAD conference in Madrid, Spain. The annual INSEAD Social Entrepreneurship conference takes place every year in different parts of the world, hosted by members of graduates of the program. It brings together leading social entrepreneurship practitioners, academics, business leaders and policy makers from all parts of the world. The theme for this year was "Technology, Innovation, and Social Change". There were various presenters and Fatou did a presentation on TRY and led the discussions that followed and exchanged ideas with her counterparts. She came to encourage the women to continue using mobile phones while at sea so as to be able to communicate and ask for help when needed. She encouraged the women to carry along their mobile phones while at work and also made emphases on the linkage of women and the police of the navy for protection while at sea. She insists that all TRY members must be taught how to make calls on their mobile phones

COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

At the annual review of the co-management plan, it was recommended that a committee comprising the village heads, village development committee, youth leaders of each of in the fifteen communities including TRY should be formed. So this was done except for two communities which were not available at the time. We hope to continue during the rainy season when they are free.

picture

Peace Corp Volunteer

Fern Aguda-Brown, Peace Corp Volunteer (PCV) has returned to the United States following the successful completion of her assignment with TRY. She was extremely helpful within the TRY organization and will be greatly missed. Lisa Helm, alias Rohey Ngum, is the new Peace Corp Volunteer who replaced Fern Aguda-Brown. Lisa Helm has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of health and will be assisting the women oyster harvesters and their daughters with their health needs including health education. Topics of interest include the importance of taking prescribed medications, HIV/AIDS, birth control, cervical cancer, hypertension, diabetes, malaria, and menopausal problems. It is hoped that after the oyster production season, TRY Association will be able to organize series of training programs on health and other related issues. At the moment, she is busy familiarizing herself with the activities of TRY Association as well as learning the Wolof language.

From left to right: Isatu, Lisa, Fern, Jalang, Fatou



TARUD – The Trust Agency for Rural Development

Training of trainers on Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) was conducted by TARUD over a two-week period. The first week May 7th-9th included communities of women oyster harvesters from Kamallo. From May 14-16th communities attended were from Old Jeshwang. Each week included three days of training by Omar Njie from the Ministry of Health and Dr. Bamba Banja the WASH (Water and Sanitation Hygiene) coordinator. The group of attendees was very interested in the training, asked questions and engaged in active discussions they expressed concerns regarding a need for consensus by all women oyster harvesters to follow correct hand washing procedure.

Visit to Processing Plant Banjul Highway

On May 13, 2013 TRY members from Kamallo visited the Atlantic Seafood Plant located at mile 5 on the Banjul Serekunda Highway. This plant is a joint venture by private owners from the Netherlands. Employees at this plant are mostly Africans from surrounding countries including Gambians. The purpose of this visit was to observe processing and quality control techniques, understand hygiene and sanitation practices in food production including proper packaging procedures. The women oyster harvesters during the tour were required to wear uniforms, hair nets, and follow correct hand washing protocol. The tour and the information obtained was highly regarded and appreciated by the women oyster harvesters. They were very much excited and were impressed with what they have been able to see and they asked lots of questions and expressed the hope that one day they will also have the same factory where they will process the oysters and cockles for exportation.



Global Giving

With the cash donation that was received from the Global Giving, TRY was able to purchase one hundred pairs of protective goggles from Dakar Senegal. This will help address the problem of eye irritation which has been a major complaint by the women. It was late to share the goggles to the women this year because the oyster harvesting season has closed and therefore, it was decided that the distribution would be done at the beginning of the next season.

Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects (GGP)

Akiko Osumi consultant from Senegal representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan met with TRY director Fatou Janha Mboob on May 27, 2013. The purpose of the visit was to discuss grant assistance for a TRY Oyster Harvesting Center for training and office location. The grant that TRY applied for has been approved but Fatou Janha Mboob continues to negotiate with GGP regarding grant requirements

GEF-Global Environmental Fund

There is continued monitoring of oyster racks within the following regions: Wencho, Kamallo, Old Jeshwang, Faji Kunda, Abuko, and Kubuneh. The monitoring is needed to determine if the racks require repair due to certain environmental change. The project has now come to an end and the women are expected to continue monitoring and caring for their farms.

With the help of Babading and the team from fisheries and Parks and Wild life, the women were provided with training on how to maintain and clean the oyster shells using brushes to remove debris and barnacles. TRY Association purchased brushes which given to the communities for the women to use and continue the process of cleaning oyster shells.

June 2013

UNDP and TRY visited the following communities Wencho, Kamalloh, Old Jeswang, Lamin, Abuko, Fajikunda, Ibo Town, Kartong and Kembujeng. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate and inspect the ovens that will be used to roast oysters. The inspection revealed the following problems; the tiles for the flooring are not fixed in place and oven trays are situated at a level that is felt to be too high for roasting. This position of the trays will need approval by the (oyster harvester) women. Efforts are ongoing to correct the problem.

BIOLOGICAL DATA COLLECTION

TRY is in the second year of collecting, counting, and weighing oysters as part of data collection using funds provided by the USAID/BaNafaa grant. The objective of the project is to access the size and weight of the oysters over a four-month period (to account for changes). Data collection takes place during the harvesting season - March, April, May, and June. The oysters are collected from the different markets by the girls under Kanji's supervision. The objectives of this project are to evaluate the ecological sustainability of the mangrove ecosystem, assess the health and vitality of the oysters, and their economic value, and to ensure that the women derive a fair price for their products. Six communities have participated in this exercise: Kamallo, Wencho, Old Jeshwang (Jeshwan), Abuko, Lamin, and Ibo Town. The data is recorded in an excel program and will be available in July for review. Biological data collection will continue for a third season next year 2014.



Kanyi Babanding counting and weighing oysters for data collection

BRITISH Ambassador Grant

There was a call for project proposals on various subjects including conservation of environment which TRY applied for and was chosen out of one hundred applicants .The grant was an amount of £4,500 (Four Thousand Five Hundred Pounds Sterling) and it is to support aquaculture in six communities. We plan to carry out this activity during the rainy season. Feasibility studies will be done to determine the best location for this project.

Upcoming Events

The annual fund raising event has been postponed until further notice due to the fact that the President of The Gambia who is usually our chief invited guest was not available. We hope to organize this event at the beginning of next year's opening season, so that we will have ample time to prepare well for it.

END OF OYSTER SEASON

The season has come to an end and all TRY members have suspended the harvesting and sale of oysters. The women have complied fully with the recommendations of the (co) management plan.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

An annual general meeting was held at the TRY center. This attracted two hundred women from all communities. Two of our Boards members were also present. The purpose of the meeting was to have a general review of the year's events and activities and also recommendations for the future. One of the major topics discussed was the co -management plan which is a living document that is subjected to changes if necessary, however it was unanimously agreed that they all maintain the MARCH TO JUNE opening and closing. This was done by voting.

Then there was discussion on the micro finance programme the membership fees, annual fundraising festival and the smoking ovens that are been built.

Topics dealt with were training programme of the raining season which includes the vacuum packing of oysters using the machine from UNDP. Lisa, also took time to explain about her health programme she wishes to undertake with them.

They were also told about the grants received by TRY on aquaculture and also to prepare for the raining season mangrove planting.



... 'WE HAVE REACHED GRADE TWELVE AND WE WILL NOT GO BACK TO GRADE ONE'