



Dimitra Newsletter

Newsletter N° 11 – Brussels, October 2005

RURAL WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

The dynamics of women's networks

Dear friends,

We are very sad to inform you of the loss of Sissel Ekaas, who passed away in Oslo on June 23, 2005. From 1998 until November 2004 she was Director of the Gender and Population Division at FAO, after which she was appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations as his Deputy Special Representative for the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Sissel was devoted to the cause of rural women, reducing gender inequality and fighting food insecurity. She was a strong source of support to the Dimitra project and while she will be greatly missed, her spirit of optimism, energy and determination will remain with us.

This is the 11th Dimitra newsletter. Our last edition was replaced by the distribution of the Dimitra CD-ROM. Many of you took time to return the short survey we enclosed with it and we would like to thank you for this valuable feedback. We have also received numerous messages telling us that the newsletter is a much appreciated information resource and we hope that you will continue sending

us your comments and suggestions.

FAO-Dimitra/CTA Workshop

From 13-17 June 2005, we had the privilege, thanks to the financial support of the King Baudouin Foundation, the Belgian Development Cooperation and CTA (the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU) to co-organise a workshop with CTA in Brussels. This event brought together members of the two networks for a week of lively and productive exchange on the topic of 'Rural women, dynamisation of networks and the fight against HIV/AIDS in rural areas'. The 22 participants came from Africa, the Near East, the Caribbean and the Pacific in order to discuss how to strengthen their networks, to exchange experiences and strategies on how to effectively address HIV/AIDS in their countries and to consider future ways of collaborating more closely to achieve common goals. A summary report of the five days of groupwork, presentations and discussions is included in this newsletter and a more detailed publication is in preparation and will be distributed in the near future.



Women and rural radios

In March 2005, our Senegalese partner, Enda-Pronat, together with the National Network of Rural Women of Senegal, organised a workshop on one of the most widely used tools in Africa, rural community radio. Community radios can greatly contribute to dynamising networks and are a driving force for local development in rural communities throughout Africa. This workshop, entitled 'Women, rural radio and new information and communication technologies' highlighted the need for more gender awareness amongst rural radio producers and journalists and called for increased collaboration between women's organisations and radio stations.

Women working for change

Many of this newsletter's pages resonate with the voices of rural women who continue to tirelessly work for change in their local communities. In addition to taking care of the family, agricultural work and domestic tasks,

they are busy developing their entrepreneurial activities, educating and informing themselves on their rights and striving to take a stand in politics and against violence and conflict. Dimitra network members in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi speak out on their experiences and the issues that concern them. The situation of child soldiers and the HIV/AIDS pandemic remain major problems in these regions, in addition to the heavy weight of tradition and its often negative impact on girls' education.

An important event held in March this year was the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. We take a look back at some of the main points which arose during these discussions and their impact on rural women.

Better information access for rural women

As always, ICTs are emphasised as an essential tool for sustainable development. Traditional techniques, such as puppets, can also be used to good effect, particularly, to address taboo or difficult issues such as HIV/AIDS. Women of Uganda Network (Wougnet) report on how they have tailored a programme to bring improved information access to rural communities. We are also looking forward to discussions on improved information access during the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society which will be held in Tunis in November.

If you have internet access you can follow updates on the project's activities on our website at:

<http://www.fao.org/sd/dimitra>

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to your feedback.

MARCELA VILLARREAL, Director,
Gender and Population Division, FAO

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FAO-Dimitra/CTA Workshop “Rural women, dynamisation of networks and the fight against HIV/AIDS in rural areas”

BRUSSELS, 13-17 JUNE 2005

Thanks to the financial support of the King Baudouin Foundation, the Belgian Development Cooperation and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA), Dimitra and CTA hosted a workshop in Brussels from 13-17 June 2005. The event brought together representatives from organisations working with and for rural women in Africa, the Near East, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions. However, arrival in Brussels was just the starting point for a week-long journey of sharing ideas, pooling skills, building alliances and partnerships across countries, regions and continents and defining a common strategy...

A total of 22 representatives of organisations from the CTA and Dimitra networks gathered together for the Brussels workshop with three main objectives in mind:

- to look at ways of enabling networks to grow stronger, in terms of their abilities, their capacity for exchange and information, attracting funds to assure their sustainability and developing strategies together to strengthen one another;



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- to exchange experiences and knowledge on the impact of HIV/AIDS in rural areas, particularly on women, who are the principal victims of this pandemic and to analyse the effects on food security and rural community life; and
- to define common activities that could reinforce the various organisations and networks that are participating in the workshop.

Networking helps the Dimitra and CTA partner organisations to pool their knowledge and skills and develop practical and dynamic activities to prevent and fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic in rural areas.

Marcela Villarreal, Director of the Gender and Population Division at FAO, Luc Tayart de Borms, Managing Director of the King Baudouin Foundation, Joergen Maersk Pedersen, Director of FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium and Dr. Hansjörg Neun, Director of CTA, lent their strong sup-

port to the event and took an active part in the discussions during the workshop's final day.

Sharing experiences

For the first three days, the participants reviewed events that had particularly marked them at the personal, organisational and wider national and global levels, as well as their involvement in networking for rural women and the fight against HIV/AIDS. This provided everyone with an insight into each others circumstances – their motivation and the environment in which they live and work, and their main priorities and concerns over recent years.

A particular focus was placed on the role of networking and the impact of HIV/AIDS on agriculture and rural communities in the different countries and regions, particularly on rural women, who are the most affected group.

There was agreement that information on this issue is increasing at international and national levels due to intensified advocacy, accurate statistical information and improved nutrition awareness. However, at grassroots level, access to information and resources remains problematic, mainly due to cultural factors and geographical isolation.

One point emphasised throughout the discussions was the need to focus on resource mobilisation and promotion of rural women's status, as well as training and information dissemination through awareness-raising activities.

A participative methodology

As part of the self-management approach of the workshop, the participants split into small groups based on geographical and/or language affinity, to continue with more focused and in-depth exchanges on their particular areas of

work and interest. This encouraged greater control over the direction of the work and freer expression of experiences and stories, as well as practical proposals for plans of action and solutions to the many common challenges faced.

The participants identified what had worked well for them in the past and also considered what additional action needed to be taken to better fulfil their objectives. This was also the opportunity to look and plan for the future by defining shared goals and generating novel ideas to further empower and improve the status of rural women and fight against HIV/AIDS.

A common action plan was agreed on by the whole group to increase their capacity for exchange and information and propose new strategies to help them support one another in the future, cutting across organisations and national boundaries.

Defining a common strategy

An important part of the workshop was also set aside to look at the preferred and available information and communication tools and techniques for reaching out to local communities. Rural radio experts from FAO (Jean-Pierre Ilboudo) and CTA (Oumy N'diaye) focused on the impact that radio stations can have in promoting local development, empowerment of rural communities and information dissemination on crucial issues. As a result of these presentations, participants said they would look into developing their expertise in this area and getting projects off the ground.

New electronic tools for networking and exchanging information on the Internet, such as the information management and resource kit (IMARK) and Dgroups (see page 19), which were showcased by Sophie Treinen, FAO information management specialist, also raised a lot of interest and will certainly be further exploited. Dimitra will start using the Dgroups to reinforce communication capacities amongst its members.



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As well as sharing information amongst themselves, the participants also had an opportunity to interact with multi-lateral and bi-lateral donor agencies. These included the Belgian Development Cooperation, FAO, the World Bank, UNAIDS, CTA, CONCORD (the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) and the World Health Organisation to have very specific information on the different funding policies and partnership possibilities available to them in their countries and at the regional level.

Moving forwards... together

Representatives of rural organisations need to be well informed and trained so as to access available funding. Within networks, information sharing, participation and training are essential factors to enable grassroots organisations to represent their own interests.

During the final open session of the workshop, the participants took the opportunity to share their stories and experiences with a wider public. This included representatives from the King Baudouin Foundation, the Belgian Development Cooperation, European Commission, ACP Ambassadors and Embassy Representatives, UNAIDS, the World Health Organisation, the Belgian Women and Development Commission, representatives from European NGOs, etc.

As the workshop drew to a close, the participants took time to discuss the impact of what they had learned and experienced over the week. They also considered the commitments they need to make to implement their new plans and strategies in their everyday work and networking activities.

Common Action Plan

Context: The globalisation and feminisation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, due to the vulnerability of rural women: social status, family violence and armed conflicts, poor economic situation, illiteracy, lack of appropriate means of communication, etc.

Tools: Use of networks

Objectives

To strengthen the organisational and operational framework of rural women's organisations, with the emergence of national networks in mind.

To establish a mechanism for linking focal points with a view to the emergence of regional networks

Together with the national rural women's networks, to draw up and carry out an action programme against HIV/AIDS, taking into account the aspects of food security and illiteracy

Evaluation:

It is recommended that the evaluation stage should consist of a participatory assessment, involving the rural women's networks first and foremost.

Actions

To organise meetings for information and awareness-raising concerning the dynamics of the rural women's networks

To develop local and regional partnerships

To organise training sessions for rural women's associations (network dynamics and HIV/AIDS), in order to empower rural women.

To reinforce the institutional and organisational capabilities of the focal points, in particular by organising training, exchange meetings and by acquiring logistical material (NICT and others)

Information and training meetings concerning HIV/AIDS, agricultural policies, environmental protection (conventions on desertification, biodiversity, etc), education of women and young girls

Meetings to determine lobbying strategies to be adopted by the rural women's networks concerning the issue of the HIV/AIDS pandemic

Implementation of mechanisms allowing the rural women's networks to take part in implementing, monitoring and assessing strategies combating poverty in these countries.

Everyone agreed on one thing: they were strengthened and energised thanks to the open discussions, the wealth of information shared and the group dynamism.

A publication on the work and results of the workshop will be published by Dimitra and distributed in the coming months. 📖

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Some comments from the final evaluation of the week's work:

- 📍 "I have a new vision of the needs and the possible solutions.
We are not alone and together we can move mountains"
- 📍 "I appreciate the impact and outreach of working through networks"
- 📍 "Now I'm aware of the amount of help available and how to access it"
- 📍 "We got an overview of the breadth of AIDS ; the strength that lies within women's associations to fight against this illness when they organise themselves"
- 📍 "What is making you so happy?" – "It's the Dimitra spirit!"





“Women, rural radios and new information and communication technologies”

THIES, SENEGAL, 30 MARCH - 1 APRIL 2005

In rural areas, community radios play a fundamental role as tools for local development and for empowering women through a participatory approach. This potential needs to be developed to strengthen women's status.

At the end of March 2005, Enda-Pronat and the National Network of Rural Women of Senegal (Réseau National des Femmes Rurales du Sénégal - RNFRS) organised a 3-day workshop to formulate a project entitled, 'Women, rural radios and new information and communication technologies', with the support of the Dimitra Project, the FAO Extension, Education and Communication Service and the WAICENT Capacity Building and Outreach Branch.

This workshop constitutes one of the follow-up actions recommended by the Workshop "Rural Women and Land", organised by Enda-Pronat and Dimitra in Thies in February 2003. The aim was to reinforce the internal and external communication and information capabilities of the RNFRS. This network is currently made up of 150 grassroots organisations and its secretariat is uniquely composed of rural women.

Women are under-represented in radios

Rural women have great hopes in community radio stations because they could enable them to express themselves and to make their needs known. Finding solutions to their problems could help reinforce their social position. Women are under-represented in the daily operations of the radios for various reasons, among which lack of time and illiteracy. During the dry season, women spend most of their day at the well, and after this, they are too tired to listen to any radio broadcast, no matter how important the subject matter might be. It is vital that more women are recruited, trained and involved as radio producers and presenters, and encouraged to contribute more to the content of the broadcasts. This can be achieved by reinforcing synergies between women's organisations and community radios. The RNFRS commitment to community radios will help bring about improved support for local development and the empowerment of women.

Synergies between women's groups and rural community radios

For the workshop participants, this was an important opportunity to create synergies between the representatives of the RNFRS and to establish links with community radios. This would enable them in:

- reinforcing, exchanging and communicating between grassroots organisations and decision-makers through rural radios and NICTs;
- using the national network of rural community radios as a tool for social commu-

nication for the National Network of Rural Women of Senegal;

- setting up radios (run by women).

Participants at the event included rural women, representatives of NGOs, AMARC and ENDA Cyberpop, the directors of the community radio stations, the written press (SUD-FM, PANOS) and the two consultants who had prepared the workshop's preliminary report. As a first step on the road to progress, the workshop aimed to make radio station directors aware of gender issues and to encourage RNFRS women communicators to participate in community radio activities whilst training them in the use of this tool.

Participation and dialogue

A participatory methodology was used to identify the needs of rural women in terms of information and communication. This allowed everyone to take part in the dialogue, helped gather proposals for better use of the radio and promoted the involvement of the rural community (particularly women) in defining programmes.

After taking time to reflect together, the participants highlighted other expectations, including:

- the development of an inter-network synergy (to widen the circle between entities working in the same sector);

- a clear identification of the partners (community radios and rural women's network); and
- the training of women in using radio tools, and for radio broadcasters in meeting women's needs.

Challenges

Some of the challenges mentioned during the group discussions include:

- how farmers can make themselves heard and take advantage of other people's experiences;
- radio stations and telephones exist but not all villages are equipped;
- how to resolve problems related to the isolation of the villages and the high costs of the radio services;
- how to resolve communication problems linked to illiteracy;
- how to equip the women of the organisations and provide them with tools enabling them to be informed about current prices in central markets;
- how to create community radios in disadvantaged areas and improve the telephone network.

The close of the workshop resulted in the establishment of a partnership project between the RNFRS and the rural community radios. This project will lead to the organisation of training workshops for network members and radio operators, and the setting up of systems to monitor and assess radio broadcasts. ¶

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The 3rd Amarc Pan-African conference: “Local content for the sustainable development of community radio in Africa”

NAIROBI, KENYA, 18-23 APRIL 2005

The 3rd Pan-African Assembly of Community Radio Broadcasters gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, from 18-23 April 2005. Community radio broadcasting in local languages allows the participation of rural communities, promotes local content development and is an important factor in bringing about social change.

The AMARC Pan-African Conference is held every four years to enable community radio stakeholders to meet and work together on a common strategy and action plan.

The Conference theme, “Local Content for the Sustainable Development of Community Radio in Africa”, builds on radio as the most accessible communication medium across the continent and enhances its role in international processes such as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and international targets for development.

The Dimitra coordinator participated at the Conference to present the project and its future links with community radios.

There is a clear convergence of goals between Dimitra and the community radios, particularly as regards:

- working towards social change through information and communication;
- promoting the involvement of the community and the development of local content.

Both factors are linked to the highlighting of local knowledge and experience.

Development of local content

In the past 10 years, community radio has established an innovative role for itself in development processes in Africa, helping address crucial issues such as human rights, livelihoods and governance. During the discussions

at the Conference, Steve Buckley, President of AMARC International, explained how an enabling legal environment could promote the installation and success of community radios, as well as the production of good content.

In Kenya, where the Conference took place, there are many commercial radios but only one community radio, Radio Mang'elete, which broadcasts in Kikamba. This radio has been created by 33 women's groups and first went on the air in February 2004.

Community radio: a tool for women's empowerment

Delegates agreed to strengthen the AMARC Africa network by continuing to sensitise and empower women from grassroots level about their participation in community radio so that they can hold decision-making and leadership positions in their communities. Many women's groups see community radio as an important information and communication tool which they can use to participate in their region's development.

This meeting clearly highlighted the vitality, dynamism and determination of the Women's Network of AMARC-Africa and of the women's movement in Africa in general, so it seems that the outlook is bright for women's participation in community radio! ♪

For more information on the conference, see the AMARC website: <http://africa.amarc.org/>



Radio in rural areas: the word is on the airwaves

The informal rural communication channels of days gone by – discussions around a well, in the fields and at the weekly markets (loumas) – helped to spread the news around. Nowadays, new information and communication channels – radio, television, Internet – can carry crucial information for social change much further afield.

Rural populations live in remote and isolated areas where lack of access to information, transport, illiteracy and cultural or linguistic differences are recurring problems. Community radios enable them to have easier access to the information they need.

In the district of Koumpentoum (central-east Senegal), 400 km from Dakar, the community radio station Niani Fm is helping link up rural populations and is broadcasting content essentially provided by local people. Programmes address themes which are central to development, such as agriculture, livestock breeding, fishing, transport, as well as social issues, including the place and role of rural women, education and health.

Valuing local languages

Wolof, Pulaar, Mandingue, and Sereer are the languages spoken by the Senegalese people and they are promoted and valued through interactive broadcasts. Throughout Africa rural community radio stations are using local languages to encourage more effective exchanges of information and knowledge.

In the words of the chairman of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN): “The African community must ensure that its linguistic heritage is fully exploited in order to bring its know-how to the world, and participate fully in this knowledge sharing society”. ♪

Summary of an article by Mr. Baba THIAM

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Looking at global trends and gender mainstreaming ten years after the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action

In the ten years since governments committed themselves to the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action, the global setting has changed drastically, creating new challenges for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly for rural women.

The impact of globalisation

The complex process of globalisation has seen rural women risk losing control over their access to land and earnings when food crops are switched to cash crops. Privatisation has made it increasingly difficult for rural women in particular to access productive assets, knowledge, and services.

Land, property and inheritance rights

Rural women's human rights, household food security, as well as land, property, and inheritance rights need to be addressed. Even when national laws give men and women equal rights to own and control land, customary laws often prevent women from fully owning land.

Shifts in the rural population landscape

Rural demographics are changing and there are increasing numbers of female-, elderly- and orphan-headed households as a result of male migration for employment, family disintegration, wars and conflicts, and HIV/AIDS mortality among younger adults. Both the family and the household unit are changing along with how agricultural production is carried out.

Increasing information for and on rural women

To meet the challenges laid out in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), rural women need information about their situation and their rights, and governments need information about rural women, particularly in the context of their relations with men in terms of their access to, and control over, resources.

Urban-rural digital divide

Over the last two decades, the types of information and the speed at which they have been made available to vast numbers of users have grown substantially. Yet the digital divide between urban and rural areas and men and women persists and is widening.

Gaps and challenges

- Even when participatory approaches are recognised as being essential and are applied, they still fail to ensure that women are included in planning processes.
- Gender-sensitive indicators, gender disaggregated data and statistics, and the capacity to analyse and interpret these data are crucial to agricultural policy and planning, yet are difficult to develop and use.



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- Information and communication technologies (ICTs), like all technologies have the potential to empower rural women, but it is crucial to understand rural women's particular needs and constraints related to ICTs and to create a helpful environment that allows them to enjoy these benefits fully.

Some FAO responses

- The Dimitra project provides a tool through which grassroots women's organisations can make their voices heard internationally. This is an important tool for advocacy and networking.
- FAO has helped improve global access to information about rural women by broadening global search mechanisms on its website; increasing the availability of information on policy, planning and advocacy, as well as carrying out continuous research on rural women and gender issues related to agriculture and rural development.
- FAO has been advancing the development and use of gender-sensitive data and statistics to improve agricultural and rural development policy and planning.

Responding to the challenge: re-committing to women's empowerment

The Beijing Platform for Action, and more recently, the MDGs have brought to the fore the urgent need to ensure that recognition of women's human rights is translated into the enjoyment of those rights. FAO's experience against this global backdrop has shown that gender mainstreaming must continue to be rigorously applied. It is essential to link policies, strategies and action plans to lessen the gap between theory and action. Some proposals for ways forward include:

- Reaffirming the commitment to women's rights and gender equality.
- Reaffirming the application of the gender perspective and refocus on achieving women's empowerment.
- Building national demand and commitment.
- Strengthening organisational capacity. ♪

Summary of excerpts from a paper entitled "Ten years after the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (BPFA): Global trends and gender mainstreaming" by Catherine Hill (FAO Consultant) and Yianna Lambrou (Gender and Population Division, FAO).

To access the document see: <http://www.fao.org/sd/>

Beijing +10: the struggle for land rights continues

The International Land Coalition and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) seized the opportunity of the March 2005 review of the Beijing Platform for Action to organise a special programme on Women's Access to Land and Water. The goal was to promote empowerment of women by giving them rights over resources and particularly property rights in the context of the Millennium Development Goals.

The importance of women's land rights

During the discussions IFAD's Senior Gender Advisor expressed grave concern for the limited attention given to women's land rights generally, and specifically in the context of the ten-year review. The need to target women's concerns in view of their key roles in economic empowerment was also emphasised. Findings from many developing countries presented by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), confirm the direct relationship between women's secure access to land and increased food and nutrition security.

Focus on women's rights

A strong emphasis was placed on the need for stronger joint advocacy efforts at both the national and global levels, along with the importance of using or establishing instruments to assist women to uphold their rights. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was cited as the only ratified convention that includes women's land rights. Panellists from non-governmental organizations provided a community-level focus. The Director of Society for Partners in Development from Nepal spoke of the important role of social mobilisation in changing the mindsets of ministries. The Asian Women Land Rights Consult presented their advocacy efforts aimed at obtaining government agreement to provide women's centres in villages where food insecurity exists. ¶

For more information see:
<http://www.landcoalition.org>

Source: International Land Coalition, Advancing Together Newsletter Vol 2 No 2 June 2005

The Millennium Development Goals: lessons from Land Coalition Partners

Promote gender equality and empower women (Goal 3) and Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1)

Women own less than two percent of all land and receive less than five percent of all support services, despite playing an increasingly key role in agriculture and household food security. Women and woman-headed households are a growing majority of the extreme poor. Particular care should be given to ownership and inheritance rights for women and girls. In countries where laws allow for the names of both spouses to appear on the land certificate, rural women can benefit from assistance in understanding both their rights and land administration procedures. Special attention should be paid to entrenching women's rights when there is a change in tenure systems. Where shifts from customary or communal-based tenure to individual tenure systems occur, women risk losing the land provided to them under traditional tenure arrangements. Women's equal participation in decision-making at all levels is necessary to ensure equal economic opportunities, including access to land and other natural resources. ¶

For more information see:
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
<http://www.landcoalition.org/>

WORLD FOOD DAY | 16 OCTOBER, 2005

"Agriculture and intercultural dialogue – it's our common heritage"

FAO marks World Food Day each year on 16 October, the day on which the Organization was founded in 1945. This year's observance, as FAO celebrates its 60th anniversary is on Monday 17 October.

The World Food Day and Telefood theme for 2005, 'Agriculture and intercultural dialogue' recalls the contribution of different cultures to world agriculture and argues that sincere intercultural dialogue is a precondition for progress against hunger and environmental degradation.

Although the substitution of farming and livestock raising for hunting and gathering as the main mode of food production – the birth of agriculture – occurred independently in many parts of the world around 10 000 years ago, the history of agriculture is full of examples of important intercultural exchanges. Throughout history, the intercultural movement of crops and livestock breeds revolutionized diets and reduced poverty.

South-South cooperation

Intercultural dialogue between developing countries facing similar food and agriculture problems makes good sense and is more than simply transferring technologies, seeds and breeds. South-south cooperation to share knowledge, expertise and experiences has re-

sulted in the transfer of many solutions suited to local conditions. While international initiatives and civil society networks promote intercultural dialogue to help achieve goals set by the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals,

World Food Day provides an opportunity at the local, national and international levels to further dialogue and enhance solidarity. ¶

For more information on World Food Day see:
<http://www.fao.org/wfd/2005/>



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A practical look at gender and land administration

Women and land administration is a sensitive issue that always provokes strong feelings. In order to help guide practitioners through the complex maze of issues at stake, Oxfam GB has prepared an overview of a recently published World Bank synthesis of information, ideas and suggested best practices gathered from four case studies in Ghana, Lao, Bolivia and Azerbaijan.

The World Bank report entitled “Gender Issues and Best Practices in Land Administration Projects: A Synthesis Report” was published in July 2005 by the Bank’s Agriculture and Rural Development Department. It is divided into four main sections:

- Why does gender matter for land policy? Theory and evidence;
- Actors in the struggle to improve women’s land rights;
- Priority gender issues in land administration projects;
- Lessons learned and recommendations.

At a practical level, the report raises questions and provides checklists, as well as a matrix on different forms of property ownership and a sample questionnaire for data collection for baseline and impact evaluation.

Integrating gender from the outset

One of the key issues highlighted in the report is the need for gender-disaggregated information with a recommendation to “Make gender an integral part of the [land administration] project from the beginning and in all of its phases and components.”

When gender is taken into consideration at the outset of a programme or project, the expertise and the required financial costs can be incorporated and monitoring and evaluation of impacts are more effective.

Collecting gender-disaggregated data is essential for assessing the extent and depth of women’s land rights and for assessing the impact of land administration projects on gender equity. This gender-specific data feeds into knowledge regarding how land rights are distributed among different groups of women and men, and what effects differentiated land rights have on gender equity and on women’s capabilities. Local customs and traditions are sometimes at odds with legislative reform and often have a stronger influence over women’s ownership or use of land than written law. Customary institutions are often very important for enforcing women’s land rights or making changes to long-held customary norms. As they are local and therefore accessible, women may be more inclined to approach village leaders than to participate in a formal court hearing.

Enforcing women’s land rights

Others argue however that insufficient attention is being paid to power relations in the countryside and their implications for social groups, such as women, who are not well positioned and represented in local level power structures. The

report claims that “legislative reform by itself often makes little difference to the majority of women” and that those who take advantage tend to be “urban, educated, and usually wealthy women”. Polygamy also “seriously affects women’s rights to property and is the source of much tension and anxiety over land rights in many countries.”

Key issues

As regards gender dimensions in land administration the report points to:

- a lack of understanding of the complexity and diversity of land tenure patterns, including women’s rights;
 - a belief that addressing gender issues only concerns issuing titles or co-titles to women, with little appreciation for:
 - subsequent transactions;
 - enforcement and actualisation of those rights;
 - the benefits that may stem from formalising women’s rights (such as access to credit);
 - altering decision-making powers within households;
 - the need for mainstreaming equal opportunities for all employees in all types of activities.
- Issues that need to be addressed include communal and individual rights to land, inheritance and marriage practices and variations between urban and rural areas.

Information is crucial

The report underlines the crucial importance of information and the necessity for all stakeholders to know about and understand their rights as well as threats to those rights. Thus, issues such as media, illiteracy (including map illiteracy), location, and timing are cited as critical. Information needs to be accessible to everyone, particularly bearing in mind that women in rural areas are often less mobile than men.

Education, training and communication are considered valuable tools in:

- promoting gender equity in land administration;
- raising awareness about rights within a country and hence encouraging longer term sustainability;
- making project implementers more aware of



social and cultural implications and the need for gender sensitivity;

- increasing the participation of women in land administration, classically a male-dominated profession;
- increasing the participation of women and men in titling and registration processes.

This also means including women in any technical or other training, education programs, or study tours. This contributes to empowering women, despite the traditions within land administration.

Involving men and women

The report also concludes that “informing both men and women of their rights is essential for mutual understanding of any differences. Sessions with both men and women also allow each group to understand potential barriers to full participation and may encourage households to overcome these barriers together. However, it is also often important to hold separate sessions for women to provide a non-threatening environment for discussion and to provide feedback to the land administration processes. Having public meetings in which younger people can participate is also a way to ensure that the next generation of landholders better understands its rights.”

Source: Summary of extracts from “A Guide to the World Bank’s Gender Issues and Best Practices in Land Administration Projects: A Synthesis Report” Mr. Robin Palmer, Global Land Adviser, Oxfam GB <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/> World Bank – <http://www.worldbank.org/>



The kipatane: a source of revenue for landless rural women in Burundi

BAG ESSA L. FABRICE | PACT-Burundi

Living without resources in a rural environment

To be illiterate and landless is a very harsh predicament in a rural environment in Burundi. Trying to exist without a plot passed on from your parents is the root of all the problems linked to poverty in rural areas, as there is nowhere to grow crops or to build a dwelling. Women come up with various coping mechanisms to provide for their families, the best-known of which is the 'kipatane': a plot of land cultivated on behalf of a third party in order to receive a daily ration. This paid agricultural service can be provided by an individual or by a group.

Here we look at some of the situations experienced by women on a day-to-day basis, and the solutions they find to alleviate at least those problems linked to hunger and poverty, the sources of all their suffering.

Between risk and despair: the suffering of rural women

Frequently deserted or left to fend for themselves by their husbands, or widowed, rural women from the poorest households, Batwa and other marginal groups, merge implicitly with the street children. They struggle from one day to the next, searching from hilltop to hilltop for a kipatane. They walk hazardous and desperate miles, similar to the high season migrations during each cropping season.

After nine months of this marathon ordeal, summer is the time of great indignation when all activities cease, and these unfortunate women prostitute themselves and risk HIV/AIDS in order to survive.

Faced with this suffering and poverty, these women's strength is sapped and they are completely worn out. In the fields, you can see babies, with red hair and swollen cheeks, lying on torn sheets under the banana trees or between the flat strips of the cassava fields, come rain or shine. Without food, they await the poor milk of their mothers who are weakened and exhausted by poverty, malnutrition and fatigue.

Defying the status quo

For women's groups, the kipatane is used to obtain micro financing within mutual assistance schemes. The emergency service of FAO in Burundi has brought hope to over a thousand rural women living in the provinces that are still suffering from armed conflict, such as



© Fabrice Bag Essa

rural Bujumbura, and wherever else they have been needed throughout the land. Thanks to FAO, PACT has created several grassroots groups in the hill areas, which have become very active and are now going from strength to strength.

PACT has provided 3116 households with agricultural inputs such as hoes, market-gardening seeds, beans and maize throughout the 2003 and 2004 seasons. Twenty wheelbarrows and several crop dusters have also been given to the vulnerable people belonging to the groups most devoted to fighting food insecurity. In addition to all these achievements a micro-project has been implemented: the revolving

credit funds for small livestock, which was obtained from the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and intended for the poorest women. A method stemming from the synergy between DFID and PACT has been devised in order to gradually address the problems of economic insecurity faced by rural women in their households.

We must keep rural women in our thoughts: having survived the armed conflicts, the fatal equation of poverty-prostitution-illness hastens them to an early grave and their rights continue to be disregarded. ♪

WORLD RURAL WOMEN'S DAY
15 OCTOBER 2005

"What rights for women as rural citizens?"

This year's theme aims to promote the role of rural women in society, defend their rights and sensitize the rest of the population about their livelihoods. Initiatives on how to celebrate this day are left to individual organizations and communities, according to their own traditions and requirements and in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation.

The purpose of the Day

World Rural Women's Day provides rural women and their organisations with a central platform in order to:

1. raise the profile of rural women;
2. sensitize both government and public to their crucial, yet largely unrecognized roles; and
3. promote action in their support. ♪

For more information see
<http://www.rural-womens-day.org/>

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Recognising women's role in peace-building: time for equal participation at the negotiating table

In July 2005, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) called on the international community to recognise women's efforts to prevent and resolve conflict in their communities, and to strengthen support for women's inclusion as full and equal participants in formal peace processes.

According to UNIFEM's Regional Programme Director for East and the Horn of Africa, Ms. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, although women often play a leadership role in their communities during and after conflict, they are too often left out of formal peace negotiations and agreements. "Women's roles are often undervalued or ignored, despite the fact that it is their right to participate on equal terms with men in all governance and decision-making processes. Formal peace negotiations that leave out half the population have limited hope of popular support", said Ms. Gumbonzvanda.

Thinking out of the box

In Somalia, during the Djibouti peace talks in 2000, only clans – five of them – were recognised as legitimate participants at the peace table. Women, excluded from the five clans, mobilised to form a 'sixth clan', which was eventually accepted as an equal participant in the high-level peace talks. Their presence at the negotiations led to the Federal Charter requiring that a minimum of 12 per cent of National Assembly seats go to women.

"We had to think out of the box," said Asha Hagi Amin, newly appointed MP and founder of NGO 'Save Somali Women and Children', describing how women organised across clan borders to form what became not only a 'multi-clan', but a clan that for the first time represented women from all over the country. "As women we had no role in the traditional clan structure, so we had no right to represent our own clans and therefore were shut out of the peace process. Since we were not treated as full members of our individual clans, we refused to rally behind them, and chose instead to form our own – to represent the voice of women, and more importantly the voice of peace. During the Djibouti peace talks, only men were allowed inside the big tent where the negotiations were being held. So we stood outside demanding to participate until they had to let us in. I had the honour of representing the sixth clan, and for the first time I sat together next to the men as a full and equal participant."



© Elaine Njirōs

Women's networks are key allies

As current negotiations in Somalia's peace process continue, women are playing a crucial role, working among different clans and militias to advocate for peace and non-violence so that Mogadishu remains a safe place for the talks to continue.

Women's networks, with their extensive local, and increasingly, regional reach, are key allies in building and sustaining vital public support for ongoing peace processes. Advocacy efforts by women's civil society groups can be instrumental to initiating formal peace negotiations, maintaining public support for their continuation until a peace accord is signed, and then assisting in its implementation. ♪

For more information, visit
<http://www.unifem.org/>

UNIFEM, 304 East 45th Street, 15th Floor,
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Tel: +1 212-906-6400; Fax: +1 212-906-6705.

Women of Courage

There will be a morning song
For those who clean the dust
From the children's bruises
The blood of the wounds from bullets
Those who wipe the sleep from the eyes of
the weary
And whose labour shields
The frail bodies of the old
Those whose pain is multiplied by the pleas
of their young
Scarred by the precision of their inquisitors
Who refuse to retreat in battle
And who are dying with the sum of this
knowledge
There will be a future.

IYAMIDE HAZELEY
Sierra Leone parentage, lived in West Africa

In Busby, Margaret. *Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Words and Writings by Women of African Descent from the Ancient Egyptian to the Present.* 1992. pg. 906.

The contribution of women to the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of Congo

ELISE MUHIMUZI | Conafed

Since the advent of the multi-party system, Congolese women have become aware of the need to actively contribute to the development of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, women in poor areas, particularly in the countryside and on the outskirts of towns, are cruelly faced with a growing poverty. This is expressed, among other things, by lack of food, drinking water, malnutrition, difficult if not virtually non-existent access to healthcare, and absence of individual income...

In spite of the official line, very few public resources are dedicated to combating poverty, and even fewer to challenging the impunity of those who rape women.

Many challenges

The challenges of reconstruction and democratisation, etc – in short, of good governance for the country – must also imperatively involve the advancement and participation of rural, peri-urban and urban women, so that the country may benefit from their contribution. We need:

- to encourage Congolese women to take on more responsibilities and have a common vision so as to advocate and help them emerge from the state of servitude in which political transition, culture and a number of wars

have trapped them; and

- to help Congolese women to have access to resources so they may become actors for their own socio-democratic development. The prospect of free, transparent and democratic elections soon to be held in our country is an excellent opportunity to support the efforts of Congolese women in their participation and involvement in all levels of the process.

A valuable asset

Finally, the important role played by women in preparing and implementing the process of the International Conference on Peace and Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes region is also a valuable asset in seeking solutions to the crisis which has now been shaking the region for over a decade. ♪

© Elise MUHIMUZI,
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Synoptic table showing the situation of Congolese women in political decision-making (February 2005)

Institution	Women's Representation	Percentage (%) of women's representation
Presidential milieu	0/5	0
Government (Ministers: 6/36 and Deputy Ministers: 2/25)	8/61	13.12
National Assembly: Office	3/120	
Plenary	2/8	25
	60/500	12
Independent Electoral Commission	1/8	12.5
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	2/8	25
National Observatory for Human Rights	0/8	0
The High Authority for the Media (Haute Autorité des Médias)	0/8	0
Public office	85/1215	7
Headquarters	11/206	5.34
Commission on Ethics and the Fight against Corruption	0/8	0
Political Leadership (Founders of political parties)	8/392	2.5
Governors: - in 2003	0/11	0
- in 2004	0/11	0
Vice-Governors: - in 2003	11/22	50
- in 2004	3/21	14

“Sustainable peace (...) requires the involvement of women and young girls as well as mainstreaming of gender into all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, including peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. Although both men and women suffer the consequences of armed conflicts, there is a marked difference in the impact on women and young girls, who may also be subjected to particular types of violence and deprivation.”

H.E. Armand De Decker, Minister for Development Cooperation (Belgium), “Women, war and peace” Conference, September 28th, 2004 (Egmont Palace – Brussels, Belgium)



The demobilisation of child soldiers: a priority in the peace and democratisation process

“Children who are exposed to war and trapped in war zones, whose families are torn apart, can be drawn into the fighting and forced to witness or perpetrate atrocities, sometimes against their own families. These experiences can scar them for life and shatter their childhoods.”

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

On July 26th 2005, the United Nations Security Council strongly condemned the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and reached a decision on a series of measures to protect children affected by armed conflict. For this purpose, the Council's 15 members unanimously adopted Resolution 1612 (2005). This requests the implementation of a mechanism to monitor and expose the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as the creation of a working group to review the information provided by this mechanism.

Demobilisation of child soldiers in the DRC

The Democratic Republic of Congo is currently at a decisive stage in its long-awaited transition to democracy. According to the 2001 Report of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the issue of child soldiers first arose in the DRC in 1996. In recent years, tens of thousands of children have been forced to fight alongside governmental armed forces and armed political groups in DRC.

The states involved in the conflict (the DRC, Uganda and Rwanda) all resort to using children. This war is characterised by widespread violations of human rights, notably massacres of civilians, rape, and other forms of torture. Those children who have witnessed and committed atrocities in their families, communities and villages are now finding it hard to forget. They grew up in the army, losing their school years in forests, in the bush, and on the battlefield, and learning about violence instead of learning to read and write. Other children in the provinces have been obliged to leave their villages, giving up their studies, and are currently refugees as a result of the regular clashes between armed groups. Several of them have ended up on the streets of Bukavu town, and do not hesitate to sell their bodies in order to survive.

The uncertain future of child soldiers in the DRC

NGO ADEPROP

“The demobilisation programme for child soldiers initiated by the transitional government of the Democratic Republic of Congo with the support of the international community does not seem to be having much effect on the troops operating in the Uvira and Fizi territories.

Observations and information received through sources in the field suggest that there is a large number of child soldiers, in particular in the Ruzizi plains and the Fizi region. Armed child soldiers are frequently seen along the road between Kamanyola and Uvira. NGOs are taking action, to encourage the demobilisation of children. But those working in these NGOs are opposed by the unit leaders, who refuse point-blank to demobilise the children. The fact is that military commanders, take half the salary paid to the army by the government. As a result, demobilising these children would entail a real loss of gains for these soldiers, which makes the NGOs task even more laborious. A further obstacle to the NGOs' work is the children's re-recruitment. Often, the children are taken back on and sent into a different unit. This makes it difficult for the NGOs to find them and identify them. In the Fizi territory, the same phenomenon exists, with the exception that girls are also used here as porters or servants. This year, the NGO SOFBE, based in Uvira and operating in the Fizi territory, has recovered 165 of these girls. The conditions in the Fizi and Uvira territories are complicated, and many problems such as demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers as well as the presence of multiple interests among the commanders of the armed forces make the future uncertain for child soldiers.”

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Children participating in the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools in Mozambique use masks as a tool for learning and self-expression.

Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools

In 93 countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, 143 million children aged under 18 are orphaned as a result of losing one or both parents to HIV/AIDS or other causes. The parents die before having had the chance to pass on agricultural knowledge to their children, hence endangering their future livelihoods.

FAO in collaboration with the World Food Programme and other partners have set up “Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools” as a sustainable response to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS and achieve long-term food security in the countries most affected by the pandemic. The pupils are orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

The main objective of the schools is to empower the children to take control of their own future, improve their livelihoods and become independent and actors for their own advancement. The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools aim to encourage gender equality, improve children's nutrition, agricultural knowledge, life skills and self-esteem, thereby reducing the chances of contracting HIV through risky behaviour.

The pilot project in Mozambique involves 100 orphans and other vulnerable children living in four locations.

The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools are led by volunteer facilitators who three times a week help the children learn by observation, using the cropping season as a “living classroom”. In the end, the children will be able to perform their own field research and draw their own conclusions about the performance of various farming methods.

The use of theatre and other participative techniques help to address difficult issues such as the roles of women and men, psycho-social problems and children's rights. This provides a constructive means of communication through which the children can gain self-confidence and develop a favourable attitude to gender equality.

By relying on local resources, the future facilitators for the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools can come from the children and the community itself.

For more information see:
<http://www.fao.org/hivaids>



Puppetry – a creative answer to fighting HIV/AIDS

Many rural villages are far removed from the global information highway and have no access to new information and communication technologies. But these villages contain a rich communication environment that predates modern electronic media by many years.

Traditional communication tools and methods combine indigenous knowledge, experiences and expressions passed down from generation to generation. These can be a potent force for development when they are woven into songs and dances, puppet plays, stories and poems. Creative use of these popular cultural resources in communities can be a subtle and effective way of

introducing development ideas and messages. Puppets are an example of traditional media which can be used to express ideas and communicate issues which are sometimes too delicate to address directly. It is for this reason that puppetry can be very effective in addressing the sensitive issue of HIV/AIDS. Here are some examples of ongoing initiatives.

Puppet Power Team

NAMIBIA

The Puppet Power Team is a project of the Namibian Red Cross Society that spreads HIV/AIDS awareness. The project uses puppets to disseminate information on HIV/AIDS in an informal and often humorous way. The themes of the show revolve around how HIV/AIDS is contracted, can be prevented and how certain behavioral patterns can increase the chances of getting infected. Based in Windhoek, the team performs at schools, mines, prisons, companies and villages around the country. The show often triggers discussions about sex and HIV/AIDS, and during the performance there is interaction between the audience and the Puppet Power Team. Organisers say that the puppet show helps to break the barrier of illiteracy and language when delivering its message to the audience.

<http://www.comminit.com/africa/experiences/pds52004/experiences-2556.html>

► Contact: Essack-Kauaria Razia – secgen@redcross.org.na

The Puppet Has a Cough

ETHIOPIA

The puppets are part of the HIV/AIDS Education Team at the Counselling and Social Services Center of the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Ethiopia, which aims to inform Ethiopians about HIV/AIDS.

The puppets work with students to pass on information about preventing HIV/AIDS, and how to care for people with HIV/AIDS. They teach students how important it is to break down the social stigma that is hurtful for people who have HIV/AIDS and they discuss how everybody in the community has a part to play in combating the epidemic. Along with puppetry, the education programme also uses drama, music, video and other techniques.

<http://www.mmmworldwide.org/>

► Contact: Dr Carol Breslin – counscen@telecom.net.et

Community Health & Awareness Puppeteers (CHAPS)

KENYA

CHAPS is a community puppetry-in-education programme of Family Programmes Promotions Services. The programme has a network of over 350 puppeteers, from more than 40 community-based puppet troupes in rural and urban Kenya. These groups perform educational and interactive puppetry performances as part of a community education initiative on a variety of socio-development issues and themes. These issues include reproductive health, HIV/AIDS education and awareness, environmental conservation, drug use and abuse, gender, corruption, transparency, and human rights. As well as mounting performances, CHAPS also provides puppetry training targeting individuals and organisations involved in advocacy, community outreach programmes and social marketing.

<http://www.fpps-chaps.org/chaps.htm>

► Contact: fpps-chaps@alphanet.co.ke

Réseau Arts Vivants (Living Arts Network)

NIGER

This network of national and international organisations aims to promote and use performing arts, such as theatre, puppets, songs, and dance, as a means of creating awareness on different issues such as HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and forced marriage. The network works with local theatre groups, training them in performing arts and in interactive theatre, such as forum theatre and then touring in the surrounding communities. The dramas are the result of collective work where the local artists bring in their own experience and that of the community they come from.

<http://www.comminit.com/africa/experiences/pds62005/experiences-3211.html>

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Puppetry as a Tool in HIV/AIDS Awareness & Behaviour Change Motivation

GEORGE OMONDI AYOMA

This twelve-slide presentation comments on the use and context of puppetry in Kenya, as used to create HIV/AIDS awareness and promote behaviour change. It includes photos of puppetry programmes in Kenya for the purposes of illustration and comments on the history of puppetry, the types of puppets used, and explores why puppets are useful for breaking down racial, social and political barriers and stereotypes. The author notes that puppets can deliver strong messages in a light-hearted manner, without offending or frightening audiences. He comments on the training of puppeteers, particularly with

reference to train-the-trainer courses and concludes with comments on combining puppetry with other media, including as a complement to folk media.

<http://www.comminit.com/africa/edutainment/edutainmentEE4/edutainment-54.html>

See Also:

► Puppet Theatre to explore Voter Awareness – Tanzania

<http://www.comminit.com/africa/experiences/pds32003/experiences-2404.html>

Source: Soulbeat Africa – www.comminit.com/africa/



Puppet show on HIV/AIDS, Stigma and Discrimination at the Windhoek prison in Namibia.



Using ICTs to bring rural women better access to agricultural information

JANET COX ACHORA | WOUGNET

New ICTs, in particular email and the Internet, facilitate communication between organisations and the international community. Indeed, access to information about best practices, appropriate technologies, ideas and problems of other groups working on similar concerns have been identified as critical information and communication needs of women's organisations in Africa. Janet Cox Achora of Women of Uganda Network (Wougnet) describes what her organisation is doing to address this issue in rural areas of Uganda.

Increasing awareness

The WOUGNET evaluation carried out at the close of 2003 showed that its activities had increased awareness and participation of women in ICT related activities and increased information sharing and networking among women and women organisations. However the benefits were still limited to those who had access to Internet, leaving the majority in the rural areas unserved. Hence the need for a rural access programme, which among its several specific objectives, intends to expand its activities to reach out to women in the rural areas.

Reaching out to rural areas

"Enhancing access to agricultural information for rural women farmers using ICTs" is a pilot project developed under WOUGNET's three-year development program (2005-2007). The main objective of this project is to strengthen and support the use of ICTs among women and women's organisations, build their capacities in ICT use and application, and expand WOUGNET activities to reach out to women in rural areas.

The project implementation area is Apac District in Northern Uganda. It is one of the most deprived districts in the country. The pilot phase will cover two counties, four sub counties and twelve parishes, targeting about 300 rural women farmers.

The Apac District covers 449 km and encloses a total area of 6,541.2 sq km. To the north it is bordered by Gulu District, by Lira to the east,

by Luwero in the south and by Masindi to the west. According to the 2002 population census, the district has 4 counties, 22 sub counties and a total population of 676,244 of whom 51% are women. The population is mainly rural accounting for 98.7% and the economy is mainly subsistence with 75% of the population engaged in subsistence farming.

This pilot project is supported by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation ACP-EU (CTA). Key activities include:

- identifying information needs and prioritising agricultural information for rural women farmers;
- packaging and disseminating the required information into formats to suit the farmers/ local users using appropriate delivery mechanisms – including radio, telephones, print media and the Internet;
- establishing linkages with the CTA Question and Answer Service (QAS) based at the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) to provide answers to farmers' questions;
- establishing the Kubere Information Centre (KIC) in Apac town with linkages to agricultural-focused organisations based in Apac and based nationwide;
- Collaborating and networking with organizations like FOODNET, Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO), and Agricultural Information Institutions nationally, regionally and internationally that work in rural development and with rural women. ♣



© Sophie Treinen

"Fracture numérique de genre en Afrique francophone: une inquiétante réalité"
(Gender Digital Divide in Francophone Africa: a worrying reality)

(only available in French)

This book published by Enda presents the results of research over two years in six countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal and supported by the International Development Research Center (Canada).

The report assesses three information and communication technologies considered as strategically important to promote gender equality: computers, Internet and mobile telephones. The results show that the gender digital divide is a reality and more so in terms of control, contents and capacities than as regards access.

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Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) is a non-governmental organisation set up in May 2000 by several women's organisations in Uganda to develop the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among women as tools to share information and address issues collectively. Its mission is to promote and support the use of ICTs by women and women organisations in Uganda, so that they can take advantage of the opportunities presented by ICTs in order to effectively address national and local problems of sustainable development.

♣ Janet Cox Achora
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World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

SECOND PHASE, TUNIS, NOVEMBER 2005

Carrying forward the process

The second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society will take place in Tunis, Tunisia from Wednesday 16 November to Friday 18 November 2005. This meeting will aim to carry forward the process of building a people-centred Information Society that will help accelerate the pace of development. The Geneva phase of WSIS culminated in 2003 with a shared vision to meet the global challenges of the new millennium along with a concrete Plan of Action. World leaders clearly expressed the need to harness the tremendous potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to help bridge the digital divide and advance the broad development agenda outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

Laying the foundations for change

During the Tunis phase, Preparatory Committee meetings were held in Hammamet (Tunisia), 24 to 26 June 2004, and in Geneva, 17 to 25 February 2005, while WSIS regional conferences took place in Damascus (Syria), Accra (Ghana), Tehran (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). The focus of the Tunis meeting is on the highly political issues of Internet governance and financing to bridge the digital divide as well as on defining the implementation and follow-up process to pave the way ahead. Creating a truly global, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society requires political commitment and support at the highest level from world leaders. ¶

For more information see:
<http://www.itu.int/wsiv/>



Your feedback on the Dimitra CD-ROM

We would like to extend our thanks to all the Dimitra network members who took time to complete the short evaluation survey which we enclosed with the Dimitra CD-ROM.

Overall we received a very positive feedback, highlighting the practicality of this tool through which the Dimitra database can be accessed offline.

Many of you appreciated the easy consultation of information contained in the database and the increased opportunities for grassroots organisations to work together in networks and exchange experiences and information. It was also noted that the CD-ROM can be used to disseminate information in rural areas with no internet access, allowing documentation to be printed out, translated and distributed in local languages. Moreover, this tool which contains your contact details and the description of your organisation, seems to help overcome fear of information technology. Organisations are proud to be included in the Dimitra database and to know that they can be contacted by people throughout the world.

At the same time several difficulties were mentioned. Problems include: the lack of adequate computer equipment, costs of access and connectivity problems, as well as transport costs to Internet cafés. Illiteracy also remains a major barrier to information access in rural areas.

One of the main lessons learnt from this survey was that the vast majority of respondents said they prefer to use the CD-ROM, rather than to carry out their research online, even if they have a good Internet connection. We will bear in mind your comments and suggestions to help improve the next version, which will be updated and distributed to the whole network. For example we will include the Adobe Acrobat software in the next edition to enable everyone to access pdf files.

Thank you once again for your response! ¶

APC Hafkin Prize 2005: helping create opportunities for Kenyan youth

For young people living in poverty in coastal Kenya, surfing the Internet and learning how to use computers make most sense when these skills directly spell economic opportunities and work-readiness. In recognition of this, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) announced the "Global Education Partnership - Wundanyi" in Kenya on May 26 as the winner of the APC Africa Hafkin Communications Prize for 2004-5.

Preparing for the world of work

Global Education Partnership - Wundanyi (GEP) is a not-for-profit organisation located in the Taita Taveta District of Kenya. It has created a 12-week comprehensive training programme that focuses on "entrepreneurship and work-readiness skills" for local youth from 15 to 24 years.

Taita Taveta is one of the poorest areas of Kenya with a poverty rate of 66%, which is 10% higher than the national average. In recognition of their vision and implementation, a six-member international jury awarded the Kenyans the USD \$7,500 award which is named in honour of Nancy Hafkin, a pioneer of networking and

development information and communications in Africa.

In addition to recognising GEP, the judges awarded an honourable mention to "BorgouNET" in Benin. BorgouNET has provided a number of towns in North Benin with their only means of sending and receiving email to and from the outside world, owing to the absence of telecommunications infrastructures and the non-digitalisation of telephone lines. This biennial award recognises outstanding examples of African initiatives in information and communications technology (ICTs) for development. The focus in 2004-5 was on community initiatives that use the internet and other digital communication networks to access markets, skills and opportunities to derive real economic benefits. ¶

More about the prize finalists and winner:

<http://www.apc.org/english/hafkin/2004/winner.shtml>

The Hafkin Prize is supported in part by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).



The education of rural women and girls in Kisantu and the province of Bas-Congo

MARIE JOSÉE MANDIANGU | *Refed Lukaya*

According to our traditions in Kisantu, in the Bas-Congo and in the Democratic Republic of Congo in general, a woman, whoever she may be, is considered to be the driving force for the continuation of the family and for preserving traditions. Therein lie the reasons for her education.

From an early age, a girl's education is different to that of the boys in our region. The girl is called upon to spend all her time at her mother's side, in order to observe and remember all the tasks she will have to carry out. Her duty is to learn how to do the dishes, the washing, the cooking and housework; how to carry loads needed for survival and agricultural production and particularly how to look after a baby, because for every young girl, motherhood is her primary mission on earth. According to our traditions and customs, any young woman not capable of taking on all these roles will have no social standing and is considered unworthy of marriage. However, any young woman who masters these roles is heralded as a wonderful wife, whether she has been to school or not.

Imprisoned by customs

The education provided at school is not very far removed from traditional and customary considerations. Girls are meant to study courses that tend to train good workers, not decision-makers. They are also encouraged to choose professions with low to medium incomes, rather than those that might significantly improve their standard of living. When tasks are allotted at school, girls are given the hardest ones – cleaning classrooms, drawing water for the teachers, brushing the schoolyard, sometimes even carrying the teachers' belongings. This is not because they are seen as more trustworthy than the boys, but rather because it reflects their social position (again, according to our customs and traditions). At home, once they get back from school, girls are taught to carry out all sorts of household tasks, such as cooking, washing clothes and dishes, fetching water and firewood regardless of the distance, cleaning the house, washing the smaller children, learning how to process cassava from the retting through to preparing the chikwangue, babysitting the children, and serving meals, sometimes to the whole family. In short, they act as a good mother, while at the same time the boys are learning to be the boss, just like their fathers by entertaining themselves with various pastimes.

A question of priorities

In any house where there are girls aged above ten, the mother's absence is not a cause for concern, as her young replacements must

assume their responsibilities to prove that they have been well taught. This behaviour is at the root of a deplorable phenomenon known as the "educational waste" of girls, which is increasing constantly. Girls' schooling is neither a priority nor a concern compared to that of boys.

Overcoming traditional barriers

As to the religious, economic and political environment, everywhere from the villages to the large towns, in spite of the small degree of willingness to promote women, they are always looked upon with disdain when they try to access decision-making positions. Women are therefore educated to execute orders, not to make decisions. A woman who refuses to be submissive, who tries to be independent, is seen as badly brought-up. Men prefer women who beg over those who aspire to change the system. They are wary of those who stand out by their remarkable economic efforts and who assert their personal dignity.

Since the advent of the "gender approach", female leaders who have made this their main concern are seen as a complicated group of women, stubborn, misunderstood, difficult to control and to manipulate, uncouth, and therefore a group of people to be fought and beaten. Their reputation is tarnished by men who are sometimes over ambitious. All this can be traced back to the fact that women's education is based solely on backward looking traditions and customs. Even the churches are finding it hard to overturn this boat of oppression in which women have been compelled to set sail. ♪

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A Girl is a Child Too

Father, let me go to school too
Even though I am a girl
You never know where fortune lies
Children are the same everywhere.
Father let me go to school too
To learn, like the others do
A person's livelihood depends on education
And a girl is a person too.
Father let me go to school too
Accept me the way I am
You refer to a boy as a child
Even me you call a child
So treat all children the same.
Father, let me go to school too
Without education I am useless
Tomorrow you will regret
A girl is a person too
Please let me go to school.

SHUMIRAI MAKASA
Zimbabwe

*Getecha, Ciru and Chipika, Jesimen.
Zimbabwe Women's Voices. 1995. pg. 35.*

Women's empowerment and credit unions in Miti, South-Kivu (DRC): MUSO

ACTIONS POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT INTÉGRÉ AU KIVU (ADI-KIVU)

Some people today still persist in thinking that women are generally only useful for cooking, and that rural women in particular are incapable of doing anything other than working in the fields. Such reasoning is truly antiquated. Rural women have shown that they are capable of working for their own empowerment and integration and that they contribute to their local community development.

There are now thousands of rural women's associations, which are living proof of their drive for progress. For instance, in Miti (in the Kabare territory, in South Kivu province, DRC), women's dynamism can be seen in their swift use of the training they had received from ADI-Kivu to organise credit unions, commonly known as 'MUSO' (village credit and savings unions).

More so than was the case for the men, who were trained alongside them, women were quick to understand that this innovation was necessary to solve several problems to which they often fall victim.

The MUSO: a tool in the fight against poverty

The more the various armed conflicts impoverish the people of Miti, the harder they work at fighting poverty.

It is a question of life or death! Either poverty wins and you all die, or you join forces to set up mechanisms to fight it as much as possible.

The credit union is exactly one of these strategies, a weapon against poverty, which ADI-Kivu has been popularising among its farming partners since 2002. The MUSO is a new type of improved tontine (micro-finance); it involves encouraging the farmers to get together to build a village union. This is a group of people who know one another, organise themselves and save an agreed amount each month. They put these savings into what is known as a "green bank" (mobilised savings).

This differs from the tontine in that it does not serve each of its members. The principle here is to save and to accumulate contributions. The money will only be released from the green bank as a loan to members or for small trading activities.

Alongside the green bank, there is a red bank, which receives the members' social security or mutual help contributions. All the contributions added to this red bank are used to help members with certain regular social events such as births, deaths, marriages, illness... and that is basically the role of the MUSO.

The loans, which are easily accessible for members, help them to carry out income-generating

activities, thus providing for thousands of families. Crops or other types of produce can also be used as contributions in kind when no cash is available. This is especially true during the harvest season. Members can store up the produce harvested in order to sell it in the next sowing-season; in this way they earn more and this helps strengthen the green banks.

Women's promotion through the MUSO

The credit union has helped many women in Miti to carve out a rather remarkable position for themselves in community life. The fact that they can have something of their own in the green bank, which they manage themselves, is a great asset. They are empowered by not having to ask their husbands for everything and being able to contribute to the needs of the family, such as medical care, school fees for the children, purchase of clothes...

All of this gives greater value to rural women in Miti in the eyes of their community.

Furthermore, the MUSO is a small structure, which leads its members to act as apprentice accountants or bankers on a daily basis. The women enjoy this and want to learn more in order to be able to correctly keep the books of their MUSO. The documents to be filed, the money to be managed, as well as the training given, brings about a change in the women's image. They become someone important to whom others can turn to ask for a loan (because loans are given even to non-members if they have a good reputation in the area), to learn the new "system" or to receive advice on management.

Women no longer have to run here and there to request ridiculously small credits from town micro-financiers, which they would only obtain with difficulty in any case.



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The MUSO network in Miti

The women realise that the MUSO is now a part of their daily lives and that they must do everything they can to help it progress. For this reason, in August 2004, they decided to set up a "Miti MUSO network", led by Mrs Ursule M'Balola, who was elected freely and democratically by the members of all the MUSO. Through this network they hope to be able to answer some of the problems each MUSO is facing, because through union comes strength. On December 31st 2004, the women held the network's first general assembly. One of the resolutions passed in the meeting was the setting up of a central bank, which they decided to create in order to respond not only to individual problems but also to those of the MUSO as member organisations.

We wish all these women every success and the best of luck! 🍀

© ADI-Kivu,
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EVENTS

☉ **“How does change happen?”
The AWID International Forum on Women’s
Rights and Development**

27-30 October 2005, Bangkok, Thailand

The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) Forum brings together women’s rights leaders and activists from around the world every three years to strategise, network, celebrate, and learn.

Participation in the AWID Forum is open to anyone who works or has an interest in women’s rights, international development, and social justice.

For more information see:
<http://www.awid.org/forum/>

☉ **“New challenges and options for revitalizing
rural communities”**

27-30 March 2006, Porto Alegre, Brazil

FAO will convene an international conference on “Agrarian Reform and Rural Development” in Porto Alegre Brazil from 27 to 30 March 2006. This event should help encourage national governments and the international community to support ongoing agrarian reform and rural development processes, and to secure land access and tenure rights and access to other natural resources by the poor.

Some objectives of the conference, among others, are to:

- promote understanding, learning and constructive dialogue to address agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and rural poverty issues;
- share experiences, foster recognition, improve willingness, and concrete actions by the international community, governments, producer organizations, civil society organizations, and others to enhance international cooperation and promote more equitable, transparent and accountable access to land and natural resources.

For more information see: <http://www.fao.org/sd>

☉ **World Rural Women’s Day
“What rights for women as rural citizens?”**

15 October 2005

<http://www.rural-womens-day.org/>

☉ **World Food Day
“Agriculture and Intercultural Dialogue”**

16 October 2005

<http://www.fao.org/wfd/2005/>

☉ **World Summit on the Information Society
(WSIS), Phase II**

16-18 November 2005, Tunis, Tunisia

<http://www.itu.int/wsif/>



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PUBLICATIONS

☉ **West African NGOs Report on the
Implementation of the Beijing
Platform for Action**

*Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF),
2004*

This report summarises the outcomes of a consultation organised by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through the African Centre for Gender and Development, which contributed to the ten-year evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

http://www.siyanda.org/static/wildaf_westafrica.htm

☉ **Shedding light on critical policy issues: 10
Years after Beijing**

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) launched a research-based report at the March 2005 session of the CSW in New York, in order to shed light on some of the critical policy issues highlighted in the Beijing Platform for Action. This report provides a useful complement to the formal review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action that the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) is undertaking.

The UNRISD report is divided into four broad sections:

- Macroeconomics, well-being and gender equality;
- Women, work and social policy;
- Women in politics and public life;
- Gender, armed conflict and the search for peace.

A series of international and regional dissemination conferences are planned for 2005 and 2006.

More information about these events will be posted on the UNRISD site: <http://www.unrisd.org>

☉ **Marking out the future path of electronic
document management**

As part of its partnership-based e-learning initiative known as the Information Management Resource Kit (IMARK) FAO released a training module in 2003 entitled “Management of Electronic Documents”.

The second module “Digitization & Digital Libraries” – is now available on CD-ROM in English and expands upon several of the topics covered in Module 1. It was developed by UNESCO, FAO and the National Centre for Science Information (NCSI) at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

IMARK modules are being used to train individuals in the effective management of agricultural information. However, librarians and information specialists working in other fields other than agriculture information management, who would like to manage electronic documents effectively or set up digital libraries and document repositories, will find the two modules very useful.

For more information on this module and other IMARK modules, visit:

<http://www.fao.org/imark>.

For copies of IMARK modules, please contact IMARKenquiries@fao.org

or Justin Chisenga at Justin.Chisenga@fao.org

☉ **Gender, Conflict, and Development**

by Tsjeard Bouta, Georg Frerks, Ian Bannon.

This book highlights the gender dimensions of conflict, organized around major relevant themes such as female combatants, sexual violence, formal and informal peace processes, the legal framework, work, the rehabilitation of social services and community-driven development. It analyzes how conflict changes gender roles and the policy options

that might be considered to build on positive aspects while minimizing adverse changes. The suggested policy options and approaches aim to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by violent conflict to encourage change and build more inclusive and gender balanced social, economic and political relations in post-conflict societies. The book concludes by identifying some of the remaining challenges and themes that require additional analysis and research.

To view the book online, please visit:
<http://www-wds.worldbank.org/>
<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/GenderConflictandDevelopment>

Gender and ICTs for development. A global sourcebook

Published by KIT Publishers in association with
Oxfam GB

How can traditional and new information and communication technologies (ICTs) contribute to improving the livelihood of populations in the developing world? This new KIT publication offers insight into how ICTs such as radio, video, CD-ROMs, the internet, mobile telephones and email can be used to enhance income, status and health of poor women and men. The emphasis is on their use in rural areas where many women and men work as farmers or small entrepreneurs.

The publication brings together case studies about women and their communities in developing countries, and how they are influenced by, and are using ICTs.

A key feature is the extensive and up-to-date annotated bibliography of the international literature and resources (in print and electronic) on gender and ICTs for development.

For more information see:
<http://www.kit.nl/publishers/>
 ISBN 90-6832-728-3 (KIT Publishers)
 ISBN 0-85598-565-8 (Oxfam GB)
 paperback 143 pp.
 Euro 23.00

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

The American Association of University Women has published the following International Fellowships for the Fellowship Year from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007:

- a) Master's/Professional Fellowship \$18,000;
- b) Doctorate Fellowship \$20,000;
- c) Postdoctoral Fellowship \$30,000

International Fellowships are awarded for full-time study or research to women who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Both graduate and postgraduate study at accredited institutions are supported. The Foundation will award 57 fellowships for the 2006-7 academic year.

Six of these awards are available to members of

International Federation of University Women affiliate organizations. These fellowship recipients may study in any country other than their own.

The Foundation also awards several annual Home Country Project Grants (\$5,000 to \$7,000 each) to women who received AAUW Educational Foundation International Fellowships between 2001 and 2005. These grants support community-based projects designed to improve the lives of women and girls in the fellow's home country.

Applications are available from August 1 - December 1, 2005.
 Application POSTMARK deadline December 1, 2005.
 For further information see:
http://www.aauw.org/fga/fellowships_grants/international.cfm
 Contact: aaaw@act.org
 For support at the undergraduate level, visit:
www.isep.org

ONLINE RESOURCES

Open Knowledge Network (OKN)

This network aims to strengthen the abilities of local communities and organizations in developing countries to create, synthesise, adapt, and exchange valuable, and potentially wealth-generating local content, including appropriate knowledge from elsewhere.

The Open Knowledge Network (OKN) is a human network, which collects, shares and disseminates local knowledge and is supported by flexible technical solutions.

Visit the Open Knowledge Network website:
<http://www.openknowledge.net/>

Dgroups: Community Content Creation Network

Dgroups are electronic discussions with the online tools and services to support groups and communities interested in development issues. FAO for example uses Dgroups as a platform for exchanges and discussions to sustain interaction on the Internet.

Through the Dgroups the community content creation network facilitates exchange on local knowledge, content and livelihoods, such as rural knowledge centres, telecentres, price information systems, etc. Despite the broad diversity of participants' background, the network consists predominantly of practitioners all of whom share a common interest in using community content for rural development.

The service is simple, non-commercial, respectful of privacy, and targeted at low bandwidth users in the South.

To learn more about the resources and opportunities for exchange on Dgroups see:
<http://www.dgroups.org/>

Feminia – a discussion platform for women's issues

Feminia, an African women's network of media professionals, has created and launched its own website. This is a platform for publication and exchange of articles, programmes, experiences and knowledge about women's issues, discussions, training and effective networking. Topics that are dealt with include: women at the top, defying traditions, gender mainstreaming, the price women pay in times of war in Darfur, HIV/AIDS and the vulnerability of girls, interviews with e.g. 'Bayam-Sellams', Cameroonian market women who are driving forces behind the country's economy. As with the Feminia network itself, the website is not limited by traditional boundaries between Francophone and Anglophone readers. Some of the articles are English, some in French, depending on the preferred language of the contributing member.

For more information about Feminia, please contact:
 Madeleine Memb & Léontine Babeni
 BP 13 187, Yaoundé, Cameroon
feminia2@yahoo.fr, membmadeleine@yahoo.fr,
lbabeni@yahoo.fr
<http://www.feminia.org>

MISCELLANEOUS

Millennium Review Summit 2005

From 14-16 September 2005, Heads of State from around the world converged in New York for the Millennium Development Goals review summit. Set in 2000, this list of eight targets on education, health and hunger is supposed to be achieved by 2015.

A side event on September 13 hosted by the Chair of the G-77, the Government of Japan and the Chair of the Consultative Group on Integrated Agricultural Research (CGIAR) highlighted the importance of agriculture and agricultural research for achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Other issues under discussion at the Summit included security, human rights and UN reform.

For more information see: <http://www.un.org/ga/documents/overview2005summit.pdf>

ITU establishes Multipurpose Community Telecentres in 20 African countries

The United Nations International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is to establish a network of at least 100 MCTs (Multipurpose Community Telecentres), to provide communities with access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi are among 20 African countries that are to benefit from dozens of these female-directed community telephone and computer centers setup by the UN. Several African countries, including Benin, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic

of Congo, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia, requested help in fulfilling the first phase of the December 2003 Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society.

For more information please contact
secretariat@ugabytes.org or info@ugabytes.org

☉ Call for papers Gender, HIV/AIDS and Development

Oxfam International makes a Call for Papers from policymakers, practitioners and researchers, as contribution to its international journal 'Gender and Development', an activist-oriented journal with a primary aim of supporting transformatory gender mainstreaming in development organisations. The journal will feature two new sections starting in 2006 concerning the world of gender and development and recent book reviews.

The first issue of the new-look journal to be published in March 2006, will focus on HIV/AIDS.

Please contact Caroline Sweetman, Editor, 'Gender and Development', with your idea, as soon as possible and before the deadline for commissioning: 15 July 2006 at:

csweetman@oxfam.org.uk

For more information on the journal please visit
Oxfam's website: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk>

☉ 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005

The project 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 defined as its objective the nomination of 1000 women to represent collectively the women who are engaged daily in working for the better future of their communities, promoting reconciliation, demanding justice, and rebuilding what has been destroyed. They transform conflicts; fight against poverty and for human rights. They create alternative sources of income, they strive for access to land and clean water, involve themselves in education, healing and reintegrating HIV/AIDS patients. They find solutions to a great many forms of violence and they condemn the genital mutilation of girls. The life stories, the visions, methods, strategies and networks of these 1000 women will be publicized. With this recognition they should receive both encouragement and gratitude for their commitment. The names of the 1000 women can be found under: <http://www.1000peacewomen.org>

For the biographies of each of these women, please visit:
<http://www.1000peacewomen.org/eng/html/nominierte/suche.php>

☉ European Commission announces new development policy priorities

The European Union's development policy will increasingly focus on building partnerships with developing countries and promoting good governance, human rights and democracy according to proposals announced recently by the European Commission. Poverty eradication for all developing countries in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals will

be the core of the new EU development policy. It also stresses the role of civil society and tackles conflict situations and failed states.

EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel told reporters the European Commission would finalise its proposals after a meeting with the African Union in October and seek to have them approved by European governments the following month. He commented that relations with developing nations should also focus more on security, migration, trade and environmental protection issues.

For more information see: http://europa.eu.int/pol/dev/index_en.htm

☉ Women and AIDS programme in Mozambique

UNAIDS and the Flemish Government have launched a four-year programme to combat the growing feminisation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Mozambique. The initiative promotes existing programmes, including support services for survivors of gender-based violence and helps strengthen the capacity of local NGOs to address Gender and HIV/AIDS within their activities.

For more information contact:
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Belgium



FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS



Arise to the Day's Toil

Wake up Woman!
The Cock is crowing;
It's three a.m.
Wake up – it's time to weed the fields
In the distant hills.
Sleep no more;
Arise from the burdens of yesterday,
Forget the hours of toil
In that hot sun
That arose when you worked in the field
But set while you hurried to clear the weeds.
In the dark you return, as you left,
To those empty cooking pots.
Alas! the day is over
When the family enjoys the day's meal
But before you rest your feet
A voice calls: Woman get me hot water!
With that you know it's over
Until the cock crows
And the circle begins again:
Wake up woman!
Wake up woman!

ASSUMPTA ACAM-OTURU
Uganda

In Chipasula, Stella and Frank. The Heinemann Book
of African Women's Poetry. 1995. pg. 142.