

EDITORIAL

SUPPORT TO HERBALISTS WOMEN FOR THE VALORISATION OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ON MEDICINAL PLANTS AND FOR THE PROTECTION AND RATIONAL USE OF VEGETAL BIODIVERSITY .

Aidemet NGO is engaged since 2003 in supporting the actors of Traditional Medicine in Mali. In this context, he collaborated with the Malian Federation of Traditional Healers and Herbalists and with the associations of Kolokani, Segou, Bandiagara Kadiolo, Bamako and elsewhere.

As part of its activities, after several sessions of training provided to the herbalists of Bamako, *Aidemet* NGO launched in 2006 the campaign for the adoption of an herbalist, which enabled to provide more than twenty-five herbalists in Bamako, mostly women, with the kiosks, to improve the conditions of sale and storage of medicinal plants. Funding was secured by: AEMETRA, Italy; Hope Foundation, through Antenna Technologies, Switzerland; the French Society of Ethno-pharmacology, and private sponsors. Support for herbalists was always accompanied by training and monitoring activities. Some investigations have also been carried out in order to measure the impact of the kiosks in the work and women herbalists' income.

From March 2011 to November 2012, thanks to a grant from the Italian Cooperation, through UNOPS, in the FEMATH and *Aidemet* Ong, other kiosks were installed: 30 in Bamako and 10 in Ségou. It was also possible to set up microcredit self-managed and self-renewable funds, to support the activities of women herbalists.

This initiative is therefore a logical and operational continuity with previous activities and aims to consolidate the experiences gained, to extend the activities of other herbalists and to validate and disseminate the methodology and approaches used.

It deal once again with: (i) to facilitate access by herbalists to new knowledge, new resources and appropriate work tools, in order to improve the quality of their work and of their lives, (ii) to strengthen the economic independence of beneficiaries and improve the quality of the plants sold to the population, (iii) to assess the impact of project activities on women herbalists', about the quality of their lives and the effectiveness of their work, to ensure that their efforts are known and appreciated at local and national level.

During the previous activities, we realized that the women herbalists were able to adapt better than men with the challenges of urbanization: she showed the collective intelligence and flexibility to transform their traditional knowledge, accumulated over time and passed on from generations of women, in a commercial activity, both social and economic, present in all urban markets. They respond so to the social demand of medicinal plants and provide the public with a proximity health service at very affordable prices. The income so generated is invested in supporting the family economy, especially to meet the daily expenses for health, nutrition and education of children.

This is why we do not want to stop on a so good way and we never stopped looking for technical and financial partners, as well as private sponsors, in order to continue accompanying the activities and to increase the number of women beneficiaries.

WE REMAIN AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE ALL THOSE WHO WANT TO HELP OUR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT WOMEN HERBALISTS' WITH ANY AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION AND ALL NECESSARY GUARANTEES.

Bamako, September 2013

PROF ROKIA SANOGO, PRESIDENT

DR SERGIO GIANI, PROGRAM OFFICIER

Links to :

- Document of Projet (in french)
- Poster on Women Herbalists'