



# Can small-scale success stories turn the tide?

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# Biodiversity, thus food and income are under threat

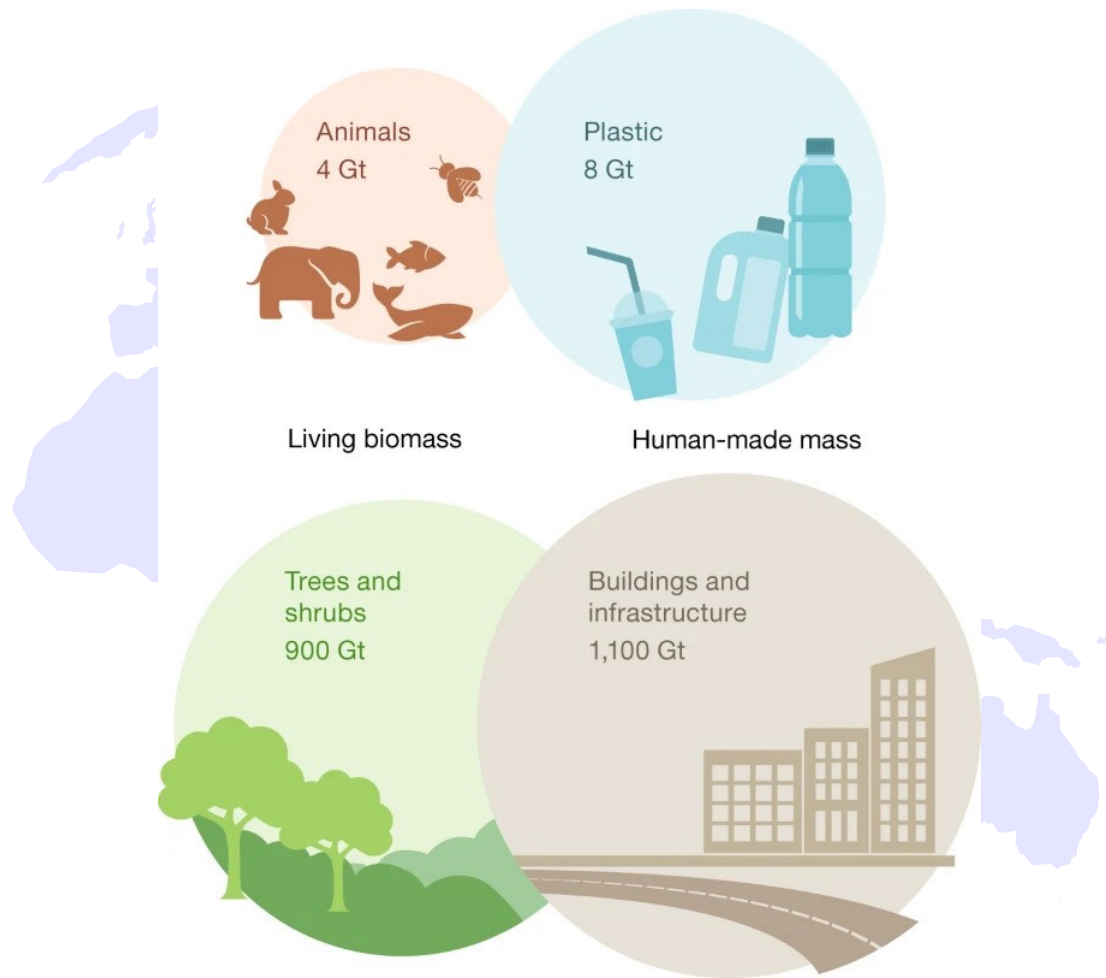
## Looking at the global picture:

Comparison of the most important components of global biomass with products of human origin in 2020\*. Plant and animal biomass are what produces our food and generates income not only for producers.

\* expressed as gigatons of dryweight

Source: Elhacham, E., Ben-Uri, L., Grozovski, J. et al. Global human-made mass exceeds all living biomass. *Nature* 588, 442–444 (2020).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-3010-5>





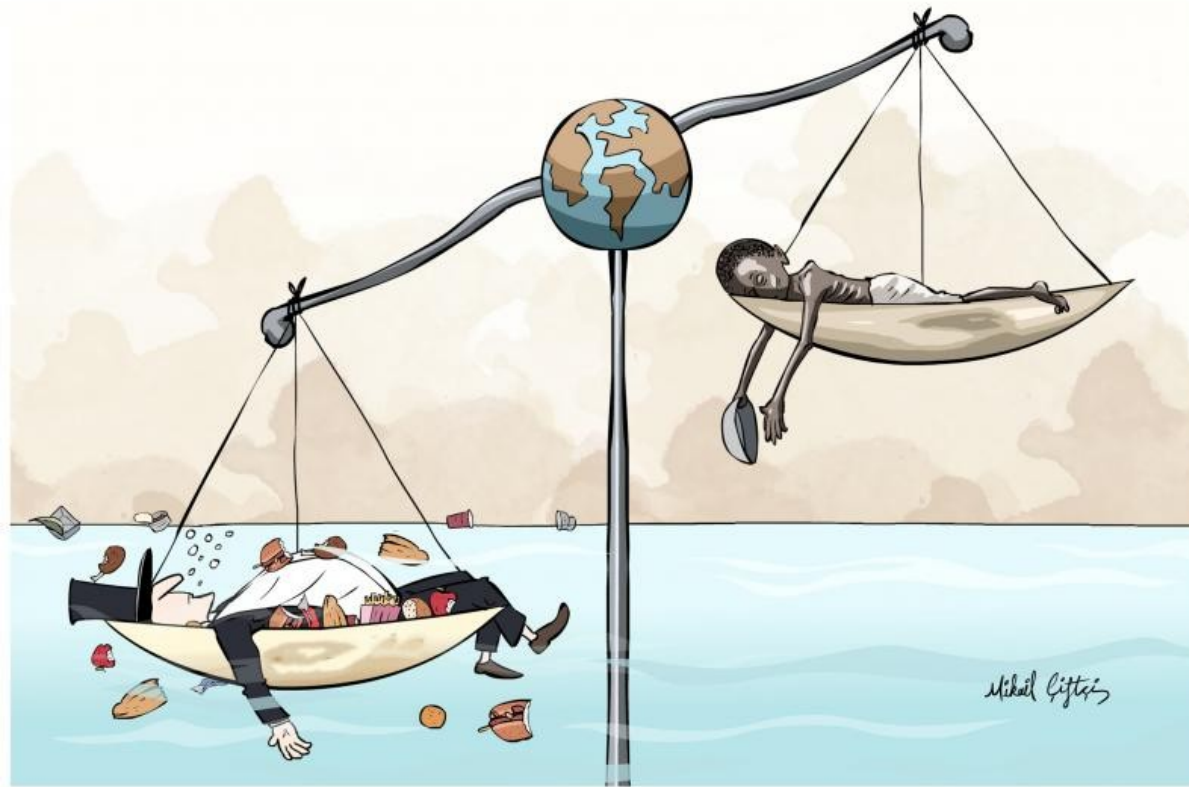
# How did this happen?

The 'tyranny of small decisions', a term coined by the US economist Kahn in 1966, refers to the empirical evidence that harmless individual optimisation decisions may create even global-scale cumulative changes.

Between 1990 and 2015 an estimated USD 242 trillion flowed from the 'developing world' to richer nations.

This amount would have been enough to end extreme poverty 70 times over.

Source: J. Bradley, 2024. *Deep Water. The World in the Ocean*. Scribe Publications Australia



(Photo: Cartoonmovement.com)



# What to do in the aquatic realm? - Stop overfishing

Example Professional Fishing Association in Amorgos, Greece

Coastal fishers taking the initiative to modify their own practices to reduce fishing mortality (gradual increase of mesh size, use biodegradable netting material) and collect plastic during the spawning season instead of fishing.

Lobby the government for protection around the island, seasonal closures to all fishing.



Amorgorama from 2021 plastic collection campaign, 15 tons collected, 3 tons recycled





# Ghana heading towards co-management with SSF

Example: Overfishing by industrial trawlers pushes Ghana's historically resilient canoe fisheries into crisis with grave social, economic and ecological consequences.

The Ghana Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association (GCFGOA) and the National Fish Processors and Traders Association want to engage with the governments opening towards co-management in an exclusion zone extended to 12 nautical miles to improve the resources situation for the canoe fisheries and curb IUU fishing and other malpractices



(Photo: Nana Kweigyah of GCFGOA and Ms. Emelia Arthur, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ghana at UNOC3)



# EU Citizen Initiative to stop shark fin trade

Example: 100 million sharks are killed worldwide per year especially for their fins  
Europe contributes a shocking 45% to the shark fin trade to Asian markets, both as a main exporter and as a trading hub for shark fins.

The EU Citizens Initiative @StopFinningEU collected over 1.1 million statements to support the establishment of a trade ban on shark fins in Europe!

The hearing in the European Parliament provided compelling evidence.

Some measures were taken, but not the ban on the trade to eliminate perverse incentives





# African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network

## Example: AWFISHNET

Founded in 2017, the African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network currently has 44 national and two regional chapters.

Supported by African Union-IBAR and the EU, AWFISHNET strengthens women's capacity for defending their rights and efforts for better market access.



**The Africa Women's Fish Processor and Traders Network (AWFISHNET)**  
**Consultive and Capacity Building Workshop on Leadership**  
21-23 March 2024, Peacock Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania





# Nigerian Women in Agricultural R&D

## Example: NIWARD

Launched in 2013 as a national chapter of the development programme for African Women in Agriculture Research and Development (AWARD, [www.awardfellows.org](http://www.awardfellows.org)) that equips top women agricultural scientists, including fisheries and aquaculture scientists across Nigeria and AWARD Fellows, to accelerate food production gains and economic opportunities for women.



Picture: NiWARD fellows and mentors at the Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMR), Victoria Island, Lagos





## Conclusion (1)

The examples show a wide variety of potentially game-changing experiences ranging from the quite local or much broader national and even regional scales.

They illustrate what is possible, when people engage, collaborate, invest in personal, professional and institutional capacities, particularly if there is sustained institutional support.

We spot huge underutilised potential.





## Conclusion (2)

We identified major road blocks that need removal to realise the potential:

- Concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few agricultural and aquatic corporations dominating national and international value chains
- They have strong influence on governments and the way international trade and exchange conditions are structured
- Their investment horizon is typically 5 to 10 years with a dominant profit focus





# Call to action

- Invest in people, **strengthen coastal communities and collective action**
- Strengthen respectful links of communities with regional and national governments to create spaces for innovative solutions not based exclusively on resource extraction and export – **hold governments and corporations accountable** for keeping citizens out of harm's way, rebuild resources and implement the international agreements
- Build **broadier coalitions** incl. with local businesses; this enhances chances of success, but this requires rights-based approaches without excessive power differences; accept it's hard work, willingness to learn, recognise women as equals.
- Focus on meeting basic needs, restrain profiteering.







# Thanks for your attention

## Mundus maris looks for collaboration

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