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Dear Readers,

Welcome to Dimitra Newsletter 22. This issue places the spotlight on the Dimitra community listeners' clubs, with a special dossier made up of several articles that focus on the impact of projects under way, the development of this approach and the launch of new initiatives.

In Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the rate at which listeners' clubs are being formed and the fact that the approach is now being reproduced in various settings are indications of the success of this strategy and the extent to which it is proving sustainable. In South Kivu, for example, a new formula has been tested with excellent results: the introduction of Farmer Field and Life Schools has been supported by existing community listeners' clubs. In addition, a process for evaluating the impact of the clubs has revealed an unexpected but promising factor: the improved capacity of club members to engage in more formal rural structures. In this sense, the clubs are paving the way for greater participation of women in producers' organizations and rural cooperatives.

The success of the clubs has led to the setting up of new projects in Burundi, Senegal, Mauritania and the DRC (Oriental Province). At the request of various organizations and agencies, FAO-Dimitra is helping to implement these projects based on gender sensitive participatory methodologies that are flexible and well adapted, with a goal that remains unchanged: the empowerment of men and women in a rural environment.

Still on the question of empowerment, we highlight FAO's Capitalisation of good practices in support of agricultural production and food security project, which, together with VIE Kande Ni Bayra, is implementing an initiative in Niger to empower producers' organizations that are members of the Cigaba Union. In this country, the position of women in producers' organizations and the issue of gender in agricultural innovations have been explored in two separate studies carried out by the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division of FAO, with the support of Dimitra. The results are presented in this issue.

This year, FAO has published two key documents to help ensure that gender issues are included in sustainable rural and agricultural development strategies. Firstly, there is the new Policy on Gender Equality, which places gender at the heart of the work done by the Organization. The second document, Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, aims to help governments to protect people's property and access rights to land, forests and fisheries.

On the issue of land access, an article presents FAO's Gender and Land project currently being implemented in Mozambique. This seeks to help communities to assert their rights and the government to address gender issues in a proactive manner, through awareness raising and capacity strengthening activities, including the training of paralegals.

Elisabeth Atangana from Cameroon is profiled in the Women's Portraits section. President of the Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO) and the Regional Platform of Farmers' Organizations in Central Africa (PROPAC), she has been appointed FAO Special Ambassador for Cooperatives.

Finally, this issue presents two interesting networks. The ICT4D Youth Network, launched in Uganda by WOUNGNET (Women of Uganda Network), is an interactive platform where young people can discuss and exchange ideas about the use and usefulness of information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D). A very different initiative, the Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition (AAHM) is a global partnership whose members share a common goal: eradicating hunger and malnutrition in the world.

We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter!

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