We capitalise when we take the time to think about the reasons for our successes or failures, which enables us to learn lessons and improve our activities. However, we can systematise our efforts to make them more effective. This is what the action learning workshop organised recently in Niamey aimed to encourage, by clarifying the various stages involved in the capitalisation of good practices. The participants analysed the activities associated with this process, which include systematisation, organisation, documentation, repackaging and dissemination, sharing and taking ownership. The workshop also allowed the demystification of some jargon words like “knowledge management”, “capitalisation” and “good practice”.

The capitalisation of good practices is not a simple, linear process. Rather, it is repetitive and participatory and involves the following stages: being involved in the action – evaluating experiences and deriving lessons from them – gathering and documenting good practices – sharing and dissemination of the good practices – adopting, adapting and applying the good practices. Gender issues are taken into account throughout the process, at each stage of the capitalisation process.

The action learning workshop in Niamey was attended by 21 people, a third of whom were women. It brought together the Capitalisation project team, several members of the IARBIC project (Intensifying agriculture by strengthening cooperative input shops), of the Emergency Rehabilitation and Coordination Unit (ERCU), ONG-VIE (Dimitra’s partner), as well as representatives of three producers’ organisations: Mooriben, the Réseau national des chambres d’agriculture du Niger (RECA – National Network of Nigerien Chambers of Agriculture) and the Fédération des Coopératives Maraîchères du Niger (FCMN-Niya – Federation of Nigerien Market Gardening Cooperatives).

The participants went away with an action plan and a promise to meet again in three months to exchange their good practice sheets. A handbook on the capitalisation of good practices with a gender dimension is due for publication in 2012.

Some useful resources shared during the training course:

- Knowledge sharing for development – e-learning module www.imarkgroup.org/moduleDescription_en.asp?id=138#content
- Du terrain au partage (Sharing experiences from the field) – handbook on building on experiences (in French) www.iedafrique.org/du-terrain-au-partage.html


Within the framework of FAO’s Knowledge Management and Gender Programme, the Capitalisation of good practices in support of agricultural production and food security project organised an action learning workshop on the capitalisation of good practices in Niamey (Niger) from 5 to 9 December 2011.