



# Dimitra Newsletter

GENDER, RURAL WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT



- © The Dimitra community listeners' clubs on the move
- © FAO Voluntary Guidelines
- © Field research in Niger



## Table of contents

- 3 | Dossier: Dimitra community listeners' clubs
  - 3 | Niger and the DRC – The Dimitra community listeners' clubs on the move
  - 5 | Niger – Evaluation of impact of the community listeners' clubs
  - 7 | DRC – Farmer Field and Life Schools and community listeners' clubs, together to fight hunger and poverty
  - 9 | Dimitra community listeners' clubs in new countries!
- 11 | Niger – Cigaba strengthens unity through inventory credit
- 12 | Niger – “Engendering” the innovation process in rural areas
- 14 | FAO with women farmers in Niger
- 15 | FAO – Successful endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines
- 16 | Women's Portraits – Elisabeth Atangana
- 18 | Mozambique – Overcoming gender issues in land rights
- 19 | Uganda – Reaching out to youth through the ICT4D Youth Network
- 20 | The AAHM – A global platform for unification and strength
- 21 | FAO Gender Policy
- 21 | New FAO Publications
- 23 | Resources



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Dear Readers,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter!

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# Niger and the DRC | The Dimitra community listeners' clubs on the move

Since their creation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Niger, the Dimitra community listeners' clubs have generated great interest among both rural communities and development practitioners. The clubs have been extremely useful for highlighting gender equality and everyday life issues, thereby contributing to women's empowerment and helping rural populations, women and youth in particular, to fully participate in the life of their community and to fight for food security.

First of all a reminder of what the Dimitra community listeners' clubs are and how they work... They are groups of women, men or youth (or a mix thereof) that meet regularly to discuss development issues and challenges and find solutions to these together. In this action-oriented process, rural radio stations are used as a media to relay information and increase the communication flow, thus providing access to knowledge and raising awareness on themes that have been identified and requested by the clubs themselves – agricultural practices, food security, unequal workloads for women and men, access to water, land, sanitation, health, etc. The clubs' members use solar-powered and wind-up radio sets to follow broadcasts and interact with each other or with other clubs and, in the case of Niger, solar-charged cellular phones operating as a fleet that allows free calls among nearly 300 phones.

The community listeners' clubs are both a tool and a process for dialogue for individuals and groups and have proved to be an efficient means for isolated rural communities to access information and engage in participatory communication, thereby becoming stepping stones for action. Through the clubs, men and women villagers share their concerns, priorities and needs, obtain information that would otherwise be beyond their reach and take constructive actions together.

## Increasing numbers

The listeners' clubs approach was first used in 2006 in South Kivu (DRC) by Dimitra and its local partner, Samwaki, after a field survey had shown that women farmers' access to information and communication was very limited and that there was a lack of interaction between community radio stations and rural women's groups.

Today, after some five years of activities, there are 12 federations of clubs in South Kivu, with a total of more than 55.000 members of whom more than half are women and girls. Five community radio stations are involved. In 2009, the activities were extended to the Province of Katanga (DRC) in collaboration with REFED-Katanga. At present, four radios are involved



*The Kika listeners' club in Kapolowe (Katanga) has been awarded a community field by the village chief for market gardening activities. The benefits go to supporting the club and providing micro credits to its members.*

and the clubs have some 34.000 members, again more than half of them women and girls.

The approach was also adapted and replicated in two regions of Niger. Since their creation in 2009, the clubs in Niger have grown constantly and have generated tremendous enthusiasm among the population: there are now some 500 listeners' clubs, with 8000 members from 5000 households for a total of 28.000 people who are indirect beneficiaries, and over 5200 women leaders. Ten rural community radios are involved.

## Evidence of positive changes

As the clubs themselves determine their functioning, there are differences between countries and even within the countries where they are operational. However, qua-

litative assessments in all locations reflect similar changes in the behaviour, practices and perceptions of men and women in the rural communities concerned. These include changes not only in access to information and knowledge but also in agricultural practices, in women's access to land, increased self-confidence and leadership, and community social mobilization.

Many examples show how women have gained self-confidence and now are leaders in their communities. In Niger, the women listeners' club of Dantiandou negotiated with men land owners and the traditional authorities and obtained an official land lease for 99 years to grow vegetables on a good-quality 2.75 ha plot of land. In the village of Téra, the women's club has been instrumental in alerting the Ministry





*The improvement of women's status and leadership role within the community is often a result of their active participation in the clubs.*

## Keys to the success of the project

Several key elements are considered indispensable for the approach to be successful. These include:

- 1 The **bottom-up approach** used by the Dimitra project is based on rural populations' involvement in and ownership of the clubs and focuses on discussions directed towards **realistic courses of action** and individual behaviour changes.
- 2 **Support from** Dimitra's **local partners** to facilitate the whole process.
- 3 **Awareness-raising at local level** (formal, traditional, religious authorities and villagers) on the approach, gender issues and their involvement in the process.
- 4 **Training** provided to the stakeholders (women and men leaders, community radio stations, agricultural extension workers, etc.) to implement the approach, introduce gender into communication for development, mobilize communities and support their organization.
- 5 **Effective partnerships** with radio stations and exploring alliance opportunities with other existing development actors and initiatives.
- 6 **A long-term relationship** between the rural community and community radios, based on trust and frequent and regular contact.
- 7 **Connecting** small organizations and **increased self-confidence** are two elements which help populations to gain knowledge and act collectively.

of Agriculture regarding the presence of locusts in their region, while in Gassedra the clubs' discussions have had a positive impact on reducing the practice of early marriage. Sanitation has become a crucial issue in a majority of villages where the related tasks are now shared within the household and at community level.

In the DRC, after years of war and continuing insecurity in several parts of the country, the Dimitra community listeners' clubs' debates on food security, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence have contributed to improvements in women's and men's livelihoods and women's status in the community. For example, changes in cultivation techniques have ensured that the people of Kopolowe (Katanga) no longer need to resort to buying corn flour, their own production being sufficient for their own consumption. The listeners' club has been awarded a community field for market gardening by the village chief. Its benefits go to supporting the club and providing micro credits to its members. The listeners' clubs also have a mediation role: in several villages in Katanga and South Kivu it has been reported that the members of the listeners' clubs have a pivotal role in resolving conflicts and that people turn to them for advice.

The woman president of a listeners' club in Mugogo (South Kivu) explained that thanks to the discussions in their club (that were also broadcast) people living with HIV/AIDS dare to come and ask for advice. An increase of voluntary screening for HIV/AIDS was registered just after the debates on this issue.

An improvement of women's status and leadership inside the community, both in Niger and the DRC, has often been a consequence of their active participation in the clubs and

increase of their leadership and self-esteem. Through the clubs, women have the opportunity to assume an active role as fully entitled participants in community life and this has immediate benefits for their credibility in the village. The community listeners' clubs have enabled men and women to decide on actions to solve their own problems.

### Linking up with farmers' organizations or cooperatives

Aware of their rights and strengths, some of the listeners' clubs' members have decided to join larger and more formal farmers' organizations or cooperatives where they are able to make their voices heard. Often, close bonds among small producers in grassroots and self-help groups, local associations and cooperatives are the basis for the development of strong rural organizations. Through these relationships, small producers gain the self-confidence and knowledge needed to analyse their own problems, make informed decisions and act collectively. This in turn empowers them to connect and form larger organizations like federations and networks, which give them greater negotiation power and influence in decision-making processes.

### A sustainable approach

Different factors show the high level of sustainability of the approach: the multiplication of successes, the replication of the experience by neighbouring villages that have not received support from the project, their continuation even without support.

The experience is now to be scaled up in additional regions in Niger and replicated in the Province Orientale of the DRC and in other countries such as Mauritania, Senegal and Burundi (see article page 9-10).

# Niger | Evaluation of impact of the community listeners' clubs

Three years after the launch of the Dimitra community listeners' clubs project in Niger, a participatory evaluation process was set up to analyse its results in terms of the changes brought about by the clubs' dynamic. The evaluation was carried out in two phases, a field survey followed by a forum which brought together all stakeholders.

After collecting data through a basic questionnaire among two-thirds of all Dimitra community listeners' clubs (380 out of 420), meetings were organized to find out if club members had noticed any changes to their livelihoods at individual or community level. In order to ensure that the results of these meetings were shared and endorsed more effectively, they were recorded and broadcast by community radios.

An impact evaluation forum was then organized on 22 and 23 May in Niamey. The meeting brought together about fifty women and men listeners' club members from the different areas covered by the project. The first day was spent examining the results of the field survey and presenting the conclusions of the discussions on the changes at individual and collective level brought about by the listeners' clubs dynamic. The debates which followed touched on lessons learned and drawing up future plans.

On the second day, after watching a film about the community listeners' clubs in Niger, the participants presented the results of the field survey and discussions to the General Secretary of the Ministry of the Population, the Promotion of Women and the Protection of the Child (MPPFPE) and two Director Generals of MPPFPE's programme for leadership and economic empowerment for rural women. Also present were the FAO Representative, as well as representatives from FAO's Emergency Operations programme and from other development agencies, such as UNICEF, UNFPA, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the European Union, the Belgian Development Corporation (BTC), not to forget the media.

## The impact of the listeners' clubs in different sectors

The Dimitra community listeners' clubs provided members with a framework to organise discussions and undertake initiatives on a wide range of issues. This had an impact on their livelihoods and that of their families in many areas.

### ☉ Agriculture and livestock

Club members report that new agricultural and livestock practices have been tried and that more effective and productive techniques have been adopted, resulting in increased agricultural output and fewer food shortages. Other observations include improved task sharing between women and men. For example, women can now rent carts to transport very heavy water containers, while men take care of purchasing wood, boys also go to fetch water, etc.

In Bankilaré, 14 women created a garden. Two years later, the number of women involved has grown to 43. Land has been obtained and subdivided into beds, fed by water supplied

from eight wells. This ambitious initiative has prompted neighbouring Tuareg women to form a group, and they are planning to ask the government for permission to use the wells. The introduction of horticultural activities in the Tuareg community – which is not part of local tradition – is helping to keep everyone supplied with fruit and vegetables throughout the season.

After receiving training on land reclamation, livestock fattening, credit and savings associations, cereal bank management and harvest and post-harvest management for certain horticultural products, villagers now know where to turn for additional information (for example on agricultural inputs or plant health products).

### ☉ Land access

Land access and inheritance rights for women are key subjects for the clubs. On their own initiative, and with support from the community listeners' clubs and from the men, many women have managed to obtain secure land access. In the urban community of Dantian-

The impact evaluation forum in Niamey brought together some 50 people: members of community listeners' clubs, radio facilitators, as well as representatives of ministries and development agencies in Niger.





dou, for example, rural councils have decided to enshrine the right of women to inherit land in their regulations, according to the principles of Sharia, the Islamic law (1/3 to women, compared with 2/3 to men), with retroactive effect. At Albarkayze, for example, thanks to discussions broadcast by the listeners' clubs, a woman inherited a plot of land twenty years after the death of her father! Such decisions appear to be having a ripple effect and it will be important to monitor these changes and their impact on the lives of women and men.

### ☉ Literacy

As a result of literacy courses linked to club meetings, reading and writing have become a reality in these communities. For some women, even being able to recognize and use the telephone keypad is a major step forward. All clubs require that their members, both women and men, be literate, with the result that sending girls as well as boys to school is no longer an issue.

### ☉ Health, nutrition and sanitation

Community listeners' clubs have received training in health and nutrition, with special focus on the importance of including vegetables in children's diets, as well as the merits of exclusive breastfeeding, essential family practices, basic rules of hygiene, etc. As a result, improved hygiene practices have been observed – for example, the local butcher has set up a more hygienic abattoir and some villages have introduced a health day, once a week. In some places, waste from the village is used as fertilizer in the fields, improving yields and linking respect for the environment with agriculture. It can also be seen that more use is being made of the health services than before and that exclusive breastfeeding, while not a traditional practice, is becoming increasingly popular.

Many listeners' clubs have undertaken activities to improve the sanitation and cleanliness of their villages. In the region of Kiota, fines are handed out to people who allow their animals to wander. Neighbouring villages that do not have listeners' clubs have decided to adopt similar rules on health and hygiene.

Other subjects often discussed in the clubs, not just by women but also by men, include birth spacing, pre-natal check-ups and medically supervised deliveries in health centres. In the village of Albarkayze, men must now pay a fine of 500 FCFA (0.75 euros) if their wives do not give birth in the health centre. In Boro-bon, discussions between men and women on pregnancies of very young girls due to early



*A woman leader participating in the Niamey workshop offers a framed picture of the Torodi listeners' club to the FAO Representative in Niger.*

marriage has led to a greater understanding of the reasons behind certain complications such as vaginal fistulas, which cause serious problems for women for the rest of their lives. Most women from the village now seek medical advice and have their babies in maternity hospitals. As well as the positive health implications, this practice also makes it easier to acquire a birth certificate.

### Women's empowerment

In a general sense, it was noted that women club members have more self-confidence. They are able to speak in public without being interrupted, have more freedom of movement, can leave their homes for several days without seeking the permission of their husbands and engage in a wide variety of income generating activities. Mutual understanding between husbands and wives has improved and the household budget is no longer exclusively managed by men. Most women say that after harvest, they now receive a share of agricultural output and/or a share of the profits when livestock is sold.

Social cohesion is decidedly stronger and individual and collective support systems have been set up for the benefit of the community. There is now dialogue between different social groups – men and women, young people and adults, etc., and both men and women have

realised that joining forces to make decisions and take action for the development of their communities has made them stronger. Individuals have become more responsible for their own development.

In the field of politics, spurred on and supported by the listeners' clubs, some women were elected at the last local elections. One of these women was present at the Forum and revealed that while previously women did not take part in the vote, this is no longer the case.

### Conclusions

The results of the participatory evaluation were considered extremely positive by all participants, both men and women, and local communities and donors would like to see the clubs rolled out throughout the country. The initiative will therefore be continued and extended to include other areas.

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# DRC | Farmer Field and Life Schools and community listeners' clubs, together to fight hunger and poverty

The members of the community listeners' clubs in South Kivu do not mince their words when they say that poor governance is the main cause of poverty. They are also convinced that kick-starting agriculture can have a significant impact on reducing the effects of poverty and tackling hunger and food insecurity. But how can communities embark on agricultural work when they face so many difficulties, such as lack of access to land, soil degradation and inadequate inputs? The answer lies in introducing a new approach which combines Farmer Field and Life Schools with community listeners' clubs.

Farmer Field and Life Schools, launched in South Kivu in October 2010 by Samwaki, with funding from FAO, seek to provide communities with appropriate knowledge in agricultural techniques, but also in other issues relating to life in general. These include nutrition, gender-based violence, reproductive health, gender equality, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, resource management, savings and credit, the rights and duties of citizens, peace and peaceful coexistence, and human rights. Supported by the existing community listeners' clubs in South Kivu, the "schools" have received an enthusiastic welcome from the rural communities.

## Learning agricultural techniques and discussing social issues

The project kicked off with a nine week "master trainer" course for the Samwaki coordinator, who subsequently passed on her new knowledge to the Farmer Field and Life Schools facilitators. When training was completed, Samwaki proceeded to set up 16 "schools" to test the approach – 12 for adults and 4 for young people – at Walungu and Kabare, two rural areas in the province of South Kivu.

The process started by raising awareness among community members. This task was made easier by the existence of community listeners' clubs in both areas. Next, facilitators were selected and trained, and beneficiaries were identified. In the case of adults, these were mainly vulnerable individuals, including women victims of sexual violence and people living with HIV/AIDS. The youth group mainly involved vulnerable young people aged between 12 and 17, including orphans, young people living with HIV/AIDS and other girls and boys living in extreme poverty.

The activities of the "schools" are divided into two major categories: learning agricultural techniques and discussing various social issues. The themes are illustrated using sketches and demonstrations. For example, to

explain the idea of a nutritious diet, the facilitators might prepare all the materials needed to show the group which foods have particular nutritional properties. The approach is participatory – the facilitators do not act as teachers, but rather as "guides". The basic principle is that the participants have knowledge, but this needs to be built on and shared, with the help of the facilitators.

## First results

The Farmer Field and Life Schools (for adults and for young people) produced good results in several countries. In South Kivu, coupling the schools with community listeners' clubs resulted in an even greater impact. For while the listeners' clubs enabled farming communities to identify the major problems hampering development, the "schools" pro-



## A few key terms

- ✿ The **Farmer Field School** is a group learning process which involves women and men farmers engaging in activities so that they learn by experience. This approach helps them to understand the ecology of their fields and improve their crop practices.
- ✿ **Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools** are an extension of this approach. In these "schools", orphaned and vulnerable young people aged 12 to 18 are trained in traditional and modern agricultural techniques, as well as in life skills. The children work in groups and learn through experimentation, theatre, singing and dancing and other participatory methods of a cultural nature.
- ✿ Finally, given the pertinence of working on "life skills" with young people, FAO has launched **Farmer Field and Life Schools for adults** in areas of high health-risk or emergency situations.

For further information, see the *Dimitra Newsletter* issue 18, June 2010





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vided an appropriate response for promoting agriculture, while strengthening knowledge and raising awareness of practices available for dealing with various problems in daily life.

The first harvests from the schools' test fields helped participants to understand that the approach offers a solution to a wide range of concerns, especially those linked to the need to improve agricultural production and boost food security, despite limited access to land and inadequate soil fertility. The experience showed them that it is possible to produce food from soil that is considered to be infertile, even without rain. In addition, through discussions on social issues, the "schools" offer participants a useful platform for sharing knowledge on various aspects of daily life, both at the individual and community level. This success explains the commitment and active participation of both beneficiaries and facilitators in all the activities.

For example, in Lugohwa (close to Mugogo), everyone knew that garlic with large cloves is not well suited to the local soil. "I have already tried three times to grow garlic with large cloves in my field, the one that you can see there, behind yours," says a farmer as he walks along the edge of a test field at Mugogo, just as participants are planting the large-cloved variety. "But when it came to the harvest, I was disappointed to see that apart from the fact that the yield was low, the large cloves had somehow been transformed into small ones, even smaller than those of the garlic that we usually

grow here". Before moving off, he added: "I promise you'll see I was right when it comes to harvest time. Our soil doesn't like garlic with large cloves."

This farmer is not alone in his opinion. Some participants at the Farmer Field and Life School mutter similar warnings. But others are more prudent, choosing to wait and compare the results of the next harvest before accepting or rejecting the farming techniques taught at the "school". When it came to harvest time, there was a pleasant surprise! Production of large-cloved garlic had clearly improved and even the smaller-cloved varieties, sown to compare results, produced cloves that were larger than when they had previously been planted. Satisfied with the result, the Cinyabuguma Farmer Field and Life School chose growing large-cloved garlic as an income generating activity.

Participants say they believe that the Farmer Field and Life School approach should be

rolled out to other rural communities in South Kivu. The quantity and quality of the resulting agricultural output would give rise to the launch of farming cooperatives which could handle the marketing of products to major consumer centres. In this way, farmers would have enough to eat and would also be able to sell produce from their fields in order to meet other basic needs.

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**The Farmer Field and Life Schools had good results in several countries. In South Kivu, linking the schools with community listeners' clubs resulted in an even greater impact.**



# Dimitra community listeners' clubs in new countries!

The success of the Dimitra community listeners' clubs in Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has led to the launch of new projects in Burundi, Senegal, Mauritania and other parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Oriental Province). At the request of other FAO services, United Nations agencies (UNICEF, UN Women, IFAD, UNDP) and other technical and financial partners (Canada, Belgium), FAO-Dimitra is building on previous experience to assist the implementation of these projects using gender-sensitive participatory methodologies that are flexible and well adapted. The goal remains unchanged: the socio-economic empowerment of rural men and women and food security.

Since their launch, the Dimitra community listeners' clubs have sought to involve and empower rural communities. They are based on principles of transparency, gender equality and good governance. In the DRC and Niger, all those involved in the listeners' clubs have been surprised by the extent of the positive impact in terms of participation and governance within farmers' organizations, even though these were not specific goals at the outset.

The new projects have been adapted to develop this component, and they now introduce capacity building activities for farmers' associations and organizations in order for them to become more equitable and inclusive, inspired by the basic principles and values of cooperatives. These organizations should be profitable (like businesses) but also have social objectives, in particular with regard to the well-being of their members (who are also the owners of the organizations), which will ensure their sustainability and resilience. Supporting the structuring of local associations and organizations and helping them to, potentially, become cooperatives should help them to grow and sell their produce using a market oriented approach.

Given that most women and men farmers practise subsistence agriculture, well-structured farmers' organizations can network and help their members benefit from economies of scale and develop post-harvest activities all along the value chain. Their voices advocating for the development of an appropriate legal environment, will also be better heard at political level

## In the Democratic Republic of Congo

At the request of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the government of the DRC, the FAO-Dimitra project is setting up sixty community listeners' clubs in the Tshopo District of Oriental Province (north-eastern DRC). Inspired by the experiences in South Kivu and Katanga, the "Listeners' clubs, combating poverty,



A meeting of the members of the FAO field school in Gitega, Burundi, which have been approached to form a Dimitra community listeners' club.

food security and gender" project is helping to achieve the goals of the Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme in Oriental Province (PRAPO), namely: providing support to the agriculture and fisheries sectors and the rehabilitation of social services.

Social mobilization and farmer organization both play an important role, especially through information and communication. The project aims to ensure that rural communities, including the women and young people members of the community listeners' clubs, have easier access to information, and that they use and share it to improve their knowledge about agricultural, economic and socio-political activities. Increased self confidence, acquired as a result of club membership, could lead to greater participation in decision-making and better management of food security and agri-

cultural development. Sixty listeners' clubs are being created in Oriental Province, in partnership with INADES Formation-Congo (Institut africain pour le développement économique et social – Centre africain de formation). About ten others will be set up soon in South Kivu, with financial backing from UN Women and the technical support of Samwaki.

## In Burundi

Convinced of the key role that the Dimitra listeners' clubs can play, especially for networking and sharing best practices, four FAO programmes in Burundi have decided to launch a pilot project for 40 Dimitra listeners' clubs in the provinces of Bujumbura Mairie, Bujumbura Rural, Bubanza and Muramvya. Although Burundi is a small country, the isolation of its rural communities, especially as regards access to information, is acute.

The network of listeners' clubs will be based on existing Farmer Field Schools and horticultural farmers' groups. The project will contribute to the structuring of these informal groups and to changes in agricultural and other practices through capacity building activities. UN Women has decided to support the initiative and fund 15 clubs in Burundi with the economic empowerment of women and youth as specific objective.

### In Mauritania

Impressed by the participatory approach of FAO-Dimitra, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) have decided to support Mauritanian NGO PRAD (*Perspectives Rurales Action et Développement*, Rural Perspectives Action and Development) – which specializes in participatory communication – in setting up listeners' clubs. The first phase of the project will mainly involve the wilayas (regions) of Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol and Assaba (in the south of the country). Some forty Dimitra community listeners' clubs will bring together men and women in these areas where access to communication and information is limited and socio-cultural challenges, including obstacles to gender equality, are marked.

One specific aspect of the Mauritanian project is the link with climate change and the environment. Some debates within the clubs will focus on specific themes, mainly regarding biodiversity and climate change. Innovative approaches are also being explored, including partnerships with existing UNDP programmes such as Multifunctional Platforms. These have been developed and adapted to reduce the workload of women and allow access to electricity, drinking water and new information and communication technologies.

*In Mauritania, the community listeners' clubs will bring together men and women in areas where access to communication and information is limited and socio-cultural challenges, including obstacles to gender equality, are marked.*

### In Senegal

Dimitra community listeners' clubs will be launched in Senegal with the aim of increasing gender awareness and linking the activities of two existing FAO programmes: the Italian Programme for Food Security (FSCA) and the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) project, which has a number of Farmer Field Schools in the country (and in other West African countries). Here too, before the initiative is scaled up, a pilot phase funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will involve launching a network of Dimitra listeners' clubs in the region of Niayes and in Casamance.

Unlike other countries, technical support for the project is being provided not just by Dimitra, but also by OEKR, the FAO division that specialises in communication for development.

The Dimitra listeners' clubs project in Senegal also aims to strengthen the farmers' organizations that are partners of FSCA and IPM, in terms of access to communication and information as well as gender awareness at all levels.

### The first activities: baseline survey and initial training

In the different countries, two stages are considered to be especially important for the project's success: a baseline survey and the initial training.

Carrying out a **baseline survey** in the target areas makes it possible to have a clear picture of the situation and acts as a benchmark for future reference. The assessment generally has three components: gender, participatory communication and organization at local level. As with any development project, it is essential to

be familiar with local conditions so as to define indicators, which will be useful throughout the project in order to help check progress. The assessment allows an adapted global approach to be adopted and serves as a reference point for monitoring and evaluating the clubs. This phase also offers the opportunity to identify potential partners or local leaders (women, men and young people) with whom the project will be able to work.

The other key moment is the five-day **initial training** facilitated by Dimitra. It brings together about thirty people (stakeholders, media, men/women leaders, representatives of government ministries) who play a key role in implementing the project. It has several objectives: informing and raising awareness among stakeholders about implementation of the project; start building the capacities of participants – men and women – in the field of gender and communication, with a view to setting up clubs and; providing guidance to participants on how the listeners' clubs work as well as on other practical aspects of conducting activities. It also offers an opportunity to confirm the results of the assessment.

Both these activities are currently being carried out in the four countries mentioned, although the specificities vary because each project is different, with many aspects having to be decided by the communities themselves as part of a participatory process.

The coming months will see new projects for Dimitra listeners' clubs developing endogenously, on the basis of decisions taken by club members and their partners. There is no question that the creativity of rural communities, especially women and young people, will again make it possible to find solutions to the challenges encountered. At the global level, these projects and experiences will enable FAO to draw lessons and share them with as large an audience as possible.





# Niger | Cigaba strengthens unity through inventory credit

Wawa (which means “stupid” or “ignorant” in Hausa), is the nickname taken by Zeinabou Oumarou, farmer and mother of nine children. Before discovering inventory credit, she used to sell her entire harvest, or use it to feed her family. Around her, she saw women starting up other activities such as livestock keeping or selling groundnut oil, using credit obtained through inventory credit, even if many of them had to do it under their husbands’ name because women were not allowed to apply for loans. And Zeinabou found herself with nothing – “wawa” ...

With the help of the Cigaba Union, of which she is a member, Wawa has understood that she too could have a different future. For five years now, she has been practising inventory credit, using her own name, and she supports other women too: “It’s thanks to inventory credit that I now have these activities which earn income for me. I travel to markets to sell the groundnut oil that I have produced and to buy cereals. I am well known, people come to visit me and I am well respected socially”.

## Women and inventory credit: progress and difficulties

The Cigaba (meaning “Progress” in Hausa) Union is based in the region of Dosso in south-east Niger. It is a union of producers’ organizations (POs), made up of 51 village groups, comprising about 1,500 men and women farmers. Its goal is to fight poverty. Despite good harvests, Union members tended to sell off their products cheaply in order to obtain cash, only to be faced with food shortages during the lean season. In a bid to counter these problems, members of the Union turned to the credit system.

Although inventory credit is now widely practised in Niger, it has taken a long time to develop a workable system for both women and men farmers. Challenges to be tackled before the credit system can be truly successful include poor harvests, high levels of illiteracy, inadequate storage facilities, low output of women farmers and lack of recognition for the role of women.

## Improving infrastructure

To help the Union tackle the constraints highlighted by its members, Cigaba has been granted funding by the King Baudouin Foundation, through the Amélie Fund. The idea is

**Inventory credit** (also known as “warrantage”) is a system of rural credit that enables a PO and/or its members to obtain a loan by offering as warranty a non-perishable agricultural product which is likely to increase in value (millet, sorghum, rice, maize, sesame, gombo, groundnuts etc.). The credit allows farmers to generate additional revenue during the post-harvest period.



© Déla Fatouma Sidi (projet Capitalisation)

Thanks to inventory credit, Wawa was able to improve her life and that of her family.

to support the empowerment process of the Union and its members. Activities are being implemented by FAO’s *Capitalisation of good practices in support of agricultural production and food security* project, together with Dimitra’s partner, the NGO VIE Kande Ni Bayra.

Using this funding, five warehouses have been built by the PO’s members, who joined forces to find the necessary materials locally and offered their labour. These infrastructures have enabled the Union to reduce its members’ reliance on warehouse owners. The purchase of three cereal mills and 15 kits for extracting groundnut oil has significantly lightened the domestic burdens of women in the beneficiary villages and fostered the creation of income generating activities through warranted credit. The equipment has enabled women to strengthen their presence within the inventory credit system and has helped to promote several initiatives aimed at achieving economic empowerment for women PO members.

## Good governance and literacy for the Union and its members

Two facilitators – a man and a woman – have been recruited to assist the Union and the POs.

The Union hopes that this close supervision will ensure better organizational governance in the long term, taking account of the concerns of both women and men farmers. Union and PO officials have benefited from training on community organization and some members have received training on extracting groundnut oil and managing cereal mills.

For several months now, VIE has been running literacy courses for Union members, with the aim of improving their access to knowledge and information, and in so doing, helping them and the Union to develop better practices. Their experiences will be built on, so that other organizations, in the country and elsewhere in the world, can also benefit.

## For further information:

Amélie Fund:

[www.kbs-frb.be/fund](http://www.kbs-frb.be/fund)

Capitalisation of good practices:

[www.capitalisation-bp.net](http://www.capitalisation-bp.net)

Vie Kande Ni Bayra:

[www.viebayra.org](http://www.viebayra.org)

Knowledge Management and Gender Programme:

[www.fao.org/oek/km-gender](http://www.fao.org/oek/km-gender)



## Niger | “Engendering” the innovation process in rural areas

The fact that women make essential contributions to agriculture in developing countries and that they have less access than men to productive resources, innovations and income opportunities has been widely documented and acknowledged. Closing this gender gap would generate a significant increase in production, income and livelihood in rural areas. The Gender in Agriculture Partnership (GAP)<sup>1</sup> aims to contribute to closing this gap by making innovation better serve the needs of women farmers.

Taking Niger as an initial case study,<sup>2</sup> the GAP developed a participatory assessment of innovation priorities of farm-households’ members to determine the innovation needs and priorities of women and men, recognize different perspectives, and determine the potential for change in women’s priorities when more relevant innovation options are made directly accessible through radio communication. The assessment is demand-driven and takes various approaches into consideration: gender, participation and livelihood.

The case study took place in October 2011, in partnership with local development and research agents. It took place in eight villages selected by the local partners in three regions of Niger. Among the selection criteria were the way the main village partners share information:

- two “traditional” villages (Karma and Niamè, near the capital Niamey) where the information flow is mainly top-down and selected potential innovations are presented to groups of rural farmers, by sex.
- four villages with innovation platforms (Katatouma, Karanguya, Fagagaou and Gade, in Maradi), where the entry point is agricultural improvement within the broader context of enhancing rural livelihood.
- two villages with Dimitra community listeners’ clubs (Gasseda and Falanga, near Dantandou), where, through two-way information sharing, the beneficiaries move from being passive recipients of guidance and advice to active participants in their own development.

In each village, the purpose of the visit and its conduct were explained to the whole community in advance. Groups were subsequently formed, except where there were already community listeners’ clubs, for women, men and youth to share their concerns. They had to answer 3 questions: what were the major agricultural changes that happened in the past, what are their current main constraints and what are their ideal demands for change for the future. The results of these group exchanges were consolidated and presented to all participants and further discussed.

### Capacity for dialogue

The discussions showed very different attitudes towards gender issues and capacity for dialogue. Willingness to participate in the discussions was strong in villages with innovation platforms and listeners’ clubs, as opposed to the villages with a more traditional communication approach. In the “traditional” villages discussions were very heated, highlighting unresolved conflicts, whereas analytical capacity was greatest in villages with listeners’ clubs. Time to reflect certainly was a positive factor, as all the listeners’ clubs had received the questions a few days earlier.

### Distribution of work and workloads

The seasonal calendar proved to be a powerful tool to reconstruct the daily work done by women. Expressions such as “I bring food to the field workers and come back home” had to be further discussed to discover that those women not

only brought lunch to the workers, but worked themselves two to four hours with them. The women’s workload was well acknowledged and discussed in the villages with innovation platforms and listeners’ clubs, but rather more grudgingly acknowledged in more “traditional” villages.

The discussions highlighted the fact that everyone knows and recognizes the fact that women have more work and that “men make all decisions”. However, the gender consciousness level and the perception of gender inequalities and their implications for development varied greatly. For example, sayings like “Women have the same access to our advices / technologies” and “We work for all, without distinction” were heard. In practice, however, most extension packages are blind to the role of the users within the rural community.

The case study also confirms that women not only work on the household plot, but also farm their own plots. However, women cultivate much smaller plots than those of the heads of household and the male household members. Their use of fertilizers, organic and/or mineral, is much lower than that of men. No women own a plough or a cart, and their access is highly dependent on equipment and cash availabilities. Access to information through, for example, radio or cellular phone, is also lower than men’s.



## A wide array of needs and demands

In all villages, concerns and demands for change were much broader than agricultural technologies and services. They concerned all aspects of daily life, such as agricultural production and productivity, health, access to water and to credit, education, income generation, food security, a clean environment, etc. Access to education, training and information in their broad sense, were among the three major demands of both women and men in four of the seven villages. Most groups acknowledge benefits from education and information. A woman expressed the relevance of information needs: "What you do not know, you do not change". Lack of cash and low access to credit were perceived as a major need in three villages for the women and two for the men.

Interestingly, all demands concerned products and services that are already available in the country, but not always at the village level.

## Demands of men ... and of women

There were clear discrepancies between women's and men's demands. While men mainly asked for innovations intended for their major income source, namely agriculture, women tended to prefer products and services aimed at reducing their workload, such as milling and de-husking machines or easier access to water and wood. These are also relevant for post-harvest activities, both for home-consumption and for commercialisation.

Both women and men asked for intensification and/or new income-generating activities (IGAs). However, the timing of these activities differed. Men specifically asked for IGAs during the dry season, when many of them migrate to look for work. Women rather asked for activities that can be done irregularly and in a segmented manner.

The paradox is that women complain about an overload of work, and yet ask for IGAs. This is the poverty-time-gender nexus. Women are responsible for most reproductive tasks, which take up a large amount of their daily time and energy. Most innovations require resources, but women have fewer resources and generate less income than men. And generating higher income requires more time, energy and other resources (land, capital, etc.) ...

## Making innovations work for women

The case study raises several issues which are relevant to making innovations work better for women and improving rural livelihoods. Women are heavily involved in family farming. They also cultivate their own plots, even with lower inputs levels. Their demands encompass all areas of livelihood, even beyond the agricultural sector. Their prioritised demands always include products and services that would help reduce their workload for activities such as milling, pressing, de-husking, water and wood collection. Liberated time and energy lead to economic empowerment.

Listeners' clubs seem to induce more matured prioritised demands, and collective dialogue on gender issues tends to be more open. Time for reflection certainly positively influenced the decision and consolidation processes. The "traditional" top-down approach resulted in heated discussions between women and men, and negotiation seemed difficult. Innovation platforms and listeners' clubs therefore seem to be outperforming the traditional information channels for information diffusion and for assessing the innovations' options and best practices.

Gender relationships and the capacity for social dialogue in a rural community determine the possibility for collective action and positive attitude toward change. Support from the local chief as well as the competency and skills of those accompanying the process certainly influence that capacity.

## Conclusions

The case study highlights several entry points for reducing inequalities at both individual and collective levels. It also allows assessment of the readiness of rural communities to discuss such topics, the influence of external communication links in achieving greater



Women tend to prefer products and services aimed at reducing their workload, such as milling and de-husking machines or easier access to water and wood.

access to innovation for women, and the level of awareness of gender inequalities among the local population and the various actors.

It concludes that taking socio-economic aspects into account and making use of gender-sensitive methods are important. It advises using a broader and holistic approach to innovation, not only for income-generating activities, including agriculture and post-harvest activities, but for all activities contributing to improved livelihood.

Making innovation work better for women requires long term institutional change and reorientation of innovation processes so that gender implications are considered from the outset. It also necessitates targeting agricultural knowledge and making it more directly relevant and available to women farmers and heads of households.

Most importantly, all of the above needs to be done in partnership with the local population, the local authorities and development organizations.

✳ This article was based on a research report and an article drafted for FAO by Anna Crole-Rees, international consultant



- 1 This initiative was developed through the mechanism of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) among partners, including FAO, the CGIAR and regional fora.
- 2 Conducted by Anna Crole-Rees (CRC4change, Switzerland) in collaboration with GFAR, FAO-Dimitra and FARA (Ghana).
- 3 ONG VIE Kande Ni Bayra (VIE) and the Institut National de Recherches Agronomiques du Niger (INRAN).

# FAO with women farmers in Niger

Despite the key contribution they make to producing and processing agricultural products and providing food security for their families, women farmers in Niger still have very limited access to natural resources and productive opportunities. They also play a quite marginal role in decision-making in rural institutions. These observations were highlighted by an FAO study, whose results were officially presented in Niamey on 24 May 2012, during a restitution workshop on “The role and participation of women in producer organizations in Niger”.

The study was conducted by FAO’s “Rural Institutions and People’s Empowerment” (RIPE) team and is part of a wider research programme on the promotion of rural women and the essential role that producers’ organizations (POs) can play in supporting small-scale women and men farmers and helping women to overcome the obstacles that they face. Strong and effective organizations could provide their members, especially women, with better access to natural resources, training and information, as well as to markets and marketing services. They could also promote women’s active participation in policy making.

Carried out in eight different regions of the country, the study targeted both mixed POs (71%) and women’s POs (29%). The specific aim was to identify the constraints that prevent women from becoming involved in POs in Niger.

## Main results

During the restitution workshop in Niamey, the results were presented to some 40 participants. These included the Minister of Agriculture, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Population, Promotion of Women and Child Protection, the FAO Representative in Niger and his Information Officer, as well as the representatives of FAO’s Capitalisation of Good Practices in support of Agricultural Production and Food Security project and of other international development agencies, as well as some thirty women and men members of the rural organizations which participated in the study.

The study showed that joining a PO was no obstacle for women, since they can become members without any particular restrictions. However, the situation changes when it comes to women taking a full and active part in PO activities. For example, in the case of mixed POs, it emerges that women are in the majority in terms of members (59% are women compared with 41% who are men), but their numbers fall dramatically when it comes to management positions (81% are men; 19% are women). Here, the study revealed major hurdles to women’s involvement, in particular the heavy burden of domestic tasks, the husband’s refusal to grant permission and a general lack of information. It was observed that the obstacles are not structural or economic, but are mainly linked to cultural and social norms



Children from VIE Kande Ni Bayra’s bridge schools present a sketch on inventory credit during the restitution workshop.

woven into the fabric of Nigerien society. Many of the hurdles arise when women try to call into question their traditional role in society.

The study also revealed that in general, women’s access to resources and information remains very limited. The POs tend to reinforce the traditional roles played by men and women through specific training sessions for women, which rarely seek to prepare them for leadership or entrepreneurship. Marginalization of women was also observed when it comes to active participation in management committees and decision-making in POs. In almost half of all cases (48%), women were under represented in such bodies and in one quarter of the cases (25%), they were totally absent. In the rare cases where women obtain key posts in POs, the decision to allocate these posts is always taken by men, never by women.

## How to improve women’s participation

The presentation of the results was followed by a debate featuring a great many questions which sought to clear up certain points, and these discussions helped to clarify the participatory approach taken by FAO. The idea was to get PO representatives to confirm and add to the results of the study, but above all for both men and women to join forces in identifying possible solutions to the constraints facing women in these organizations.

The proposed solutions focused on three main areas:

- **awareness raising** for women and men on the importance of women’s involvement in decision-making as a development challenge;
- improved access for women **to goods and services**: to land, information (listeners’ clubs and community radios), training (in leadership and agricultural techniques, Farmer Field Schools and inventory credit), inputs and credit, markets and marketing services and, lastly, to public services (the granting of public spaces for unions and cooperatives, free care for women and children);
- **setting up mechanisms** that promote women’s participation, such as quota systems in decision-making bodies.

The conclusions of the study and the workshop will help in the development of a wider programme for the coming years, which should make it possible to design more innovative PO models. Above all, it will be important to develop effective support strategies for POs, so that they are equitable forums where women are on the same footing as men and can play a crucial role in decision-making.

✳ **For more information,**  
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# FAO | Successful endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines

On 11 May 2012 the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) officially endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. The Guidelines were prepared through intergovernmental negotiations. They set out principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices and aim at helping governments safeguard the rights of people to own or access land, forests and fisheries.

The guidelines are based on an inclusive consultation process started by FAO in 2009 and finalized through CFS-led intergovernmental negotiations that included participation of government officials, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, international organizations and academics.

The aim of the guidelines: to promote food security and sustainable development by improving secure access to land, fisheries and forests and protecting the rights of millions of often very poor people.

## Historic and far-reaching

“Giving poor and vulnerable people secure and equitable rights to access land and other natural resources is a key condition in the fight against hunger and poverty. It is a historic breakthrough that countries have agreed on these first-ever global land tenure guidelines. We now have a shared vision. It’s a starting point that will help improve the often dire situation of the hungry and poor,” said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

Much public debate has focused on the so-called ‘land-grabbing’ phenomenon, which is one of the issues that are dealt with in these guidelines.

While the guidelines acknowledge that responsible investments by the public and private sectors are essential for improving food security, they also recommend that safeguards be put in place to protect tenure rights of local people from risks that could arise from large-scale land acquisitions, and also to protect human rights, livelihoods, food security and the environment.

Investment models exist that do not result in the large-scale acquisition of land, and these alternative models should be promoted. Investments should also promote policy objectives such as boosting local food security and promoting food security, poverty eradication and job creation, and “provide benefits to the country and its people, including the poor and most vulnerable.”

## Next steps

It is now up to the countries who endorsed the guidelines to put them into practice on the ground. FAO will develop a series of technical handbooks designed to help countries adapt



## The Voluntary Guidelines ...

... promote **secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests** as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development and enhancing the environment.

... set out **principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices**. They are a framework that actors can use when developing their own strategies, policies, legislation and programmes. They allow government authorities, the private sector, civil society and citizens to judge whether their proposed actions and the actions of others constitute acceptable practices.

... are **not legally binding**. They do not replace existing national or international laws, commitments, treaties or agreements. They do not limit or undermine any legal obligations which States may have under international law. As soft law instruments they have positive impact in guiding national policies, legislation and programmes.

In the Guidelines, two of the ten **principles of implementation** which are essential to contribute to responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests refer to **gender equity and equality**:

**Principle 3. Equity and justice:** recognizing that equality between individuals may require acknowledging differences between individuals, and taking positive action, including empowerment, in order to promote equitable tenure rights and access to land, fisheries and forests, for all, women and men, youth and vulnerable and traditionally marginalized people, within the national context.

**Principle 4. Gender equality:** Ensure the equal right of women and men to the enjoyment of all human rights, while acknowledging differences between women and men and taking specific measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality when necessary. States should ensure that women and girls have equal tenure rights and access to land, fisheries and forests independent of their civil and marital status.

the guidelines to their local contexts and put them into play. The Organization will also provide targeted technical assistance to governments towards that same end.

✱ **More information:**  
[www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en](http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en)

# “In Africa, the attitude of men is key to the success of women”

ELISABETH ATANGANA | PRESIDENT OF THE PAN AFRICAN FARMERS ORGANIZATION (PAFO), THE REGIONAL PLATFORM OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA (PROPAC) AND FAO SPECIAL AMBASSADOR FOR COOPERATIVES.

Since the 1980s, Elisabeth Atangana, a farmer from Cameroon, has worked to defend the interests of African producers, both men and women. President of PAFO and PROPAC, she was appointed FAO Special Ambassador for the International Year of Cooperatives on 29 May 2012.

## Could you describe your career path? How did you come to be President of PROPAC and PAFO?

It's a long story! I began by rearing pigs in 1979 through an organization that I had helped to set up. One thing led to another, and with other farmers' leaders, we worked to build the farming sector in Cameroon during the 1980s. This work led to the launch of a national federation, the *Conseil national des fédérations du Cameroun*. But this body did not last long, due to internal conflicts. In 1988, we reassembled and launched an appeal for solidarity with the aim of setting up another national organization. In 2000, following consultations in the regions, we were able to launch the federal organization of producers' organizations (POs) in Cameroon. (...) It was in the wake of this that we founded a regional organization which is now PROPAC.

## Did you follow a particular academic path?

I trained as a teacher, a primary school teacher, and I got a job in a rural area towards the end of the 1970s. Very soon, I began working in production and rural extension work. I then had the opportunity to train in finance, rural finance in particular. In 1991, I set up a micro-finance network to help poor communities. I also trained in project planning and develop-

ment and in many other areas linked to development.

## Have you always had a sense of social commitment?

As soon as I started working I decided I wanted to make an effort to help communities. I come from a family of farmers and I have seen the difficulties they face. So I decided to become involved with rural communities. It was a natural choice.

## What challenges have you faced in your work?

The first challenge has been that of always having to prove yourself. A woman will often have to make more of an effort to show that she is capable of achieving something. Something that might have been easy for a male leader was not necessarily so for me. I had to make a great deal of effort to win the support of others, to be understood and accepted.

Then there were problems with the authorities. Since I wasn't an agronomist, people didn't understand all the initiatives that I took. On occasions, someone would even say to me: 'you aren't an agronomist, what are you doing?' to which I would reply: 'I have the ideas and the engineer will put them into practice because he has the expertise'!

## Did you encounter any resistance from your family?

At the start, it was complicated with my husband's family, who had difficulty accepting the fact that I was often not around. It was only when I managed to complete my first drinking water project, with an inauguration by the authorities, that everyone understood and accepted what I was doing, especially with regard to my travelling. Before that, it was hard to get people to understand why I travelled to undergo training, particularly in Europe, and why I was taking part in international meet-

## FAO Special Ambassador for Cooperatives

As FAO's Special Ambassador for Cooperatives, Elisabeth Atangana seeks to encourage the growth and creation of cooperatives worldwide, especially in Africa. This general objective is divided into the following specific goals:

- ✱ supporting agricultural cooperatives through various activities organized during the International Year of Cooperatives (2012);
- ✱ motivating stakeholders to take advantage of the International Year of Cooperatives and raising awareness about their contribution to social and economic development;
- ✱ supporting FAO in raising awareness of governments and the public on the contributions of cooperative enterprises to poverty reduction, job creation and social integration;
- ✱ encouraging actions aimed at strengthening the cooperative model as an alternative business mechanism and promoting socio-economic development.

Elisabeth Atangana shares the role of Special Ambassador for Cooperatives with the Brazilian Roberto Rodrigues, President of the Superior Council of Agribusiness of São Paulo's Federation of Industries, former Minister of Agriculture and Food for Brazil and former President of the International Cooperative Alliance.



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**FAO Director-General Graziano da Silva and newly appointed Special Ambassador for Cooperatives Elisabeth Atangana at the FAO Cooperatives Meeting "Working Together for the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives".**

ings. The inauguration helped my family to understand my situation and the efforts that my husband was making to support me. It is difficult for a man in African society, he was judged to be weak. It was only later that people started saying 'he was right!' It wasn't easy for him either. I owe him a great deal. In Africa, the attitude of men is key to the success of women.

### **How do you see the future of women in Cameroon and in Africa in general?**

I think there has been significant progress, though a great deal still needs to be done. But greater resolve is needed from governments and international institutions to work for

women's empowerment, to support women leadership. The benefits will then trickle down to women at grassroots level. The potential of rural communities could develop as a result.

There is also a need for training, and especially support for decentralized training. We have a centre that trains both young boys and girls. But sometimes the girls' progress is blocked because they have a baby or have to work in the house. Solutions have to be found to reach them in the villages. And it is absolutely cru-

cial to include men. If training is exclusively offered to women, they develop capacities for reflecting and taking initiatives, but this may cause a sense of insecurity among men.

Regarding access to land, women do not make long-term, sustainable investments for they are not the owners and don't have secure land access. Here too, we need to find specific solutions.

Lastly, there is the issue of networking between women in leading positions and rural women. There needs to be a link between the two groups so that they can unite to express their political needs together. I think that there can be a future if there is a real will to support African women. Strengthening women's economic independence is essential. There is a need to develop their entrepreneurial capacities, promote cooperatives and make sure that women can develop their potential.

### **To conclude, have you any advice for our women and men readers?**

It takes humility to learn and women need to be able to accept one another. It is important to join forces in order to overcome obstacles. I come back once more to networking. Women really do need to learn to work together, to accept each other and to recognize the position of others, so that everyone plays a role. Groups need to stop working on their own and have to find solutions together so as to achieve common goals.

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## **Regional Platform of Farmers' Organizations in Central Africa (PROPAC)**

PROPAC was launched in 2005 in Cameroon. Its members have defined the following strategic priorities:

- ✳ supporting the structuring of farmers' organizations, strategic planning and communication at local, national and regional level;
- ✳ strengthening the institutional and strategic capacities of farmers' organizations and agricultural producers in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes for rural communities;
- ✳ promoting women leadership, job opportunities for young people and self-promotion for minorities;
- ✳ strengthening the economic capacities of agricultural producers to respect the sustainable management of natural resources, the environment and biodiversity;
- ✳ representation, negotiation, advocacy and lobbying.

## **Panafrican Farmers Organization (PAFO)**

Launched in 2010, PAFO brings together five regional African networks: the Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of West Africa, the Eastern African Farmers Federation, the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions, the Union of North African Farmers and the Regional Platform of Farmers' Organizations in Central Africa.

The platform works to harmonize the visions of farmers' organizations and to carry out advocacy, particularly with the African Union. It aims to obtain greater focus on common concerns for African farmers' organizations.

# Mozambique | Overcoming gender issues in land rights

Access to land is fundamental for the food security and well being of all people. In many countries where women are the major work force on the land, the security of their rights over this key resource is also a fundamental condition of household food security and equitable economic development. Unfortunately, in many such countries, including Mozambique, these rights are in fact not so secure.

Gender issues in Mozambique are quite complex. Rural women are both the major producers of food and responsible for the management of their households, but they are not given real decision-making power in their families, or given rights over land. Whether they belong to patrilineal or matrilineal communities, most of their access to land comes through some form or relationship with men— their fathers, husbands, uncles ... In the past, in a normal household reproduction cycle, the women would use assets allocated to them through these relationships. Older women, maybe widowed, would be looked after by the now grown children as they inherited the land left to them by their fathers or the family lineage system.

Due to HIV and AIDS, however, many men are dying young and their children are too young to claim their inheritance rights. Land is also getting scarcer, as private sector investment, population growth and climate change reduce real land availability. In this context, many families are taking new measures to either hold onto or gain as much land as they can, and young widows are being dispossessed of their lands and their children disinherited. Young women are being evicted with their children, and very often they cannot even return to their families as there is no land there either for them to farm. As a result they often end up in vulnerable situations as landless poor, often migrating to urban and peri-urban areas and being forced to take up high risk activities like prostitution and other exploitative work in order to survive, exposing them even more to HIV and AIDS.

## Gender equality and the law

There are very good gender equality laws in Mozambique. The constitution is very strong on women's rights, and Mozambique has signed many conventions that promote gender equality. The country's land law guarantees women's rights over land and ensures that customary law takes second place to constitutional principles. At the same time, it remains very difficult to implement these laws, in large part because people do not know about their existence.

To overcome these challenges it is crucial to raise awareness about the statutory law and its gender equality principles throughout the country, even in the most remote areas. Although it is very important to work with women, it is perhaps even more important to work with men, who are still the leaders and



Paralegals trained by the CFJJ/FAO programme for the legal empowerment of rural women.

conservative bastions of customs. It is essential to show the advantages of gender equality to society as a whole, but to men in particular as they must give up part of their power to ensure that women become empowered ...

## FAO's Land and Gender Project

FAO has been supporting the Government of Mozambique through its Land and Gender Project. In partnership with the Juridical and Judicial Training Centre (CFJJ) of the Ministry of Justice, the project is implementing a twin track strategy, supporting an awareness raising campaign and capacity building activities targeting community leaders, men and women at local level and also government officials to ensure that people are enabled to exercise their rights and the State is prepared to address gender issues proactively.

Throughout paralegal training courses, new concepts have been transmitted at different levels of Mozambican society, challenging the traditional system that is mostly negative towards women. This work is necessarily slow and incremental, because to promote gender equality and women's rights in Mozambique means changing the current culture and this takes time. It is clear that any project must respect the underlying culture and proceed with sensitivity and understanding.

But positive results are being recorded. A good example is the achievement of a group of 11 paralegals from a local NGO called AMUDEIA,

which has recently obtained land titles in favor of vulnerable women. The group organized community sessions at local level to sensitize rural people about gender equality and land rights. From this emerged a demand from some vulnerable women to pursue individual titling. AMUDEIA organized itself to support these women, and obtained a small grant from another local NGO, Forum Mulher.

"This is a moment of positive change in our lives, from now on our land and our livelihoods are safe, our past and our future are protected," says Teresa Mboa, one of the paralegals. She states that obtaining land titles, as rural people and through their own efforts, made all the communities involved very proud and confident.

## For more information please contact:

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Also see this video clip, which presents an overview of gender issues in Mozambique and the major challenges faced by rural women when it comes to access to land and natural resources:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDoBZamFvVc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDoBZamFvVc)



# Uganda | Reaching out to youth through the ICT4D Youth Network

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are vital tools for the development of any economy. The WOUGNET ICT4D (ICT for Development) Youth Network is composed of a wide range of young people – secondary school boys and girls, other youngsters with access to email, youth leaders working on community development projects and young business men and women passionate about the use of ICTs for development.

WOUGNET focuses on young people because they are the most active members of society – they adopt new strategies fast, learn new skills as they evolve, possess insurmountable energy to carry out tasks and projects and are the most appropriate age group for capacity building in economic empowerment.

When youth are guided appropriately and provided with the opportunities and means to use ICT tools, they are able to meaningfully and proactively take part in entrepreneurship and other economic development activities. But this will depend on how strategically and innovatively they can use these technologies in addressing their day-to-day issues and needs.

## Enabling policies

Since the early 90's, the Ugandan authorities have aimed to ensure equitable access to basic communication services to all citizens, particularly those in rural and under-served areas. Since then, remarkable progress has been made in terms of getting youth involved in the information society. However, many still have not fully grasped the opportunities that ICT tools present to them, for example in addressing the information gap, promoting agricultural production, conducting transactions/commerce (e.g. mobile money transfers), promoting transparency and accountability in social service deliveries, and looking for professional opportunities.

For WOUGNET, the ICT4D Youth Network, established in November 2011, is crucial in helping youth fully understand how these tools can help them. Young people were engaged as **ICT4D agents** within their communities. They are responsible for facilitating the innovative use of ICTs for information gathering, repackaging and dissemination within their communities. They also serve as intermediaries to strengthen the flow of information to and from the Network.

In collaboration with the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC), over 2000 young people have already been reached in secondary schools through sensitization, training and awareness-raising about ICTs and gender. WOUGNET stresses the importance of gender awareness among young school boys and girls as they will be the ones to act as change agents

in promoting equal relations, opportunities and rights and see development as an activity in which both men and women participate actively and equally.

## Partnerships and collaborations

Strategic collaborations and partnerships for ICT awareness and training have also been created with youth organizations. For instance, WOUGNET has partnered with Recreation for Development and Peace in Uganda (RDP Uganda), an organization advocating for youth involvement in governance and policy processes. Visits to youth groups in Apac District were conducted to ascertain the levels of ICT awareness and skills amongst youth and to determine the availability of ICT tools and Internet connectivity in their communities. Simple ICT trainings for youth were conducted and e-mail addresses were created for participants. Free Internet and computer access is also offered for youths at WOUGNET's Kubere Information Center in Apac.

A **youth discussion group** (dgroup) was established to share information on agriculture, rural development, ICTs and opportunities for young people. A **Facebook** page acts as a platform to further facilitate the information-sharing process and stimulate debate and interactivity amongst youth. The establishment of a WOUGNET Community Development through Technology Centre in Kampala has further enhanced the number of young people joining the network, as many of those coming to the Centre for ICT training courses become part of it.

## Lessons learned and challenges: access for rural youth

The aim is a very interactive platform where youth can discuss, generate feedback and ask questions. So far, however, interaction and feedback have remained limited, especially on the discussion group. Experience shows that



ICT4D Youth Network members at the WOUGNET ICT Training Center

young people are very enthusiastic to learn about ICTs and the benefits they offer. However, despite the fact that most urban youth are advantaged compared to their rural counterparts, **lack of access** to technology tools such as computers and the Internet is still a problem affecting many young people. Lack of skills and low accessibility of services offered at ICT centres and Internet cafes due to high costs, limit many young people's involvement in the Network.

There is a need to ensure that the distribution of ICT tools and their use is beneficial to young boys and girls in both urban and rural areas. More skills training needs to be organized, accessibility and connectivity issues need to be addressed and ICT services must be made more affordable. This calls for the attention of all stakeholders, including the government!

## \* For more information:

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# The Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition – A global platform for unification and strength

Eliminating hunger and malnutrition cannot be done by governments alone but must involve coordinated action. The Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition (AAHM) is a global voluntary partnership where members share a common commitment to the rapid eradication of hunger and malnutrition in the world.

When the United Nations announced famine in southern Somalia in July 2011, strategic thinking and action were necessary to fight extreme food insecurity in the region. Resources were mobilized locally and globally in an effort to assist affected countries. For many local and international NGOs, this meant partnering with like-minded organizations. This is precisely the mandate of the AAHM, whose work is founded on the principle that entities working towards a common goal, such as the fight against hunger and malnutrition, need to be unified.

## What is the AAHM?

The Alliance brings together a wide range of partners – governmental and non-governmental groups, international organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and members of the private sector – committed to fighting hunger. This diversity in partnership is what gives the Alliance a unique credibility in today's world. With 60 country-driven National Alliances, four Regional Alliances and one Sub-Regional Alliance, the AAHM facilitates national-level policy dialogue in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

At the global level, the Alliance works through a Secretariat, housed at FAO headquarters.

The Secretariat facilitates the establishment of National Alliances and supports their growth and ongoing operations, serving as a communication and coordination nexus, through which members can seek solutions to problems.

In addition to setting up communication channels, the Secretariat sponsors and hosts national, regional and international workshops for the National Alliances. It also encourages and supports participation of National Alliances in relevant regional and global meetings as a way to raise their visibility and recognition. It organizes capacity-building workshops, hosts consultations and monitors and reports on the implementation of programmes and projects executed by the various National and Regional Alliances.

The Secretariat is assisted by an Advisory Group which is comprised of the four founding agencies of the Alliance – FAO, IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International – as well as representatives of some twelve partner organizations, including international civil society and NGO partners such as Oxfam and ActionAid. The Advisory group has a Rotating Chair, which is currently held by Mr. Kwesi Atta-Krah of Bioversity International.

## Programme areas

The work of the Alliance focuses on four specific areas:

- **advocacy:** championing the fight against hunger and malnutrition through multiple channels;
- **accountability:** working through the National Alliances to serve the country-level implementation of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The National Alliances contribute to map country-level food security actions and resource flows and support development of mechanisms and initiatives;
- **coordination:** providing a central node for coordination among all AAHM members;
- **resource mobilization:** identifying and mobilizing funds for the AAHM and to support National Alliances.

## A concrete example – emergency relief in Somalia

In July 2012, the Regional Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition for Francophone Africa (RAAHM-FA), launched an emergency relief initiative that brought 60 tons of cereals to southern Somalia, where approximately 3 million people were suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

Somalia's Chamber of Agriculture and Rural Women's Organizations and rural sector CSOs, supported by FAO, Regional Alliance members and WFP representatives, assisted with the collection of cereals – mainly maize and beans – and with the delivery of the food stuffs so they would reach the women, children and men in the region.

In an interview with FAO's Media Team, Ms Christine Andela of the AAHM's Cameroon National Alliance and coordinator of the RAAHM-FA, said of the initiative: "It's a project that highlights how these alliances work, with collaboration at many levels and the pooling of skills of the different agencies."

## Participation and inclusiveness

The AAHM is aware that not all local, national and global initiatives that address food security are adequately represented or always able to participate in discussions regarding food security. The Alliance would therefore like to call on all relevant organizations to take part in the Alliance.

✿ For more information and a full list of National Alliances, visit: [www.theaahm.org](http://www.theaahm.org)



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## FAO Gender Policy | Better opportunities for women and girls means leverage in fight against hunger

One of the keys to eradicating hunger and extreme poverty is to increase social, educational and economic opportunities for women and girls. FAO's new Gender Equality Policy aims to place the improvement of gender equality at the centre of its work to boost sustainable agriculture and development.

"FAO's gender policy underscores the Organization's commitment to addressing gender and women's issues to eradicate hunger and poverty," said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva at the launch on International Women's Day.

FAO asserts that the empowerment of women could significantly raise their own farm productivity, increase national agricultural output and, ultimately, reduce the number of people suffering from hunger.

### Gender equality objectives

FAO will work with countries, UN agencies, and civil society, private sector partners and academia to make progress toward achieving the following objectives by 2025:

1. Women and men participate equally as decision-makers in rural institutions and in shaping laws, policies and programmes.
2. Women and men have equal access to and control over decent employment and income, land and other productive resources.
3. Women and men have equal access to goods and services for agricultural development and to markets.
4. Women's work burden is reduced by 20 percent through improved technologies, services and infrastructure.
5. The percentage of agricultural aid committed to women/gender-equality related projects is increased to 30 percent of total agricultural aid.

While countries themselves bear the main responsibility for achieving gender equality objectives, FAO will plan, implement and monitor its programmes and policies to ensure that they contribute to achieving those aims.

The new FAO policy recommends targets for increasing the Organization's effectiveness in addressing gender imbalances, including incorporating sex-disaggregated data into all major FAO statistical databases by 2015 (where relevant and available) and allocating 30 percent of FAO's operational work and budget at the country and regional levels to targeted, women-specific interventions by 2017.

In a further bid to enhance its effectiveness, FAO is also in the process of finalizing a human resources plan designed to help achieve its corporate objective of 50 percent female representation among all internationally recruited, professional staff worldwide. The objective is in keeping with standards throughout the UN system.

✱ For more information,  
[www.fao.org/gender](http://www.fao.org/gender)

## New FAO publications

All publications are available on [www.fao.org/docrep](http://www.fao.org/docrep)

### ⊙ Agricultural cooperatives: Paving the way for food security and rural development

This publication aims to raise awareness of the important contribution of cooperatives to socioeconomic development. Cooperatives offer small agricultural producers opportunities to access markets, and provide them with a range of services such as better access to natural resources, information, communication, technologies, credit and training.

FAO/IFAD/WFP, 2011

### ⊙ Decent rural employment for food security: A case for action

Promoting decent employment is essential to achieving food security and reducing poverty. Simply put, in order to be able to access food, poor people rely on the income from their labour, because it is often the only asset they have.

However, policy responses have rarely addressed the employment and hunger challenges in a coordinated manner. This publication argues that improving policy coherence between employment and agricultural initiatives and investing more in the promotion of decent rural employment contribute highly to the interlinked challenges of fighting rural poverty and feeding a growing world population in a sustainable way. Even more importantly, decent work is a fully



fledged human right, enshrined in international human rights law, to which each person is entitled as a means of personal development and socio-economic inclusion.

FAO, June 2012

### ⊙ Gender and climate change research in agriculture and food security for rural development

Both women and men play a significant role in safeguarding food security, and their respective roles and responsibilities need to be well understood to ensure that men and women benefit equally from climate-smart agriculture practices. Little research, however, has been undertaken to understand how men and women are adapting to climate change, mitigating emissions and maintaining food security. As one of many steps toward addressing this gap, FAO and the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) have developed this training guide, which provides a clear understanding of the concepts related to gender and climate-smart agriculture; describes participatory methods for conducting gender-sensitive research on the impacts of climate change; and offers guidance on different ways of reporting research findings so that they can be properly analysed. Using the guide will ensure that critical information on gender and climate change is collected, allowing researchers and development workers to formulate appropriate gender-sensitive policies and programmes for rural development.

FAO & CGIAR/CCAFS, 2012

### ⊙ Gender inequalities in rural employment in Ghana: An overview

Despite Ghana's great progress in poverty reduction, an important share of rural men and women in the country still lack decent work opportunities. Rural women in particular face greater difficulties in transforming their labour into more productive employment activities and their paid work into higher and more secure incomes. Similarly, the young rural population faces barriers in joining the labour market and migration is often a livelihood strategy. Efforts to promote gender equity in labour markets and income generating activities, as well as to support decent employment initiatives in rural areas, are hampered by the lack of comprehensive information on the multiple dimensions of social and gender inequalities, particularly in rural areas. This country profile addresses the lack of statistics and contributes to a better understanding of the types and the degree of existing gender inequalities in rural settings. It serves as a policy support tool for integrating and monitoring gender equity and decent rural employment in agriculture, food security, and rural development policies and programs. The profile is part of a policy kit that contains two additional items: 1) an overview of the main in-country legislations and policies related to gender and rural employment; and 2) a policy brief summarizing key gender inequality issues and policy recommendations

FAO, 2012

### Good Practices in Building Innovative Rural Institutions to Increase Food Security

(main report + case studies)

Strong rural organizations like producer groups and cooperatives are crucial to hunger and poverty reduction. They allow small producers to play a greater role in meeting growing food demands on local, national and international markets, while improving their own economic, social and political opportunities. The publication presents 35 cases of successful institutional innovations that have empowered small-scale producers and contributed to food security in different regions in the world. The good practices show how group collaboration within organizations and with economic actors and policy-makers enable small producers to fully participate in the economic, social and political life of the society they live in.



FAO & IFAD, 2012

### Passport to Mainstreaming Gender in Water Programmes. Key questions for interventions in the agricultural sector

Until recently the focus of many agricultural water management projects and programmes has been on technical issues. Water professionals have been successful in developing and promoting different techniques in the field of irrigation, rainwater harvesting, flood control, watershed management, etc. By doing so, they have managed to improve agricultural production significantly. When it became clear that projects are more successful when the potential users are involved, many adopted a participatory approach trying to involve the water users in the planning and the design of their pro-

jects. However, contrary to the actual situation in many areas, planners, engineers, extension staff and decision-makers still do not perceive women to be farmers. This situation is enhanced by the fact that these professionals are often men and they do not adequately recognize the agricultural work of women. They are less familiar with the specific needs and priorities of women, and might encounter difficulties in targeting them because of specific socio-cultural norms. The most common gender stereotype that has guided and shaped many irrigation policies and the planning and design of irrigation systems is that women are primarily housewives and mothers, while men are farmers and irrigators. As a consequence, policies and programmes frequently overlook the knowledge, tasks, needs and requirements of women in agriculture water management.

FAO, GEWAMED, GWA, July 2012

### Rural Women and the Millennium Development Goals

This fact sheet highlights the progress of rural women against key MDG indicators, pointing to some of the advancements made and gaps that still exist. It suggests that globally, and with only a few exceptions, rural women fare worse than rural men and urban women and men for every MDG indicator for which data are available. While data collection along these lines has improved in recent years – in part because of increased donor and government interest – there still remains a general lack of data not only disaggregated by sex, but also by rural and urban areas. This has an impact on our global ability to confidently monitor progress toward the MDGs for all people in all regions, urban and rural, and particularly where progress is needed most.

Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Women, 2012  
(Fact Sheet)

### The Role of Information and Communication Technologies for Community-Based Adaptation to Climate Change

This publication provides an overview on the application of communication and ICTs for community-based livelihood adaptation to climate change. It is crucial to identify information and communication systems, particularly for poor smallholder farmers, in order to have access to scientific and technological advances that can support their agricultural decision-making. As a result, research must be reported and communicated in such a way that policy makers can support the adaptation of the food systems to climate change. The first section explains the role played by ICT in the adaptation or mitigation of climate change and examines the potential use at regional or local levels. The second section describes the steps of using ICTs at the community level to communicate information about climate change. Specifically, it describes seven actions where ICT can be of use. But for these steps to be effective, they must be framed in the context of integrated communication for development processes in order to bring about positive social change. The publication concludes that this is indeed an area for pioneers with the potential for much further development.

FAO-CSDI, 2011 (Technical Paper)  
[www.csdinitiative.org](http://www.csdinitiative.org)

### The role of women producer organizations in agricultural value chains. Practical lessons from Africa and India

This report offers a cross-cutting comparison of different models of women producer organizations from India and Africa in order to draw broad lessons about best practices in institutional development within producer organizations, including women-based organizations and their potential role in the development of staple food value chains. The report looks at how different women producer organizations support poor small-scale women farmers and workers to better market their products, improve their position in the agricultural value chains and influence policy. It first presents the approach and achievements of the Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India and how it has been successful in facilitating women's access to markets and promoting women as competitive entrepreneurs. It then gives an overview of the experiences and accomplishments of a representative sample of women's organizations in agricultural value chains in West and Central Africa. Based on the analysis of the initiatives and strategies of these different organizations as well as the challenges they face, the fourth chapter looks at how SEWA's model and its proven best practices can apply to African organizations, especially in relation to appropriate institutional settings and human and financial self-reliance mechanisms. The report concludes with some broad lessons to consider when designing and implementing programmes to mainstream small-scale women producers in value chain development. It advocates for interventions that will give women and men equal opportunities and ultimately support the performance of the whole value chain to the benefit of rural households and local and national economies.



FAO, 2011 (58 pp)

## FAO-ILC project facilitates access to land governance resources

Information on land governance is a critical factor for enabling developing and emerging economies to establish effective land tenure systems and ultimately ensure secure and equitable access to and control over land. To this end, the International Land Coalition (ILC) has now integrated information on land from FAO databases into the Land Portal, the global reference point for land related information on the internet.

FAOLEX, the FAO's database of treaties, laws and regulations governing food, agriculture and renewable natural resources from all over the world, and the FAO Corporate Document Repository, a rich online library of FAO materials and publications, have been integrated into the Land Portal country and topic pages.

Many other databases with land information are also set to be integrated into the Land Portal, including the World Bank databases on land related publications, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) database and datasets from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

The **Land Portal** is the global gateway for land related information, aggregating information on land from multiple sources and building a specialized community of land experts from civil society organizations, governmental and intergovernmental institutions and academia. It is the result of a partnership among the International Land Coalition, FAO, ActionAid, the Hunger Institute, the IALTA, AGTER, IFAD, IFPRI, and 40 other organizations committed to sharing information on land and collaborating. This partnership is open to other land-related organizations aiming to be actively engaged in the Land Portal development.

<http://landportal.info/>

The **International Land Coalition** is a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organizations working together to promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for poor women and men through advocacy, dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

[www.landcoalition.org](http://www.landcoalition.org)



# Resources

Note: Most of the publications mentioned here are available on-line for free (unless otherwise specified). Most web links are too long to provide in their entirety. If the publications are hard to find on the organisations' websites, it usually suffices to do a google search.

## ☉ Africa Human Development Report 2012: Towards a Food Secure Future

This report explores why dehumanizing hunger remains pervasive in the region, despite abundant agricultural resources, a favourable growing climate, and rapid economic growth rates. It also emphasizes that food security – the ability to consistently acquire enough calories and nutrients for a healthy and productive life – is essential for human development. To boost food security, it argues for action in four interrelated areas: agricultural productivity, nutrition, access to food, and empowerment of the rural poor. It asserts that increasing agricultural productivity in sustainable ways can bolster food production and economic opportunities, thereby improving food availability and increasing purchasing power. Effective nutrition policies can create conditions for the proper use and absorption of calories and nutrients. Finally, empowering the rural poor – especially women – and harnessing the power of information, innovation and markets can promote equitable allocation of food and resources within families and across communities.

UNDP, May 2012  
[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

## ☉ Climate Airwaves: Community Radio, Action Research and Advocacy for Climate Justice in Ghana

Community radio is well recognized as a powerful vehicle for advocacy and social change in Africa, but its use in the field of climate change has remained very limited, and then largely for top-down transmission of information to communities. This article discusses lessons learned to date from the Climate Airwaves, an initiative aimed at developing new approaches for supporting community radio broadcasters to investigate, communicate and engage in broader debates on the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities in Ghana. It also discusses in depth the central role that action research aimed at effecting social change plays in this particular initiative, and in climate justice initiatives more broadly. Lessons learned to date have highlighted the challenges of addressing complexity and uncertainty appropriately, the importance of framing climate change in the context of rights and responsibilities, the role of sustainable partnership models, and how this work can contribute to broadcasters' and communities' longer-term visions of change.

International Journal of Communication, Vol 5, 2011  
<http://ijoc.org>

## ☉ Community Radio, Gender & ICTs in West Africa: How Women Are Engaging with Community Radio through Mobile Phone Technologies

This report shares findings from a comparative study across three West African countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea) to explore the current intersection between radio, gender, and information communication technologies (ICTs). The research examines whether recent improvements in radio broadcast coverage and SMS technology are increasing women's access to information and providing them with a platform that adequately meets their needs, and tests whether implementing a SMS mobilisation programme, like FrontlineSMS, can increase women's engagement with local community radio programming. The findings show that, while technology can play a role in enabling participation, the lack of participation is influenced more by the fact that radio is still male-dominated and too often consigns women's programming to a narrow interpretation of gender issues including marriage, childcare or domestic responsibilities.

Search for Common Ground, July 2011  
[www.radiopeaceafrica.org](http://www.radiopeaceafrica.org)

## ☉ Environmental and Gender Impacts of Land Tenure Regularization in Africa

Although recent developments greatly increased interest in African land tenure, few models to address these issues at the required scale have been identified or evaluated. Rwanda's nation-wide land tenure regularization programme is of great interest. A discontinuity design with spatial fixed effects that is used to evaluate the pilot for this programme points to three main effects; namely, (i) improved land access for legally married women and better recordation of inheritance rights; (ii) significant and large investment impacts that are particularly pronounced for women; and (iii) a reduction in land market activity rather than distress sales. Implications for programme design and policy are discussed.

UNU-WIDER Working Paper 74, November 2011  
[www.wider.unu.edu](http://www.wider.unu.edu)

## ☉ Land Governance in Africa: How historical context has shaped key contemporary issues relating to policy on land

The Framing the Debate series aims to facilitate a deeper understanding of the key topics at the centre of current land governance debates. The controversies and disputes surrounding the current land rush result in part from differing perspectives among stakeholder groups. The series aims to minimize these misunderstandings and quid pro quos, and to create the conditions for a constructive discourse of ideas and perspectives. This first publication in the series presents an overview of the historical roots of the current land governance challenges facing Africa, from customary land tenure issues to present-day land administration dilemmas and the phenomenon of large-scale land acquisitions by foreign actors. The study charts the evolution of land tenure and governance during the economic liberalism and structural adjustment policies of the late twentieth century. It examines the barriers to land access faced by groups such as women, pastoralists, tenants, and migrants, and questions the role of land titling in improving access to land. It also examines contemporary phenomena such as the upsurge in foreign investment and "land grabbing" for the production of food crops and bio-fuels. The author suggests a framework for land governance minimises social conflicts over land, ensuring greater transparency in land management that benefits smallholders and other customary land users.

International Land Coalition, Framing the Debate series, June 2012  
[www.landcoalition.org](http://www.landcoalition.org)

## ☉ Gender Equity Index 2012: Know the Size of your Gender Gap

The achievements made by women all over the world towards equity in education are still very far from making an impact on their having a fair share in the economy or in political power. This can be concluded from the updated figures of the Gender Equity Index (GEI) 2012. None of the 154 countries



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considered in the study has narrowed the gender gap to an “acceptable” level. The annual GEI measures the gap between women and men in education, economy and political empowerment. The index is an average of the inequalities in the three dimensions. In literacy, it examines the gender gap in enrolment at all levels; economic participation compares the gaps in income and employment; empowerment measures the gaps in highly qualified jobs, parliament and senior executive positions.

Social Watch, 2012  
[www.socialwatch.org](http://www.socialwatch.org)

### ☉ Small Farmers, Big Change

Support for smallholder agriculture is seen as increasingly important, both to boost the food security and incomes of the rural poor and to provide food for urban populations. But to achieve scale in agricultural interventions, NGOs must move beyond a project-by-project approach and instead enable farmers to engage with market players. Small Farmers, Big Change considers learning from the experience of Oxfam’s global agricultural scale-up initiative as well as from wider agricultural markets-based programming. This book includes very practical examples of achieving wider change in smallholder agriculture, through influencing policy and investment decisions, linking smallholders into markets and value chains, and innovating service provision for small farmers. The case studies outline what steps were taken to facilitate new types of farmer organization and alliances with an emphasis on promoting equitable livelihoods and developing rural women’s economic leadership. Drawn from Africa, Latin America and Asia, the cases include information about challenges faced and what remains to be done in the future.

Practical Action Publishing, 2011  
<http://practicalaction.org/small-farmers-big-change>



## Dimitra CD-ROM 2012

Following the 2004 and 2008 editions, Dimitra presents a new CD-ROM which contains all of the information to be found on the Dimitra website and on-line database as of 31 December 2011.

The Dimitra on-line database ([www.fao.org/dimitra/dimitra-database/en](http://www.fao.org/dimitra/dimitra-database/en)) lists detailed information on organizations based in Africa, including descriptions of those development projects and initiatives they are involved in which actively concern rural populations – and more particularly women – and use a gender or women-specific approach. The aim of the database is to provide **a set of best practices and field experiences** that may give inspiration to others working on the same issues and strengthen possibilities for mutual exchange and cooperation.

The aim of the CD-ROM is to facilitate dissemination of the information collected by Dimitra to those who do not have easy Internet access.



The CD-Rom has been sent with Dimitra Newsletter 21 (February 2012). Should you not have received it or should you wish an extra copy, please do contact us (our contact details are on page 2 of this newsletter).

You can also contact us if you would like your organization to feature in the database or if you want to update your information. We will send you a questionnaire to fill out. The **only condition** for inclusion is to be implementing activities/projects with rural women and/or a gender approach.

### ☉ Social Accountability and Social Change: A Toolkit for Small-scale Farmers

This toolkit provides a structured programme of activities and worksheets designed to be used by facilitators working in and with small-scale farmers’ associations in central, west, and southern Africa. It was produced to empower organizations with skills, such as budget monitoring and the use of community scorecards, to improve their situations, grow their organizations, and ultimately contribute more effectively to ensuring food security for themselves, their communities, and ultimately to the whole region. The toolkit was ratified by the nine partner country organizations that are part of EGP’s Public Expenditure and Smallholder Agriculture Project of IDASA.

Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA), Economic Governance Programme (EGP), January 2011  
[www.idasa.org](http://www.idasa.org)

### ☉ What Works for Women. Proven approaches for empowering women smallholders and achieving food security

The question of “what changes do we need to empower women smallholders and achieve food security?” has been asked repeatedly. But transformational changes in both public policy and practice have been few and far between, although increasing access to resources and opportunities for women farmers could substantially reduce the number of hungry people in the world. In this context, nine international development agencies (ActionAid, Care, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, Find Your Feet, Oxfam, Practical Action, Save the Children, and Self Help Africa) have produced a briefing to share the lessons learned based on their experience of promoting gender equality and working with women smallholders and rural women over many decades.

The paper concludes with a number of recommendations for policy makers on measures to help close the gender gap in agriculture.

March 2012  
[www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)

### ☉ Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

Women play a critical and potentially transformative role in agricultural growth in developing countries, but they face persistent obstacles and economic constraints limiting further inclusion in agriculture. The WEAI measures the empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector in an effort to identify ways to overcome those obstacles and constraints. The Index is a significant innovation in its field and aims to increase understanding of the connections between women’s empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth. It measures the roles and extent of women’s engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains: (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, (3) control over use of income, (4) leadership in the community, and (5) time use. It also measures women’s empowerment relative to men within their households. The WEAI is a composite measurement tool that indicates women’s control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community, and economy. It allows us to identify women who are disempowered and understand how to increase autonomy and decision-making in key domains. The WEAI is also a useful tool for tracking progress toward gender equality, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals.

IFPRI, USAID, OPHI, February 2012  
[www.ifpri.org/publication](http://www.ifpri.org/publication)