

Concern Worldwide Sierra Leone
Livelihoods Proposal – Fish Pond Case Study

Support of fish ponds to improve lives of vulnerable households

Fish farming is one of the main livelihood activities of the people of Rogbom village complementing other agricultural activities. The source of income is normally scarce in the village notably at the peak of the hunger period, between the months of July to September when household food reserves are no longer available. Fish is scarce during this period as a result of rise in water volume in the nearby streams where these families source fish mainly for consumption. The remoteness of Rogbom village makes it even worse for the people to access market centre to procure fresh fish as the nearest periodic market centre is far [13km] from the village notwithstanding the poor road condition.

Ya Yeanoh Sesay live in Rogbom village; a remote community with a population of 97 persons in Kunike Barina Chiefdom in Tonkolili District. Ya Yeanoh and her husband had a fish pond which was their source of livelihoods before the war. Her husband was killed during the war and thus forcing her to flee with six children for a period of three years as the war intensified. With the cessation of animosities, she returned home and found her fish pond dilapidated and could not afford to rehabilitate it. This made it extremely difficult for her and children to cope especially during the hunger period.

Yeanoh was one of the three most vulnerable households who were targeted by Concern two years ago in the village for fish ponds rehabilitation project. The fish pond presently augments her household food basket during the hunger gap and also provides income to meet other basic needs such as medical care and school fees for her children.

When Yeanoh was visited, she remarked; “I now have enough food to feed my family from the daily catch and proceeds from sale of fish and fingerlings from my fish pond”. Yeanoh further explained that after the war, her household relied on bush yams and cassava during the hunger period while she was engaged in sale of labor to earn her living.

When Yeanoh was asked how she copes with farming; she responded, “I find it difficult to farm after the war since my late husband has been spearheading farming activities, but I was able to hire laborers to work on my farm from the money generated from the sale of fish this year”. She also added that she raised approximately Le 550,000 from the fish sales and part of the money was used to buy rice seeds and pay laborers.

Since 2007, Concern has rehabilitated and restocked 70 fish ponds with improved fingerlings (*Tilapia Nilotica*) in Kunike and Kunike Barina Chiefdoms targeting the most vulnerable households which include widows, women headed households, households with elderly and disabled in the villages with community youths providing labor in the rehabilitation work. Fish ponds rehabilitation project is geared towards improving the nutritional status of the beneficiaries through provision of fish as a source of protein as well as diversifying income sources for the resource poor household’s to sustainably reduce shocks and stress.