

**For Immediate Release**

**Farm Radio International Wins Award for Radio Campaign Strategy in Africa**

**Ottawa, Canada, March 23, 2010** – Farm Radio International is a recipient of the [ALINe 2010 Farmer Voice Awards](#) announced on March 11. Organizations from twenty countries submitted nominations for the awards which are given to projects that promote the voice of farmers.

[ALINe](#) works with a wide range of agricultural organizations, providing technical assistance, conducting research and promoting innovations. It promotes people-centred performance in agricultural development.

Farm Radio International received the Award for its Participatory Radio Campaign (PRC)—a holistic model developed through broadcasters, farming communities, aid agencies and agricultural experts. Farmers’ input and feedback are the essence of all the radio campaigns.

The PRC is a strategy developed under the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) launched by Farm Radio International in 2007 in various countries of the sub-Saharan Africa. The goal is to develop and document best practices for using radio-based communications with farming communities. AFRRI is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Radio stations from Tanzania, Uganda, Mali, Ghana and Malawi took part in the research initiative that involved the production of several radio campaigns to improve farming. The campaigns have already shown promising results. For example, a campaign on improved composting methods in Mali resulted in a fourfold increase in percentage of farmers adopting this practice. In a follow-up study, farmers, broadcasters and officials attributed the success of the composting program to the radio campaign.

“We’re honoured and pleased to have received the ALINe award. It affirms the importance of using innovative, participative approaches to sharing information with farming communities in Africa. These approaches help small and marginalized farmers achieve increased food production and better agricultural practices, while strengthening their voices within their countries,” said Kevin Perkins, Executive Director of Farm Radio International.

Perkins also thinks that the PRC model developed by Farm Radio International can be successfully applied to health, natural resource management and even human rights issues and projects. “Several agricultural organizations and other NGOs along with radio broadcasters are showing a keen interest in adopting the PRC model to deliver their programs,” said Perkins.

The radio campaigns were developed between 2007 and 2008 and implemented in 2009. Farmers, broadcasters and agricultural experts were involved in an exercise to identify key improvements in agricultural practices that would become the focus of the PRCs.

“The PRC model isn’t a typical top-down campaign in which outsiders market a new behaviour to passive subjects”, says Perkins. “ Rather, the PRC helps farmers make informed decisions about whether and how to change their farming practices. Deep respect for farmers is the starting point.”

Farmers had a say in when the program would be broadcast, who the host would be, and how they would participate in each week’s episode. Local musical groups sang the program’s signature tune. During the PRC, farmers could debate the issues, learn from each other, challenge the experts, and gain technical support as they adopted new practices.

PRC methodology was applied to twenty-five different campaigns involving one-hundred farming communities and twenty-five broadcasters from five different countries. The programs were broadcast at least once a week in the local languages at a convenient time for the farmers to listen.

The production, participation, delivery and effectiveness of the radio programs were carefully evaluated to develop a radio campaign model that could be replicated for effective radio-based communications with farmers.

The campaigns were based on the elements of adult learning and the theory of participatory communications for development. The best PRCs were anchored by a farmer’s story and gave priority to the local farmers’ voice. The campaign programs’ tone and language is regional and colloquial—suitable for everyone in the community.

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**About Farm Radio International**

Founded in 1979, Farm Radio International is a Canadian charity with the mission of supporting broadcasters to strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities in Africa. Farm Radio International researches and produces radio scripts on rural development issues and distributes them to over 320 radio broadcasters who interpret and use the scripts to provide their listeners with practical information about farming, land management, health and other issues. Farm Radio International also develops training opportunities; researches farm radio strategies and facilitates networking among and between broadcasters.