

“ We regularly receive your packages and Voices... the majority of your scripts have been brought to life as radio programs, and broadcast for the past three years on Radio Brakoss every week. In addition, some of your scripts are broadcast as spots on our program ‘Quelques petits conseils.’ Once again, thank you for the considerable effort you make in putting together these packages. ”

Tchangviz Vatanhah, Radio Brakoss, CHAD



Annual Report 2002 | 2003

Thank You

Hundreds of radio partners, and millions of small-scale farmers, benefit from the generosity of our friends and supporters. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of all individuals, groups, corporations and foundations who gave to the Network this year. It is because of their commitment and support that we were able to fund the activities outlined in this report. We would like to make special mention of the following donors:

Les Soeurs de la Congregation de Notre-Dame
The Anglican Church of the Incarnation
Emmanuel United Church
The K.M. Hunter Charitable Foundation
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The N.A. Taylor Foundation
S.M. Blair Family Foundation
Citizens Bank of Canada

We very much appreciate the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

We would also like to thank all Network volunteers who continue to give their time and effort to our international program. Their involvement with translation, research, administrative duties and fundraising is critical to our work, and our success.

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Librarian
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Founding Director
Retired Farmer/Farm Broadcaster,
CBC

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Educator (Nursing),
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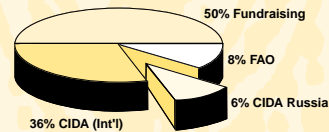
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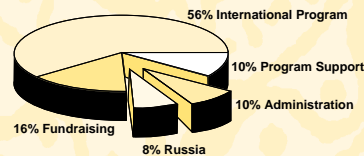
*** resigned during the year**
**** appointed during the year**

Revenue and Expenditures Year end March 31, 2003

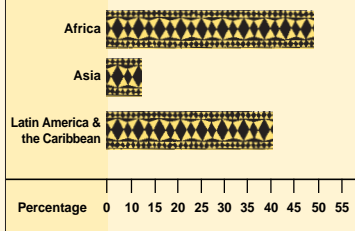
Revenue



Expenditures



International program expenditures by continent



416 Moore Avenue, Suite 101, Toronto, Ontario M4G 1C9
 Tel: 416-971-6333 Fax: 416-971-5299
 Toll Free: 1-888-773-7717
 Email: info@farmradio.org
 www.farmradio.org
 Charitable Registration Number (BN) 11888 4808 RR001

Rural Radio is Booming



RURAL RADIO STATIONS have sprung up all over the African continent in recent years, leading rural populations and the urban poor in an information and knowledge revolution.

Broadcasters and not-for-profit organizations are beginning to realize what the Farm Radio Network has been promoting for nearly a quarter century – simple, low-tech radio has a valuable role to play in rural development and sustained food security.

Jean-Pierre Ibouido, a communications expert with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, emphasized radio's importance at a 2001 farm radio conference in Rome.

"Community radio is Africa's Internet," said Ibouido. "It reaches our most important audience – the illiterate and hungry."

Getting through to this audience hasn't exactly been easy. Broadcasters in countries like Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo regularly battle censorship and propaganda. Connecting to Africa's rural population is often difficult because of tight budgets, sporadic electrical services and dodgy, outdated transmitters.

Despite these drawbacks, rural broadcasting has flourished. A recent survey by the Communication Initiative of Johns Hopkins University revealed that radio, broadcast in dozens of local languages, is by far the most effective way to reach far-flung rural populations in Africa. West Africa's radio community has expanded from a few rural stations in 1990 to hundreds of private, local or commercial stations almost a decade later. Access to radio is up, too – half the rural population in Niger tunes in regularly, while 60 per cent of rural Mauritians own radios. A staggering 95 per cent regularly listen to national radio programming on Radio Mauritania.

Some of this growth can be credited to the introduction of international FM radio and the decentralisation of radio stations in many African countries, encouraging the growth of regional and local stations. In addition to government-controlled radio, independent commercial broadcasters have also begun harnessing the airwaves.

Local community members use these stations as a forum to discuss pertinent issues, further increasing radio's role in rural development. Broadcasting organizations like the Uganda National Farmers' Association and Jamana Radio in Mali present important rural issues to its audience, such as DCFRN's recent scripts on national disasters and livestock care. Using this information and local knowledge culled from the field, farmers can learn from each other and address their problems collectively.

"Community radio is about empowerment," says AMARC's Africa Director Michelle Ntab. "That microphone changes lives."

Projects complement core Farm Radio work

FARM RADIO NETWORK is defined and driven by knowledge development.

Broadcasters plan their programs with our background information, in response to emerging issues. Our specialized library facilitates script research in Canada and in the field. DCFRN's website makes our materials widely available to non-radio groups working for agricultural development.

Farmers in developing countries, as in Canada, recognize the importance of life-long learning – and we are helping them meet their need for relevant, reliable information and strong communication networks.

Short-term projects, such as those completed in 2002-2003, enable us to meet specific local or regional needs, or pilot an activity before making a lasting commitment.

Meeting regional needs

The **Rural Information Network (RIN)** was designed to meet the needs of farmers in Russia's developing market economy. With funding from CIDA, we joined with the Foundation for Agrarian Research and Development (FADR), a Russian non-government agency, to improve agriculture communication and to develop national and regional networks for cooperation.

The RIN project attracted more than 300 partners – radio stations, rural extension centres, agricultural technicians – in 53 regions. Hundreds of text scripts were distributed, as well as 12 broadcast-ready CDs. We developed a series dramatizing life on a private farm in Russia, "At the Kitchen Table," for further development by local stations.

The project evaluation showed that 1.4 million rural Russians were accessing new information via the project partners. More than 50,000 people visited the RIN website each month, and more than 10,000 farmers adopted new methods because of the project. RIN provided training in agriculture and communication to dozens of partners, and made long-lasting links between people and organizations working with Russian farmers.

Testing new activities

Many of our rural broadcast partners have few opportunities for professional development. At their request, we now regularly include contextual information about agriculture development in our information packages. Frequently, we include training materials with our scripts and newsletters.

Recently, we were able to provide hands-on training to African broadcasters in a joint project with the University of Guelph and the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR). Two workshops held in Ghana were attended by partners from Mali, Uganda, Cameroon and Ghana. The first, in 2001, identified the skills and training needed for broadcasters to work effectively with agriculture researchers. The partners then developed a six-day training program, tested in the field in July 2002. The project was completed this year, with the distribution of training modules in the field.

It is evidently a success: participants are now working together, sharing locally-appropriate research results through radio. Farmers can now use the radio to get the latest updates relevant to their region, and also have a local contact for further information. The Farm Radio Network also benefited from its partnership with two internationally-acclaimed training institutions, and the lessons learned will be applied to future training activities.



Message from the President...



There is a growing recognition, in the international policy-making arena, of the importance of agriculture to poverty reduction and food security. A few years ago agriculture just about fell off the development agenda of the Canadian government. Now, with the release of CIDA's strategy, "Promoting Sustainable Rural Development Through Agriculture," it is front and centre.

The role of information and communication is also becoming better understood in development circles. No longer an afterthought in development strategies, the processes for knowledge creation are now given due consideration by program planners and donors.

This is cause for optimism at Developing Countries Farm Radio Network. These shifts in public policy (and public funding) are an implicit acknowledgement of the importance – and impact – of our work.

Our optimism is tempered with caution, however. Despite the shift in international development circles to support agriculture and communication, national budgets for public agriculture extension services are in decline. At the same time, governments are retreating from agricultural marketing, research and trade.

Private advisory services and new information technologies do not adequately meet the needs of resource-poor farmers. Private services offer farmers little choice about content or nature of information delivery, and some are not affordable for subsistence farmers or household producers. The Internet is ranked low by farmers as a preferred source of information. In fact, there is a new "underclass" of people living in

rural and remote areas who are excluded from public as well as private information services because they do not have access to technology.

Yet communication is more important to farmers today, on the eve of our 25th anniversary, than it was when we started our work. Agriculture is increasingly complex. Farmers must be concerned not only with yields and markets, but also with environmental protection, food safety and international trade.

Who can farmers turn to for sound advice?

In Africa, radio is farmers' preferred source for "outside" information. It is trusted, it is oral, it is in local languages, and the number and diversity of rural radio stations permits relevant approaches to farmers' needs.

That is why radio remains our choice for farmer communication – although how we use radio to help farmers is changing. Increasingly, our role will move from providing information to facilitating its flow – in a way that promotes sustainable agriculture, contributes to food security, and reduces poverty for women, men and children in poor rural farming communities.

Doug Ward
President

“ Indeed I sometimes wonder where I would now be as a farm broadcaster if I had not joined DCFRN...I am now more confident, and obviously more productive and skilful...it is like 'broadcasting made easy' using Farm Radio Network's information. ”

Sachia Ngutsav, Radio Benue, Nigeria

Reducing the need for relief

DISASTERS, when they occur, mobilize tremendous resources for international aid. Who can forget, for example, Hurricane Mitch? Sweeping through Central America in 1998, it caused more than 13,000 deaths, affected 6.4 million people (leaving many without homes and livelihoods), and resulted in economic losses of US\$30 billion in the region. Canada's relief response was swift and generous.

Humanitarian response to disaster – resulting from natural or human causes – is an important part of international aid. So too is assistance for sustainable development, and this has always been the focus of the Farm Radio Network. Much of our work focuses on food production and food-based nutrition, reducing the need for future food relief. We have also worked with our partners to promote preventative health methods as part of a sustainable development strategy.

Farmers are important partners in preventing, or mitigating the effects of, natural disasters – and thus reducing the need for relief. Planting trees as windbreaks, contour ploughing, using rock and grass barriers, and planting cover crops reduce erosion – and vulnerability to landslides and floods. Introducing diversified cropping systems, conservation tillage, and storm-resistant crops are also useful for disaster preparedness.

In 2002, Farm Radio Network worked with its partners to promote these and other environmentally-sound practices. These messages are especially important in developing countries, where farmers, with limited land or other resources, sometimes make choices that increase erosion and deforestation or otherwise risk their assets and future

livelihoods. We worked with our partners to make information available to farmers so that instead, they can make choices that will create long-term development opportunities. We developed ten scripts on this topic, which were then adapted by our partners to suit local conditions.

Radio is the medium of choice in times of crisis. Widely available to listeners, and inexpensive for local producers, radio is often used to broadcast emergency messages. Our project to broadcast disaster preparedness messages is an example of how radio can also be used for sustainable development.

Farm Radio Network scripts are always focused on long-term change and self-reliance. Other script projects completed in 2002 were "Nutrition and health," "Post-harvest storage and processing" and "To market, to market," a five-part drama about understanding and using market information. Farm Radio Network scripts are both timely and timeless, and are archived on our web site (www.farmradio.org) for easy access.



Improving productivity through livestock management

HEALTHY LIVESTOCK are vital to food security in developing countries. Livestock provide draught power and fuel as well as food, and are often the only asset a family can sell in times of need. Women often rely on small livestock enterprises to buy food and farm tools, or pay for medicine and school fees.

That's why livestock management is an important subject for rural radio broadcasts in countries where the Farm Radio Network operates. Lack of information about how to prevent animal diseases can have a devastating effect on farm productivity, human health and family incomes.

Many of our partners, however, have limited access to current information about livestock diseases and management. Veterinary and extension services in remote rural areas are inconsistent, and often do not reach families with just a few animals. So, in April 2002, DCFRN produced a series of scripts for radio programs about livestock management. We tackled issues such as poor hygiene, animal disposal, and common diseases (including a script about transmission of disease from animals to humans), and promoted practices such as pasture rotation, sanitation, vaccination, and genetic diversity. We highlighted examples of valuable indigenous knowledge, and the use of fodder trees for a balanced diet for livestock.

Recent crises in Canada and Europe have demonstrated our own vulnerability to animal disease. In countries where farmers have no economic safety nets, and families face greater risk of illness due to poverty and malnutrition, livestock management is a critical issue. Information can make the difference between poverty and prosperity, and even life and death. We were there, with our partners, to make that difference.



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Farm Radio: In the field and on the air with our partners

The radio partners who make up our network are a diverse group. They include community-run stations with annual budgets of less than \$10,000, national public broadcasters such as Radio Uganda, and private commercial stations that devote several hours of air time each week to social programming. Yet they all belong to the Farm Radio Network because they have values and goals in common. Each of us is working to improve food security and reduce poverty in rural areas of low-income countries.

Our partners' commitment is vital to the success of our program. By providing a forum for community learning, discussion and debate, and in some cases forming radio listening groups or working directly with farmer associations, rural radio supports positive change for rural women and men.

Radio Benue

Radio Benue in Nigeria, has been a Network partner since 1999. With its community-based approach and farmer-focused programs, it is typical of many of our radio partners in Africa.

Radio Benue broadcasts three weekly programs for farmers, on environment and health, agriculture and community development. Through interviews, on-air discussions and phone-ins, the station engages an estimated six million listeners. Radio Benue adapts our materials for these programs.

"Community members found value in the material on agriculture from Farm Radio Network," reports Sachia Ngutsav, Program Manager, "and have been coming together in groups to harness the grains of the broadcasts."

ABC Ulwazi

ABC (Applied Broadcasting Centre) Ulwazi, a Farm Radio Network partner since 2000, is an umbrella body for over 50 community radio stations in South Africa. Their mission is to strengthen the community radio sector nationwide and promote radio as a tool for development. "A community radio station [should] be the focal point of a community, with the capability of motivating the community into action and providing information to support that action," says John van Zyl, Executive Director.

ABC produces educational radio programs in seven languages on topics such as health, HIV/AIDS, and agriculture for their members. Their innovative documentaries and dramas – many of which incorporate Farm Radio Network scripts – address the broader issues of democracy and human rights in South Africa. ABC also provides training to radio broadcasters, and involves stations in job creation and poverty relief programs.

All India Radio

The Farm Radio Network has included All India Radio (AIR) stations since 1996. One such station is the "farm and home" unit of AIR Hassan, which airs programs on sustainable agriculture, covering topics such as the use of natural fertilizers and pesticides, rainwater harvesting and the critical role of women in rural areas. Station Manager Vijay Angadi regularly uses our scripts and background material to develop and broadcast these programs. "Since we [too] are involved in farm radio broadcasting," he writes, "your scripts are highly useful to our rural listeners."

Vijay recently directed a study for All India Radio to evaluate the impact of farm broadcasts in the local community. The study concluded, overwhelmingly, that farmers listening to farm radio programming produced better yields, lowered farming costs and reduced pesticide use.

Radio Xepet

Radio Xepet of Mexico is the recipient of the 2002 George Atkins Communication Award for excellence in farm radio broadcasting. A Network partner since 1991, Radio Xepet has broadcast programs for local farmers in the Mayan language for over twenty years. Programs discuss sustainable agriculture, health and indigenous knowledge, with topics such as traditional herbal medicine, weather patterns and daily market updates. Station Manager Bernardo Caamal Itza ensures that these valued programs air when farmers have returned from their fields.

Radio Xepet demonstrates the spirit of our international program, providing ideas and suggestions for future scripts that can be shared with other partners in the Farm Radio Network.

This year, we continued to expand and strengthen our network, by seeking out new radio partners. In 2002/2003 we welcomed 37 new partners to the Network, from over 24 countries! These new partners increase the number of farmers we can reach, and add to the experience and knowledge-base of our international network.

“ I am very happy for the work you are doing for us, and we are convinced that with the support of Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, a real change will take place in rural communities. ”

Mr. Louis Roland de Paul Nya, Radio Site-Dar, Cameroon