



Dimitra Newsletter

GENDER, RURAL WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT



- 🎯 Listeners' clubs: new partnerships
- 🎯 Social mobilization and good governance

Dear Readers,

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A warm welcome to Dimitra newsletter 23, which outlines the project’s most recent activities and achievements, especially the development and growing impact of the Dimitra listeners’ clubs. These successes are producing growing recognition for the Dimitra approach and a strong increase in the number of partnerships. This issue also presents examples of good practices reported by organizations in our network.

The Dimitra listeners’ clubs project in Orientale Province (Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC) is taking off – already 43 clubs have been formed. Their launch has been welcomed with enthusiasm by rural populations in this very isolated region. Now, the men and women club members, together with the farmers’ organizations of the region, can start to dream of a better future, make their voices heard and take action for a more equitable and sustainable rural development.

In Burundi and in DRC’s South Kivu province, a dynamic partnership has been formed. FAO and UN Women are working together to set up a network of listeners’ clubs to contribute to the economic empowerment of rural women, men and youth. Similar initiatives are under way in Mauritania and Senegal, where FAO is launching a transborder Dimitra listeners’ clubs project.

The Dimitra listeners’ clubs approach has very concrete impacts. In Gassedda (Niger), women members of the listeners’ club have benefited from a multifunctional platform, provided by UNDP. The women say they were able to obtain this equipment as a result of advocacy and leadership skills acquired at their listeners’ clubs. These new skills helped them to organize their own advocacy, explain their needs and demonstrate their motivation.

As part of our series of portraits of leaders, we feature an interview with an outstanding man: Ali Abdoulaye, coordinator the NGO VIE Kande Ni Bayra, Dimitra’s partner in the Sahel. Ali explains the strong influence that Dimitra – and especially the listeners’ clubs – have had on his professional and private life and on the

activities of his organization. He points to significant behaviour changes in terms of women’s empowerment in several villages and believes in a better future for all.

Also in Niger, a new FAO programme called CoOpequity is supporting the development of equitable and effective agricultural producer organizations (POs) for women and men.

FAO-Dimitra is part of the FAO-Belgium partnership programme “Knowledge Management and Gender”. The “Capitalization of good practices in support of agricultural production and food security” project – another component of the programme – recently organized two mini-fairs to exchange good practices, in Niger and Burkina Faso. Another article in this newsletter highlights the impact of a Knowledge Share Fair organized in Niger in 2010. One of the participants, Martin Tohou, Executive Director of the NGO GRAAB in Benin, was inspired by the micro-garden technique. He subsequently launched similar initiatives in his own household and among beneficiaries of his NGO. With great success.

In another example of knowledge transfer, five women trainers from Benin travelled to Togo to train local women in an activity that combines income generation with recycling – crocheting plastic waste. In Mali, Aidemet is an NGO working to financially empower women herbalists and help them gain greater recognition for the role they play in society.

Finally, in May 2013, the King Baudouin African Development Prize will be awarded to Bogaletch Gebre from Ethiopia, “for her inspiring leadership and determination, building on a remarkable personal journey to strengthen the position of women in Ethiopia and develop a real community-based movement for social change”.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter!

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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Democratic Republic of Congo | Listeners' clubs in Orientale Province to tackle poverty

In the district of Tshopo, rural communities have organized with great enthusiasm into the first 43 Dimitra listeners' clubs in Orientale Province. These have been set up in the framework of a project implemented by FAO-Dimitra and funded by the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), together with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Their launch was warmly welcomed by the rural populations of this landlocked region, which suffers from extreme poverty and faces particularly difficult living conditions.

About fifty people, one-third of them women, crowd into the entrance of the training room in Yanonge, a village on the left bank of the Congo River, about 60 km from Kisangani, the capital of Orientale Province. Among them are members of the area's nine new Dimitra listeners' clubs, as well as community leaders, traditional and religious chiefs and radio producers. They come from the Isangi-Est area and have just finished a training session organized by the "Listeners' clubs, combating poverty, food security and gender" project. The topics of the training included participatory communication, gender and the Dimitra listeners' club approach.

After the session, the comments are enthusiastic. "This training has helped me to understand all the operational stages of a Dimitra listeners' club. Our meetings will be more dynamic as a result," said one participant, Maguy Aliloma, facilitator of the Kima Bobola listeners' club ("Fighting poverty"). Said Sister Berthe Mangala, treasurer of the Etumba na nzala listeners' club ("Tackling hunger"): "I must say that I found everything of interest in this training session, especially the gender approach to local governance. Equal opportunities between men and women must allow both sexes to aspire to the same rights to improved control of their environment within a harmonious development process."

The Yanonge workshop was one of the decentralized training sessions organised for the recently launched Dimitra listeners' clubs. Other similar workshops have already been organized in recent months for six listeners' clubs in the Isangi-Nord area. After Yanonge, it will be the turn of clubs in the Isangi-Ouest, Basoko and Isangi-Nord areas.

A total of some 60 Dimitra listeners' clubs will be launched in the district of Tshopo. These will enable men, women and young people to develop leadership skills, gain self-confidence, engage in participatory communication within their own and with other clubs. The goal is the development of their community, notably through collective action aimed at resolving problems that they themselves have identified and through community governance.



Official launch of the project in Yangambi by the National Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Provincial Minister of Rural Development, the Environment and Tourism, the administrative authorities and the FAO Representative.

Launch of the Dimitra listeners' clubs project in Orientale Province

The project in Orientale Province is being implemented by FAO-Dimitra, with funding from the government of the DRC through the Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme in Orientale Province (PRAPO), and a grant from IFAD. It aims to strengthen the socio-economic power of both men and women producers, their livelihoods and food security, through better access to information, communication and sharing of practices and experiences, including those linked to agricultural issues, all of this with a gender perspective.

The project was officially launched in Yangambi on 30 October 2012, before the National Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Provincial Minister of Rural Development, Environment and Tourism, the FAO Representative for the DRC, FAO-Dimitra and representatives of 20 listeners' clubs already in place. The officials emphasized the importance of access to information and the dynamics of participatory communication

as crucial factors for triggering a sustainable socio-economic development process in rural areas. They also distributed solar-powered and wind-up radios to the delegates of the Dimitra listeners' clubs.

Synergies between Dimitra listeners' clubs and farmers' organizations

Jérôme Bitilaongi, President of the Union of Farmers' Organizations of Agricultural Producers (UOPA), a beneficiary of PRAPO, believes the listeners' club project is of pivotal importance: "We have understood the role of the listeners' clubs in promoting agricultural activities. That is why we did not hesitate to send several members of the Maendeleo-Rome listeners' club for aquaculture training in Kisangani. Members of the Ba mama liboso listeners' club ("Mothers First") are planning training sessions for the launch of a savings and loans cooperative. We have also supported the Muungano club ("Union") in Yakamba with groundnut seeds. It has already prepared a field which will soon be sown. The Mwangaza club ("Enlightenment") for young people is being set up. The listeners' clubs have been our partners since they were first launched".



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The Dimitra listeners' clubs approach, participatory communication and gender equality were the focus of the decentralised training sessions organised by the project in Orientale Province.

Collaboration with radio stations

The Dimitra listeners' clubs in Orientale Province collaborate with a number of community radios (Boboto, Kulokoko, Mabele, RTBI, RTCB, Radio Yanonge and Mwangaza) to disseminate information and ideas. These radio stations have been involved since the outset, from the first training session organized in Kisangani for all stakeholders to the technical training sessions specifically organized for radio stations.

Butukari Batulongani, head of programmes at Yanonge community radio, is well aware of what is at stake: "We will never again develop our programming schedule without taking on board the expectations of the local communities, especially with regard to those programmes that cover the listeners' clubs' debates and the exchange of experiences and knowledge. The radio station will be at the service of the community".

Members of the new Dimitra listeners' clubs have already identified themes close to their heart – issues that they would like to see raised in the coming weeks and months during club meetings. Agriculture often tops the list, including the use of improved seeds, cultivation techniques, tackling plant diseases, fishing techniques and access to land. But other subjects are also considered important, such as food security (a review of eating habits, increased diversification of agricultural output, etc.), health (combating HIV/AIDS, watershed management, sanitation, etc.) and key themes such as youth unemployment and sexual violence.

First results

The project can take pride in the first results, which have been achieved in less than 10 months: 240 villages have been involved in awareness raising activities regarding the listeners' club approach, 43 Dimitra listeners' clubs have been launched and equipped with solar-powered and wind-up radio sets, eight radio stations have received training, seven of

them have been equipped with reporting kits, and about 300 club members and stakeholders have been trained in the methodology. Today, the 1,672 club members, including 701 women and 971 men, can start dreaming of a better future, of making their voices heard and playing an active role as women and men citizens.

The project has surpassed all expectations, reflecting the interest of the communities involved and their wish to make a difference and take action. All the more so because the initiative is set in a region that is totally cut off, where the canoe and the bicycle remain the only means of transport for local people, who generally feel excluded from the socio-economic development process. Against this backdrop, it should come as no surprise that, during the opening of the training workshop, the Yanonge village chief underlined "the impor-

tance of Dimitra listeners' clubs in such an isolated area".

In August 2013, a forum of Dimitra listeners' clubs in Orientale Province will be organized at Isangi, to enable club members to share their experiences and results and the difficulties they have faced. It is this participatory angle that Thérèse Ramazani, facilitator of the Etumba nanzala listeners' club, has understood from the outset: "Participatory communication has shown us how to share information with others and, above all, how to spread our knowledge and experiences so as to achieve a better control of our environment".

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Burundi | New Dimitra listeners' clubs, an example of synergy

Building on the resounding successes in Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo, several FAO programmes and UN Women have joined forces to launch an ambitious Dimitra listeners' clubs project in Burundi. FAO in Burundi has asked for the support of FAO-Dimitra to launch these listeners' clubs, which seek to empower rural communities, especially women and young people. The actors and the contexts may differ, but the approach, based on previous experience, remains focused on participation, gender, social mobilisation and knowledge sharing.

For more than a year, the FAO Representation in Burundi has been working to set up a network of Dimitra community listeners' clubs. The FAO programmes "Peace-building Fund for victims of conflict" (United Nations), "Addressing the problem of HIV and gender inequality through a food security and nutrition response in Central and East Africa" (Sweden), "Agro-economic empowerment of vulnerable households" (Sweden) and "Urban and Peri-urban Horticulture" (Belgium), have decided to jointly implement this innovative approach. UN Women is also providing financial support.

A successful example of collaboration between several FAO programmes, the initiative aims to improve access to information and communication of rural communities, especially women and youth, so as to contribute to their socio-economic and political empowerment and food security.

In concrete terms, FAO is setting up 35 Dimitra listeners' clubs as part of a pilot project, targeting the following provinces in Burundi: Bujumbura Rural, Bujumbura Mairie, Bubanza, Muramvya and Cibitoke. The project has the support of – and offers support to – the FAO Farmer Field Schools. On the one hand, the clubs are set up "side by side" with the Farmer Field Schools, with the support of existing stakeholders. On the other, the listeners' clubs will allow the Farmer Field Schools to network and exchange good practices. The Farmer Field Schools and the listeners' clubs are complementary approaches used by FAO. Both are based on the participation of rural communities, recognizing their needs and interests. It is an example of a win-win partnership.

The setting up of Dimitra listeners' clubs is a medium to long-term process. As well as distributing solar-powered wind-up radio sets, creating the clubs and offering suitable training, support is needed for 6 months to one year, in order to ensure real participation, sustainability and gender sensitivity in the project. The length of time required depends largely on the local context (socio-cultural, institutional, etc.).

At the start of this process, Dimitra facilitates a "community listeners' clubs workshop". This workshop represents a crucial step in raising awareness and sharing information on the listeners' clubs. It is the time when the FAO-Dimitra team can increase awareness and strengthen capacities, but also adapt, together with the men and women participants (the actors in the project), the approach of the listeners' clubs to the local context. It is also useful for refining the role that each person will play in subsequent phases.

In Burundi, the Dimitra community listeners' clubs workshop was held from 5 to 8 March 2013, with the aim of adapting the Dimitra approach to the local context and actors involved, strengthening the capacities of participants in terms of gender sensitivity and social communication and better identifying the practical aspects of setting up such clubs.

The workshop was held in Bujumbura and brought together about 30 women and men participants: local club leaders, FAO Farmer Field School facilitators, representatives of partner organizations (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA) and radio producers.

Despite the differing levels of the participants, the teaching method used (active training, based on participants' experience) led to rich exchanges on the situation of rural women in Burundi. Particularly striking were results based on the daily activity clock exercise, which clearly showed the disparity between men and women in terms of workload.

For participatory communication – another key aspect dealt with during the workshop – a role playing game allowed the group to work on specific areas of the media situation in Burundi, as well as communication in general. In Burundi, the media is concentrated in the capital and the absence of community radio as such poses a challenge.

The workshop ended by identifying the next stages in the creation of the clubs, including the setting up of a creative partnership with several national radio stations, and the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved.

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A partnership between FAO and UN Women for Dimitra listeners' clubs in the DRC and Burundi

FAO and UN Women, both United Nations agencies, signed a memorandum of understanding recently. It is a joint effort to contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of men, women and young people in rural areas of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). To reach this objective, participatory information and communication are being promoted through the Dimitra listeners' clubs.



The members of the Rhushangire listeners' club in Makwale, Walungu Territory (DRC) receive their solar-powered and wind-up radios.

ties of Buterere and Kanyosha) and Bujumbura Rural (municipality of Isale). In South Kivu, they are located in Mudaka (Kabare Territory) and in Walungu, Ludaha and Kaniola (Walungu Territory).

Networking and the search for synergies

One of the unusual and innovative features of this project is linked to the fact that the clubs support other initiatives of FAO and UN Women. In the case of South Kivu, they rely on the network of existing Dimitra listeners' clubs and on the creation by UN Women of "listening houses" for victims of rape. In Burundi, they are part of a network of clubs set up by four FAO programmes (see article on page 5). This dimension of networking and creating synergies with other initiatives is an important factor in their success. For if being a member of a Dimitra listeners' club helps a person to have a better understanding of his or her surroundings, being part of a network of clubs also helps to be more effective and less isolated. This can only enrich the discussions and exchanges organized between clubs, including the decisions that are taken there.

In both countries, activities are supported by FAO-Dimitra, which organized a first training session in Bujumbura from 5 to 8 March on the Dimitra listeners' club approach, in order to strengthen the capacities of men and women participants in social and gender-sensitive communication. Three participants from UN Women Burundi benefited from the training session, namely field staff from Isale and Mpanda municipalities and the Programme Director for UN Women in Burundi. Similar training initiatives will soon be organized in Bukavu, South Kivu, by Samwaki, Dimitra's local partner NGO, which has supported the process and the Dimitra listeners' clubs since 2006. The participation of UN Women will involve issues linked to knowledge of and claims for women's rights in the DRC.

The partnership agreement signed between the two agencies should also be strengthened by an additional contribution from UN Women Burundi, which will enable people to benefit from decentralized training programmes, take part in a forum of Dimitra listeners' clubs, or participate in exchange visits.

In the framework of this collaboration, five Dimitra listeners' clubs have already been launched in the province of South Kivu (DRC), and ten others in the provinces of Bubanza, Bujumbura Rural and Bujumbura Mairie (Burundi). But it seems likely that the number of clubs will double or even triple in the weeks to come, given the enthusiasm with which communities have welcomed the initiative.

Multiplication of Dimitra listeners' clubs

In the case of South Kivu, where solar-powered and wind-up radios have already been distributed, more than 100 people have been present for the first meetings of each club. However, it is known that to work in a participatory manner, a Dimitra listeners' club should have no more than 25-30 members. So more clubs will have to be created in order to accommodate all participants. A similar situation appears likely in Burundi, where the clubs have generated a dynamic response. In both countries, the clubs have been quick to organize themselves and

launch collective action, without even waiting for training!

The clubs will act as a stepping stone to stimulate rural community participation and citizens' governance for development activities. They will also serve as a space for speaking up and taking action with regard to needs as identified by the clubs' members themselves. As a result, these community members will be able to gain self-confidence and make their voices heard, whether at local policy level or in decision-making bodies of farmers' organizations, so as to improve their social, economic and political opportunities.

The choice of sites for the creation of listeners' clubs has been made on the basis of criteria such as the presence of local partner organizations to UN Women, and/or Farmer Field Schools or other FAO activities. In Burundi, the Dimitra clubs are situated in the provinces of Bubanza (municipalities of Gihanga, Mpanda and Rugazi), Bujumbura Mairie (municipali-

The members of a new Dimitra listeners' club in Mutimbuzi, Bujumbura rural province (Burundi). The club chose the name Abasangirajambo, "Those who share words".



© Gustave Ntaruka

... and Dimitra listeners' clubs in Mauritania and Senegal

In Mauritania, a Dimitra listeners' club workshop, held in Nouakchott from 11 to 14 November 2012, brought together 25 participants from the four regions targeted, Assaba, Trarza, Brakna and Gorgol.

The workshop followed a request to FAO-Dimitra for technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), prior to the launch of a pilot project for Dimitra listeners' clubs in the country, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It was facilitated by FAO-Dimitra, with support from Mauritanian resource persons for aspects linked to the environment and gender, and assistance from a representative of Radio Mauritania for communication. The NGO Rural Perspectives – Development Association (PRAD, Perspectives Rurales – Association de Développement) was responsible for organizing the training.

The case of Mauritania is particular in that the pilot project relies on several partner organizations: NGO PRAD (Nouakchott), Action (Gorgol), AFRES (Assaba), AMSTOP (Trarza) and CHDCD (Brakna). The project's first phase

will allow the structure to be refined so as to achieve maximum impact.

In addition, FAO will be launching a transborder (Mauritania-Senegal) Dimitra listeners' club project in the Senegal River Valley. The listeners' clubs will allow networking and sharing of best practices between the Farmer Field Schools of the regional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme.

The media in Mauritania has yet to be liberalized. Cooperation with Radio Mauritania, the national state radio, has therefore been established through its local stations. The transborder project will also allow collaboration with local Senegalese radio stations, which are closely followed on the Mauritanian side of the border.

At the moment, the clubs are being launched and new opportunities are opening up in terms of joint activities with other FAO programmes, or with other units of UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) or the International Labour Office (ILO).



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The key to development: education for girls and boys

SERIES PORTRAITS

Since 1998, Ali Abdoulaye has been coordinator of the NGO VIE Kande ni Bayra, focal point for FAO-Dimitra in the Sahel. His work in rural areas has given him a strong interest in development activities and gender-related issues.

Could you tell us about your career?

After completing my studies at teacher training college in Dosso, I began teaching in rural areas, first as a schoolmaster and then, very soon, as the principal. It is there that I began having contact with development NGOs. That encouraged me to submit a request for six wells to be sunk and a school garden to be set up to support the purchase of small items of equipment and materials for the school. This experience led me to become involved in development activities and, together with other teachers, I set up the NGO *Volontaires pour l'Intégration Educative* (Volunteers for Educational Integration), VIE Kande ni Bayra, which means "bring your knowledge".

What are your main areas of activity?

Our main activity is basic education. Enabling children to go to school. And offering an educational alternative to those children who cannot join the classic system. For example,

we carry out literacy activities. The aim is to tackle illiteracy and ignorance, both factors that exacerbate poverty in grassroots communities. We are first and foremost teachers, and it is through education that we can make our expertise and experience available.

Our goal is therefore to educate, offering an integrated education, which can support development activities and provide them a greater chance of success.

Together with our various partners, including Dimitra, we have been able to extend and develop our outreach to include women in the community, especially in the area of education and literacy.

Speaking of Dimitra, you mention gender equality. Are you involved in activities in this field?

We are the focal point for Dimitra in the Sahel, covering Chad, Benin, Togo, Niger and Mali. We are tasked with collecting all the information available, from the women themselves and from institutions, which might lend credibility to and gain recognition and visibility for the importance of women as a force for rural development. To help carry out this objective we have been given training on gender, so that we can understand what it means. Among the key lessons we have learned is the importance of putting tools in place to empower women and also that of involving men in the activities.

What brought you to work on gender issues?

When launching VIE, we decided to pay special attention to the sector of the population most affected by poverty and food insecurity, that is to say, those living in rural areas. And in these communities, it can be seen that women are always in the frontline of the fight against poverty, taking up the challenge in the fields of agriculture, finances, education, health, social organization, etc.

To increase the impact and effectiveness of our activities in the field, it therefore made sense to collaborate with women. That was not difficult in itself, once the gender dimension has been taken on board. And once men and women accepted professional and human interaction.

In your own cultural and family environment, has it been easy for a man to address issues of gender? Have you encountered any resistance?

We have encountered a great deal of resistance. Especially from those who were trying to defend their privileges. These people were strongly opposed to any initiative aimed at bringing about positive change in the position of women in society.

We also met with resistance based on mistaken interpretations of certain religious principles and on misunderstandings of the [religious] texts by women.

There have also been other types of resistance, due to the simple lack of self-confidence possessed by many women in rural areas; these are women who have a heavy workload and little time for reflection and contributing to the future of the community.

How do you explain the gender dimension to people who are not familiar with it?

As development actors, we started out thinking that the mere fact of having women present at the meetings meant that we could say the gender dimension was being respected. That was until we understood that they not only needed to speak out, like the men, but they also needed to take part in debates and decision-making on all matters concerning the community.

And we also came to understand that in order to introduce the concept of gender in rural areas, it was essential to identify the obstacles and the difficulties, to understand in which areas and activities there were the most gender-related inequalities – in households, within the community. At the level of decision-making, it was also important to look at the areas in which decisions were being made, at the control of responsibilities and at the distribution of tasks within households.

When people are encouraged to reflect, they begin to realize and admit that there are inequalities. This admission can lead to a desire for change and a search for solutions from within. Development actors can play a role in looking for solutions that are sustainable and that can be extended from the local to the regional or national levels.





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Do you have examples of experiences you have shared through the Dimitra network?

An example of experiences shared is a workshop organized by Dimitra in Mbour, Senegal, in June 2008, on the issue of land access. The workshop enabled us to learn about the activities of the National Network of Rural Women in Senegal. The conclusions and recommendations from this international encounter inspired us for our activities with grassroots organizations. We took and adapted documents describing initiatives undertaken involving rural women in Senegal and we translated them into our own national languages.

It should be emphasized that we managed to couple this initiative with another Dimitra experience – that of the listeners’ clubs. These clubs are real information tools and discussion forums. At local level, they have made it possible to move the debate on land access for women higher up the agenda. Various approaches and strategies have been debated through the medium of these listeners’ clubs. The discussions have helped women in Banzoumbou to organize themselves and, with support from the chief and several men from the village, they have managed to negotiate with landowners the lease of a fertile plot for 99 years. If they succeed in farming this land in a profitable manner, many of them will be able to lift themselves out of poverty, buy land and strengthen their position in the community. At the moment, this result is cause for considerable satisfaction.

One can very well say that this initiative resulted from the determination and dynamism of these women, but that the idea was largely inspired by the experiences of other partners in the Dimitra network.

How do you see the future of women, who are considered to be the pillars of society and the economy?

This is true, given the role that they play, especially in our African societies. Women have the necessary potential to achieve balance and equity by themselves. Observations made in villages where we have worked well show that gender equality is possible. And achievements made at this level can be extended on a broader scale. At the global level, and at government level, things are also moving, with legal texts and resolutions adopted in favour of gender equality, and that provides the impetus to persevere.

What satisfaction do you derive from your personal involvement in this sector?

The greatest satisfaction I have is in being more aware of gender equality, in my professional activities and in my daily life. It has almost become a reflex.

My satisfaction is even greater when I visit some villages and see the enormous progress achieved in just 5 years. I see progress in the fact that women are speaking out at village meetings and playing a greater role in decision-making, on all issues linked to community life. In rural areas, women are taking on more and more responsibilities for managing activities, without having to ask for help from men. That is happening in one of our flagship villages, Gasseda. The village women’s group received a multifunctional platform from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). They refused to allow men to become involved, in the management or even the repair of the machine. The initiative is so successful that the management plan is expected to facilitate the

“The greatest satisfaction I have is in being more aware of gender equality, in my professional activities and in my daily life. It has almost become a reflex.”

purchase of a new grinder so that the activities can be continued (see article page 10). Personally, when I see how much has been done in the 30 years that I have been visiting these villages, I tell myself that the next 10 years could bring even more positive changes.

Given your experience, what advice would you give to readers of the Dimitra newsletter who may be interested in becoming involved in gender promotion?

The first piece of advice is to... be committed. To understand and fully take on board the concept of gender. Also, anyone wanting to work in this sector must be careful to adopt a participatory approach in any actions they undertake, especially in rural areas. Above all, they should avoid having preconceived ideas, leave space for women’s creative genius and favour solutions that come from within.

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Niger | From information to action.

The multifunctional platform in Gassedda

In Niger, 70% of the population lives in rural areas or in villages with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. Some 90% of people living in these areas have no access to electricity. Until recently, this also was the situation in Gassedda, a village in the commune of Diantchandou, in the district of Kollo. But several months ago, the community benefited from a multifunctional platform, provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

A multifunctional platform (MFP) consists of a chassis onto which a simple and robust motor is mounted. This is fitted with a three-phase generator that supplies mechanical and electrical energy to various pieces of equipment. In Niger, 40 villages have benefited from a platform fitted with a huller, a grain mill and a battery charger. The platform can be used to power other tools, such as a grinder or a welding unit. It can also provide sufficient energy to power the electrical network of a village or to provide a water supply.

The inhabitants of each village benefiting from a platform must provide a shed or other shelter to house the material. They must also gather a fund of 200,000 FCFA to cover main-

tenance and any repairs that might be needed. In this way, UNDP ensures that the villages will be able to maintain the equipment in good working order, without having to use external finance. Installation of the platform goes hand in hand with training in management and literacy for the committee members in charge of the project. Each committee is made up of at least eight women, who take turns in the daily management of the equipment.

Each day, Inayata Garba, secretary of the Gassedda committee, carefully fills out details in a notebook, each time entering the name of the person asking to use the machine and the service requested. In so doing, she makes sure that everyone gets their turn and that the day's revenue is accounted for. After the accounts have been checked by a third party, the revenue is divided between management committee members and maintenance and depreciation costs of the material. With the surplus generated by the use of the platform, the committee will be able to buy more equipment for the platform.

But the platform is much more than just a new source of energy for the village. It is proving especially valuable in changing the lives of women. The huller and grain mill enable women to make significant savings on the amount of time they devote to daily household tasks. This gives them more time to spend on other income generating activities. Even the youngest girls benefit: now that they no longer have to pound millet, they have more time for their education.

"Before the machine arrived, our hands had callouses. Now they are smooth. Before, we never had time to do anything else. Now, we practise horticulture, and I leave each morning to plant my plants. Now, all the women practise horticulture. Before, we used to spend all our time preparing meals," says Sofi Sidikou, one of the women in charge of the platform. "The machine has greatly improved our lives and now we are no longer ashamed to show our hands when we speak," she adds, laughing.

In early 2011, when the FAO-Dimitra project team visited women members of the Gassedda



listeners' club, these women spoke of their difficulties in translating words into action. They especially lamented the lack of water in their village, which prevented them from practising horticulture. Today, in March 2013, the water problem has still not been resolved, but the women of Gassedda have made progress. Since the arrival of the platform, the women have had more spare time. But they have not used it for resting. They have left for Gourou, a village situated two kilometres from Gassedda, where they have managed to obtain land to grow fruit and vegetables. Each day, some of them go to the site to water the land and later return with vegetables, which they consume or sell. The issue of water may not have been resolved, but the time savings have meant that the women are able to go and grow crops elsewhere. The women of Gassedda are already dreaming of installing a water supply system, once the costs linked to the platform have been paid off.

"It is thanks to the listeners' club that we were able to get this machine. The listeners' club changed us, and it is because they (UNDP project staff) saw that we were motivated that they gave us the machine," says



The secretary of the management committee makes a note of each service provided.



Sofi Sidikou talks of changes in her life. Behind her are training modules for platform management.



ACCELERATING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR RURAL WOMEN

Consultative workshop to launch a joint IFAD, FAO, WFP and UN Women programme in Niger



Hulling cereals.

Hamsa Makido, treasurer to the management committee of the Gasseda platform.

In the district of Téra, western Niger, 17 villages had expressed interest in having a multifunctional platform. There were eight platforms available and all were given to villages with listeners' clubs. Said Ali Abdoulaye, coordinator of VIE Kande Ni Bayra which accompanies the women: "I can only say that those women who know how to mobilize themselves, how to express themselves and how to plan their activities, have been taken into consideration in the selection process for villages able to manage a platform in an effective manner." In Gasseda, the first few months using the new platform proved to be a resounding success. The platform has also been the subject of discussion in a number of debates organized by the listeners' clubs.

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Women play a major role in developing rural areas and national economies. However, they only have limited access to resources for production, such as land, agricultural inputs, financial services and credit, extension services and technologies, a factor that creates an obstacle to an effective agriculture sector.

Against this background, the three Rome-based agencies – FAO, IFAD and WFP – decided to team up with UN Women to offer a more global and integrated United Nations response by supporting economic empowerment for rural women through joint action. The five-year programme will be implemented in seven countries: Niger, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan and Nepal. Its aim is to create synergies arising from the mandates and comparative advantages of each of the agencies, and to improve livelihoods and strengthen the rights of rural women, in the context of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals after 2015 (post-MDG 2015).

The launch of a joint programme in Niger

A consultative workshop for the joint programme in Niger took place in Niamey from 27 to 28 November 2012. This launch workshop was organized together with all stakeholders – Representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, Population, Promotion of Women and Child Protection and the 3N Initiative (Nigeriens feed Nigeriens), representatives of technical and funding partners (donors and international NGOs) and representatives of grassroots organizations already working with the four agencies, coming mainly from the two targeted regions of Maradi and Dosso.

Challenges and good practices

The workshop methodology was participatory and alternated presentation sessions with open discussions, working groups and plenary feedback sessions.

Following the working groups and during the plenary sessions, participants identified five main categories of requirements and challenges: capacity building, rights, access to information and resources, participation and

representation of rural women at all levels, and programme management (capacities and good governance).

Good practices already in place in Niger held special attention: the FAO-Dimitra listeners' clubs, CARE's Matu Masu Dubara microfinance programme, the UNFPA husbands' schools, CTB's project for Increasing Women's Financial Income in Dosso, and the capitalisation of good practices and gender mainstreaming in FAO's community development programmes.

The next steps

The four agencies are now mapping their project and programme activities in the two target regions and developing a common concept note for Niger.

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CoOPequity | Promoting governance and gender equality in producer organizations in Niger

Agricultural producer organizations (POs) play a crucial role in the fight against poverty and food insecurity. But in many cases, specific groups, such as women and young people, are excluded from the services and benefits that POs offer. The active participation of producers – including of women and young people – is key to the good governance of POs and to strengthening their capacity to influence policy. It is in this context that the CoOPequity programme is working in Niger to support the implementation of policies and measures that encourage the development of equitable, efficient and economically viable POs.

In this Sahel country, structuring the agricultural sector and improving the livelihoods of women and men smallholders are major challenges.

POs can play a decisive role in reducing inequalities in the agriculture sector, as well as in tackling poverty and food insecurity, provided they have an enabling policy, legislative and economic environment and are founded on principles of equity and good governance.

Launched in 2012 by FAO, with backing from the European Union, the CoOPequity programme has been designed to support governments in implementing policies and measures that will encourage the development of equitable and effective POs.

A framework for sound PO development

CoOPequity provides technical assistance to policy-makers, as a way of encouraging them to put in place the enabling environment needed to create and develop efficient and inclusive POs. They also seek to promote a more equal balance of power between different actors, improve communication between them and strengthen mechanisms for dialogue.

Strengthening organizational capacities

The programme also offers technical assistance to POs, so that they can strengthen their organizational capacities. The focus is on strengthening governance, gender equality, economic performance, market access and the capacity of POs to influence the development of agricultural policies. These activities are planned and carried out according to the needs, priorities and strategies as identified by the POs themselves, through surveys, consultations and dialogue.

Strengthening women and men producers within their POs

The programme promotes initiatives that can help men and women farmers play a more active role in POs, using participatory infor-



© Dabrawka Bojic

mation and communication sessions. It also works to set in place a network of good practices and experiences, most notably by organizing exchange visits between producers – both women and men – from different POs.

CoOPequity in action: an ambitious workshop

The first CoOPequity workshop, which took place in Niamey from 20 to 22 November 2012, was first and foremost one of identification, aimed at laying the foundations for future interventions in Niger and highlighting weaknesses and the priority needs of the organizations targeted, particularly in terms of performance, governance and equity. Subsequently, the idea was to support the development of a common plan of action to strengthen the performance, governance and equity of POs in Niger.

The multi-stakeholder workshop brought together all the actors involved in agricultural and rural development in Niger (POs, govern-

ment, High Commission of the 3N Initiative, NGOs, research), as well as representatives of key international partners: IFAD and the *Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec* (Union of Producers in Quebec, UPA).

POs in Niger – the current situation

Among the main causes of weakness in POs, workshop participants identified lack of organizational support and training, lack of or inadequate information and communication within POs and between various levels of each organization, as well as under-representation of women and young people in PO decision-making processes. Other problems highlighted included insufficient financial resources.

Working together to achieve common goals

The participants agreed on a series of priority objectives to be achieved over the next three years, with the aim of improving the performance, equity and governance of POs in Niger.

What is a rural organization?

Rural organizations such as POs and cooperatives are autonomous organizations, based on principles of free membership and participation, managed by their members and governed by an elected representative.¹

Rural organizations provide a range of economic and/or social services to their members, which enable them to improve their access to natural resources, agricultural inputs and markets. They also facilitate access to information and knowledge sharing, as well as promoting better participation in decision-making by men and women farmers and their active engagement in partnerships with public authorities, the private sector, research and other actors. Collective action taken by POs enables women and men producers to overcome a range of obstacles and improve their livelihoods, thereby reducing poverty and hunger.

As regards **enabling environments**, there was broad agreement on the urgent need to set up equitable consultation mechanisms and ensure the effective participation of POs in the decision-making processes.

For the **POs**, a more autonomous, democratic, equitable and transparent management is to be developed, as well as an improvement in the accessibility and quality of services provided to members, especially in the area of information and communication.

As for the **women and men producers**, there were calls for significant advances in capacity building, as well as for an easier access to PO services and a better knowledge and understanding of their rights and duties as members.

All the participants welcomed the success of the first CoOPequity workshop in Niger, which paved the way for dialogue between the Government and POs, under the supervision of FAO and the partnership agreement with UPA.

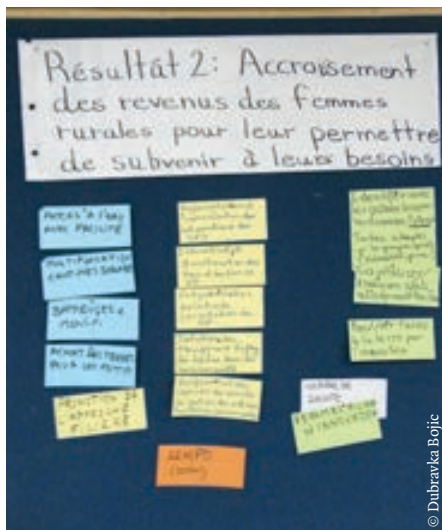
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The toolbox

The CoOPequity approach was developed on the basis of a body of literature and good practices on strengthening institutions and developing organizational capacities.²

More specifically, the launch workshop took as its starting point Learning Module 4 from the FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development. This module presents a systematic approach to change for institutions and organizations.³ It brings together a series of recently developed methodologies and tools that can help to facilitate an analysis of organizational capacities, as well as assist in implementing an evaluation of the process of organizational change.

Adapted to both specific conditions in Niger and to the demands of the CoOPequity programme, the methodologies used included, for example, a framework for systematically analysing organizational performance, a tool for analysing the enabling environment, or a “vision” tool which made it possible to develop a common plan of action.



An innovative partnership

The CoOPequity programme supports the implementation of innovative partnerships, such as the one between FAO and the organization “Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec – Développement International (UPA-DI)”, based on the principle of solidarity between farmers North and South.

As part of the International Year of Cooperatives, and in keeping with the theme of World Food Day 2012, “Agricultural cooperatives: key to feeding the world”, a memorandum of understanding was signed between FAO and UPA with the aim of developing a targeted intervention strategy for farmers’ organizations and agricultural cooperatives in developing countries.

CoOPequity is based on an innovative North-South approach for cooperation between farmers, with the broader goal of strengthening their capacities to work together for sustainable and fair development and better livelihoods.



- 1 Annual Report on FAO activities in support of producers’ organizations and agricultural cooperatives, FAO, 2012; Agricultural cooperatives: paving the way for food security and rural development, FAO, 2012.
- 2 Good practices on building rural institutions to increase food security, FAO/IFAD, 2012; Successful farmer collective action to integrate food production into value chains, Herbel, D. and Ourabah Haddad, N., Food Chain Journal, November 2012.
- 3 Learning Module 4 (LM4).

Mini-fairs for the exchange of good practices in Niger and Burkina Faso

In December 2012, FAO's "Capitalization of good practices in support of agricultural production and food security" project organized two mini-fairs to exchange good practices. One was held in Niamey, Niger and the other in Founzan, Burkina Faso. These meetings enabled the men and women who attended these events to share and exchange the good practices documented during this four-year project on agricultural input management.

As the Capitalization project draws to a close, the mini-fairs in Niamey and Founzan offered valuable opportunities for exchanging and sharing good practices, while drawing lessons on how to identify, document, adapt and adopt them on a wider scale.

The good practices capitalized on by FAO and its partners took many different forms: best practice information sheets, fact sheets, concept notes, videos and radio broadcasts. Practices dealt with included inventory credit, farmer field schools, micro-doses of fertilizers, group orders and community listeners' clubs, with a particular focus on gender.

The mini-fair in Niamey

The mini-fair in Niamey was part of the process to capitalize on experiences and document good practices, undertaken together with partners since the project's launch in 2009. During training sessions on methodologies for capitalizing on experiences, partners pledged to implement capitalization activities, choosing formats suited to their target audience.

During the mini-fair, participants were able to show the products on which they had capitalized and share experiences on the methods used and the difficulties encountered. As the mini-fair was held in the capital of Niger, a

number of other organizations working in the field of food security and capitalization were invited to explain their working methods.

In common with the Knowledge Share Fairs, the mini-fair sessions were participatory and highlighted the approach. How was work conducted and why? What lessons had been drawn from successes and failures? The World Café sessions, during which participants answered questions, alternated with peer support sessions to jointly find solutions to the most pressing problems emerging from the World Café. Both men and women participants shared details of documentation, identification, dissemination and adaptation of best practices, paying special attention to gender issues.

The info-training centre in Founzan

In Founzan, the mini-fair took another form as it coincided with the inauguration of the info-training centre on inventory credit set up by the *Coopérative de prestation de services agricoles Coobsa* (Cooperative for the Provision of Agricultural Services Coobsa, COPSA-C). A day of festivities crowned the partnership between COPSA-C, the Italian NGO CISV (Comunità Impegno Servizio Volontariato), the Swiss

Development Cooperation and FAO's Capitalization project. Gathering from the Founzan area, as well as from Ouagadougou, Niger and Europe, the partners joined the women and men participants in visiting the centre and discovering the advantages of inventory credit.

COPSA-C is a farmers' organization set up in March 2009, with headquarters in Founzan, south-west Burkina Faso. It is made up of nine unions and its mission is to increase the agricultural revenues of its members so as to improve their livelihoods and food security. In 2009, COPSA-C members were already engaging in inventory credit.

The COPSA-C info-training centre aims to serve as a place for meeting, knowledge sharing and learning, so as to further best practices for inventory credit. The centre will enable producer groups of men and women farmers from within the region and beyond to carry out exchange visits in order to have a better understanding of fair inventory credit.

Following the inauguration of the centre and a visit to the cooperative and the inventory credit warehouse, a theatre play was staged at

“The Capitalization project helped us to improve our radio broadcasts. When we listened to the programmes with the Capitalization team, we realised that most of them did not take gender equality into account. For example, before this collaboration we assumed that horticulture was an activity restricted to men and we therefore only interviewed men. Now, we realise that this was a shortcoming, since the concerns of men and women are not the same.”

INOUSSA GANDA |
HEAD OF COMMUNICATION OF THE MOORIBEN
FEDERATION | NIGER

Participants answer questions during a World Café session in Niamey.



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The women and men participants to the inauguration of the COPSA-C info-training centre on inventory credit.

© Alice Van der Elstraeten

the mini-fair, titled “From selling off cheap to inventory credit”, together with a film called “At the heart of inventory credit”. There was also a session to explore gender issues and another on exchange visits. A presentation on the historic origins of inventory credit, titled “The path to inventory credit”, documented the practice in images.

Future perspectives

While the Capitalization project will come to an end in May 2013, the Knowledge Management and Gender programme, of which Dimitra is a component, will continue in 2013, particularly in the context of the crisis in the Sahel. Thanks to advances made by the project, the partners will continue to draw advantages from capitalized products and transform them into specific tools for their beneficiaries. The good practices will be disseminated through community radios, the Dimitra listeners’ clubs and grassroots farmers’ organizations, as well as through national organizations working in the sector of food security.

In Founzan, the info-training centre on inventory credit, which welcomed 13 exchange visits during 2012, is hoping to attract even more visitors in 2013. Using videos, theatre, a timeline and field visits, COPSA-C will enliven the visits in an entertaining manner while taking care to promote equitable inventory credit.

The outcome of the project, the programme and the partnerships will be marked by a regional Good Practices Share Fair, to be held in West Africa towards the end of 2013.

- ✳ **For further information:**
 Knowledge Management and Gender Programme:
www.fao.org/oek/km-gender
 Capitalization of good practices:
www.fao.org/knowledge/km-gender/capitalization-gp/en/

“ I was impressed by the methods and tools used for organizing the mini-fair. The documents on display helped me to learn a great deal about inventory credit and farmers’ experiences. (...) The info-training centre on inventory credit offers practical advice to men and women farmers for the organization and management of agricultural activities. Being local to the province, I am amazed by this initiative, which will definitely help my fellow farmers to fight poverty, since inventory credit enables both men and women producers to keep their crops safe after harvest, without having to sell them off cheaply to traders. (...)”

MOUSSA ISIDORE DABIRÉ |
 TRAINEE WITH THE RÉSEAU FEMMES EN ACTION
 (RFA, WOMEN IN ACTION NETWORK) | BURKINA
 FASO

The path to inventory credit

The “river of life” or the “road of life” is a narrative method for knowledge sharing which helps to visualise the past, present and future. Individuals can use this method to introduce themselves in an entertaining way; a group can use it to better understand and analyse the past of a project and imagine its future.

This method focuses on drawing rather than text, making it useful for groups that do not share a language. Based on collage and drawing, the chronological reconstruction of memories by different people within a group makes it possible to create a common vision and, in so doing, to understand how the project has developed.

Using this method in Founzan, COPSA-C and the FAO Capitalization project team were able to visualise the memory of the organization and document it through a timeline titled “The path to inventory credit”.



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Benin | Micro-gardens against malnutrition



David Tohou waters his micro-garden.

His reaction at the Fair: “The micro-garden is what really caught my attention. Honestly, I want to try it out myself. It’s a very simple, easy and practical concept, which we need to experiment and develop in Benin.” Indeed, following his return home, he created several of his own, following the guidelines he had been taught at the Fair. Since then, he and his family have been producing different kinds of vegetables (tomatoes, peppers and amaranth, etc.), with relatively little effort and using just small amounts of water.

Even David, the youngest member of the family, has been caught up in the enthusiasm. When still very young, he would pull up young plants and pick tomatoes before they were ripe. But now, after watching his mother go about

In 2010, Martin Tohou, Executive Director of the NGO GRAAB and focal point for FAO-Dimitra in Benin, participated in the Knowledge Share Fair in Niamey (Niger). He was particularly captivated and inspired by the cultivation of vegetables in micro-gardens, and decided to create them at home, in Benin.

her daily work, the young boy has begun to cultivate micro-gardens alongside her, watering the plastic tubs that he can manage to reach. He now insists on being given water each day so that he can sprinkle some on his own garden!

But the experience has not been limited to the family circle. Through his NGO, Martin Tohou has set up training sessions for low-income farming households on micro-gardening techniques and small-scale animal husbandry. With support from the NGO’s partners, 30 women have each been given four micro-gardens, together with seeds and an animal husbandry kit, consisting of sheep and local chickens. The results have been encouraging: the members of each household are now self-sufficient in vegetables throughout the year and sell their surplus output. The micro-gardens alone earn an average weekly revenue of 2 500 FCFA for each woman, without counting the income generated through the raising of small livestock.

The activity is now being extended. In Agbangnizoun, in central Benin, GRAAB (Groupe de Recherche et d’Appui à l’Autopromotion durable à la Base) has just built a training room, a well and a water tower on one hectare of land specially destined for training in above-ground micro-garden cultivation techniques

Sylvie, a micro-garden pioneer

My name is Sylvie Afazonnou. I am 37 years old and am married with four children. I attended a two-day training course organized by GRAAB on micro-garden and small-scale animal husbandry techniques. When the training ended, I received four plastic tubs to build my own garden. To make compost, I collect household waste and manure from my livestock, and I use plastic sacks for above-ground cultivation. Since I started, my children, husband and I have eaten vegetables from my small garden on a daily basis. That means I can save 200 FCFA per day. My neighbours buy the surplus, from which I earn an average of 2 500 FCFA each week. Other women have already asked me to train them in the technique, so that they too can produce vegetables at home. I would like to thank GRAAB for its support.

and small-scale animal husbandry. The NGO has obtained financial support from the FAO 1% for Development Fund to train and set up micro-gardens for 50 women in the commune of Agbangnizoun.

In all, GRAAB is planning to reach 200 women in each of Zou Department’s nine communes, making a total of 1.800 women. In turn, each of these will take on the task of training one or two more women, and gradually setting them up. This programme will make a substantial contribution to tackling malnutrition, hunger and poverty in a sustainable and effective manner.

Spurred on by his experience, Martin Tohou is now a strong advocate of regular knowledge share fairs, so as to foster this kind of exchange and promote the adoption of good practices.

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Training of women on micro-gardening techniques.

Togo | Crocheting against waste

A crochet hook – that is all it takes for Baraka Oukpedjou to get rid of her household plastic waste. She lives in Sokodé, Togo's second biggest town, and is one of 100 people taking part in training workshops organized by German NGO Urbis Foundation. A story on how to link an income generating activity to recycling.

The idea came from neighbouring Benin and has been introduced to Sokodé by five women trainers from Papatia, a small village in the north of that country. The training team, led by Odile Sannou, made a six-hour car journey over bumpy roads to come and train the women of Togo. For these women from Benin, it is quite an adventure to leave their village and cross the border to train women who speak a different language and who live in a big city. They are going to teach a technique that they themselves learned four years ago, with support from a German development agency – how to crochet with plastic waste.

Odile Sannou stresses the importance of recycling. As part of her introduction, she asks the women of Sokodé a question: "Why should you never discard plastic in the environment?". Not all the participants have a very clear understanding of what the environment really means, but Sannou uses convincing arguments: "If your goat tastes salt on a plastic bag, it will eat it. And tomorrow, your goat will be dead".

But if you cannot discard plastic in the environment, what are the alternatives? Waste is poorly managed in Togo. Projects involving incineration or recycling have had little success in resolving the problem. You see rubbish everywhere: along the roads, piled up in informal dumps and in the rivers. Large numbers of plastic bags, used to carry shopping from the market, are a particularly serious problem. Once back in their homes, people throw the bags away because they are too fragile to reuse. But if you crochet them instead, you can make strong bags that can be used time and time again!

Before the crocheting begins, the plastic bags have to be made into lengths of yarn. To do this, the bags are first folded into strips and cut, so as to obtain rings that are then knotted together to make the yarn.

On the third day of the training, Baraka Oukpedjou proudly poses with the handbag that she has just finished crocheting. Three days earlier, when asked what she did for a living, she shyly replied that she did not do anything. Even though "nothing" is not a true description of the daily workload of a woman in Togo



© Christine Bertsehi

The plastic bags have to be made into lengths of yarn. To do this, the bags are first folded into strips and cut, so as to obtain rings that are then knotted together to make the yarn.

who has a family to look after. Oukpedjou sees crocheting as an activity that could bring in a small income. This could help her to become more independent – and not just in the financial sense!

Some of the women had already heard about similar projects on television. But no report can fully explain the technique. Aware now of the importance of recycling and of protecting the environment, the participants are really motivated and keen to share the idea. Their relatives, daughters, sisters and neighbours, who were not able to attend the workshop, will be able to benefit from private training sessions. At the close of the workshop, Mounifa Saou, a teacher in Sokodé, explains: "When I show my crocheted bag to my colleagues, they will ask me how I made it. And I will be able to show them."

Due to the newly acquired technique, the women are now making plans, such as selling crocheted accessories to people in Sokodé or exporting some of their creations to Europe. The money that they earn from these sales will help to motivate women by providing them with a start-up capital. Maimouna Idrissou can already imagine a better future thanks to these

bags: "Maybe one day I will be able to open a small workshop and sell the bags in a shop". This young woman, who is 22, is studying accounting at the technical college. "During the breaks between lessons, I will be crocheting myself a school bag. Of course, my whole family will now have to start collecting plastic bags for me!"

Madame Angèle, who is in charge of the social sector at Urbis Foundation-Togo, is happy with the results of the crocheting initiative: "I have seen participants collecting plastic bags in town," she said. "I too often collect pieces of plastic that are lying on the ground. I take them to my daughter-in-law. She is good at crocheting and needs a great many bags as raw material for her work."

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ETHIOPIA | DR. BOGALETCH GEBRE

Winner of the 2012-2013 King Baudouin African Development Prize

Women's rights campaigner Bogaletch Gebre was awarded the Prize "for her inspirational leadership and her determination to build on a remarkable personal journey to empower the women of Ethiopia and establish a true community-based movement for social change." The Prize will be presented to Dr. Gebre on 22 May 2013 at the Royal Palace in Brussels.



zation that people cannot 'be developed' but can only develop themselves and that a relatively modest and focused impetus can unleash the potential that lies within communities. Its pioneering "Community Conversations" provide just that – they enable communities to discuss issues openly, first in gender- and age-specific groups and then across all groups in order to reach a consensus about what needs to be changed.

KMG's first "Community Conversations" focused on HIV/AIDS prevention and the elimination of harmful customary practices such as female genital mutilation and bridal abductions. KMG has since broadened its scope to address development and women's empowerment in a holistic manner. Rural roads and bridges are built to reduce the time it takes to go to the market or fetch water and wood. Environmental rehabilitation projects enable women to find firewood or water closer to their homes. Economic empowerment activities enable them to become more independent. And education provides girls with skills and knowledge, as well as the self-confidence to claim their rightful place in society and become future leaders.

The societal change that KMG has triggered is substantial. Not only have tens of thousands of girls and women been spared gross human rights violations, but the transformation of their communities goes far beyond that. The status of women has changed so that not only do they now raise their voices, they are also heard and their communities have become more equitable overall. A 2008 UNICEF study confirmed that over 10 years, the incidence of female circumcision in KMG's areas of operation had dramatically decreased from 100% to less than 3% of new-born girls and recommended that its strategy be replicated in other parts of the African continent.

Achieving this success took patience. Gebre emphasises that she and her colleagues did

Since growing up in rural Ethiopia, Bogaletch Gebre has overcome tremendous adversity to become the founder of Kembatti Mentti Gez-zimma (KMG Ethiopia), a non-profit organization that envisages a society where women are free from all forms of discrimination and violence and able to attain justice and equality for themselves, their families and their communities.

Bogaletch (Boge) Gebre was born in the 1950s in Kembatta, a region where female genital mutilation was endemic, bridal abductions widespread and reproductive health services virtually non-existent. Gebre refused to accept a fate of remaining illiterate and dreamed of learning the alphabet. On the pretext of collecting water, she started making illicit 'hide and seek' trips to the church school. She eventually received a government scholarship to attend the only boarding school for girls in Addis Ababa, went on to study in Israel, and

later at the University of Massachusetts in the United States on a Fulbright scholarship.

By the time she was working on a PhD in epidemiology in Los Angeles, her country was struck by famine, poverty and political turmoil. These events drove Gebre to devote herself fully to helping the people of her native Ethiopia. She knew that back home, girls were still being failed by society. Girls were now allowed to go to school, but because their education was not a priority for their families, they were made to do chores and often failed their examinations. As a result, women existed in a kind of limbo: their "disobedience" sullied them in the eyes of men who refused to marry them, but they had no way of progressing and establishing a career.

In 1997, Gebre returned home with US\$ 5000 and a vision. Together with her sister she founded KMG Ethiopia, inspired by the reali-



not just tell people what to do. As with all efforts seeking social change, the instigators of change need to listen to the local communities, learn from them, and gain their trust. Also, people tend to relate better to practical rather than abstract issues says Gebre: “When I first started talking to villagers about HIV/AIDS, women’s rights and human rights, these were abstract concepts which were not their priority; what is important to them is, for example, trying to fix a broken bridge.”

The initial discussions thus focused on very practical, day-to-day needs of women and on creative ways to align these needs with longer term strategic issues facing the communities. Only later would they focus on women’s rights or HIV/AIDS, a disease that people refused to call by name. After many discussions, a village elder spoke up: “Why do we complain that we have no medicine for this disease? Unlike malaria, I cannot catch it by a mosquito biting me at night, and it is not spread like TB by sneezing. This disease does not touch me unless I touch it – I am the medicine.” Such realisations cannot be taught, says Gebre, they need to emerge from dialogue.

Later, the community began to talk about female genital mutilation and its harmful effects. Although the practice is rooted in the culture, not even the elders seemed to know where it originated. “It has always existed. They don’t realise that it is not in the Bible or the Koran”, says Gebre. With information to dispel myths, she reasoned, they would change their minds: “People in villages may be non-literate, but they are not stupid. They want what’s good for themselves and their children.”

Gebre believes gender discrimination is as pervasive and destructive as racial apartheid once was. “My dream for African women? That the world realises that the suppression of women is not good for business, for the economy, nor for human development. Africa, in particular, cannot develop unless it involves all of its peo-

ple. This is what I want to see – a global coalition against gender apartheid.”

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✳ This article was based on a presentation text by the King Baudouin Foundation and includes excerpts from *The Lancet*, Volume 369, number 9579 as well as the organization’s website.

The King Baudouin African Development Prize rewards outstanding contributions of individuals or organizations in the development field in Africa. The Prize spotlights innovative initiatives which improve quality-of-life and empower local communities to take development into their own hands.

www.kbprize.org



“**B**efore the beginning of the project in our district, the prevalence of female genital mutilation was extremely predominant but it was a taboo issue. Every year, many circumcised women died due to delivery complications. No one gave any attention to the issue or recognized female genital cutting as a health matter. Domestic violence was also rife.

The community dialogue conducted every fifteen days facilitated changes and reduced the incidence of female genital cutting and other harmful customary practices. Recently, most of the local women in the district have become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. Penalties set by community conversation participants for each identified harmful customary practice became the backbone in sustaining the change process.

Fighting harmful customary practices is one of the sixteen health extension packages. As a health extension worker, I have been offered the responsibility to perform activities within the district to reduce maternal and infant deaths by providing health-related information.

The activities performed by KMG against harmful customary practices have brought remarkable changes within the district. I therefore would like to thank KMG for every new phenomenon and change occurring in the district as a result of community conversation.”

MALULE LEA IS A NURSE AND WORKS AS A HEALTH EXTENSION WORKER IN DITTA WOREDA OF WUGULLA DISTRICT

Mali | Empowering women herbalists in Bamako and Segou

Aide au Développement de la Médecine Traditionnelle (Aid to Development of Traditional Medicine) – Aidemet for short – is a Malian NGO whose main goal is to develop and enhance the use of traditional medicine’s resources in the health, environment, social and cultural sectors. It was launched in 2003. A recent action-research project aimed at social and economic empowerment for women through the development of local knowledge of plants has increased income, knowledge and self-esteem for women herbalists in Bamako and Segou.

Since 2005, Aidemet has focused its studies and activities on strengthening the financial autonomy of women herbalists and gaining greater recognition for the role they play in society. The idea has been to help them lift themselves out of poverty and insecurity. Objectives included providing them with better quality plants, reducing pressure on natural resources and promoting the transfer of knowledge to younger generations.

With the support of various donors and in partnership with associations of stakeholders in traditional medicine, Aidemet launched a campaign to ‘adopt’ herbalists in Bamako. The initiative provided kiosks for more than 25 herbalists, to serve as a sales outlet for medicinal plants; most of the herbalists were women. Subsequent studies showed that the monthly income of herbalists with kiosks was 51.550 FCFA (about 78 euros), 38% higher than that of herbalists without kiosks.

In the light of these results, the Italian Development Cooperation, working through UNOPS (an operational arm of the United Nations), agreed to fund an action-research project called “Economic autonomy and empowerment of women through the promotion of local knowledge about plants”. The project, which involved 20 women herbalists, was carried out in Bamako and Segou between March 2011 and June 2012.

The project’s main activities involved supplying 20 kiosks so as to improve the presentation, sales and storage of medicinal plants and training women herbalists in techniques for harvesting, storing and processing medicinal plants, as well as in simple financial and accounts management. Close support was provided and a self-managed microcredit fund was set in place. The experience was documented in a brochure.¹

To launch the microcredit fund, the project deposited a total of 5 million FCFA (about 7.600 euros) into two savings accounts opened in the name of the women herbalists at the BNDA in Bamako and Segou. Although the money was secured at the bank, it remained the property of the women herbalists, who organized themselves to ensure its management. There was a



Two herbalists, a grandmother and her granddaughter, in front of their kiosk.

set interest rate of 7%, to cover administration charges (3% for the Federations of Therapists and Herbalists of Bamako and Segou, which arranged monitoring, and 4% for the women’s groups).

An internal evaluation study, carried out when the project ended, showed that the 20 women who benefited from the initiative were well satisfied with the kiosks and their quality. The most frequently cited cause for satisfaction was the high quality of the plants, due to good drying and storage techniques. Comments were also made on the increased number of clients and improvements in sales, due to greater public awareness of the work done by herbalists. All the customers interviewed made positive remarks about the kiosks. Most of them said they preferred herbalists who had kiosks and claimed they had found no difference in prices between the products sold by the two groups.

During a workshop to mark the end of the project, Prof. Rokia Sanogo, Chairwoman of Aidemet, said: “The project confirmed that women herbalists have been better able than men to adapt to the challenges of urbanization: they have jointly demonstrated the intelligence and flexibility needed to convert their traditional knowledge, accumulated over time and handed down by generations of women, into a commercial, but also a social and economic activ-

ity, that has a presence in every town market. They respond to a social demand for medicinal plants and offer communities a customer-centred service at very affordable prices, while generating extra income which is used to support the household budget, mainly to cover daily expenses for clothes, health, nutrition and education for their children”.

A new project to support 200 women herbalists in Bamako and Segou was due to have started in the first three months of 2012, with funding from the Italian Development Cooperation and the Italian Region of Umbria. Unfortunately, the political and security crisis in Mali has led to the funding being frozen for the time being.

✳ For further information:

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1 R. Sanogo and S. Giani, *Women and Plants*, Edimco Edition, Bamako (Mali), July 2012.

New FAO publications

All publications are available on www.fao.org/docrep

⊙ *Agricultural cooperatives and gender equality*

Agriculture is the main source of employment and income in rural areas of developing countries, where the majority of the world's poor and hungry people live. Rural women play crucial roles in agricultural activities and in increasing food and nutrition security, as farmers/producers, workers and entrepreneurs. However, rural women have less access than men to the resources and opportunities they need to be fully productive in agriculture and to ensure the food security, nutrition and well-being of their families and future generations. Cooperatives can play important roles in overcoming the barriers faced by women and in supporting small agricultural producers. Evidence shows that efficient cooperatives have the capacity to empower their members economically and socially and to create sustainable employment through equitable and inclusive business models that are more resilient to shocks.

FAO, 2012

⊙ *CEDAW - A tool for gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policy and programme formulation. Guidelines for Ministries of Agriculture and FAO*

Agricultural policies need to address gender inequalities to ensure effective development interventions that can achieve positive and sustainable results in the lives of rural women, men, girls and boys. One powerful instrument for promoting the realization of the rights and potential of rural women and girls is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This publication provides guidance on the support and use of CEDAW in country level policy development and programming, to achieve equality between men and women in agriculture and rural development.

FAO, 2013

⊙ *Children's work in the livestock sector: Herding and beyond*

Agriculture accounts for most of the reported child labour in the world, and livestock accounts for some 40% of the agricultural economy. Efforts to curb child labour require getting governments, farmer organizations and rural families directly involved in finding alternatives to practices which often reflect the need for survival. This desk study aims to give an overview of available data on child labour in the livestock sector and indicate potential avenues for action. By contributing to the knowledge base on this topic, FAO aims to provide a basis for further research and discussion in order to come to a common understanding of what efforts need to be prioritized and to encourage governments and other stakeholders to address this issue. Helping children to realize their rights and the reduction of poverty and food insecurity should be complementary goals.

FAO, 2013

⊙ *Invisible Guardians. Women manage livestock diversity*

This publication presents an analysis of women's role in the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources. The importance of small-scale farmers and pastoralists as custodians of these resources is well recognized, but has never previously been disaggregated by gender. The differential roles of men and women have largely been neglected in studies of animal genetic resources management, but by piecing together several strands of argument and indirect evidence it can be concluded that women are the main guardians of livestock diversity. Case studies from many regions of the world illustrate that while to a degree women acquire their role as guardians of diversity by default because of global trends, many also make an active and conscious contribution to the management of animal genetic resources.

FAO, *Animal Production and Health paper 174*, 2012



⊙ *Governing land for women and men. A technical guide to support the achievement of responsible gender-equitable governance of land tenure*

Gender equality is one of the ten core principles of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. This guide aims to assist in its implementation through the achievement of responsible gender-equitable governance of land tenure. It focuses on equity and on how land tenure can be governed in ways that address the different needs and priorities of women and men. The guide provides advice on mechanisms, strategies and actions that can be adopted to improve gender equity in the processes, institutions and activities of land tenure governance.

FAO, *Governance of Tenure Technical Guide 1*, 2013

⊙ *Food Security Communications Toolkit*

This toolkit is geared to helping food security professionals develop a communication strategy and communicate more effectively with their target audiences. Specific sections of the toolkit focus on policy makers and the media, because of the important role they play in implementing and influencing food security policies. It also looks at specific information products such as policy briefs, reports and early warning bulletins, and suggests ways to structure and improve them. Finally, it gives tips for using the internet, social media and Web 2.0 tools as these technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for engaging in two way dialogues with global audiences. The toolkit also includes readymade templates and dozens of tips and tricks distilled from many years of experience.

FAO, 2011



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☉ **Growing greener cities in Africa. First status report on urban and peri-urban horticulture in Africa**

African policymakers need to act now to steer urbanization from its current, unsustainable path toward healthy, greener cities that ensure food and nutrition security, decent work and income, and a clean environment for all their citizens. This report highlights a key component of sustainable urban development: urban and peri-urban horticulture (UPH). Based on an Africa-wide survey and on case studies prepared by national experts, the report reviews the current state of UPH in countries across the continent, from Algeria to Zambia, and in cities from Nairobi to Dakar. It presents major findings, detailed profiles of urban and peri-urban horticulture in 22 countries and recommendations for the development of market gardens to serve Africa's rapidly growing urban population.

FAO, 2012

☉ **Guidance Note: Integrating the Right to Adequate Food into food and nutrition security programmes**

This is a practical tool for practitioners who want to integrate the right to food into food and nutrition security programmes. It builds a bridge between the normative dimensions of the right to food and practical work on programme design, implementation and monitoring at country level. This tool does so by briefly explaining the conceptual, legal and operational dimensions of the right to food. Then it looks at four key entry points for integrating the right to food into food and nutrition security programmes: roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, legal aspects, monitoring, and recourse and claim mechanisms. Then uses specific examples and cases to illustrate how this can be done.

FAO, Right to Food Publication, 2013

☉ **Strength in numbers. Effective forest producer organizations**

For many years, FAO and AgriCord have supported cooperation between farmers, groups and communities to improve agricultural production. Recognizing that increasing amounts of forest are coming under the control of individuals and communities, their focus has now expanded to include forest products and services. This report suggests that effective forest producer organizations, which give small producers political voice and access to markets, can promote economic development for their members. Through a range of practical examples, the document highlights success factors and challenges, and offers pointers to operational support.

FAO / AgriCord, 2012

☉ **The State of Food and Agriculture 2012 - Investing in agriculture for a better future**

Investing in agriculture is essential for reducing hunger and promoting sustainable agricultural production. Those parts of the world where agricultural capital per worker and public investments in agriculture have stagnated are the epicentres of poverty and hunger today. Demand growth over the coming decades will place increasing pressure on the natural resource base. Eradicating hunger sustainably will require a significant increase in agricultural investments, but also an improvement



in their effectiveness. Farmers are the largest investors in developing country agriculture and must be central to any strategy for increasing investment in the sector, but if they are to invest more in agriculture they need a favourable climate for agricultural investment based on economic incentives and an enabling environment. Governments also have a special responsibility to help smallholders overcome the constraints they face in expanding their productive assets and to ensure that large-scale investments in agriculture are socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable. Government investment in agriculture is a crucial component of providing an enabling environment for private investments in the sector. Governments need to channel scarce public funds towards the provision of essential public goods with high economic and social returns.

FAO, 2012
www.fao.org/publications/sofa

☉ **Youth: the future of agricultural cooperatives**

There are some 500 million smallholder farms worldwide. These small farms produce about 80% of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Young people account for a large percentage of the rural population, and are often unemployed or underemployed, despite the need for labour force in agriculture. Rural youth do not perceive agriculture as a remunerative or prestigious profession, and until they find meaningful economic opportunities and attractive environments in rural areas, they will continue to migrate to cities. This trend not only contributes to the emerging phenomenon of over-urbanization and growing unemployment in urban areas, but is also expected to affect global food production. Investing in young people living in rural areas is therefore key to enhancing agricultural productivity and food security and boosting rural economies.

FAO/IFAD, International Year of Cooperatives issue brief series, 2012

Resources

Note: Most of the publications mentioned here are available on-line for free (unless otherwise specified). Most web links are too long to provide in their entirety. If the publications are hard to find on the organisations' websites, it usually suffices to do a google search.

☉ African Women's Decade: One Year On

This report summarises the progress made by African countries regarding women's rights and gender equality on the continent during the first year of the African Women's Decade. This is done by presenting each country with a background and a presentation of progress and developments made within different areas, with importance for the human rights of women and gender equality. Make Every Woman Count (MEWC) will publish one report yearly throughout the 10-year duration of the African Women's Decade. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of women's rights situation in Africa.

MEWC, 2011
www.makeeverywomancount.org

☉ Because I am a Girl. Africa Report 2012. Progress and Obstacles to Girls' Education in Africa

Plan's Because I am a Girl annual global report maps the state of the world's girls. While women and children are often recognised as specific target groups in policy and planning, girls' particular needs and rights are often ignored. These reports provide evidence, including the voices of girls themselves, on why girls' needs require specific attention. This is the first panAfrica Because I am a Girl report, presenting the difficulties faced by girls, their families, communities and teachers across Africa, and how their experience of education is impacted and influenced by policies, cultural practices and traditional values.

Plan, 2012
<http://plan-international.org>

☉ Empowering Women. Legal Rights and Economic Opportunities in Africa

The importance of property rights in providing the incentive to invest, work hard, and innovate has been recognized for centuries. Yet, many women in Africa do not have the same property rights or formal legal capacity enjoyed by men. This book documents the extent to which the legal capacity and property rights vary for women and men, and analyzes the impact this has on women's economic opportunities. It introduces the "Women's Legal Economic Empowerment Database – Africa (Women LEED Africa)", which covers all 47 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, providing indicators and links to constitutions, ratified international conventions, and domestic statutes where there are gender gaps in legal capacity and property rights.

The World Bank, 2012 (US\$29.95)
<http://publications.worldbank.org>

☉ Empowering Women through ICT

This publication offers a review of Spider (The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions) supported projects that gave specific focus to the empowerment of women through ICT and contributes to on-going discussions in the area. Spider has supported several initiatives that focused on increasing ICT access and use among women. Each project focused on a particular area of importance for the women and using ICT to address the issue at hand helped demystify the technology to the women. The success of the projects hinged on this ability, i.e. the extent to which technology was adapted to suit women's reality.

Spider ICT4D Series No. 4, 2012
www.spidercenter.org

☉ Gender and Climate Change Cutting Edge Pack

Responses to climate change tend to focus on scientific and economic solutions rather than addressing the vitally significant human and gender dimensions. For climate change responses to be effective thinking must move beyond these limited approaches to become people-focused, and focus on the challenges and opportunities that climate change presents in the struggle for gender equality.

BRIDGE, 2012
www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/go/bridge-publications

☉ Gender and Climate Change: Toolkit for Women on Climate Change

This toolkit is part of an endeavour to explore innovative and strategic ways to communicate gender justice and climate justice issues, especially from southern feminist perspectives. It seeks to provide community-based or grassroots organisations with basic information on climate change and how to communicate climate justice with their constituencies and target groups.

Isis International, 2012
www.isiswomen.org

☉ Gender and the Right to Food

In June 2012, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, was invited by the Asian Development Bank to contribute his views on the role of gender equality in securing the right to food at the Eminent Speakers' Forum. Two articles reflect his contribution to the Forum:

- Our secret weapon against hunger: gender equality and women's empowerment
- The contribution of the right to food to global food security: a tool not a symbol

In March 2013, he presented the report "Gender and the Right to Food" to the 22nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

www.srfood.org

☉ Gender Sensitive Response and Recovery: An Overview

The number and complexity of hazards and disasters are increasing rapidly and there is ample evidence that women and girls are often more vulnerable to disasters than men and boys. This collection of Programme Insights papers considers the progress made and the challenges we still face in humanitarian and disaster risk reduction interventions, in responding adequately to the needs of all affected people. By sharing lessons learned, the papers can have value beyond their own contexts and will help to make future work more effective.

Oxfam GB, Gender Equality in Emergencies Programme Insights series, 2012
<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk>

☉ 2012 Global Gender Gap Report

The Global Gender Gap Index is a framework for capturing the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education- and health-based criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups, and over time. The rankings are designed to create greater awareness among a global audience of the challenges posed by gender gaps and the opportunities created by reducing them. The methodology and quantitative analysis behind the rankings are intended to serve as a basis for designing effective measures for reducing gender gaps.

World Economic Forum, 2012
www.weforum.org/reports

☉ Influential Leadership. Handbook for African Women

This handbook is a training manual with eight sessions designed to guide the empowerment of African women with leadership skills. According to the publication, leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. The handbook can be used by trainers, training and capacity building institutions, and researchers.

West Africa Civil Society Institute, 2012
www.wacsi.org

☉ Innovative Approaches to Gender and Food Security

Gender justice and ending hunger are closely entwined, interdependent goals. Solving hunger now and in the future involves challenging the current global development model which permits – and is driven by – inequality. Gender analysis shows that women are providers of food as producers, processors, traders, cooks and servers. However, women



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are still often excluded or have limited access to resources, credit, information and markets, greatly limiting their productivity and food security. To add to this, unequal gender roles, responsibilities and workloads often leave women exhausted and malnourished. This issue shows how development policy and practice can improve food security while supporting women's empowerment. Whilst there is no one size fits all approach the document shows that by empowering women, and transforming gender norms and inequalities within households and communities, food security programmes are more effective.

IDS Knowledge Services, *Insights*, issue 82, 2012
www.bridge.ids.ac.uk

⊙ **Lay of the land. Improving land governance to stop land grabs**

Large-scale land acquisitions by investors, which are often called 'land grabs', can deprive rural women and communities of their livelihoods and land, increasing their food insecurity. This report argues that the current rise in land grabbing needs to be urgently addressed, and focuses on the actions that developing countries can take to mitigate land grabs through strengthening national land governance so that it is transparent, is accountable and protects communities' rights.

ActionAid, 2012
www.actionaid.org/publications

⊙ **Making Care Visible. Women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya**

While all women regardless of class, race, caste and ethnicity are expected to provide care as part of their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters, women living in poverty are disproportionately affected by this responsibility. Unpaid care is more difficult to do in the context of poverty as basic amenities, and access to public services are lacking. Further, the income needed to purchase goods and services to undertake care work may not be available. Women must then rely on their own labour to provide the care that is required. Many women living in poverty

carry the dual responsibilities for both unpaid care work and earning an income or subsistence farming. Women's responsibility for care leads to the violation of their basic human rights to an education, political participation, decent work and leisure. It contributes to persistent gender inequalities.

ActionAid, February 2013
www.actionaid.org

⊙ **Off the balance sheet: the impact of the economic crisis on girls and young women. A review of the evidence**

This report examines the continuing and deepening impact economic crisis is having on girls and young women worldwide. Drawing on evidence from a wide range of sources, it focuses on the impacts of crisis on girls and young women in the areas of four key rights: survival, development, protection and participation.

ODI/Plan International, 2013
<http://plan-international.org>

⊙ **Participatory radio campaigns and food security: How radio can help farmers make informed decisions**

This report presents and discusses key findings from an in-depth evaluation of 15 participatory radio campaigns conducted by the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI). Working with partner radio stations in Tanzania, Uganda, Mali, Ghana and Malawi, AFRRI created a series of farm radio programmes designed to educate farmers and enable them to improve their agricultural practices. The research was guided by two questions: How effective is radio in enabling smallholder farmers in Africa to address food security challenges they face, with a particular focus on increasing/diversifying food production, improving land use management, and reducing post-harvest losses? And how can new technologies, such as cell phones and MP3 players, increase the effectiveness of radio as a sustainable, interactive development communications tool?

Farm Radio International/AFRRI, 2011
www.farmradio.org

⊙ **Raising Women's Voices through Radio Drama: Reflections from South Africa**

This case study shares the experiences and lessons learned of Zaphamban' izindlela!, a serial radio drama designed to get people thinking, and talking, about women's rights and the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. According to the case study, the drama proved to be an entertaining means to stimulate dialogue and analysis of women's rights in communities, raise awareness of the Protocol and legal protections for women, and encourage local action, as well as provide an opportunity for people to discuss sensitive issues such as gender violence and harmful cultural practices.

CMFD Production, POWA, Oxfam, 2012
www.cmfd.org

⊙ **Survey Report: Community Participation at Local and Community Radio Stations. An explorative study in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific**

Participation of the community is an important feature of almost all stations responding to a survey conducted by CAMECO to examine and gain a deeper understanding of concrete practices and challenges of community and local radios. The explorative survey showed that in all world regions, community involvement in programming is strongest. Participation in management, ownership and funding are less common. Whereas the ranking of the various areas of participation is similar throughout the regions, differences exist in their importance: Latin American radios top participation in programming, but they are far below average in management and ownership. In Africa, the level of participation in financing and ownership is comparatively high. In Asia, participation in management plays a crucial role.

CAMECO Practice Series, 2012
www.cameco.org