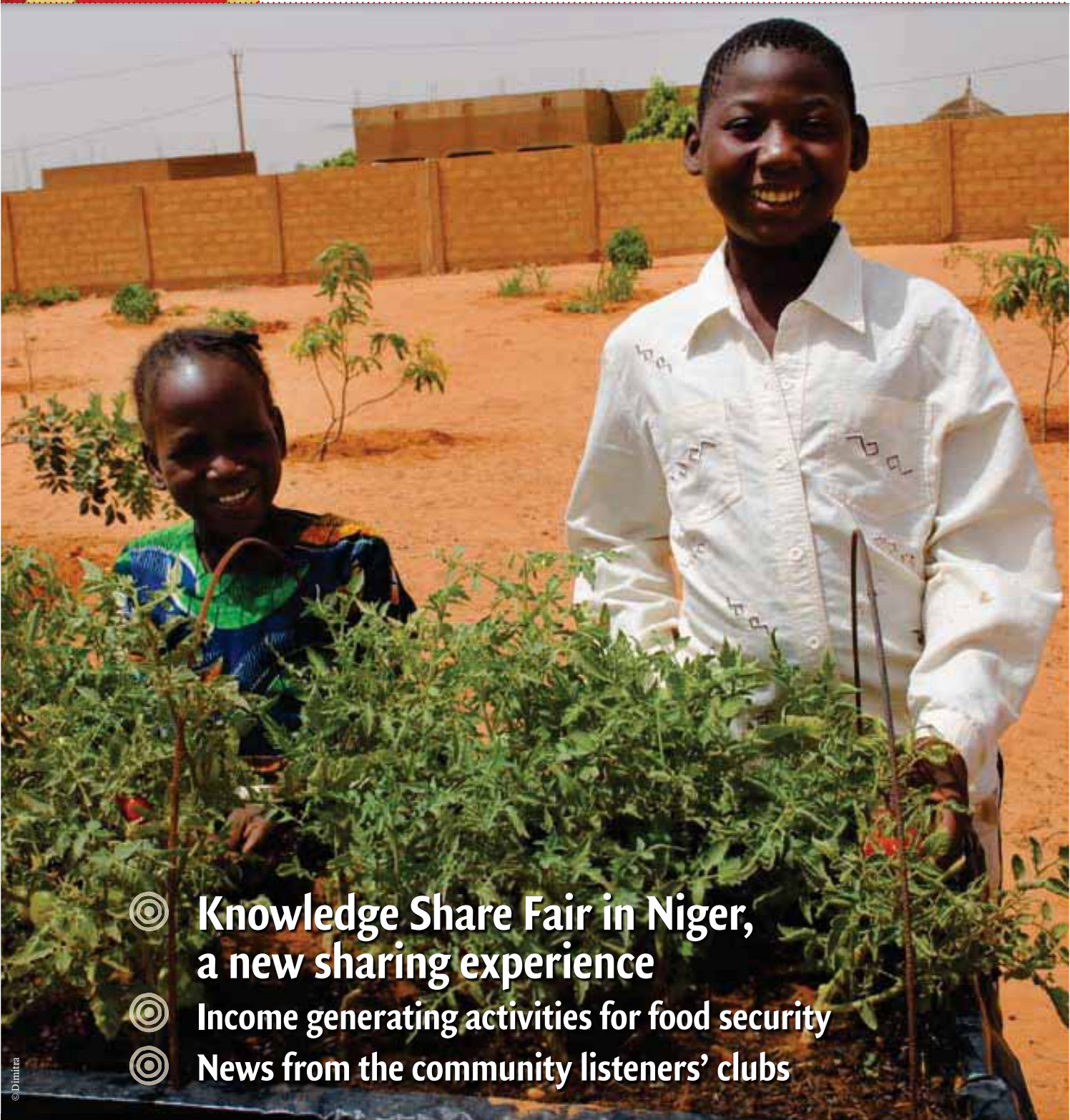




Dimitra Newsletter

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

☀ Table of contents

- 3 | Dossier Knowledge Share Fair:
 - Knowledge Share Fair in Niger, a new sharing experience
 - Warrantage and grouped orders for inputs
 - Micro-gardens at the Knowledge Share Fair
- 7 | Communication and literacy for the empowerment of rural women. News from the Niger listeners' clubs
- 9 | Women's Portraits – Adeline Nsimire Balika
- 11 | Radio Bubusa FM and the South Kivu community listeners' clubs honoured
- 12 | The World March of Women 2010 in Bukavu: Demilitarising the eastern DRC to make it a region free from violence
- 13 | Heavy loads: Paying homage to the women of eastern DRC
- 14 | Benin – Empowering women to help them guarantee food security
- 16 | Uganda – Improving the food security, income and livelihoods of rural farmers
- 18 | Natural wild silk: Making the most of Madagascar's biodiversity
- 20 | RDC – Modern beekeeping and capitalising on local know-how in Lwalaba forest
- 21 | FAO and its work on the elimination of child labour in agriculture
- 22 | FAO Agri-Gender Statistics Toolkit – Sharpening the focus on gender in agriculture
- 23 | Resources



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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