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FISH FOR TOMORROW PROJECT IN NKHOTAKOTA DISTRICT FINAL REPORT – MAY 2019

Overview

Donor Name: Foundation Eagle
Fondation Eagle ref: FF 410
Project Name: RIPPLE Africa Fish For Tomorrow in Lake Malawi – rapid extension of project into Chia Lagoon and surrounding area, Nkhotakota District
Grant Size: £41,183
Grant Period: April 2017 to April 2019

Project Overview

Fish for Tomorrow is a community based fisheries protection system in northern Malawi supported by RIPPLE Africa. The project is being run in Nkhata Bay and Nkhotakota Districts by Ripple Africa by local communities in partnership with RIPPLE Africa and the Department of Fisheries.



This funding has enabled us to introduce the project in an accelerated way in Chia Lagoon. This is the biggest lagoon in Nkhotakota District, acting as a key breeding area and refuge for many different fish species, including Chambo. Here we are working closely with fishing communities at 17 beach landing sites to introduce the new bylaws and fast track the project to halt the decline in fish stocks to safeguard livelihoods and food security.

Project Beneficiaries

There are now 14 Fish Conservation committees in operation covering 17 beach landing sites around the lagoon. Beneficiaries are as follows:

- 140 fish conservation committee members who are now empowered to play an active role in the project and the training that they are receiving is building their capacity to be more active in other community activities.
- 191 gear owners (fishers who own boats) who are now benefitting from increased catches, with the resultant increase in their household income.
- An additional 670 family members of gear owners are also benefitting – based on an average rural household size of 4.5 (from Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-2016)
- There are also other community members who service the fishing industry in this area who are benefitting – fish sellers, shop owners, boat builders etc. Applying national averages to this area, that would mean approximately 1,000 people around Chia Lagoon

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who service fishers will benefit, with the additional benefit to their families also.

- Nkhotakota’s District Fisheries Officer and his team are being supported by RIPPLE Africa to build their capacity, enabling them to perform their duties more effectively.
- 100,000 people living in the southern part of Nkhotakota District obtain their fish from markets serviced from Chia Lagoon and will therefore benefit from increased supplies of larger Chambo. Eventually, once the project has become better established in Nkhotakota District, all 404,000 people living in Nkhotakota District will have increased availability of animal protein from fish.

Progress over the last 6 months

1. Meetings

Meetings held around the lagoon in the last six months have been mainly focusing on:

- Teaching community members about the importance of conserving fish
- Stressing the importance of observing the closed season to protect breeding fish
- The effects of using mosquito nets and other illegal gears for fishing on fish stocks

Type of meeting	Last six months
Closed season awareness community trainings to ensure that all fishers understand the periods when fishing with gill nets is prohibited.	4
Review and planning meetings. Regular meetings between RIPPLE Africa, Fisheries, FCCs and the Umbrella Committees ensure that best practice is shared, training needs are identified and potential problems are solved at an early stage.	24
Chiefs meetings – these ensure that all Chiefs are fully involved in, and committed to, the project and will therefore be best placed to support their FCCs.	6
Area Development Committee and Village Development Committee meetings - FCC and Umbrella Committee members attend these to ensure that fish conservation is built into all village and area planning decisions.	8

2. Umbrella committee activities

- Umbrella committees have met regularly and this has enabled FCC Chairs to share best practice as they sit on the Umbrella Committee.
- Their attendance at Area Development Committee (ADC) meetings is ensuring that fish conservation is highlighted in all planning activities around the lagoon.

3. Activities of The Fish Conservation Committees

- All 14 FCCs around the lagoon are now actively working to ensure that the bylaws are enforced and to penalise offenders.

- They are currently in the process of being evaluated using our FCC Performance system so that we can identify any areas where retraining or further support is needed.
- Net Confiscations - The number of confiscated illegal fishing gears is now declining and this is an indication of the success of the project.

FCC Name	Type of gear confiscated	Quantity	Fine paid per gear (MKW)	Total fine paid (MKW)
Ntchanamira	Large mosquito net	2	10,000	20,000
Chimpini	Large mosquito net	2	10,000	20,000
Mtanga 2	Beach seine (drag net)	3	10,000	30,000

Successes and Challenges

Successes

- In total during the project period the 14 FCCs around Chia Lagoon have confiscated over 140 illegal fishing gears – small mosquito nets being used in shallow waters, large dragnets made of hundreds of individual mosquito nets sewn together, monofilament gill nets and fish traps. The number of confiscations is now declining as more people are using legal fishing gear.



Some of the nets confiscated by Ntchanamira and Chimpini FCCs in the last 6 months



One of the prisoners showing Chambo donated to Nkhotakota prison in December 2018

- On 21st December 2018, Ripple Africa and Fisheries organized patrols at Nkhotakota free market. With the help of market committee members, they managed to confiscate 41 kilograms of young Chambo, illegally caught. The fish were donated to Nkhotakota prison and the local hospital.
- Strong relationships have been built between the FCCs and their local community members and also with the District Fisheries team, who were previously seen only as an

enforcement agency. There is now a genuine sense of partnership working between the FCCs and Fisheries and also with the police and judiciary who support the confiscation of illegal fishing gears and fining of offenders.

- The success of the project relies on people buying into it and taking ownership of the problems and their solutions. Afiki Nkhoma and Sitolo Mwalala were born and raised near Chia Lagoon and have fished the Lagoon for decades using mainly mosquito nets. However, since learning about the project from FCC members in their area (Ntchanmira and Chimpini), they have stopped using mosquito nets completely and have reported that they are now catching bigger fish using hooks which they are being able to sell at a higher price. They are now working hand in hand with FCC members teaching others in their community how best to conserve fish in Chia Lagoon.



Sitolo Mwalala



Afiki Nkhoma

- Following Force Ngwira's selection as finalist for the TUSK Award for Conservation in Africa, he was approached by the BBC World Service to take part in their series called [The Inquiry](#), a weekly radio documentary/podcast. Force was asked to be an expert witness on a programme on freshwater biodiversity loss and features in the episode called 'Are We Headed for Another Mass Extinction' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cswgvf>

Challenges

- We are yet to introduce the catch and income monitoring systems into the lagoon. However, we are told that catches are increasing and that fishers are seeing their incomes increase.
- FCCs are still seeing fishers in the lagoon who are using illegal gears but their policy of confiscation and finings has reduced the number considerably over the two year period.

Budget

The funding from Fondation Eagle was towards the total cost of running the accelerated project in Chia Lagoon. We were able to secure funding from another donor which enabled us to carry out all our planned activities and the total project expenditure has been as follows and is in line with our budget for our work in Chia Lagoon, one of the 5 Fisheries strata in Nkhotakota District:

	Apr 17 – Oct 17	Nov 17 – Mar 18	Apr 18 – Oct 18	Nov 18 – Mar 19	TOTAL TO DATE	BUDGET TO DATE
Meetings						
Chief Meetings	£1,073	£0	£537	£536	£2,146	£2,146
Government meetings	£609	£0	£305	£305	£1,219	£1,219
Community Meetings	£1,176	£0	£588	£589	£2,353	£2,353
Contribution to Bylaw signing	£0	£0	£353	£0	£353	£353
Monthly costs						
Committee Meetings	£1,765	£1,764	£1,765	£1,765	£7,059	£7,059
Fisheries staff x 2 inc transport	£1,412	£1,412	£1,412	£1,411	£5,647	£5,647
Fisheries DFO and office	£2,118	£2,117	£2,118	£2,118	£8,471	£8,471
Umbrella committee members	£706	£706	£706	£706	£2,824	£2,824
Ripple Staff Costs inc motorbikes	£2,824	£2,823	£2,824	£2,823	£11,294	£11,294
Office contribution	£706	£706	£706	£706	£2,824	£2,824
Vehicle costs contribution	£3,530	£3,529	£3,530	£3,529	£14,118	£14,118
Total	£15,919	£13,057	£14,841	£14,488	£58,305	£58,306

We are delighted with the project's success in Chia lagoon and the FCCs and Umbrella Committees are keen to continue the work that they have started. Their enthusiasm and commitment has been due to our ability to move quickly to halt any further decline in fish stocks in the lagoon and the fact that they are now seeing real benefits in terms of fish catch and the income that they are making. We are very grateful for the support of Fondation Eagle for this vital project and on behalf of all you have helped through your support, we would like to say:

TAWONGA UKONGWA! Thank you very much!



Pam Haigh
UK General Manager
9th May 2019