



Small-scale fishers should be a big part of the future in West Africa

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Increased fishing costs have repercussions

- Overfishing driven mostly by industrial fleets has increased costs also for small-scale fishers (bigger canoes, longer trips), though interaction is not only conflictual. SSF produce most of the food.
- Export orientation can threaten local food security, but can also be source of SSF income.
- Fish meal 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, but also create new opportunities.



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>



Fossil fuel dependence – rethinking local strengths

- Coastal fisheries sustained cohesion through cultural practices, mutual support, and traditional leadership systems
- Informal cross-border trade thrived on trust and enforceable social contracts (e.g., Ghana, Senegal, trade with Sahel countries ECOWAS)
- Influx of external capital (investors, urban elites) weakened local ties and traditional norms, under-explored relations between formal and informality
- Shift in consumer behaviour, hygiene and traceability demands affect fish trade networks at all levels and lead to price hikes





Small-Scale Fisheries Academy

- *Mundus maris* established the Academy in Senegal with artisanal fishers (men and women)
- Uses inclusive dialogue methods (tested successfully in 2019) to build organisational and advocacy capacity
- Learning begins with participants defining what a “good life” is to them
- Participants develop a practical roadmap to improve their social and economic conditions, active participation in co-management
- 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
- *Mundus maris* Academy promotes inclusive, respectful multi-actor 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>



SSF Academy helps innovation

- Lagos State University (LASU-CESAR) and *Mundus maris* led a practical innovation workshop
- Water hyacinth converted into biochar and smokeless briquettes
- Plant stems processed into handcrafted bags and decorative items
- *Sargassum* transformed into livestock feed
- Demonstrates turning environmental challenges into income opportunities



Source: *Mundus maris* 2026.

<https://www.mundusmaris.org/ocean-literacy-and-outreach/turning-a-water-pest-into-a-source-of-income/>



Call to more action

- **Small-scale fisheries** at the centre of fisheries governance and food security at UNOC3 in Nice
- Strengthen local organisational and technical capacities; respect and emphasise **cultural heritage** for buy-in
- **Connect international agreements to local experience** to enhance agency, confidence and fairness, fight IUU fishing, make rules enforceable
- Build **broader coalitions**, incl. with local businesses, to support institutional reforms to break vicious circles towards rights-based inclusive governance approaches. **Tenure rights for women and men in SSF!**



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.



Small selection of addit. literature

- Akintola, S.L., Fakoya, K.A., Areola, F.O., Olatoye, K.A., Abiodun-Solanke, A. (2024). Legal and Policy Instruments on Rights and Provisions on Other Issues in Small-Scale Fisheries of Nigeria. In: J. Nakamura, R. Chuenpagdee & S. Jentoft (eds), *Implementation of the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines*. MARE Publ. Series, vol 28.
- Basurto, X., Gutierrez, N.L., Franz, N. *et al.*, 2025. Illuminating the multidimensional contributions of small-scale fisheries. *Nature*, 637, 875–884. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-08448-z>
- Nauen C.E. (2023). Bridging the Implementation Gap in International Agreements on Marine Protection and Sustainable Use. *Examines Mar Biol Oceanogr*. 6(3). EIMBO. 000636. 2023.
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- Pérez, G., O'Leary, B.C., Allegri, E., Casal, G., Cornet, C.C. et al. (2024). A conceptual framework to help choose appropriate blue nature-based solutions. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 352, 119936, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2023.119936>.
- Sall, A. & Nauen, C.E. (2017). Supporting the small-scale fisheries guidelines implementation in Senegal: Alternatives to top-down research. In: S. Jentoft, R. Chuenpagdee, M. Barragan-Paladines & N. Franz (eds.), *The Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines* (pp. 609-634). MARE Publ. Series, vol. 14.
- Uduji, J.I. & Okolo-Obasi, E.N. (2020). Does corporate social responsibility (CSR) impact on development of women in small-scale fisheries of sub-Saharan Africa? Evidence from coastal communities of Niger Delta in Nigeria. *Mar.Pol.*, 118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2018.10.036>
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Thanks for your attention

***Mundus maris* looks for collaboration**

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