

## Higher Quality Brings Higher Prices – Nkasi Sardine Story

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The Nkasi district core group have been working on improving market linkages in their area. Our core group includes the District Focal Person, District Trading Officer, Partner Agency, traders, producers and transporters. At our first meeting we selected the commodities for starting the market chain activities. Maize and sunflower were the crops selected for the Ufipa plateau while for Lake Tanganyika shores paddy rice and sardines were selected. This story concerns our work with improving the marketing of sardines.



We selected to start with the improvement of the quality of sardines because it can attract cross-border traders and higher prices. A team from the AMSDP core group accompanied project coordinator Mr A Majollo in visiting fishing camps in the islands of Lake Tanganyika. Along Tanganyika shores we visited three groups: Akiba Haiози, Mzalendo and Ufipa, dealing with sardines. Each of the groups had about thirty members half of whom were women.



The marketing situation before starting marketing linkages was bad. Fisherman had no access to market information. The price was very low and the fishermen were not well organized. They were simply drying and selling sardines (dagaa) directly to the

middlemen who visited their village. The middlemen then ferried the dried sardines to buyers in Sumbawanga for sale in Rukwa, Mbeya, Ruvuma and Dar es Salaam. Some of the sardines were also sold in Congo DRC, Zambia and Burundi



Traditionally the fishermen dry their sardine catch on the sands in the open air on the lake shore (as seen in the photo above). Fish dried in this way adhere with the sand and because consumers do not like sand dried fish they fetch a very low price. The core group trained the fishing groups in how drying fish on tables off the sand would increase the quality and value of their dried sardines. The fishing groups saw how this technology could add value to their sardines and immediately started constructing drying tables (as shown in the photo below)



The improved method of drying (seen in the photo above) has improved the value of the fish. The result of drying the fish on these driers instead of on the sand led to the sardine prices shooting up from 600/ shillings per kg to 1500/ shillings per kg; more than a doubling in price.

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