

# A methodology based on listening and participating



FAO-Dimitra once again asked Cynthia de Windt to facilitate the workshop. This year, the group was made up of participants from various walks of life: actors in the field, NGO partners, partners representing institutions (bilateral cooperation, ministries for agriculture, etc.) and FAO colleagues.

As ever, Cynthia's good humour and ability to encourage the participants to express themselves were valuable assets and kept the group motivated throughout their work. Cynthia's approach is based on cross-fertilisation within a process of discussion based on differences and agreements that allows ideas to be shared. She supports the group on its mission and sees her role as being like that of a midwife: even when the pain is extreme (and the discussions difficult or chaotic), she cannot do anything about it – work must continue until the birth. The importance lies in the exchanges which take place.

As with previous workshops, the methodology was based on listening and participating, an approach where each individual talks about his or her experiences and listens to and learns from others' contributions. The principle is that every idea is valid and all remarks are useful, since, all things considered, the most important thing is that suggestions are shared. This process may be rather surprising or unusual at first, but it proved popular with all of the participants.