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## **Subsidies: Solution to or Reinforcement of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing?**

**Group 10**

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UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

▶ ▶ ▶ The University of Bergen works to address illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. The report is to analyse the issues as part of SDG 4, 14 and 16 and propose recommendations.

**The Sustainable Development Goal targets 4, 14 and 16 aim to minimize and address the impacts of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, by empowering local stakeholders and informing them through education.**

## **Subsidies: More of an Issue than a Solution**

Illegal fishing poses a risk to the sustainability of the fishing industry where currently one-in-five wild-caught fish is due to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, according to FAO (2021). Several reasons for the provision of subsidies to address the problem of illegal fishing have been put forth. For instance, subsidies are claimed to 1) contribute to acceleration of industry growth, 2) tackle social equity issues by helping improve living conditions for some, 3) reduce poverty, and 4) enhance the capacity of fisheries (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2016).

Even though subsidies were considered to be a preventative measure against illegal fishing, it has certain drawbacks:

- encouraging overcapacity due to the artificial reduction in the value of vessels (e.g. shipbuilding or fuel) (Le Gallic & Cox, 2006)
- distort markets and contribute to unfair trade practices (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2020)
- illicit trade and organized crime (Sumalia et al., 2020)
- creating conflict with legal fishers as incentive to follow rules decline (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2020)

All of the aforementioned issues related to the adoption of subsidies as the solution to illegal fishing point to the necessity of critical proposals of comprehensive, pragmatic, long-term, and feasible solutions.



Figure 1. illustrating environmental education to address SDG 14 Life below water



Figure 2. illustrating environmental education to address SDG 14 and 16 limit illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing

## Policy recommendations:

### 1. Reforming Subsidies Coupled with Tracked Illegal Fishing and Registered Fishing

Strategies with best relative results are reorienting subsidies away from capacity-enhancement, and/or conditioning them on specific sustainable performance metrics. Decoupling subsidies from fishing (e.g. providing direct aid to fishers) has unpredictable and unclear results, whereas buyback programs tend to have poor outcomes. Eliminating subsidies is perhaps the simplest strategy but is the most difficult to implement from a social and political perspective (Andrés M. Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2016).

### 2. Empowerment and Responsibilities

Policy should be adapted for the local context. While engaging all possible stakeholders, the main pillar for the policy should be human dignity and rights. The stakeholders need to be updated with practical and reproducible information. Also, the safety and welfare of all stakeholders needs to be ensured. By empowering local fisherfolk through zoning the ocean and allowing them to control over the process, they will combat any illegal fishing happening on their own grounds. All together will create a more transparent process of budget allocation and flow of money will be easily traceable.

### 3. Environmental Education and Communicative Spaces

Environmental education aimed at both adults and children can contribute to the increase in public awareness. Developing and fostering public awareness of the consequences of illegal fishing are more sustainable, especially when they can be achieved through the process of experiencing, understanding, and empathising.

A variety of activities can be conducted. Environmental art can significantly increase the sensitivity of people on this issue, raise the environment awareness and foster critical thinking (Bentz, 2020; Jokela, 1995).

Moreover, participatory workshops have proved to be beneficial (Wheeler et al., 2008). These workshops can provide the fishers with crucial information such as the destructive impacts of illegal fisheries on the marine environment.

Last, spaces for stakeholders across scales to actually communicate, candidly discuss their concerns, and openly negotiate should also be created not only by the communities where illegal fishing takes place but also with external assistance.

## IMPRINT

SDG Bergen Science Advice in collaboration with Bergen Summer Research School's 2021 PhD course holders professor Birgit Kopainsky, Dr. Hiwa Málen and Dr. Ingunn Johanne Ness.

Relevance to the 2030 Agenda SDG 4, 14, 16.

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