

Resolving conflicts, improving management and reducing vulnerability



In Ghana the important coastal fisheries are exploited by industrial and semi-industrial fleets as well as a large artisanal fleet of over 8000 canoes. These artisanal fishers and their families are among the most disadvantaged groups of the population. They often have limited alternative livelihood options, making them particularly vulnerable. The different interests of the three fleets, and the fact that they are fishing in the same location, provides ample opportunity for conflict that could affect these families. However the nature of

these conflicts has been poorly understood, having been assumed to be mainly about access to resources. FMSP funded research has successfully developed and promoted a participatory methodology (PISCES) to assess fisheries conflicts and their causes. This research has also shown that many fisheries conflicts are actually rooted in more complex institutional issues. For example, in Ghana struggles to enforce bye-laws and rampant gear theft were a result of cultural differences and political power struggles rather than issues of access. Globally, increasing populations and the resulting pressure on aquatic resources increase the likelihood of conflict and can also have a significant impact on development initiatives and poverty reduction strategies. As the FMSP research has shown, by better understanding why and how conflicts in fisheries develop, and how addressing and managing them might be improved, fisheries in tropical developing countries can be better managed to continue to supply a sustainable flow of benefits and support some of the world's poorest producers. In Ghana they would agree.

- Conflict assessment and resolution methodologies were developed with partners in Bangladesh, Ghana and Turks and Caicos (R7334)
- In 2005/06 methodologies were transferred and local capacity in the use of assessment and resolution methodologies developed in India, Bangladesh and Cambodia (R8294).
- Communication activities during 2005/06 have ensured that the methodologies have been made available in locally appropriate formats and have promoted their value.