

Fishing in Senegal

Fatima has just got a job. A job! She dreamed of getting a job for a long time. She should be happy, shouldn't she?

Fatima lives in a fishing village not far from Dakar. She was born and lived there all her life. Her father was a fisherman. Her grandfather was a fisherman. Everybody in her family made a living from fishing. When Fatima was young, she loved eating fish sandwich at breakfast, fish with rice for lunch and fried fish for dinner.

Her family's favourite dish is "thieboudienne" - rice with marinated fish. Her mother says that for a good thieboudienne you need very good fish. Thiof is Fatima's favourite fish. She thinks the best thieboudienne is made using thiof.

Her grandparents used to say that thiof was the best fish too. Fatima remembers when her grandmother called her grandfather 'thioffy'. She wanted to say her husband was as good and as beautiful as their favourite fish.

When Fatima was little, her grandmother took her to sell the thiof they didn't need. When Fatima was older she used to help her mother smoke the fish. All the women in the village did it together. Dried fish was easier to keep and to sell.

Nowadays it is very difficult to find thiof when the men go fishing. Sometimes they come back with a smaller fish called "sardinella". Sardinella is not as good as thiof, but you can still make thieboudienne with sardinella. But sometimes they come back with very little or nothing.

Just like Fatima, people in her village ate a lot of fish. There was a lot of fish to be caught in the sea. Now the fish are disappearing, and people are going hungry. Where did all the fish go?

Some people blame the foreign fishing boats. These boats drag their nets across the ocean floor, catching everything in their way. They catch too much fish. They also damage and destroy the areas where the fish breed.

The fishermen wanted the big foreign boats to leave. They fought for them to go away. They thought the fish would come back if the trawlers went away. But the foreign fishing companies got partnerships with Senegalese business. So now they can catch all the good fish, like thiof and tuna, and export them to

Europe and Asia. They also make fishmeal from other kinds of fish, like sardinella.

There are foreign fishmeal factories around Senegal's coastline.

Fishmeal is not a meal for people. The fishmeal factories process fishes like sardinella into a powder that is used to feed animals in Europe and Asia.

Now there is a fishmeal factory in Fatima's village. They need workers. Fatima went there looking for a job. There were lots of people looking for work. They chose her. She now has a job. Having a job means she will be able to buy food for her family. Maybe she will be able to buy imported thiof for special occasions. She should be happy, shouldn't she?

New words for this article

Fisherman	someone who catches fish
To make a living	to earn money
Dried fish	fish left out in the sun
To drag	to pull something forcefully
Net	thing you catch fish in
Trawler	large fishing boat
Fishmeal	fish powder

Comprehension Questions

1. Fatima moved to the fishing village with her parents
2. Fatima ate fish three times a day when she was young
3. Fatima has the same favourite fish as her grandparents
4. The thiof fish have moved to a different part of the sea
5. Big foreign boats damage the local environment

5 True
4 False
3 True
2 True
1 False

Comprehension questions

Answers