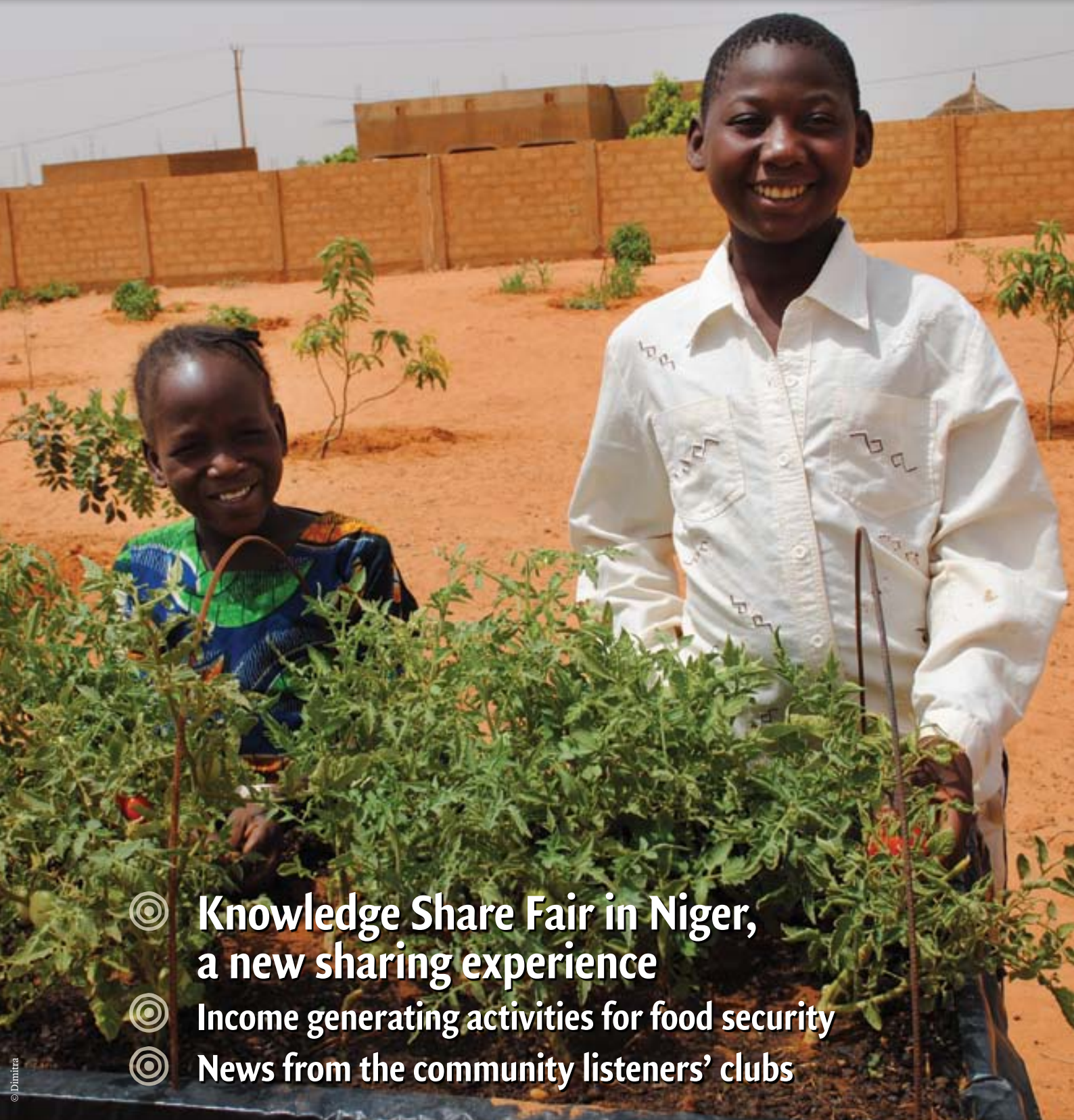




Dimitra Newsletter

RURAL WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT



- ◎ **Knowledge Share Fair in Niger, a new sharing experience**
- ◎ **Income generating activities for food security**
- ◎ **News from the community listeners' clubs**

Editorial

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Dear Readers,

Let me begin by wishing you and your families a very happy, healthy, prosperous and peaceful year 2011.

Dimitra Newsletter 19 highlights FAO's strong interest in the exchange and capitalisation of good agricultural practices and in the methods that enable rural populations to access information and communication. The Knowledge Management and Gender programme, which organised a Knowledge Share Fair in Niamey in June 2010, illustrates the innovative methods used to combine key components to promote better access for rural populations to goods and services, such as the use of community listeners' clubs, knowledge of warrantage and of micro-gardens, etc. They have created a dynamic favouring a better organisation of rural institutions, which contributes to strengthening the social and economic power of rural people, particularly women. This edition devotes an entire dossier to the Fair.

The other articles examine various initiatives that deserve to be known and shared. The community listeners' clubs that are helping to empower rural women in Niger are flourishing. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has now joined the project, and the number of clubs has risen to 300.

A number of articles focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo. The "Women's Portraits" section profiles Adeline Nsimire Balika, coordinator of the NGO Samwaki, which has been a partner of Dimitra in South Kivu for many years. The community listeners' clubs and Radio Bubusa FM, which Samwaki set up, received an Award for Excellence in August 2010 for their expertise in interpersonal communication in rural areas. In the same region, the World March of Women (WMW 2010) attracted a substantial turn-out. The Bukavu peace march brought together thousands of women on the streets of the city. We round off this series of articles on the DRC with a tribute by the association Free Advice to the 'women

load carriers' of South Kivu, who carry massive loads on their backs, sometimes weighing over 40 kilos, over distances of many miles.

Other articles show that group formation and knowledge sharing can significantly improve food security and livelihoods. This is illustrated by the Groupe de Recherche et d'Appui à l'Autopromotion durable à la Base (GRAAB ONG – Research and Support Group for Sustainable Grassroots Self-Advancement) in Benin, also a Dimitra focal point, and by the experience of the Sanyu Ly'amaka Farmers' Group in Uganda.

A gender-sensitive approach to the environment is at the heart of the next two projects. In Madagascar, we discover the Natural Silk Project, managed by the FAMIOVA women's group in the region of the Ranomafana National Park, while in the DRC we learn how women are getting involved in apiculture – traditionally the preserve of men – in Lwalaba forest.

Last but not least, this issue showcases two major FAO activities: one relates to child labour in agriculture and the organisation's corporate commitment to its elimination, the other is the publication of a new statistical toolkit, Agri-Gender, which provides guidance on how to collect sex-disaggregated data with a view to performing gender-based analyses.

This Newsletter also contains a questionnaire for you to give us feedback on all Dimitra activities. We very much hope that you will take the time to complete and return the questionnaire so that we can take your comments on board in future.

We look forward to reading your reactions, and in the meantime we wish you happy reading!

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Knowledge Share Fair in Niger, a new sharing experience

The FAO Knowledge Management and Gender programme (see box page 4) organised a Knowledge Share Fair in Niamey, Niger from 15 to 17 June. This new knowledge sharing experience was highly rated by the 250 participants who came from the whole region to attend the three day event.

Why a fair?

The concept of a fair, as opposed to a conference or seminar, already indicates something innovative. A knowledge share fair is a perfect **meeting place** that aims to introduce a new, participatory type of social gathering and serve as a forum where planned sessions would alternate with informal exchanges. It is called knowledge share fair because it is a place where anyone can come to share experiences, knowledge and lessons learned while implementing projects and activities.

By organising the Knowledge Share Fair in Niamey, the various parties involved in FAO's Knowledge Management and Gender (KMG) programme proposed a new way of exchanging knowledge on technical topics using a **participatory approach**. The aim of the fair was not only to boost the profile of the KMG programme, but also to initiate a process of exchanges of experience, knowledge and networking on topics of common interest to partners in West Africa.

What themes were covered at the fair?

The topics addressed were: good agricultural practices and innovations; information and communication in rural areas; agro-inputs management.

Good agricultural practices and innovations included various training and extension methods (Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools, advice on family farming, farmer field schools and demonstration fields), micro-gardens, integrated crop management, organic vegetable farming, women's access to land, and urban and peri-urban agriculture.

Information and communication in rural areas covered such issues as the capitalisation of experiences, communicating gender for development, community listeners' clubs, information and communication systems via text messaging, exchange visits, management of Web content, the use of horticultural databases, and linking literacy centres to rural radio stations.

Agro-inputs management focused on the funding of agro-inputs (warrantage, seasonal credits), the management of grouped purchases (seeds and fertiliser), access and distri-



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bution (agro-input shops, supply centres), and the strengthening of the seed sector (for market garden produce and other crops).

Who attended the fair?

The event was attended by a range of people and organisations selected for their potential contribution to the exchanges, for the benefit they might derive from the presentations and for their interest in the programme's mission. Accordingly, producers' organisations mixed with NGOs and development projects, organisations interested in the topics covered by the KMG programme, technical services and UN agencies, students and researchers from universities or specialised agricultural training centres, and representatives of financial and technical partners and of FAO.

What are the methods and tools of knowledge sharing?

Knowledge sharing entails **more than just 'sharing'**. It implies 'working together' and 'helping one another', whilst at the same time drawing on creativity, collaboration and participation. There are numerous methods, tools and approaches for turning tacit knowledge into explicit know-how. Each session was facilitated using a specific knowledge-sharing method or tool. This methodology enabled the participants to discover what can be done, in a

participatory way, to share experiences without resorting to PowerPoint presentations.

The participants discovered **new methods for sharing knowledge**, such as:

- the *maquis mondial* (a French-language and African version of the 'world café');
- the *carrousel*, a variant of the *maquis mondial*;
- peer assist;
- chat shows;
- proverbs;
- the tree of knowledge;
- exchange visits;
- presentations with debates;
- and many more...

For more information on such tools, see the website www.kstoolkit.org (in English, with some documents also in French and Spanish).

In addition to serving a purpose, knowledge sharing can also be fun! The fair proved to be an informative, innovative and inspiring experience.

The sessions were between 75 and 90 minutes long and started with a presentation on the topic and on the methodology used. At the end, participants had some time to reflect and summarise in writing what seemed important to remember and what they were 'taking away'

with them. They were also asked to indicate burning questions that they would like to see answered during the Knowledge Share Fair.

The formats of the various sessions differed:

- plenary sessions to open and close each day;
- workshop-debates on specific themes, bringing together experiences of the programme partners, and prepared and hosted with one or more guests;
- roundtable discussions and demonstrations to question, discuss and debate a particular experience, activity or practice presented by an organisation;
- video documentary screenings by individuals or organisations followed by a discussion;
- a half-day field visit near Niamey, to meet those involved in an experience that had been presented at one of the sessions of the Fair.

The fair was well documented throughout, with journalists producing numerous audio, video and photographic reports and interviews.

The participation of rural women

A dozen women from different rural areas of Niger were invited by Dimitra and its partner ONG VIE to take part in the Knowledge Share Fair. Some came with their baby on their back and for many this was their first time in Niamey, the capital. They were very proud to present their listeners' clubs and



explain how their lives had been changed by them. The majority of these women had never owned or even listened to a radio before. The world has opened up for them, and with the addition of solar mobile telephones they consider that they have taken a giant leap in terms of participation in community life and that their status has improved.

Despite their inexperience, they surprised all the participants at the Fair by their work and development strategies. Following the success of their first presentation, they held an additional session to explain how each group has organised its community listeners' club – in line with their specific needs and desires, how they work better both among themselves and with men, how much their self-confidence has grown and how they visualize the future.

A real success

The Knowledge Share Fair attracted almost 250 participants (33% of whom were women), mainly from Niger (74%) and neighbouring Burkina Faso (17%), from West Africa (Senegal, Benin, Togo, Mali, Chad) and Europe. Numerous exchanges between participants were facilitated over the three days in 18 workshops and roundtables, six film screenings followed by discussions and three demonstrations (one on micro-gardens and two on the Hortivar database). Networking was facilitated throughout the entire Knowledge Share Fair by the 30 stands set up in a convivial open space where numerous materials were available for the participants (documents, brochures, publications, CD-ROMs and agricultural produce).

During the Knowledge Share Fair, an interactive website was launched where many participants registered to keep in touch with one another after the event. Minutes of the sessions, notes, files and articles written specially for the fair plus other documents collected by the organisers to support the topics covered are being processed and put online. A CD-ROM compiling all materials is being produced and will be distributed to all the participants. It will also be used to promote the programme's activities.

The Knowledge Management and Gender programme



Systematic gender mainstreaming and maximally capitalising on progress made in projects and programmes motivated the creation of

the FAO-Belgium partnership's "KMG programme" (www.connaissances-genre.net). The three-year programme (running from 2008 to 2011) comprises Dimitra; Hortivar; the Capitalisation of Good Practices in Support of Agricultural Production and Food Security project; and the Rural Finance Learning Centre (RFLC).

Dimitra (www.fao.org/dimitra) and the Capitalisation of Good Practices in Support of Agricultural Production and Food Security project (www.capitalisation-bp.net) (see Newsletter 17) represent the methodological branch, applying a participatory approach with a view to fostering better knowledge

sharing and systematic gender mainstreaming through better management of information and communication. Hortivar (www.fao.org/hortivar) for horticultural practices (see Newsletter 15) and the Rural Finance Learning Centre (www.ruralfinance.org) with war-rantage (see Newsletter 16), constitute the technical branch.

The aims of the KMG programme are to:

- make knowledge dissemination more efficient;
- promote knowledge sharing;
- promote and disseminate good practices, especially with respect to supporting food security and the empowerment of rural populations;
- facilitate collaboration and synergies between as many development actors as possible.

* The Knowledge Share Fair's websites

Official website:
www.sharefair.net/share-fair-niamey
Interactive website:
www.foireauxsavoirs.net

Warrantage and grouped orders for inputs

At the Niamey Knowledge Share Fair, several workshops covered warrantage and the supply of agricultural inputs, two subjects of interest to the partners of the Capitalisation of Good Practices in Support of Agricultural Production and Food Security project, the producers' organisations in particular.

Warrantage (also known as inventory credit) has been recognised as a credit system and a powerful tool for guaranteeing food security. The technique was initiated in Niger by the FAO's Inputs Project in 1999 and since then has gradually spread to neighbouring countries as well.

The marked growth in warranted loan volumes in Niger confirms that there is keen interest in the system, with warranted loans worth 2.2 billion CFA francs granted by the banks over 10 years. This has generated revenue totalling 660 million CFA francs for farmers (a 30% increase) and 220 million CFA francs for the banking system (through a 10% interest rate).

From the experience gained in Niger and with the support of partners like the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), warrantage has spread to other countries in the region. The FAO's Capitalisation Project is now endeavouring to promote the good practices that help to make it equally accessible to all, especially the most deprived. After all, if warrantage develops unchecked in Niger, it is at risk of becoming a free market economy banking product which benefits the rich rather than the poor.

A workshop held at the Knowledge Share Fair in Niamey last June gave participants the

opportunity to exchange opinions on various interesting experiences in the field of warrantage, and ways of sustainably promoting it for men as well as for women and for vulnerable population groups. The participants approved current initiatives with micro-financing associations in Burkina Faso and Niger for monitoring warrantage, exchanging good practices and setting up a "warrantage network".

The issue of agro-inputs procurement provoked a heated debate. The initiatives of farmers' organisations in this field were discussed, in particular with regard to grouped orders, which allow better quality and better prices as well as better control of the supply dates and the types of inputs required. The Federation of market gardeners in Niger gave a presentation on its experience with grouped orders for seed potatoes, placed using a documentary credit (CREDOC), thus demonstrating that federations can order directly from the international market. A CREDOC is a guarantee from a buyer's bank to a supplier's bank vouching that the inputs will be paid upon delivery.

There was also lengthy discussion on the lack of coordination between the inputs supplied by States (from donations) and the private initiatives of farmers' organisations in Niger

and private suppliers in Burkina Faso, and the contradictions this situation presents. Initiatives are underway in each country to try and harmonise the two channels of supply. The participants applauded the idea of parties in both countries maintaining contact so that any headway made by one could be of benefit to all. The idea of an information exchange network also gained ground.

How warrantage works

Small producers tend to sell their crops cheaply at harvest time (November) to meet their immediate needs. However, prices for the same crops rise by more than 56% during the ensuing lean season (August).

As a solution to this problem, the FAO's Inputs Project in Niger introduced warrantage. In November/December, just after the harvest, the farmers' organisations stock their members' agricultural produce in a safe, salubrious storage facility. The bank, usually a rural finance institution (RFI), then verifies the quantity and quality of the stored crops. The warehouse is secured with two padlocks, one for the bank and one for the farmers' organisation. The bank then provides a credit equivalent to 80% of the crop's harvest time value. This credit is extended to each member pro rata of their contribution to the overall stock. With the credit, the producers undertake an income-generating activity (IGA), such as livestock fattening, market gardening, processing or marketing. In May, with the earnings from their IGA, each member pays back the loan to their farmers' organisation, which reimburses the bank, which in turn releases the stock by returning its key. The members thus win twofold: the stock has increased in value and their IGA has provided earnings. It is estimated that this system boosts their revenue by 30%.



After the harvest, the farmers' organisations stock their members' agricultural produce in a safe, salubrious storage facility.

Micro-gardens at the Knowledge Share Fair in Niamey

At the Knowledge Share Fair, four training sessions on micro-gardening involving theory and practical work were held for around 25 participants per session, most of them women. This interactive training gave the participants a chance to discover first hand the benefits of micro-gardens. Many of them hoped to be able to immediately set up their own micro-garden at home.

After each session, the participants shared their views and made the following list of advantages. Micro-gardens:

- are small, they do not take up much space;
- are easy to set up (a table-garden made from salvaged wooden slats);
- can be set up in a vast range of containers (including used car or lorry tyres, old basins, buckets of various sizes or other recipients);
- provide the home with an impressive range of fresh, clean vegetables, herbs and spices for cooking;
- require little physical effort;
- can be cultivated by anyone: men, women, young people, children, the elderly, the disabled or convalescents;
- do not require extensive watering and therefore require little time and effort of drawing and transporting water;
- do not require weeding;
- are easy to protect from rodents and insects, including slugs;
- can easily be moved to shelter from bad weather.

Other advantages mentioned were:

- excess water is recovered after watering, so not a drop goes to waste;
- very little substrate is used, thus saving on soil and compost;
- there is no need to use costly mineral fertiliser, which is often not readily available anyway. By contrast, household waste turned into homemade compost can be used;
- there is no need to buy special tools to cultivate or maintain a micro-garden. Everything can be done by hand or by using improvised tools (such as a wooden hoe);
- micro-gardens are ideal places to grow seedlings at home – where it is easier to take care of them – before transplantation into the field;
- the produce grown in micro-gardens is healthy because no pesticides are used;
- one knows how the produce has been grown and where it comes from, so there is no reason to doubt its quality or safety;
- micro-gardens allow children to learn gardening at home and how to recognise the different plants;
- micro-gardens can be built using locally sourced materials and supplies (old wooden slats, peanut shells, rice husks, dung, household waste, and so on);

- you can work standing upright; almost no bending is required;
- the technology used is not subject to any commercial restrictions. It is simple and can easily be replicated;
- often, women do not have access to land, but they can grow produce around the house;
- fields are often a long way from home. Having a micro-garden close by makes it easier to tend the garden and also take care of other household duties;
- leaving the house, especially unaccompanied, can sometimes be dangerous. Having a micro-garden at home is a more convenient option;
- micro-gardens eliminate post-harvest losses: you can pick what you need each day;
- micro-gardens help to keep the house tidy because household waste is recycled into compost which is then put back into the micro-garden as an organic fertiliser.

To maintain the momentum generated by these training and demonstration sessions, the plan is to set up one or more training and demonstration centres where men and women, young and old alike, can come to learn about micro-gardening.

Furthermore, in order to enable them to immediately put the acquired knowledge into practice, a micro-garden kit (“Kit MJD”) should be distributed to trainees. These kits could also be sold at agro-input shops or at other places where agro-inputs are sold or distributed in order to make micro-gardens accessible to the public at large. At the same time, an effort should be made to set up and run a monitoring and advice system based on the Farmer Field School method and using the means of communication set up by the Capitalisation project and by the Dimitra network.

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Four training and demonstration sessions on micro-gardening were held at the Knowledge Share Fair. This interactive training gave the participants a chance to discover first hand the benefits of micro-gardens.

Communication and literacy for the empowerment of rural women

News from the Niger listeners' clubs

The idea of linking up the literacy centres run by ONG VIE Kande Ni Bayra with community radio stations first came up in 2006. Now, four years later, that idea has become a reality. Some 300 community listeners' clubs have been established near literacy centres in the Téra, Gaya and Dosso regions of southern Niger and this cooperation is facilitating rural women's access to information and communication for development.

Since July 2009, the Listeners' Clubs project¹ has been working to break the isolation of rural populations in Niger. The principle is that giving rural populations, women in particular, access to reliable information of their own choice should enable them to participate in community life and development. The project is expanding rapidly and has just been extended to include the communities of Falwel and Tanda thanks to the implication of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

In a little over a year, 300 community listeners' clubs – 200 all-women, 89 all-men and 11 mixed clubs – have been established with the Nigerian organisation ONG VIE Kande Ni Bayra, which is implementing the project. Between them, these listeners' clubs have mobilised more than 1,500 women and men and involve nine community radio stations in Téra, Bankilaré, Gorouol, Dantiandou, Kiota, Garantchéday, Gaya, Tanda and Falwal.

Radios and solar telephones, essential tools

The project has definitely improved rural populations' knowledge of new technologies, such as solar-powered radios and mobile phone 'fleets'.

Initially the project provided each club with a solar wind-up radio and a mobile phone fitted with a solar charger to enable the radio stations and clubs to work together. The aim of the approach was to give women, young people and men a chance to develop leadership skills.



The members of the Kiota listeners' club at the project's launching ceremony in Dantiandou, in June 2010.

Very soon, the success was so great and demand so high that the clubs were given additional means of communication. About a hundred additional mobile phones were distributed to the listeners' clubs. These phones were linked up in a network known as a 'fleet', enabling cost-free communication at any time between the clubs and radio stations.

Mobile phones are now also used to communicate between villages about subjects as wide-ranging as social events, rainfed crops, the cost of agricultural produce and livestock, or to offer products for sale. However, the telephones in the 'fleet' also serve as public telephone booths, allowing private calls to be made against payment of a modest fee. The revenue collected this way is used, amongst other things, to pay for charging and maintaining the telephone's battery. In future it may also help to cover the cost of the telephone subscription.

Testimony – Mariama Hassane from the Fogou listeners' club

"What was our latest topic? The day before yesterday we chatted about malaria and all the issues associated with it.

To combat the disease, we need to improve domestic hygiene. We were told to remove the weeds from around our homes because that is where mosquitoes lay their eggs. We also need to remove any small containers, tins or puddles from near the house because they are breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

In the evening we have to take precautions as soon as the sun goes down by using our mosquito nets, even when we're up chatting.

We have also learned to identify the symptoms of the disease and as soon as we think someone has it, we have to take them to a dispensary urgently. So there you are."

Testimony – Moctare, VIE, Téra region

“The last programme I tuned in to was devoted to a case in a village where an 11-year-old girl was going to be married off while she was still attending school. People intervened to convince the parents, especially the father, who had taken the decision, that it would be better to let the child continue her schooling. The villagers also contacted the local authorities to ask them for their view on the matter. The mayor of the village said on the radio that if the father went ahead with his plan to give away his daughter in marriage in spite of her young age, he would be sent to prison.

The other villages responded by recounting their own experiences, though what they had to say concerned events that had already happened. This case was different, because it concerned a situation that was ongoing and over which the women leaders of the listeners’ clubs and the radio station had some influence.”

For women, the telephones have also facilitated the creation of a social network, enabling them to communicate with other women they do not actually know and to exchange information beyond the topics covered by the clubs (the first rains, what will be planted, etc.).

Flexible organisation

The listeners’ clubs themselves decide how they are organised. As a rule, club members in each village divide themselves into three sub-groups, one of which consists of men only, to listen to programmes and hold regular discussions. Whenever a topic is deemed to be of high importance to the community, the clubs invite the community radio station to record a summary of their views on the subject. The ensuing recording is edited by the radio station’s technicians, who received digital reporting kits from the project. The edited piece is then broadcast on the radio, prompting immediate responses – by mobile phone – including opinions, remarks, observations and suggestions and this often results in the launch of a whole new debate.

So far, the clubs have covered a wide range of topics, including food security, off-season crops, agricultural inputs, human, plant and animal health, education, decentralisation and even the culture of peace.

Holding topical debates and listening to radio programmes gives the participants fresh knowledge that enables them to improve their daily lives. For example, after one series of programmes, action was taken by men and women together to clean up several villages.

Women’s empowerment

The enthusiasm of the women in the listeners’ clubs has exceeded all expectations. Whenever they can find the time, they will tune in to programmes independently. It is clear that the women are now aware of the existence of rural radio stations. And they know the people working there, which facilitates information sharing. Even though the role and mission of community radio are still poorly understood, women now dare to contact them and are enthusiastically taking part in the debates. These are indicators that they have gained new skills and, above all, that their self-confidence has been strengthened. As they say proudly: “information is no longer the exclusive preserve of men”.

Ali Abdoulaye, the coordinator of ONG VIE, put it this way: “Women never used to have a say. They would sit down behind the men, and even when they were asked a direct question they would turn to the men, the only ones to have travelled and have an opinion worth hearing. Today, those same women are aware of their knowledge, they state their views, contradict imposed opinions and organise themselves so that they are respected and listened to. The women’s debates have shown that they are perfectly capable of analysing and summarising.”

For the women, the clubs’ activities also provide moments of leisure, and sometimes the chance to settle conflicts, after a stressful day.

Multiple impact

The project has yielded many benefits; improving rural women’s access to information has also generated unexpected effects, such as a revival of the literacy centres. As Ali Abdoulaye pointed out, before the clubs were



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set up in the villages the usefulness of being able to read and write was not that clear to women. “They thought that learning such skills would never be of any use to them. But using new technologies has made them discover the need to communicate – to write, to read messages. This has increased their interest in the literacy centres.”

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Gender training for journalists, an absolute necessity

In the context of the Listeners’ Clubs project, a training course on Gender and Radio Broadcasting Practices was organised for radio journalists from 31 May to 4 June 2010 in Niamey.

ONG VIE Kande Ni Bayra brought together around 20 journalists from the nine radio stations involved in the project. Each station was represented by two people: its director and the person serving as the focal point for the Listeners’ Clubs project.

The course helped to strengthen the participants’ capacities with regard to interviewing, gender and technology. The aim was to enable radio staff to conduct high-quality interviews in terms of content (preparation, execution, critical listening) while emphasising the importance of the participatory dimension of the mission of community radio. An essential element of the project was also to look with the participants at exactly how they could best integrate a gender dimension into their programmes. Finally, they received basic technical training in the use of the digital reporting equipment they had received.

The staff composition of the partner radio stations explains why women were very poorly represented at the training session, accounting for just 2 out of the 17 participants. Further training courses given in the field should enable a higher number of women to become involved in the project’s activities.

1 The full name is « Clubs d’écoute pour l’autonomisation et le leadership des femmes rurales et des jeunes des centres d’alphabétisation » – Listeners’ clubs to foster autonomy and leadership among rural women and young people from literacy centres. The project is financed by FAO (via the Dimitra project), UNPD, UNIFEM, UNFPA and the Canadian Development Cooperation.

“People don’t understand that information is the beginning of all development”

ADELINE NSIMIRE BALIKA, COORDINATOR OF SAMWAKI - SAUTI YA MWANAMKE KIJIJINI

Adeline is the coordinator of Samwaki, an NGO working to improve the livelihoods of rural populations in South Kivu through access to information and communication. The province of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been ravaged by war. And whereas Samwaki is thriving today, as evidenced by its second-place ranking in the AfriComNet 2010 Awards for its communication campaign on HIV and AIDS (see page 11), that success is largely due to the determination and leadership of its coordinator.

Tell us a little about yourself ...

I studied general educational science in Walungu [in South Kivu, some 50 km northeast of the city of Bukavu], then started teaching French and technology at a secondary school. After that, I was hired in 2001 by the NGO Association des Femmes pour le Développement (AFD, Association of Women for Development) and put in charge of gender-related issues, before going on to found the NGO Samwaki and become its coordinator.

When did you first get involved in civil society?

Very early on actually. Even as a child representing others came naturally to me. My friends would ask me to speak on their behalf and I really enjoyed doing it. They knew me. And my family liked what I was doing and supported me. I've always had a talent for leadership.

Were gender-related issues already your prime concern back then?

No, to be quite honest, they were not. Even though I felt strongly about them, without being entirely aware of what they were. It was only when I joined AFD that I really got to improve my knowledge of gender-related issues. And it was there that I underwent training that gave me a proper insight into the relations between women and men.

Before that, my efforts in that domain were pretty intuitive. My parents were in favour of me getting involved in youth movements, but they also had problems with it, because letting a girl go out and about was just not ‘the done thing’. As representatives, we often had to travel around to meet other youngsters. I was the girls’ representative. It was a great pleasure to be of service in that way. I will always remember the day when I was in charge of a theatrical performance put on in a village, and my sister said to me: “Do you feel no shame in front of an audience? You aren’t afraid to speak, dance or act!” She still reminds me about it today! (Laughs)

But it wasn’t always easy with the family. I used to attend a Catholic church where the mission-



aries called on the youngsters, including me, to play an active role in all kinds of initiatives in the region. When you understand the importance of girls in families in our society, you can see the paradox my parents faced. On the one hand they were in favour, but on the other hand they were not, because custom dictated that girls had to be protected. If it meant leaving the house, that was going to be a problem. In the end they didn’t stop us, but it wasn’t easy for them. (Laughs)

Could you explain what Samwaki concretely does?

In Swahili, Samwaki’s full name – Sauti ya Mwanamke Kijijini – means ‘the voice of rural women’. Our mission is to give people living in rural areas, especially women, access to information and communication for their own advancement. More specifically, since 2003 we have identified women’s and mixed groups in the villages of Walungu territory and we have helped them set up lines of communication (“axes de communication”). In the end we managed to put nine farmers’ groups from neighbouring villages in Walungu and Kabare

“There isn’t one society for men and one society for women. We need to find ways to complement each other. We must combine our efforts to achieve development.”

territories in touch with one another and enabled them to take action together. Samwaki set up the network to make that possible.

We then moved on from the lines of communication, which included organising training courses and meetings at which people could exchange their experiences, to setting up listeners’ clubs in 2005 with Dimitra. In parallel, in 2006 we helped to set up the Réseau des Femmes rurales du Sud-Kivu (REFERUSKI – South Kivu Rural Women’s Network), which not only includes the groups I already mentioned, but also some of the listeners’ clubs. And in 2008 we facilitated the establishment of



Radio Bubusa FM, a community radio station for rural women. That's an achievement we're very proud of.

What prompted you to set up Samwaki in the first place?

When I was working at AFD, we acquired new skills and gained fresh knowledge. But then the rural areas were affected by the war and I saw for myself how women suffered under those circumstances. So I brought several women together to see what could be done. We were cut off from the city of Bukavu, a few dozen kilometres away, but something had to be done. In 2002, the decision was made to set up an organisation of rural women to make our voices heard, even though the situation was chaotic. Initially, the challenge we faced was that people thought an NGO would bring them humanitarian aid, food or provide some kind of assistance. We told them that they ought to expect something different, but our message didn't

get through. They thought we were a bit crazy because in their eyes information served no purpose. So Samwaki did a lot of awareness-raising work, moving from village to village to speak about the role and position of women in the context of war and to rally people to our cause. The people didn't understand that information is the beginning of all development.

Did you encounter any opposition because you were women and were talking about gender-related issues?

Yes of course, and we still face opposition today, even though things have definitely changed! The concept of women speaking their minds freely was not tolerated, and it was also hard to get people to agree that women, too, have things to say. Some people said they thought we women were effectively crying in the wind or described us as "nanny goats urinating on billy goats". (Laughs)

That was how people regarded women who told men what they thought. On top of that, the social context was highly unfavourable. But things changed because we persisted and thanks to the concrete activities we undertook, everyone realised that women can help to bring about change. Today, we are in partnership with men too, but we always need to strike a balance.

Did you find yourself facing other types of challenges as well?

You bet. The first such challenge we came up against was the tradition that women may not speak in the presence of men, or address customary or local chiefs. That was a real problem. I used to wrestle constantly, day and night, with the dilemma of how to deal with the fact that some people weren't willing to listen to me.

The second challenge involved family constraints. After I got married, I had children straight away and my in-laws made it difficult for me to travel. They didn't want me to do this. They didn't really understand who or what I was. I sensed there was a problem, but nothing was said directly. Fortunately, my husband always supported and encouraged me. But in Africa women are there for their entire family, not just their husband. Thanks to my husband's backing, I managed to make progress anyway. And today everyone has understood the validity of my approach.

Being courageous helped me overcome these obstacles. People said "you can't go down that path", but I did so anyway! I was not afraid to face these difficulties, even when there seemed to be a deadlock. I knew that they were only words and that nobody was going to hit me.

“What moved things forward was that we always involved the traditional authorities in our meetings and activities.”

“ Naturally, there are hurdles to overcome, but you have to persevere and be courageous. Nobody is capable right from the outset, but gradually we learn. We learn by doing. ”

Have the chiefs in the areas where you are active changed their attitude in this respect?

Yes, a great deal has changed since 2003! Today, we work with them. They are involved in all our programmes and collaborate. That, in itself, is a great achievement for our organisation.

What moved things forward was that we always involved them in our meetings and activities. For instance, in the case of the lines of communication every time we went into a village, Samwaki tried to get the local chiefs interested or at least keep them informed. And we also served local interests by cleaning roads or schools. To raise their awareness, the solution was always to reach out to them...

What is your message to our readers?

One thing is that you should never let yourself be put off attaining an objective you have set yourself. Naturally, there are hurdles to overcome, but you have to persevere and be courageous. Nobody is capable right from the outset, but gradually we learn. We learn by doing. Everyone should support action taken by women. We live in a society of both men and women, so we have no choice.

My message to men is to always support women in their actions: there isn't one society for men and one society for women. We need to find ways to complement each other. We must combine our efforts to achieve development. Let me close by wishing good luck to all women striving for a balance in the relations between women and men.

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Radio Bubusa FM and the South Kivu community listeners' clubs honoured

Radio Bubusa FM and the South Kivu community listeners' clubs recently received the second prize in the Best Mass Media Initiative category of the 2010 Annual Award for Excellence in HIV and AIDS Communication in Africa. The award was bestowed by AfriComNet, the African Network for Strategic Communication in Health and Development, in the framework of a competition which aims to identify and honour innovative African initiatives on strategic HIV and AIDS communication.

The mission of AfriComNet, which is based in Kampala (Uganda), is to strengthen capacity in, and commitment to, strategic communication for health and development in Africa. The attention of the award organisers and jury was drawn by the originality of the South Kivu community listeners' clubs and their joint action with Radio Bubusa FM. The winner in the Best Mass Media Initiative category went to the Abugida Radio Show (BBC-Ethiopia).

The award ceremony took place in Johannesburg (South Africa) on 12 August 2010, and, keen to share this recognition with all the active members of the community listeners' clubs, Samwaki organised an official event in South Kivu on 4 September. Over the course of the day, the award was officially presented to the local authorities, Radio Bubusa FM staff, and members of the community listeners' clubs and Samwaki.

During the day's proceedings, Josseline M'Mawinga, who chairs the Rhuhinduke community listeners' club in Mugogo, reminded the participants that before the community listeners' clubs and Radio Bubusa FM had been set up, AIDS had been deemed a taboo subject, whereas "today people freely discuss and debate topics like HIV and AIDS in their families, churches, schools and at work in common fields or down by the river, etc. The fact that our initiatives broke the silence

around HIV and AIDS is what prompted AfriComNet to honour the strategies of Radio Bubusa and the listeners' clubs for combating the devastating virus."

To fittingly mark the international recognition it had received, on 4 September 2010 Radio Bubusa FM broadcast programmes non-stop on the theme "Rhuicikubuk'Esida Rucibikule Lyo Rhuylwisa" (in Mashi language) which means "Lets Avoid AIDS – let's speak up and fight it effectively!"

What distinguishes Radio Bubusa FM is the gender sensitivity of its broadcasts and its way of tackling AIDS, a previously taboo subject that nobody dared to discuss in family circles or in groups. Furthermore, it is the only community radio station in the region powered by renewable energy (solar and wind power), which has a positive impact on the population in both socio-economic and environmental terms.

For more information on Radio Bubusa FM, see page 11 of Dimitra Newsletter 17, published in November 2009.

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The World March of Women 2010 in Bukavu

Demilitarising the eastern DRC to make it a region free from violence

A major success. These are the words which best describe the Third International Action of the World March of Women, whose closing activities were held in Bukavu (DRC) from 13 to 17 October 2010. Representatives from some 42 countries attended, and, on the final day, thousands of women took part in a peace march through the streets of Bukavu.

The Third International Action of the World March of Women (WMW 2010) took place over several months with numerous activities in many different countries. The Ibanda Institute served as the backdrop for the closing activities in Bukavu. The international event brought together over 1,000 people in some 148 delegations from 42 countries around the globe. It was covered by 78 national and international press and broadcast journalists.

The opening ceremony of the activities took place on 13 October in the evening with official speeches. The four speakers who took the podium in turn were the wife of the president of the DRC, the International Secretary of the World March of Women, the Congolese minister for gender, family and children, and the governor of South Kivu province.

The peace march through the town of Bukavu of more than 20,000 Congolese women and their sisters from other countries was the culmination of this global action, which also brought the MMF 2010 to a close.

Four key topics for women

As could have been expected, an important aspect of the WMW 2010 in Bukavu proved to be the panel discussions. The presentations followed by debates around the four topics of the March – women's economic autonomy; the common good and public services; peace and demilitarisation and violence against women – effectively pinpointed the true causes of the continuing insecurity in the eastern DRC. Causes which are intimately linked to the economic interests of Western countries in complicity with certain neighbouring countries. Yet, the absence of rural women from the debates was regretful. Being the main victims of violence by armed men, their testimony would have been enlightening. What is more, some men and women in power took advantage of the event to get women from the poorest areas of Bukavu to wear T-shirts bearing the insignia of their political parties thus opposing the collective demands of the other women, who were vociferous in underscoring their dignity as women. It was a political attempt to



hijack the event for the cost of a *pagne*, a T-shirt or on the strength of a mere promise.

To express their compassion for the women and girl victims of violence, to honour the survivors and to immortalise all those who have died as a result of the brutality they endured, the participants in the WMW planted a grove of trees in the Triangle of Nguba in Bukavu. They also visited a mass grave in Mwenga, about 100 kilometres from Bukavu, where 13 women were buried alive in 1999, after having been humiliated and tortured. The delegation also passed by the village of Kasika, in honour of the 1937 people who died there during the massacre on 23 and 24 August 1998.

Translating commitments into action

The objective of the WMW 2010 was to help consolidate peace and promote the lasting pacification of the eastern DRC in particular and of the country as a whole. To achieve this, the Congolese women, in unity with the women who had come from all over the planet, drew up a list of demands for the president of the

DRC and representatives of the international community.

The WMW 2010 was a success both in terms of the resources it mobilised and the content of the messages conveyed and discussed. The committee responsible for following up the achievements of the WMW 2010, which is coordinated by CONAFED (Comité National Femme et Développement – National Committee for Women and Development), now has the job of doing everything it can to ensure that the various commitments made are translated into action. In their speeches, DRC government representatives reiterated their promise to put the quest for and consolidation of peace, along with the fight to end violence against women, at the top of their agenda. We shall wait and see.

✳ For more information, please see:
www.mmf2010.info

Article written by Adeline Nsimire Balika, Samwaki

Heavy loads: Paying homage to the women of eastern DRC

Thousands of women in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) work as 'load carriers'. Most local people don't give them a second thought as they pass, seeing them as part of the 'normal' landscape. But for the photographers of the non-profit organisation Free Advice they are walking symbols: their backs bent by the nature of their work, these women seem to be shouldering the burden of the political and socio-economic situation in this part of the country.

It is 10 a.m. on a Sunday on the road leading out of Mudaka, a village in South Kivu. Women are making slow progress along the road, with straps round their heads taut with the strain and their backs sagging beneath the sheer weight of their heavy loads. For it is only women, of all ages, that go to the market to sell their produce.

A first group of four, consisting of one young girl, two women and a spindly boy, trudges along the side of the road in single file. A huge canvas sack is perched high on each back, forming a white tower from which blackened wood emerges, precariously strapped in place. They are transporting makala, or charcoal, a product derived from the trees of the previously forest-covered hills of South Kivu. Another group follows them; they are bearing huge bunches of plantain bananas, one of the local people's staple foods. Then comes another, weighed down by loads of cassava root, another key element in the local population's diet. Stretching back further into the distance, more women – always women and some of them already quite elderly – are carrying great clusters of onions, whilst others lug huge bundles of wood.

Burdens of 40 kilos over 40 kilometres...

This weary procession will continue during the early hours of the day, with dozens, or even hundreds, of women passing by, bearing loads that in other countries would be seen on the backs of pack animals or, in other parts of the DRC, perched high on dangerously overloaded lorries or, when the state of the roads does not allow motorised traffic, on ingeniously customised bicycles capable of carrying as much as 60 or even 80 kilos. It is men who have the arduous job of pushing these bicycles over long distances to their cargo's final destination.

But here there are no men porters, just a few young boys among a sea of women and girls. As soon as those boys are older, they will be excused such toil, which is deemed unworthy of men. This unequal division of men's and women's work is learnt at an early age, and not just in families but also through day-to-day social and economic activities.



© Free Advice

The weight of the loads is gauged using scales suspended from a tree. The average load weighs 40 kilos, the heaviest 52 kilos. Little Amina, a girl just 12 years old, is carrying



© Free Advice

An itinerant outdoor exhibition of photographs of 'women carriers' in South Kivu

Eliane Beeson and François Vaxelaire, from the non-profit organisation Free Advice, recently travelled to Bukavu to produce a photographic report on such 'female beasts of burden' for "L'Observatoire de la Parité" (the Parity Observatory), a local NGO which aims to achieve gender equality at all levels of society. They met large numbers of women carriers along the roads and in the markets around Bukavu, and took 100 portraits of them at two warehouses converted into improvised photographic studios. The women felt so strongly about the project and their response was so overwhelming that the photographers felt a need to put their images on display locally. Thus, the

idea took shape of exhibiting the photos as part of the activities organised to conclude the third World March of Women, held in Bukavu from 13 to 17 October 2010. Hundreds of women activists from around the world went to show their solidarity with their Congolese sisters, promote women's rights and do their bit in the fight against war and poverty. Life-size portraits of women carriers were put up along the route taken by the marching activists. This powerful event took place in conjunction with numerous other activities organised by L'Observatoire de la Parité, including the broadcasting of radio spots, roundtable discussions and workshops on gender stereotypes.



necessity, because their living conditions are so tough.

Asked why their men do not help them carry produce to the market, the women replied that transporting goods, especially agricultural produce, is women's work. One even gave a physiological justification, claiming that "men's heads, and even more so their backs, are unsuitable for carrying, and that women are destined and trained for this kind of work from a tender age".

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a 22-kilo sack of onions. When asked how far they had to carry their loads, the women say they have come from villages near Kalonge, around 40 to 50 km away from the market in Mudaka. They left home at around 5 p.m. the previous day, rested between 11 p.m. and 3 a.m., and then resumed their strenuous journey until they came across us at 11 a.m. That makes a 14-hour walk!

The weight of tradition

When we asked the women why only they, rather than the men, do the carrying, most explained that this was "the tradition, custom or culture", and that carrying is one of the tasks usually reserved for women. Other women, selling cassava chips, bunches of bananas or charcoal, cited economic reasons, saying that they serve as carriers out of

Benin – Empowering women to help them guarantee food security

The aim of the Groupe de Recherche et d'Appui à l'Autopromotion durable à la Base (GRAAB ONG – Research and Support Group for Sustainable Grassroots Self-Advancement) is to help improve the material well-being and livelihoods of the most destitute people in Benin, especially women and children, by fostering a participatory, self-help approach. The organisation is also the Focal Point for Dimitra in Benin.

GRAAB ONG maintains that any human being, whether male or female, can aspire to and actually become socially, economically and culturally better off. Wanting to achieve this is an entirely legitimate aspiration, but the only way of breaking the long chain of social imbalances in the world is to consider the millions of marginalised people – the poor, women, children or members of any other vulnerable social group – as individuals who have the dignity, duty, ability and resources which can be strengthened in order for them to thrive.

Women's empowerment: a tangible activity

In the context of a women's empowerment project implemented by GRAAB ONG and financed by l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (IOF – International Organisation of La Francophonie), 120 women

were trained to raise rabbits and learn basic accounting to help them better manage their activities. All the women in question came from low-income households in Golo-Djigbé, in the municipality of Abomey-Calavi. After receiving their training, they were given a helping hand to set up their activities, with each woman receiving a breeding kit comprising two cages with four compartments, eight feeders, eight drinking troughs, a plastic bucket, a machete and four rabbits (one male and three females). Six months later, the women had to return the four rabbits they had been given, enabling other women to start breeding under the same conditions.

The women's activities are monitored by a female veterinary extension worker who visits each participant at home on a monthly basis,

providing any veterinary care the animals may require and offering practical guidance on a case-by-case basis. She organises meetings to plan the dates of various activities with the women and to make sure that all the women take responsibility for their particular duties. Weekly meetings between the women give them an opportunity to exchange experiences, assess whether their activities are on track, highlight any difficulties and seek solutions together.

The involvement of women from the inception phase of the project

The content of the project was based on proposals made by the women themselves and took into consideration the difficulties they face in meeting their needs. It was they who chose the rabbit because of its short reproduc-



The women participating in the project were trained to raise rabbits and in basic accounting to help them better manage their activities.

tive cycle. The women were involved in every stage of the project process and each participant is responsible for her own affairs.

Prior to the implementation of the project, an in-depth socio-cultural study confirmed that breeding rabbits and eating their meat did not pose a problem in the community in question. From the technical and environmental points of view, local materials are available which women can use for free in food and for veterinary care. Financially and economically, the resources they need to start breeding rabbits are relatively modest and can be recovered quickly. Furthermore, the high demand for rabbit meat in restaurants, hotels and even some families exceeds the supply available.

Positive results

And the results have been positive: after six months of breeding each of the women had an

average of 45 rabbits, enabling them to regularly prepare meals of (highly nutritious) rabbit meat and to sell some animals as well. A rabbit weighing 2 kg sells for 3,000 CFA francs (roughly 4.5 euros or 6 USD). The women use the proceeds of such sales to meet their needs and make sure that their children get an education. In addition, the women have teamed up to form village associations, and they meet up once a month to exchange news and views on their activities and problems.

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The story of Catherine Aguin,

25 years old and mother of four

I found out there was an information meeting for women about a rabbit-breeding project at the GRAAB office in Abomey-Calavi on 20 October 2006, so I decided to attend it in my capacity as president of the Gbénonkpo group. At the meeting, the people running GRAAB and the extension workers gave a presentation on the project.

After hearing what they had to say, other women from my group and from the village decided, like me, to sign up for a five-day training course arranged in our village. A month after that course, each of the 20 (female) participants was given a breeding kit. Six months later, I had 54 young rabbits, 30 of which weighed 2 kg. Selling at 3,000 CFA francs each, this earned me 90,000 CFA francs in 6 months, which is wonderful. I managed to step up my own breeding programme to include 10 females and 3 males. Now my husband, my children and I eat a large rabbit every other week. I myself pay for what my children need for school and make sure they can have breakfast at the school. Moreover, I use the (fully organic) rabbit droppings as fertiliser on the small field I tend beside my house. The other women participating in the rabbit-breeding project and I get together once a month to discuss any problems to do with our activity.

This activity has not prevented me from continuing my other activities, as it does not take up much time and is home-based, where my children can help me. I'm very happy and think the project can really help women take charge of their lives and face up to their situation. What I found particularly remarkable about the project is not only that it provides training, but that after being kitted out each woman receives individual assistance for six months. Subsequently, and after returning four rabbits to GRAAB to enable the organisation to help other women, too, each woman is fully responsible for what she achieves.



Each of the women received a breeding kit comprising two cages with four compartments, eight feeders, eight drinking troughs, a plastic bucket, a machete and four rabbits.

Uganda – Improving the food security, income and livelihoods of rural farmers

Uganda's economy widely depends on the agricultural sector. Over 85% of the estimated 32 million inhabitants of the country live in rural areas and rely mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. At the same time, it can be said that most agricultural activities take place in these rural areas. It is therefore right to say that Uganda's food production is widely dependent on rural women and men farmers.

Agriculture, a key sector

Many regions in Uganda are practicing subsistence agriculture. Families practice agriculture on the small plots of land they own. Their target is to produce enough food to feed their families until the next harvest. In many cases, however, even this subsistence agriculture falls short of its target. Often, the yields are not enough to feed the family until the next harvest, leading to food shortages in the homes. This has largely been attributed to poor farming methods (many farmers have chosen to remain conservative, resulting in little or no diversity in their farming methods), prolonged droughts, pests and diseases.

Since agriculture is the main or only source of income, food and general livelihood for these rural farmers, they are often faced with situations where they have to sell part of their agricultural produce to pay for (basic) needs, such as access to health facilities, school fees and rent. However, selling part of the produce further worsens food shortages in rural homes because the majority of the farmers are subsistence farmers. Furthermore, farmers often sell their produce at very low prices because the market is not easily accessible and the middlemen exploit them as they are desperate to sell.

A spark of hope

However, the example of the Sanyu Ly'amaka ("Family Pride") Farmers Group shows that rural farmers can actually improve their food security and livelihoods. The group was formed in 2007 by four women farmers in Masaka district to empower rural farmers in Bukoto Central Region. Its aim: to ensure sustainable rural livelihoods for rural farmers by sensitizing

them on improved farming methods, encouraging group formation and knowledge sharing while ensuring environmental integrity.

Today, the Sanyu Ly'amaka Farmers Group is composed of 18 farmers – 11 women and 7 men. The group works closely with over 100 other rural farmers in the region. While most of them are small scale farmers, others are trying to go commercial as a means to alleviate rural poverty. They grow food crops like beans, soy beans, ground nuts, maize, cassava, matooke (banana), sweet potatoes and vegetables. On the side, they grow coffee, keep poultry, raise small numbers of livestock or tend small eucalyptus forests.

Each of the group's members has a family with an average of 6 dependants – at least two adults (wife or husband plus one member of the extended family) and a number of children, most of them in the school going age. Sanyu Ly'amaka's target is to reach out, through its 18 members, to over 300 rural farmers in the region.

The group received 1,000 USD seed funding from the World Bank and, recently, 695 USD through the Evoke Global Giving fundraising challenge. The group acknowledges that this has been a big boost for them, but they note that there are still a lot of challenges ahead of them.

Empowerment through a demonstration farm

With the limited resources available to them, the Sanyu Ly'amaka Farmers Group has a plan to build a demonstration farm. This initiative

will facilitate knowledge and skills sharing among the rural farmers in the area. The demonstration farm will act as a learning centre to extend best practices like organic crop production methods (sustainable organic agriculture) and permaculture to the rural farmers. Permaculture is an ecological design system for sustainability in all aspects of human endeavor. It teaches farmers how to build natural homes, grow their own food, restore diminished landscapes and ecosystems, catch rainwater, build communities and much more.¹

On the demonstration farm, the rural farmers will learn how to improve their farming methods and yields regardless of the size of their farms, financial status or even level of education. The demonstration farm is also expected to help reinvent the spirit of cooperative farming, helping individual farmers enjoy advantages like collective economies of scale. As a group, rural farmers stand a better chance of producing larger volumes and better quality farm produce, which in turn will give them better bargaining power. Group support to all the beneficiaries involved will also ensure that they all get equal opportunities to benefit from the available resources. This way, cooperative farming will solve problems like low productivity, gender inequality and limited land for agriculture. To ensure effective group dynamics, there will be need for training on group formation and management.

Sanyu Ly'amaka also encourages the youth to actively participate in the project. The future demonstration farm will cater for their information needs and will provide training opportunities. 65% of Uganda's total population is





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made up of youth. This means that they have a very important role to play in supporting and contributing to the country's food security. They are therefore encouraged to participate in agriculture, to reduce unemployment while achieving social and economic empowerment.

Furthermore, the enlightenment affects both women and men. Even though most of the food growers are women, it's their husbands who own the land. This means that the men will often dictate what to do and what not to do on the family land. This project sensitizes the men on the role of agriculture in rural development, so that they will allow their wives to have

equal access to the family plots for agricultural purposes. In so doing, both women and men contribute to the desired changes, that is, improved farm yields and improved rural livelihoods, hence ensuring food security in rural communities and beyond.

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1 www.permaculture.org

The Sanyu Ly'amaka Farmers Group has improved the livelihoods of its members by sensitizing them on improved farming methods, encouraging group formation and knowledge sharing while ensuring environmental integrity.

Testimony

Margaret Kisaakye is a retired civil servant. After her retirement she realized that her farm was one of the easiest and best ways of ensuring food security in her home. "I started farming on a small plot and later I bought more land to expand my farm. My farm is of great value to me because it is not only a source of food but also a source of income", says Margaret, who is one of the founding members of Sanyu Ly'amaka Farmers Group. "We started as a small group and we are growing big. Many of the rural farmers around the country have not realized that agriculture is a key tool in rural poverty eradication. The

major challenge that we have faced as Sanyu Ly'amaka Farmers Group is lack of empowerment. Our group members have been able to pull together a small fund which has enabled us to visit rural farmers to share skills. Ssozi, staff member at WOUNET (Women of Uganda Network), has fundraised for us through the Internet and we have been able to secure some donations that will help us in implementing our activities. We have plans to build a demonstration farm in a rural farm setting. This demonstration farm will be very important, because it will be a learning centre for our rural farmers."



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Natural wild silk: Making the most of Madagascar's biodiversity

The Natural Silk Project (NSP) involves managing Madagascar's natural silk sector so as to optimise and boost the country's output of this natural product, which is obtained by collecting and breeding wild native varieties of the silk moth. The project, which is being run by the FAMIOVA women's group, is designed to enhance the technical capacity of people living in the proximity of the Ranomafana National Park in eastern Madagascar, to produce and process raw materials and manage the production and sale of finished products.

The history of silk-making in Madagascar is very old. It is one of the few countries with a long-standing sericulture tradition and where the sector is an important part of the national cultural heritage. Madagascan silk crafts use thread spun from the cocoons of *Bombyx mori*, a domestic bred silk worm, or from the cocoons of various wild silk worms, primarily varieties of *Borocera*, a common species in Madagascar's highlands and costal areas.

The target group of the Natural Silk Project are the members of FAMIOVA women's group, from the villages in the area adjoining Ranomafana National Park¹. FAMIOVA is the acronym for "Fanentanana, Fanabeazana, Famokarana Miompana amin'ny Vavaasa mivantana sady manome lanja ny zavamananaina sy mikajy ny tontolo iainana", which literally means "Sensitisation, education and production geared towards direct action concerned with biodiversity and environmental conservation and with the park". Initially, back in 2004, the project was financed by the ValBio Centre (International Centre for Research and Training in the Valorisation of Biodiversity), together with Madagascar National Parks



Ranomafana. Currently, FAMIOVA is responsible for running it.

Improving the management of natural resources

The region's population faces a range of socio-economic and environmental problems due in part to poor management of natural resources. Most villagers live off the forest, using harmful practices that bring numerous pressures to bear on local biodiversity and on the forest. These practices include:

- the illegal gathering of secondary products (bamboo, pandanus, honey, crayfish);
- encroaching of rice fields into marshland in Protected Areas²;
- excessive consumption of wood;
- over-zealous clearing of land for cultivation using the traditional *tavy* method (slash-and-burn agriculture), which is continuing to devastate the land in spite of various measures and provisions adopted by the country's authorities.

Who knows how many forest species are disappearing each year? If the livelihoods of the people living around the park are to improve, the shortage of natural resources – including water and wood – and of food like honey and

crayfish, urgently needs to be resolved. The challenge entails conserving and sustainably exploiting biodiversity whilst at the same time taking into account the needs of the local people. It should also be noted that the women of the region are burdened with arduous daily tasks (including various household duties, seeking firewood, gathering food in the forest, fetching water from shallow rivers, and so forth), which, however, do nothing to improve the family income. Consequently, their living conditions remain very difficult.

For the various stakeholders involved in the park's conservation (including the local people, the park's managers, researchers and the local authorities, among others) it is obvious that appropriate and urgent solutions are called for to stop the destruction that threatens the country's forests, a threat that could easily spill over to the park and the forest corridor linking Ranomafana National Park with Andringitra National Park and the Pic Ivohibe Special Reserve.

Alternatives to damaging practices

Since repressive measures do not appear to bring about the desired effect, the Natural Silk Project is convinced that more energy should



be channelled into fostering alternatives to the practices that bring about the daily pressures on the park. Accordingly, it is advocating the promotion of wild silk as one of the alternative activities that deserve special attention in attempts to overcome the range of problems outlined above. Facilitating women's access to development programmes geared towards conservation will be crucial, because that would enable them to devote more time to profitable income generating activities and slowly but surely change negative attitudes towards the park's conservation.

The objectives of the Natural Silk Project are as follows:

- to boost the output of natural products derived from the region's biodiversity;
- to develop silk-making (and related activities) as a profitable sector that offers an alternative to the pressures on the biodiversity of the Protected Areas as well as in the forest corridor;
- to boost the incomes of the beneficiary households.

The project purchases raw materials (cocoons) for processing into finished products that can be sold at local or regional markets. For the time being, improving the breeding of wild species (to produce *landibe*, large silk cocoons made by a number of silkworms) poses problems because the climate in Ranomafana is incompatible with breeding on the *tanety* (deforested, terraced hills) or in the forest. Domesticated silk worms provide only a negligible fraction of the quantity of silk purchased. In the future, the hope is to organise training courses on breeding silk worms on farms (domestication) and to sell the resulting products internationally. These income-generating activities will be accompanied by technical support.

Towards a better quality of life for women and men

In line with the priorities set by the Madagascar government and the principles advocated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to combat poverty, the project aims to contribute to meeting the challenges related to growth and investment and to lastingly improve the quality of life of the communities. Accordingly, in keeping with the recommendations made by the Global Action Programme for the Promotion of Women, and in line with the National Policy for the Promotion of Women (PNPF) geared towards promoting balanced development, a key objective of the project is to achieve gender equality in the context of the project's implementation.



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In this context, 14 women were given two training sessions on the traditional processing of wild silk into a hand-made natural product at a centre specialising in sericulture. The project sets out to combine the momentum generated from reviving and promoting Madagascar silk with attempts to identify potential sales outlets (by participating in international and national trade fairs, providing training on the domestication of silk worms and so on).

The silk thread is used to make hand-made articles such as traditional raw silk shawls (*lamba landy*³) for comfortably-off Madagascans and tourists, furnishing fabrics, natural or dyed *lamba landy* used by fashion designers to make diverse outfits (partly for export), and traditional burial shrouds (*lamban-drazana*). Currently, products are made either of pure wild silk or of a silk-cotton mix. The main focus of production today is the manufacture of dyed or embroidered *lamba landy*, either for tourists or locals.

Luxury hand-made natural products

The label adopted by the production unit is "Soie originale malgache / Made in Ranomafana. Produits naturels de luxe - fait mains" (Original Madagascar silk / Made in Ranomafana. Natural, hand-made luxury products). Just as the food sector is vaunting organic produce for their nutritional qualities, the lingerie sector is turning more and more to natural, hand-made products. And breakthroughs by the *lamba landy*, which is now an acknowledged haute couture article adopted by national and international designers alike, constitutes an excellent, profitable opportunity for the sector. Madagascar artisans, who are famous for their

The Natural Silk Project advocates the promotion of wild silk to overcome the range of problems that threaten the biodiversity of the region.

manual dexterity and skill, learn fast and turn out high-quality products.

The ultimate aim of the project is to save the environment, promote the island's biodiversity, and propel the region towards a better economic future with reduced poverty. This is to be achieved by creating a more widespread common awareness of current and future challenges to gradual self-development.

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1 Ranomafana National Park covers an area of 41,601 hectares and is home to an impressive range of sadly endangered endemic biodiversity. The park is famous for the curative effects of its natural hot spring and for its rainforest. It is run by the Madagascar National Parks Association (PNM-ANGAP).

2 Law no. 028/2008, recasting the Code of Protected Areas (COAP), states that a Protected Area is a marine, coastal or aquatic demarcated area which has a particular biological, historical, natural, aesthetic, cultural and/or religious value and therefore requires multiform preservation in the public interest. Protected Areas are managed to protect and preserve biological diversity, conserve particular values of natural and cultural heritage and ensure the sustainable use of resources for the reduction of poverty.

3 *Lamba* is a generic term, the equivalent of 'cloth' in English; *landy* specifies that the *lamba* in question is made of silk.

RDC – Modern beekeeping and capitalising on local know-how in Lwalaba forest

Beekeeping, once a purely masculine activity in Lwalaba, is today also carried out by women. Indeed, communities here have come to realise the importance of involving women in forest management activities in order to guarantee a sustainable and fair development of the environment.



Until recently, rural communities of Lwalaba (a district in the south of Katanga province, DRC) were completely unaware of modern beekeeping techniques. Two years ago, some of these techniques were introduced in the context of the microproject “Modern apiculture for all in Lwalaba”. This project is implemented by the Forum pour le Développement de la Femme (FDF – Forum for the Development of Women), a member organisation of REFED-Katanga, with the support of the FAO Community Development Support Project (FAO-PADC) and the provincial government of Katanga.

In the four villages targeted when the project was launched in August 2008 – Mwenekula, Lungenda, Divuma and Kisenge – the local communities were sensitised and informed and became fully involved in the project. With the support of FDF, they structured themselves democratically into four village apiculture groups, one per village, comprising a total of 150 beekeepers, 132 men and 18 women. The

members of these groups were given beekeeping equipment and clothing and were trained in modern beekeeping techniques and capitalisation of local knowledge.

Tradition and modernity

Today, the beekeepers in these villages use hives made from hollow palm tree trunks which are collected by the women and carefully crafted into traditional hives by the men. The women carry the hives on their heads to a specially set up apiary where, with the help of young male members of the group, they place them on the branches of melliferous trees.

Although the hives are traditional, the trained men and women beekeepers use modern techniques to harvest the honey. Instead of chasing away the bees by lighting a fire underneath the tree or on the branches bearing the hives as they used to, they use smokers in which they burn the green leaves of plants known traditionally to produce smoke that dazes the bees. They also wear suitable beekeeping apparel. These practices are favourable to the protection and conservation of the biodiversity since the bee colonies and melliferous trees are not destroyed by fires and the apiaries are set up and protected against bush fires using fire-breaks.

The microproject also introduced the gender approach in that men and women were elected to preside over the committees of the village apiculture groups. For the women this was their first ever participation in a decision-making body. Furthermore, the members of the groups in question said that the Dimitra publications distributed by REFED-Katanga had played a key role in raising people's

Men and women were elected to preside over the committees of the village apiculture groups. For the women this was their first ever participation in a decision-making body!



awareness about gender, the experiences of rural women, community development and the structuring of farmers' organisations and rural groups.

Honey for tomorrow

The Groupement des Apiculteurs de Mwenekula (GAMWE – Mwenekula Apiculture Group) produces a pure, natural honey, which is highly prized by its consumers, even in Lubumbashi, where part of the produce is sold by REFED. And the village's beekeepers have predicted an even better production this year.

Since the project began, it has extended its activities to include beekeepers from Kasaji, Malonga, Mungulunga and other villages in the region, who have also receiving training from the microproject's coordinator and the person in charge of the GAMWE group.

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FAO and its work on the elimination of child labour in agriculture

Agriculture, including fisheries, aquaculture and forestry, employs most of the world's working children and, at the same time, is the sector with the least progress in the elimination of child labour. FAO recognises the strong need to work progressively towards ending child labour in agriculture.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that worldwide 215 million children, aged between 5 and 17 years, are child labourers, of which 115 million are engaged in hazardous work. ILO also estimates that 60% of the world's child labourers, about 129 million, are working in agriculture.

The overwhelming majority of boys and girls working in the agricultural sector are unpaid family workers, as only one in five of them is paid for their work. This means that their participation in the labour market is mostly hidden and informal which makes it more difficult to identify these child labourers and to adequately apply mechanisms for the prevention and elimination of child labour in this sector.

Gender differences are also embedded in the nature of children's work. Rural children, particularly girls, often begin to work at a very young age, when they are 5 to 7 years old. Girls are particularly disadvantaged as they undertake household chores in addition to agricultural work and therefore tend to work more hours than boys. In general, rural girls are more likely to work as domestic labourers and are more involved in post-harvest activities while rural boys are more likely to engage in handling of livestock or fishing.

Preventing child labour in agriculture

Many child labourers in agriculture work in hazardous occupations since, according to ILO, agriculture is among the most dangerous work environments. However, boys and girls are often exposed to different work-related physical and mental hazards because of the gendered division of their tasks.

According to ILO conventions, child labour is work that harms children's well-being and hinders their education, development and future livelihoods. When children are forced to work long hours in the fields, their ability to attend school or skills training is limited, preventing them from gaining education that could help lift them out of poverty in the future.



FAO, a founding member of the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA), is committed to contributing towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture. Since the adoption of the Partnership in 2007, the organisation has been working on a number of activities and interventions for the prevention and elimination of child labour in agriculture. Some of these include:

Expert workshop on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture

FAO organised, in collaboration with the ILO, a workshop of experts on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, from 14-16 April 2010. Core recommendations of the workshop have informed The Hague Global Child Labour Conference (May 2010) and have been considered in the preparation of the new work plan of the IPCCLA.

Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS)

JFFLS is a programme designed by FAO's Rural Employment Team which promotes decent employment and entrepreneurship among rural youth. It aims to empower vulnerable youth and provide them with the livelihood options and gender-sensitive skills needed for

long-term food security while reducing their vulnerability to destitution and risky coping strategies. JFFLS was initiated in 2004 and operates in several countries in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. It contains a child labour prevention training module. (see also Dimitra Newsletters 13 and 18)

Study on child labour in agriculture in Ghana

In 2007/08 FAO contracted and technically supported the Humboldt University of Berlin to conduct a country study on child labour and children's economic activities in agriculture in Ghana. The study focuses on child labour in artisan fisheries and livestock keeping and also builds on lessons learned from studies on child labour in the cocoa sector.

More information can be found on the joint FAO-ILO website:

www.fao-ilo.org/fao-ilo-child

FAO Focal Point for Child Labour Prevention in Agriculture:

Bernd Seiffert,
FAO Rural Employment Team,
E-mail: bernd.seiffert@fao.org

If you are aware of good practices that have effectively reduced child labour in agriculture, we would be very interested to hear about your experience!

FAO Agri-Gender Statistics Toolkit – the focus on gender in agriculture

A new FAO toolkit aims to sharpen the focus of anti-hunger and development efforts by helping countries gather more accurate information on differences between men and women in agriculture.

The **Agri-Gender Database**, developed by FAO in response to a request from the African Commission on Agricultural Statistics (AFCAS), offers step-by-step, example-driven guidance on how to collect gender statistics, or sex-disaggregated data, on agriculture, livestock production, fisheries and forestry.

The database is designed for a wide range of users who influence development planning, from agricultural statisticians and researchers to policy planners and gender advocates.

Improving planning

“Gathering statistics on how women’s socio-economic conditions differ from those of men in the context of their agricultural work – and on other issues like their access to resources and exposure to food insecurity – is essential to improve the planning and sustainability of development policies and programmes,” said Diana Tempelman, Senior Officer for Gender and Development with the FAO Regional Office for Africa.

“With more specific information, policy-makers can provide greater support to those who lack access to, and control over, agricultural resources. They can help women to achieve greater equality and food security,” Tempelman said. “In the past, users and producers of agricultural statistics have noted that the information compiled often did not reflect the actual roles and responsibilities of women in agricultural production.”

Twenty years of research

The methodology for gathering such information, as illustrated in the toolkit, was developed over two decades of research and direct technical support to national agricultural census teams and offices in numerous countries in Africa.

“Very often, when people look for gender-related data, they look for it in relation to social issues, education, health, and legal aspects of people’s lives. Very rarely do they think of agricultural statistics-gathering as a tool for collecting gender data. The Agri-Gender Database will help them in this regard,” says Tempelman.

The first edition of the toolkit includes examples of gender-relevant questions and table formats used in agricultural censuses in 15 African countries between 1993 and 2006. It shows users how they can formulate questions and tables to better reflect the roles, activities, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints faced by men and women in agriculture.

Asking the right questions

The contribution of women and girls to agricultural production is often underreported because data on much of what they produce is obtained from records of land holdings, which are formally headed by men. One of the key changes in data-gathering advocated by the Agri-Gender Database is the use of information gathered not only according to each land holding or household, but as reported by males and females within each household. The majority of women involved in agriculture – around 80 percent – work in households headed by males.

Data collected in Tanzania revealed differences between male- and female-headed households in the use of agricultural credit for purchasing supplies, likely linked to a shortage of male family members in the latter, due to men’s migration to the cities. “Female-headed households predominantly use whatever little credit is available for labour or seeds, which may increase production, but not necessarily their productivity. Male headed-households on the other hand, are more likely to buy fertilizer or agro-chemicals, which are productivity-enhancing inputs.”

Similarly, the 2005/2007 agricultural census from Niger showed that chicken rearing is no longer the female dominated activity it was in the past. The census showed that women only

owned 32% of the chicken, with children owning 22% and men owning 46% of the chicken. One explanation here could be that men find it easier to find finances to invest in large numbers of chicken for this lucrative business, while women remain operating with 5 to 10 chicken in their backyard, thereby losing their past position in the business.

This kind of information could enable planners to tailor their efforts to support those who lack access to adequate productive resources.

A ‘living document’

The database covers topics like agricultural population and households, access to resources, production and productivity, labour and time use, the destination of agricultural produce, income and expenditures, membership in farmer organisations and indicators for food security and poverty.

The toolkit is designed to be “a living document,” as it will be revised to incorporate observations and comments from users and significant developments in the field of agricultural and gender statistics.

✳️ **To access the Agri-Gender Database:**
www.fao.org/gender/agrigender
<http://agri-gender-toolkit/the-database/en>

Data Item	Format	Table
1. Agricultural population and households	Questionnaire	Table
2. Access to productive resources	Questionnaire	Table
3. Production and productivity	Questionnaire	Table
4. Destination of agricultural produce	Questionnaire	Table
5. Labour and time use	Questionnaire	Table
6. Income and expenditures	Questionnaire	Table
7. Membership in agricultural/farmer organisations	Questionnaire	Table
8. Food security	Questionnaire	Table
9. Food indicators	Questionnaire	Table

Ressources

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.

WEBSITES

☉ **FAO Gender and Land Rights Database**

This database contains country-level information on social, economic, political and cultural issues related to the gender inequalities embedded in those rights. Disparity on land access is one of the major causes for social and gender inequalities in rural areas, and it jeopardizes, as a consequence, rural food security as well as the wellbeing of individuals and families. The database offers information on the 6 following categories: national legal frame; international treaties and conventions; customary law; land tenure and related institutions; civil society organisations; selected land related statistics.

www.fao.org/gender/landrights

☉ **Gender & Food Policy News Blog**

This Blog, facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), is a space to share announcements, news items, multimedia, research tools, resources and links to publications on the topic of gender and food policy (including issues such as hunger, food security, nutrition, governance, land, agriculture etc). While the blog is primarily maintained by IFPRI, anyone who is interested in becoming a contributor or sharing relevant information to be posted can contact IFPRI-Gender@cgiar.org

<http://genderfoodpolicy.wordpress.com>

PUBLICATIONS

☉ **African Women and ICTs: Investigating Technology, Gender and Empowerment**

This book explores the ways in which women in Africa utilize ICTs to facilitate their empowerment; whether through the mobile village phone business, through internet use, or through new career and ICT employment opportunities. Based on the outcome of an extensive research project, this book features chapters based on original primary field research undertaken by academics and activists who have investigated situations within their own communities and countries. The discussion includes such issues as the notion of ICTs for empowerment and as agents of change, ICTs in the fight against gender-based violence, and how ICTs could be used to reconceptualize public and private spaces.

Zed Books/IDRC, 2009 (320 pp)
www.idrc.ca

☉ **African Women's Report 2009. Measuring Gender Inequality in Africa: Experiences and Lessons from the African Gender and Development Index**

The report's theme is opportune as African countries are being urged to improve their statistical systems and data collection methods to respond to development concerns. This includes the need to accelerate gender equality in the social, economic

and political fields. The central message of the report is that gender equality cannot be adequately implemented and monitored without appropriate data.

UNECA, November 2009 (262 p)
www.uneca.org

☉ **Giving Life, Risking Death: Maternal Mortality in Burkina Faso**

More than 2,000 women die in Burkina Faso every year from complications of pregnancy and childbirth. Some die because they cannot reach a suitable health facility or because their relatives cannot pay the fees demanded. Others die because of shortages – of blood, drugs, equipment or qualified medical staff. Maternal mortality takes its toll on the poorest and least educated women. Amnesty International calls for better information and services for family planning, for the removal of financial barriers to maternal health care and for improvements in access to care.

AI, December 2009 (113 pp)
www.amnesty.org

☉ **Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives**

Catalyst believes that men have a critical role to play in diversity and inclusion efforts, especially initiatives to eliminate gender bias. In What Change Agents Need to Know, the first report in the Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives series, Catalyst provided pivotal information about the cultural forces that can undermine organisational efforts to fully engage men as champions of gender initiatives. In the second report, Stacking the Deck for Success, Catalyst examines factors that can heighten or dampen men's interest in acquiring skills to become effective change agents for gender equality at work.

Catalyst, 2009 (38 pp)
www.catalyst.org

☉ **Farmers in a Changing Climate: Does Gender Matter? Food Security in Andhra Pradesh, India**

FAO and local Indian institutions in Andhra Pradesh addressed the gender aspects of coping with climate variability and long-term change in the project Gender-sensitive Strategies for Adaptation to Climate Change: Drawing on Indian Farmers' Experiences. The project captured how men and women farmers in drought-prone districts perceived and responded to seasonal climate variability and long term changes in the climate. Participatory focus group discussions and a quantitative survey were used to collect the data. The farmers' accounts, combined with institutional and climate analysis, explored the climate risks men and women farmers are facing as they adapt to the drought conditions and develop coping strategies for food security.

FAO, 2010 (82p)
www.fao.org/climatechange

☉ **Gender and Land Rights: Understanding Complexities; Adjusting Policies**

Increasing women's access to land is crucial to fight hunger and poverty. However, gender disparities in land access remain significant in most countries, regardless of their level of development. A new FAO database helps to understand the factors that prevent women from accessing land; and to design better policies to effectively address this situation.

FAO Policy Brief 8, March 2010 (2p)
www.fao.org

☉ **Gender Inequality and the MDGs: What are the Missing Dimensions?**

As world leaders meet in New York in September 2010 to review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), new research by the OECD Development Centre finds that looking at women's control over resources, their level of decision-making power in the family and household, and their degree of control over their own physical security can shed light on the bottlenecks that hamper further progress across all the MDG targets.

OECD Issues Brief, September 2010 (8 p)
www.oecd.org

☉ **Her Mile. Women's Rights and Access to Land. The Last Stretch of Road to Eradicate Hunger**

This publication argues that "women's rights to land and natural resources are the missing link in the analysis of the food crisis and women's empowerment is the factor on which donors have less invested in their response to the increasing number of hungry and malnourished people."

ActionAid, March 2010 (38 pp)
www.actionaid.it

☉ **Land Tenure, Gender, and Globalization. Research and Analysis from Africa, Asia, and Latin America**

Drawing from field research in Cameroon, Ghana, Viet Nam, and the Amazon forests of Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru, this book explores the relationship between gender and land, revealing the workings of global capital and of people's responses to it. A central theme is the people's resistance to global forces, frequently through an insistence on the uniqueness of their livelihoods. The book addresses a gap in the literature on land tenure and gender in developing countries. It raises new questions about the process of globalization, particularly about who the actors are (local people, the state, NGOs, multinational companies) and the shifting relations amongst them. The book also challenges the very concepts of gender, land, and globalization.

Zubaan/IDRC, 2010 (312 pp)
www.idrc.ca



☉ **Resource guide on gender and climate change**

This guide aims to inform practitioners and policy makers of the linkages between gender equality and climate change, and their importance in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It makes the case for including women's voices, needs and expertise in climate change policy and programming, and demonstrates how women's contributions can strengthen the effectiveness of climate change measures. .

UNDP, May 2009 (134 pp)
www.undp.org

☉ **Strong Women, Strong Communities. CARE's holistic approach to empowering women and girls in the fight against poverty**

Increasingly, CARE's work focuses on addressing the injustice, discrimination and exclusion that prevent women and girls from achieving their full potential. CARE concluded a four-year study assessing programs serving women and girls in 24 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The learning from this research illustrates what "empowerment" really means for women and girls in developing countries, the obstacles they face in realizing their potential – and steps policymakers and practitioners can take to help.

CARE, May 2010 (46 pp)
www.care.org

☉ **The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010. Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises**

This year's report focuses on a particular group of countries, countries in protracted crisis, where levels of undernourishment are estimated to be at almost 40%. It examines the difficulties faced in trying to turn around the situation in such countries, not least the difficulty of moving beyond the mindset of humanitarian intervention towards a broader-based development agenda. The report highlights actions that can be taken to rationalize the way protracted crises are handled. These include more holistic assessment of the crisis itself, including a deeper understanding of the drivers of crises; building on local community responses and institutions; introducing or supporting social protection mechanisms such as food-based safety nets; and moving from food aid to a broader-based food assistance approach. The final section provides recommendations on ways to improve engagement with countries in protracted crisis.

WFP/FAO, October 2010 (60 pp)
www.fao.org/publications/sofi

☉ **Le genre à la radio. Manuel didactique à l'intention des animateurs des radios communautaires**

Gender on the radio. A training manual for community radio presenters

This is a theoretical and practical training manual for presenters working at community radio stations, which gives media professionals a framework for gender analysis on a sectoral basis, using simple, but efficient tools.

Institut Kilimanjaro (Benin) (40 pp)
[Available at www.genreenaction.net](http://www.genreenaction.net)

☉ **Market Access and Agricultural Product Marketing: Promoting Farmer Initiatives**

One of the main difficulties cited by crop farmers and livestock keepers is selling their products for a good price. Market access is in itself a problem for many smallholders. Many also face problems in getting what they consider a fair return for their labours. The presence of middle-men, price fluctuations and disorganised supply chains are all frequent complaints. In order to overcome these problems, some farmers have developed individual and collective initiatives. But these remain too few in number, and there is scant knowledge about how and where they operate.

Against this background, Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural, a forum for rural development in the South, launched a programme to investigate these issues. The document produced as a result of the inquiry is designed as a resource compendium of methods and tools used to create different forms of debate and exchange. Much of the space is devoted to case studies of initiatives run by farmers and their support organisations to help improve marketing of their products. Among them are examples of cashew nut producers in Benin, farmers and women processors in Burkina Faso who are organising the marketing of white rice, and contracts that are being set up between onion farmers in Burkina Faso and buyers in Ghana.

AFD/CTA/Inter-réseaux, 2010 (168 pp)
www.inter-reseaux.org

☉ **Men are changing. Case study evidence on work with men and boys to promote gender equality and positive masculinities**

In recent decades, interest in understanding masculinities and working with men and boys on gender issues has increased enormously. More is known about different ways to engage men and boys to challenge harmful expressions of masculinity and to promote gender equity. Men's ability and desire to change is increasingly understood; a recognition of the benefits this brings to themselves, and to other men, women and children. This report seeks to strengthen and broaden the evidence base on working with men and boys. It describes and analyzes 12 programmes from around the world that sought to alter the attitudes and behaviours of men in relation to sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, violence and relationships. The report discusses challenges in this field, provides an overview of emerging good practice, and makes recommendations for improving existing policy work, programmes and services. Its findings are clear: working with men and boys is effective, men are changing, but greater efforts are still needed to scale up gender-transformative interventions with men and women.

IPPF, March 2010 (78 pp)
www.ippf.org

☉ **Référentiel pour les formatrices et les formateurs en genre et développement**

A reference for trainers on gender and development

This reference guide proposes a common set of fundamental principles, commitments and skills for use by trainers in gender and development. Its purpose is to guide training practices in this field. It is designed to be modifiable and open to further improvement through the contribution of reflections and practices. The guide is mainly derived from the expertise and work of French-speaking gender specialists.

Le Monde selon les Femmes - CIEF genre | Réseau Genre en Action | Adéquations | Aster-International, April 2010 (56 pp)
www.aster-international.org