

# DR Congo | Bolstering collaboration between the Dimitra Clubs and community radio stations

Conducted in May 2016 in Walungu (Sud-Kivu), FAO's "Radios and Dimitra Clubs" training session sought to improve the capacity of community radio stations to produce programmes that are participatory and gender sensitive, and to strengthen the links between clubs and radio stations. Based on the core principles of the Dimitra approach, this type of training is now systematically organized as part of projects that include the Dimitra Clubs.



The primary media channel in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in rural areas, radio plays a key role in the networking of Dimitra Clubs, enabling them to share experiences and ideas, but also to reach surrounding rural communities. Given their participatory and gender sensitive approach, Dimitra Clubs are natural partners for local radio stations, enabling them to better accomplish their mission of local development, based on community needs and perspectives.

The "Radios and Dimitra Clubs" training initiative for Sud-Kivu was organized by NGO Samwaki and facilitated by FAO, bringing together club members, government service representatives and the following radio stations: Radio Bubusa, Radio Mitumba, Radio Umoja FM, Radio Mulangane, Radio Le Messenger du Peuple, Radio Luhwinja, Radio Bobandana, Radio Apide, Vision Shala and Radio Mutanga. Participants had varied profiles. Some were very familiar with the Dimitra Clubs approach (club members and radio stations had been working together for a number of years). Others were hearing about it for the first time.

The training sessions have a dual objective: to strengthen the capacities of radio staff and other participants in producing participatory and gender sensitive broadcasts, and

to encourage the forging of partnerships between local radio stations and Dimitra Clubs.

Based on a flexible approach that focuses on using practical exercises, the methodology for this training initiative was developed to respond to the needs of radio stations and Dimitra Clubs over a short period of time. This type of training is now systematically organized as part of projects that include the Dimitra Clubs, but on each occasion it is adapted according to the context.

## Gender and participation

The first training session offered an opportunity to clarify the clubs' core principles, which should also guide the production of radio broadcasts. Two principles that are crucial for any collaboration with radio stations were explored in greater depth: gender and community participation. Participants then carried out a 'gender-based' review of the media, so as to develop a basic understanding of the concept of gender. The issue of participation was central to exercises on participatory broadcast types/formats that can be used in rural areas, in order to promote maximum community involvement.

The second session was given over to preparing and recording a live club radio broadcast, with instructions to pay special attention to the two principles highlighted the previous day. Listening to these programmes allow trainers to deal with technical issues and discuss content.

The third session explored relations between the clubs and radio stations, enabling the FAO team to reiterate the need for clubs to engage with the stations that they have themselves chosen. The special message to the radio stations was that the clubs are products of the community, not of an FAO project – a factor that offers opportunities to the radios.

Before the final evaluation, a session was held on reinvesting in training, so as to ensure the sharing of knowledge, as well as effective implementation of collaboration with radio stations.

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