



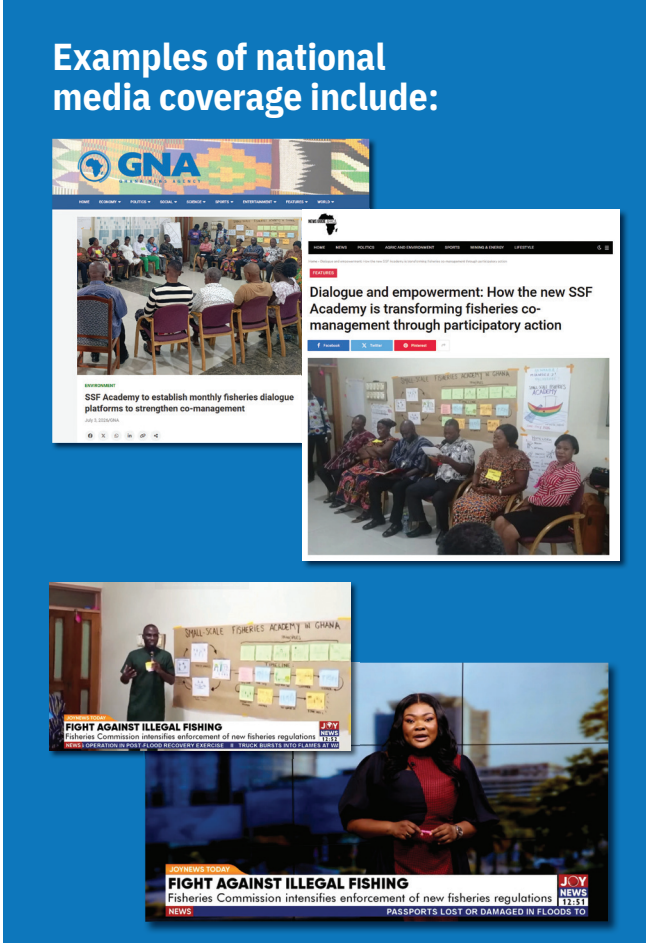
Contribution to national fisheries priorities

The Academy directly supports implementation of the **Fisheries and Aquaculture Act (Act 1146)** by:

- strengthening community participation in fisheries governance;
- improving understanding of fisheries regulations;
- encouraging voluntary compliance;
- promoting inclusive dialogue among fisheries stakeholders;
- reducing conflicts within fishing communities;
- contributing to the reduction of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- supporting the recovery of declining fish stocks;
- strengthening collaboration between communities and government institutions.

By empowering local facilitators to convene dialogue and collective action, the Academy provides a practical mechanism for translating national fisheries policy into community action.

We thank those who can donate to make a difference by supporting the small-scale fisheries academy.



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POLICY BRIEF



SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES ACADEMY IN GHANA

Building community leadership to strengthen fisheries co-management

The successful implementation of the **Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, 2025 (Act 1146)** requires active participation from fishing communities alongside effective government leadership. While legislation provides the legal framework, sustainable fisheries management depends on informed dialogue, shared responsibility, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

To support this national objective, the inaugural **Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF) Academy** held in Winneba from 29 June to 3 July 2026, brought together 34 participants from Ghana's four coastal regions. The Academy was jointly organised by **Mundus maris** and the **Canoe and Fishing Gear Owners Association of Ghana (CaFGOAG)**, with valuable support from Blue Ventures and in close collaboration with the Fisheries Commission and the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The programme also benefited from the participation of two fisheries experts from the University of Education, Winneba.

Rather than delivering conventional technical training, the Academy established the foundations

of a national network of community facilitators equipped to promote dialogue, strengthen local leadership, encourage voluntary compliance with fisheries regulations, and support community-led fisheries co-management.

Key Achievements

National capacity strengthened.

The Academy trained:

- 2 Coordinators and 8 National Trainers;
- 23 Regional Community Facilitators (including 4 Fisheries Commission officers);
- 1 invited representative from the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Participants represented fishing communities across **Greater Accra, Central, Western and Volta Regions**.

A new approach to community engagement

The Academy introduced participatory facilitation methodologies that encourage communities to

become active partners in fisheries governance rather than passive recipients of information.

Participants strengthened their knowledge and skills in:

- community dialogue and facilitation;
- leadership and communication;
- participatory planning;
- the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act;
- fisheries co-management.

Using visual facilitation tools—including community visioning, problem tree analysis and one-year action planning—participants learned practical methods for helping communities analyse challenges, identify priorities and develop locally owned solutions.

From training to community action

The Academy marked the beginning of a longer process of community engagement. Following the training, National Facilitators are supporting Regional Facilitators to organise community meetings across Ghana’s four coastal regions, marking the start of community dialogue platforms to strengthen fishers’ participation in fisheries management and governance.

First Community meetings

- Volta Region: Adina, Woe
- Greater Accra Region: Azizanya, Goi
- Western Region: Shama, Abuesi
- Central Region: Elmina

The meetings are bringing together small-scale fisheries actors including chief fishermen,

canoe owners, crew members, fish processors and traders. Community acceptance has been positive, with chief fishermen and other local leaders actively participating in the dialogue process.

Community-level priorities

The first community dialogues are already generating locally identified priorities for fisheries management and community wellbeing.

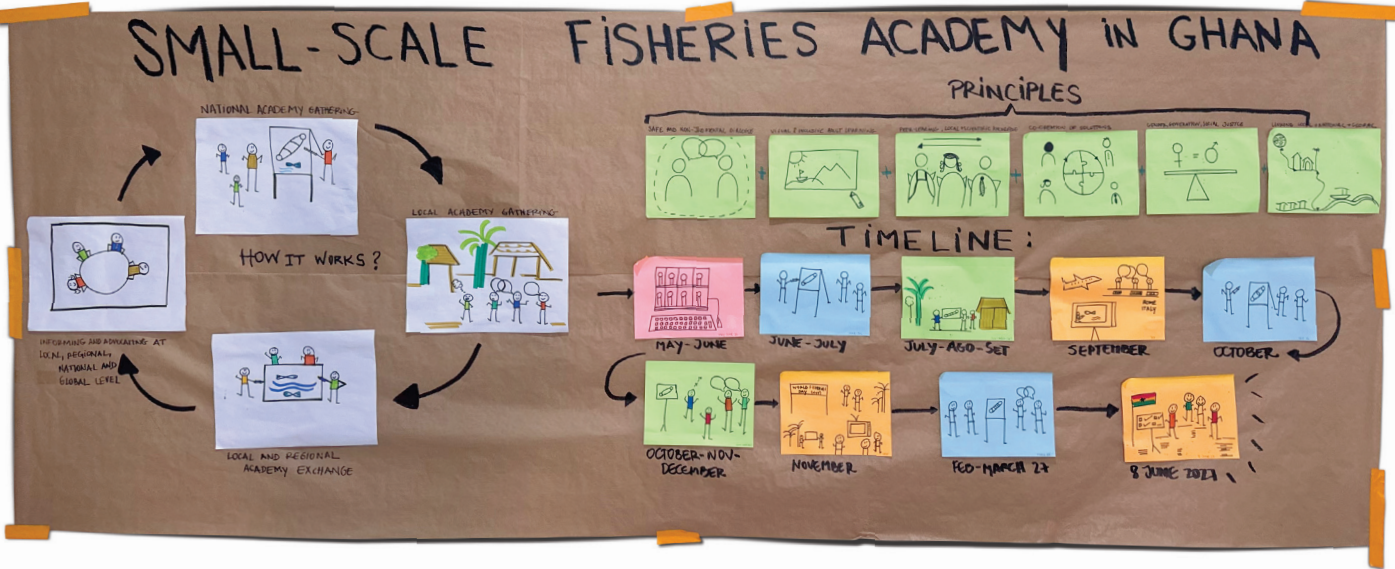
Priority issues identified include:

- Illegal fishing practices;
- Weak participation in decision-making and co-management;
- Poor sanitation at landing sites;
- Irregular supply of subsidised fuel;
- The emerging dialogue platforms provide a space for communities and local fisheries actors to discuss these challenges collectively, strengthen collaboration and identify locally relevant responses.

Immediate Results

- increased confidence in using participatory facilitation methods;
- stronger understanding of the role of community facilitators;
- greater readiness to facilitate community dialogues;
- strong commitment to apply the Academy’s skills and methodologies in their own communities.

These results are now being translated into practice as facilitators support the establishment of regular community dialogue meetings.



Looking Ahead

Over the coming months, the **Sankofa Fisheries Dialogues** will continue across the eight pilot communities, providing a regular space for participation, peer learning and locally led action. As the dialogues become established, facilitators will work with communities to institutionalize regular monthly meetings.

Building on early experiences, *Mundus maris* and CaFGOAG will organise two additional training sessions to strengthen the facilitation network. The next session, planned for September, will focus on experience sharing, peer learning and continued practice of participatory methodologies, enabling facilitators to reflect on their first community experiences, address challenges and strengthen inclusive facilitation skills.

The initiative aims to expand to 20 communities by June 2027, supported by a growing national network of trained facilitators. Complementary communication activities—including **FishTalks**, short voice messages shared via WhatsApp, and community storytelling through photos and videos—will reinforce information sharing, peer learning and engagement across Ghana’s fishing communities.

