



Bottom-up initiatives for social change the Small-Scale Fisheries Academy

Cornelia E Nauen and Team
Mundus maris asbl

Our Power, Our Planet – in celebration of Earth Day



Increased fishing costs have repercussions

- Overfishing driven mostly by industrial fleets has increased costs also for small-scale fishers (bigger canoes, longer trips).
- Export orientation can threaten local food security, but can also be source of SSF income.
- Fishmeal factories offer higher prices, encouraging opportunistic sales, fishers now demand immediate cash, also from women fish mongers, breaking traditional trust-based systems
- Women lose market share, income, community status, and ability to feed families, weaken local solidarity and culture.



Photo P. Bottoni

Literature, sample

Pauly, D. et al. 2025. From Science to Conscience: The Plunder of Senegal's Fisheries Resources, or Europe's Role in the Making of a Migration Crisis. In *Proc. Paris Inst. Adv. Study* (Vol. 21). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15833918>



Management failures

- SSF and resources are chronically under-documented by more or less infrequent scientific surveys
- The people who are on the water every day, and the women processing the catch, have finer-grained temporal and spatial knowledge of resources
- Centralised management systems do not pick up overfishing signs well, because they have no place for local ecological knowledge and marginalise SSF in decision making, lack legitimacy and ability to enforce rules.



Photo Aliou Sall



Small-Scale Fisheries Academy

- *Mundus maris* established the Academy in Senegal with artisanal fishers (men and women) in 2018
- Uses inclusive dialogue methods (tested successfully in 2019) to build organisational and advocacy capacity
- Learning begins with participants defining what a “good life” means to them
- Participants develop practical roadmaps to improve their social and economic conditions
- Progress is tracked over one year with structured 3-monthly checkpoints



Photo MF Arraes Treffner

Literature, sample

Nauen, C.E. and Arraes Treffner, M.F. 2021. Translating SSF Guidelines into practice with the Small-Scale Fisheries Academy. *Frontiers Mar.Sci.*, 8 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2021.730396>



SSF Academy towards collective action

- People are at the centre of change, supported by family and community networks, from local to national
- Essential: SSF Academy offers a safe space, promotes inclusive, respectful multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Encourages joint learning, co-creation of knowledge, and innovation aligned with SSF Guidelines
- Small successes build trust, confidence, and capacity for advocacy and collective action
- Empowers participants (e.g., Nabia) to pursue larger development goals



Photo MF Arraes Treffner

Literature, sample

Mundus maris 2021. Learning steps with the Small-Scale Fisheries Academy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gX8u1nLOD-c>



The SSF Academy can scale

- A mosaic of home-grown innovations in coastal West African countries using the creativity of successful small-scale operators, men and women, reduces vulnerabilities from external shocks
- To build such strengths, avoid direct competition between industrial fisheries and artisanal activities, which reduce scope for home-grown economic success
- Recognised tenure and the authority that goes with it, fair sharing of costs and benefits are critical for successful co-management, restoring overexploited resources, bringing more prosperity to coastal communities



Literature, sample

FAO 2015. *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*. FAO. Rome.

FAO et al. 2024. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024. Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms*. Rome, FAO

Basurto, X., et al. 2025. Illuminating the multidimensional contributions of small-scale fisheries. *Nature*, 637:875-884.



***Mundus maris* looks for collaboration in support of small-scale fishers**

More Info:

www.mundusmaris.org

info@mundusmaris.org

