



## The Participatory Radio Campaign Research Findings from the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRI)

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### Key Findings:

The Participatory Radio Campaign (PRC) model has proven to be an effective way to inform and engage smallholder farmers:

- PRC listeners are **5x** more likely to adopt an improved agricultural practice than those in communities that did not listen to the PRC.
- In rural communities, an engaging, interactive and entertaining PRC attracts **2/3** of a station's listening audience as regular listeners.\*
- Just by listening to the radio, **1/2** of listeners demonstrated detailed knowledge about the improved agricultural practice.\*
- **1/4** of listeners adopted the improved agricultural practice from the radio campaign.\*

\*Based on Passive Listening Community stats shown in Fig 2.

### The Initiative:

Through the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRI), Farm Radio International developed and evaluated an effective approach to helping smallholder farmers in Africa learn about, discuss, evaluate, and adopt a range of agricultural practices that they believed would lead to improvements in their livelihoods. Our research shows that farmers who reside in communities reached by the PRC are **5x** more likely to adopt an improved agricultural practice when compared to farmers in communities not reached by the PRC. This can be achieved at a cost of pennies per listener.

*A PRC is a planned, radio-based activity, conducted over a specific period of time, in which a broad population of farmers is encouraged to make an informed decision about adopting a specific agricultural practice to improve their livelihoods.*

A PRC goes far beyond the traditional handing down of packaged information from governments, international organizations or NGOs via radio and telling farmers to act on them.

Farmers and their supporters select a practice which is low-cost and proven. A multi-month series of weekly radio programs featuring the voices of farmers as well as experts, explains the promoted technology. The program builds up to a call to farmers to make an informed decision, right for their particular circumstances. It then provides the adopting farmers with the information and other support they require to implement the agricultural practice. A PRC:

- Ensures the **participation** of farmers and broadcasters in all stages of the campaign.
- Features the **voices of farmers**.
- Gathers continuous **feedback** from listeners.

- **Engages and entertains** listeners using a variety of effective radio formats.
- Uses a "**core story**" to provide a common thread through the campaign keeping it focused and engaging.
- Builds a **dramatic "arc"** through the program.



Radio Maria Women's Listening Group in Kiteve Village, Tanzania.

### Our Research at a Glance:

- 42 months
- 5 countries (Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda)
- 90 communities
- 25 partner radio stations
- 3 types of stations: Community, Private, Public
- 39 million farmers reached by broadcasts
- 49 participatory radio campaigns produced and aired
- 38 different campaign topics
- 4500 households surveyed in a comprehensive outcome evaluation

## PRCs Work! – The Findings of the African Farm Radio Research Initiative:

Using standard evaluation methodology including household surveys, site observations, and key informant interviews, we assessed **listenership**, **knowledge** and **practices** of farmers living in 90 communities spread across 5 countries related to a specific agricultural practice that had been featured on the radio campaign in their area.

### How We Measured:

A survey conducted with 4500 randomly selected female and male household representatives included 3 types of communities of similar agro-ecological characteristics:

- **Active Listening Community members** were directly involved as participants in planning, developing and evaluating the PRCs and interacted periodically with radio station staff.
- **Passive Listening Community members** represented the bulk of the listening audience as they could receive the broadcasts but they had no other special relationship with the programs.
- **Control Communities members** could not reliably receive the radio signal in their homes or in their fields and were not aware of the PRC.

### What We Learned:

#### Listenership:

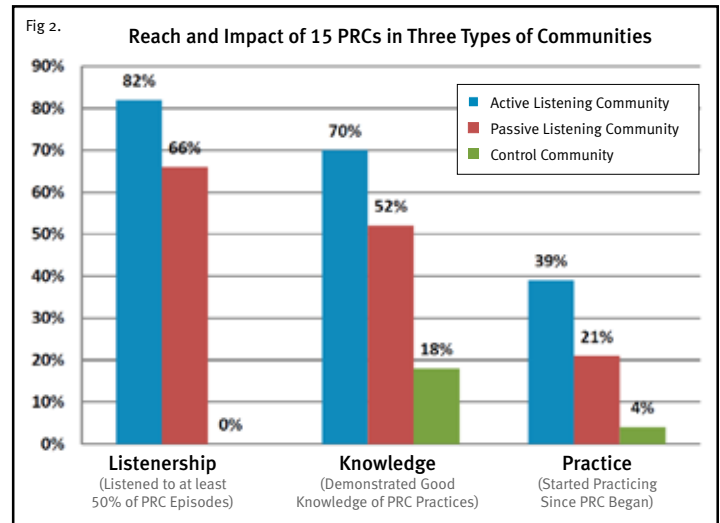
Averaged over 15 radio stations, **82%** of the respondents in the Active Listening Communities and **66%** in the Passive Listening Communities followed the program on a regular basis.

#### Knowledge:

One of the important objectives of each campaign was to improve the level of knowledge farmers had to make an informed decision about whether or not to practice the promoted agricultural practice and provide information on how to practice the improvement. **70%** of respondents in the Active Listening Communities and **52%** in the Passive Listening Communities demonstrated detailed knowledge about the technology. *This shows that just by listening to the radio, farmers are able to significantly raise their level of knowledge.*

#### Practice:

Farmers who gained significant knowledge about an improved agricultural practice are more likely to choose to adopt the practice. Our research showed that **39%** of farmers in the Active Listening Communities and **21%** in the Passive Listening Communities started practicing the improved agricultural practice since the PRC began. By comparison, only one out of every 25 people in control communities had started the same practice. *Listening to PRCs therefore caused a five-fold increase in the number of farmers introducing a featured practice.*



### Example AFRRRI Campaign Topics:

- Promotion of animal housing
- Use of neem leaves to protect greens and legumes
- Promotion of crop rotation and mulching
- Promotion of Vetiver grass establishment as a soil and water conservation technology
- Promotion of one to one method of planting maize
- Promotion of shea butter production and marketing
- Group marketing
- Integrating fruit trees with bee keeping
- Up-scaling of Akena Cassava
- Up scaling of Victoria Highland Irish potatoes
- Local chicken management



To read more about the participatory radio campaign approach please refer to our Manual for Participatory Radio Campaigns online: <http://bit.ly/farmradioPRC>

### About Farm Radio International:

Farm Radio International ([www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org)) is a Canadian registered charity that is at the forefront of using radio combined with other ICTs to serve smallholder farmers. We have been using radio to help African smallholder farmers for three decades. We send information on low-cost ways to improve food security to 370 radio stations across 39 countries.

Consistent with our commitment to empowering smallholder farmers to achieve their farming and food security goals, Farm Radio International can offer agriculture initiatives a way to communicate with smallholder farmers and support their efforts to innovate and affect change. We can help other organizations achieve their objective of communicating effectively with farmers using the medium of radio by adapting and delivering training programs to broadcasters and running specialized Participatory Radio Campaigns that aim to give farmers a voice in their own development. To learn more about how to work with Farm Radio International please email: [kperkins@farmradio.org](mailto:kperkins@farmradio.org)