

ALINe announces nine winners of the inaugural 2010 ALINe Farmer Voice Awards

ALINe's 2010 Farmer Voice Awards recognise an extraordinary range of projects which promote and benefit from farmer voice. Entrants from 20 countries were whittled down to 9 winners. The winners include initiatives to help farmers assert their land rights, get systematic feedback on extension services, and farmer-to-farmer radio learning programmes.

The 2010 award winners are:

- ACDI/VOCA, Philippines
- CARE, Malawi
- Community Self-Reliance Centre, Nepal
- Flood Hazard Research Centre, Bangladesh
- **Farm Radio International**
- Helvetas, Nepal
- Specific Union for Female Farmers, Jordan
- Story Workshop, Malawi
- World Vision, Zimbabwe

The first ever ALINe Farmer Voice Awards celebrate leading examples of development organisations successfully nurturing and responding to smallholder farmers' own efforts. They showcase organisations that listen and respond to what farmers say, throughout the course of their activities.

The awards were judged by a high level panel included Stephen Muchiri, CEO of the East African Farmers Federation, Professor Robert Chambers of the Institute of Development Studies and Alex Jacobs, of ALINe.

Yvonne Pinto, ALINe's Director, said "We are thrilled to make awards to such a diverse group of initiatives. The award winners show how development programs can increase impact by responding to smallholder farmers' own priorities. They also help farmers become more demanding citizens and consumers. We believe the award winners can act as agents of good practice for the sector."

ALINe will work with the award winners during 2010 to identify good practice in nurturing and responding to smallholder farmers' own efforts. We will publish case studies and practice notes, and use them to encourage and support similar efforts across the sector.

The winners are:

The **Community Self-Reliance Centre** in Nepal is leading a land rights campaign. Due to their local level activism, 13,400 petitions have been settled in favour of the landless and land-poor. National lobbying has put land rights on the political agenda.

CARE is using 'community scorecards' to generate systematic feedback from smallholder farmers on services that CARE provides to them in central Malawi. CARE uses the results like customer feedback, to make continuous improvements – for instance, changing when they distribute seeds and moving training venues to be more accessible for women.

ACDI/VOCA is using a similar feedback approach to monitor and improve its work with smallholder cocoa farmers in the Philippines. **World Vision** publishes information about its food security program in 14 districts of Zimbabwe and invites people to provide feedback and complaints on how the work is actually done.

Helvatas Nepal organises public audits to make sure local farmers in hill districts in Nepal are involved in designing, commissioning and reviewing public irrigation systems.

The **Specific Union for Female Farmers** in Jordan brings together agricultural labourers to confront poverty, exploitation and violence. It has 450 members and has helped them claim their rights to right land, rather than relinquish it to male relatives, and improve their livelihoods.

Farm Radio International is working with radio stations in five African countries to help smallholder farmers tackle agricultural questions. Farmers are involved in identifying good practices that work for them, along with expert input. In Mali, a radio campaign led to a four-fold increase in farmers using improved composting methods.

In Malawi, the **Story Workshop** also uses a radio programme, Mwana Alirenji, to promote self-reliance and farming techniques identified by local farmers. Listeners are encouraged to try out new approaches and learn for themselves what works, for instance through 'radio research gardens'. For example, one listener harvested more maize where she had applied manure compared to where she had used chemical fertilizer.

The **Flood Hazard Resource Centre** is supporting community level organisations in Bangladesh. Over 250 organisations with over 51,000 members (including over 10,000 women) are involved in peer support. As a result, natural resources like fisheries are being managed better and farmers are trying new crops. Communities are demanding more attention from government.

Get involved: follow progress or help shape the initiative by signing up at <http://community.eldis.org/farmervoice>

More information: <http://www.alineplanning.org/awards>

Notes for Editors:

ALINe promotes people-centred performance in agricultural development. We work with a wide range of agricultural organisations, providing technical assistance, conducting research and promoting innovations. ALINe has financial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.