

Nene Mantey, Nene Akpaglik, Moses Teye, John Tettehocanse Maklalo, Richmond Sogbaton, Douglas Amatey Sogbaton & John Nyamedji

COMMUNITY LEADERS

SAKUMONO VILLAGE



*Image above:
Community leaders
of Sakumono Village.*

*Image below:
Plastic rubbish at the
Sakumono lagoon
outlet.*



We meet the community leaders in the community house in the middle of Sakumono village, close to the lagoon.

Who are you?

We are the community leaders of Sakumono Village: Nene Mantey, Chief of Sakumono; Nene Akpaglik, Chief fisher man; Moses Teye, Chief of the youth; John Tettehocanse Maklalo, in charge of the community; ; Richmond Sogbaton, Assembly man; Douglas Amatey Sogbaton, secretary to the Chief fisherman; and John Nyamedji, Deputy Chief.

How does the new port development affect your community?

Before the port was here, we were catching a lot of fish, but since the development of the port it has become more difficult. Our fish catch has reduced to almost nothing. It is only plastic. Some rubbish is cleaned out, but more than that is put in again every day. Since the expansion of the port it has become very much worse. Because of the new breakwater all the rubbish comes back to our fishing area, and the plastic tears our nets. It is very difficult to make any income. This is very bad, because all livelihood in this community is related to fishing.

Can the port development be made better for your community?

Before, we could also use the lagoon for fishing. But now there is also too much pollution in the lagoon because of rubbish and discharge flowing in when it rains. The water is dirty and the smell is bad, and there is not much water. The lagoon is choked at the exit. Many years ago, there was a lot of water and the sea entered the lagoon, but now the sea cannot come in anymore. Long

ago, we used to catch big fish here, fresh water fish. Now there are only very small fish in the lagoon. The lagoon must be dredged and also opened; the sea must come in again.

What do you think the community will look like in 20 years time?

We do not know what is going to happen. You see, 20 years ago there was no grass in the lagoon. The sea was very far away, we had to walk over the sand to get to the water. We think it will be bad. In the past we had three things: family, lagoon and sea. But now, look at our houses, the lagoon is choked, and we do not catch any fish in the sea anymore. The port project does not think about us, we are squeezed in and life is very difficult for us. We used to earn 200 cedis for our fish, but now we make only 2 cedis. Our income is disappearing, so how can we pay school fees for our children?

What do you hope Sakumono village will look like in 20 years time?

All the development profits and work go to other people, not to us, while we have been living in this place for so long. Now the project seems not to concern about the communities, but we hope they will also develop this side of the Tema area. We would like to see employment for our community at the port, unschooled labour for now and later schooled labour for our children. We hope they can build schools and libraries in this community, and toilets. And if the lagoon can be dredged and opened, we dream of fishing there again.