



network

news

FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL

Looking ahead...

Implementing award-winning radio campaigns

In late 2010, Farm Radio International wrapped up the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI), a 42-month program that was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. AFRRI was a great success, allowing us to work with 25 radio stations in five countries to produce and broadcast a total of 49 Participatory Radio Campaigns (PRCs) on a variety of sustainable agriculture practices, from composting to beekeeping. We also developed new radio-based market information programs and identified exciting ways of linking radio with other communication technologies such as cellphones and the internet. Through AFRRI, we gathered, for the first time, clear evidence that good farm radio programs (our PRCs) are regularly listened to by the majority of farmers living in range of the broadcasts. We also found that they significantly increase listeners' knowledge. In fact, farmers are **five times** more likely to introduce a new farming practice than if they couldn't hear the broadcasts.

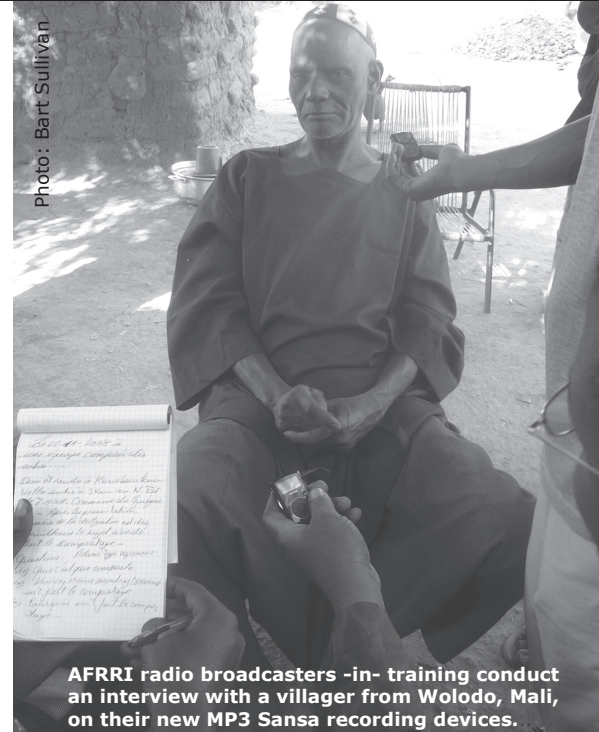
The Gates Foundation was so pleased with what we accomplished through AFRRI that they provided a second 3.5-year grant to enable us to continue our work in Africa! With this support we are able to maintain our offices and staff in Africa (originally set up for AFRRI) and partner with other organizations to deliver highly effective farm radio programs and to offer exceptional training services to radio stations. Already, we have started working with the International Livestock Research Institute in Ethiopia to develop programs about beekeeping in the northern region of Tigray and about mango and avocado production in the south. In Mali, we have started working with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics to plan and produce PRCs on drought-resistant crops like sorghum and millet. Soon, we will begin work in Tanzania on PRCs about intercropping maize and beans: Reviving an effective traditional approach to improving soil fertility and increasing food production. Beans bring nitrogen into the soil through micro-organisms that live on their roots; and, beans are a great source of protein and a valuable cash crop.

Our work in Africa is now coordinated from a new regional office in Arusha, Tanzania — we're proud to report that this office is solar powered! Gizaw Shibru, Farm Radio International's Director of Operations, works with our team of

“Farm Radio International demonstrated its capacity to lead a multi-country research for development project and achieve extraordinary results,” says Mercy Karanja, the Senior Program Officer for Agricultural Development with the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation.

African staff to plan and implement radio and training activities with our partners in Tanzania, Malawi, Ghana, Mali, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

Many thanks to thousands of Canadian donors for your continued support, which allows us to implement our programs in Africa.



AFRRI radio broadcasters -in- training conduct an interview with a villager from Wolodo, Mali, on their new MP3 Sansa recording devices.



A women's listening group

The drama of the radio drama ...

Small-scale farmers in Nigeria, particularly female farmers, are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In 2007, a project was initiated by the African Radio Drama Association (ARDA) in partnership with Farm Radio International and the University of Guelph with support from the Climate Change Adaptation in Africa Program supported by IDRC and the Department for International Development (U.K.). The project developed a special radio drama aimed at raising awareness and providing information to small-scale farmers in northern Nigeria about climate change adaptation. The 26-episode drama started airing weekly on several radio stations in April 2010 and broadcast to an estimated 20 million listeners in four northern Nigerian states targeted by the project – Borno, Kano, Kaduna, and Katsina.

Using the “edutainment” approach of combining entertainment with educational messages about climate change adaptation, the radio drama features Ribadu, a Fulani herdsman who weaves an intriguing storyline based on the lives of ordinary women and men who seek to balance life with livelihood amidst unpredictable weather patterns. The program was produced in two languages, Hausa and Fulfulde, and aired by nine radio stations with two additional stations expressing their interest in carrying the program for free. The storyline features numerous farming improvements such as rainwater harvesting, preventing soil erosion and managing crop pests and diseases. Each episode highlights the ways in which northern Nigerian farmers develop coping strategies to adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change on their livelihoods.

The project was a complex undertaking with dramatic events behind the production scene itself. Tragically, over the course of the project, ARDA faced the deaths of a wonderful scriptwriter and a supportive broadcaster. There were delays caused by painstaking adjustments of the technical content to fit local farming conditions and to ensure that the uncertainty of climatic variability in northern Nigeria was taken into account. As well, the project involved an iterative process of data collection and analysis to inform pre-broadcast (baseline) and ex-poste (end-line) surveys of 3,000 farmers.

As the Hausa proverb, “In Kidi ya Chanza”, that gave this radio drama its name suggests: *“when the drumbeats change, the dancers have to change their steps.”*

By Dr. Helen Hambly Odame
University of Guelph
Farm Radio International Board member

Farm Radio International wishes to express its sincere thanks to ARDA and its partners for the opportunity to work together on such an innovative project.

Just how effective can a radio drama be in educating farmers to help them adapt to climate change?

The evaluation work of the radio drama found that:

- 78% of respondents were familiar with the radio drama
- 84% of female and 68% of male listeners stated the program increased their awareness of climate change adaptation
- The vast majority (92.8%!) of respondents who gained awareness from the program reported that they took action

Radio Listening Clubs reinforced listener engagement with the storylines, ensuring that each episode was eagerly awaited. The evaluation found that the groups also encouraged individual farmers to take action on their farms to mitigate the effects of climate change.

TO READ MORE, follow the link:
[www.farmradio.org/english/partners/projects/Radio Drama.pdf](http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/projects/Radio%20Drama.pdf)

Farm Radio Weekly is helping broadcasters serve small-scale farmers

It is approaching four years since the first issue of Farm Radio Weekly (FRW), our electronic news service for African broadcasters, went out to about 60 subscribers. It now reaches over 1,700 broadcasters in sub-Saharan Africa alone! Doug Ward, Farm Radio International's Board Chair and former CBC Vice-President, championed the idea back

in 2007 and was actively involved in creating this important service for broadcasters. He is thrilled with the growth in our subscriber base: **"When I think that some 1,700 African broadcasters are receiving fresh news stories about African smallholder farming issues every Tuesday morning in their inboxes, it just blows my mind."**



FRI partner, Lydia Ajono, at Simli Radio Station in Daloun near Tamale in Northern Region of Ghana

In May, we sent a survey to our subscribers to find out how they use the service. We are excited to share some of their stories about how they benefited from the weekly.

First, some numbers: The survey found that the news stories are the most popular section of the bulletin with 77% of respondents reading the news stories on their radio programs regularly. After receiving the Weekly, nearly half of our subscribers share it with others. Eighty-five percent rate the relevance of the stories to their audience as good or excellent. A majority stated that they used the news stories as a model for similar local stories, and many store useful sections for later reference or use. One respondent commented: "I study and use the editing style to rework other texts for my station."

FRW stories on the radio



We enjoyed reading these examples of how FRW stories have been used in African radio broadcasts:

*Bonface Wayne Nyongesa,
producer/presenter,
Mulembe FM, Kenya*

"... the story on Gadam sorghum helped me inspire farmers in western Kenya not to be over dependent on maize alone as food crops but also to venture into drought resistant crops."

*Nanayaw Ayensu,
Theovision Radio
Network, Ghana*

"During a discussion on our farm programme about high harvest losses caused by poor road networks in Ghana, we used the FRW story of how motorcycle-wheelbarrows were used in Congo to prevent harvest losses."

*Edwin Abongwa Fozo,
manager, Santa Meteo
Radio, Cameroon*

"I used the FRW story called *"Farmers preserve local seeds but buy improved maize"* to show the importance of local seeds to farmers, particularly to those that expect the government to always come to their aid with farm inputs."

*Gloria Nagun Thomas,
editor/presenter, Voice
of Nigeria*

"The FRW story on the "great green wall" gave me an idea to do a report on desert encroachment which affects northern Nigeria and how to stop its encroachment by encouraging tree planting, especially the neem tree which grows very well in that part of the country."

The survey also confirmed that many broadcasters encourage farmer participation in their farm radio programs.

*Odong James,
producer, Etop Radio
99.4 fm, Uganda*

"When we ran a story on reviving the traditional methods of storing food, a farmers group from one sub-county sent a delegation to the radio to share their experience of a seed bank. We broadcast a discussion with the group and there was an overwhelming response from the listeners and leaders."

Volunteer Profile: Dr. John FitzSimons

Associate Professor at University of Guelph, Ontario Agriculture College

Farm Radio International commends the work that University of Guelph associate professor Dr. John FitzSimons did in the development of a Nigerian radio drama on climate change (see page 2). Dr. FitzSimons provided technical expertise on climate change adaptation techniques that were incorporated in the storyline. The wide range of topics included desertification and drought, deforestation, crop pests and disease and rainwater harvesting. Along with his colleague from University of Guelph (and Farm Radio International Board member) Dr. Helen Hambly Odame, and grad students Melissa Yule and Adam Dorn, he researched and co-authored the initial and final versions of the Resource Kit that was given to broadcasters with the radio drama.

Although originally hired to help with the drama, Prof. FitzSimons went above and beyond his original commitment to the project, putting in many additional hours and two trips to Nigeria at his own expense.

“In Africa, most people have access in one way or another to a radio. Farm Radio International, through its partner’s broadcasts, enables the sharing of knowledge and potential solutions to issues across wide areas. Farm Radio programs are not just an information source – they are a catalyst for human resource development and broader community action in a wide range of spheres.”

Dr. FitzSimons believes that climate change will impact every aspect of our existence: human and animal health, water resources, coastal zones, biodiversity and land degradation, agriculture and food security as well as the overall economy. He feels the impact of climate change on small-scale farmers is and will continue to be significant.

This was his first experience being involved in the creation of a radio drama. He said that it was a very challenging learning experience to provide technical subject matter for a dramatic story line. Weaving serious topics into a very human drama can stimulate interesting and memorable discussion and debate with the audiences.

Dr. FitzSimons also serves as a volunteer reviewer for many of Farm Radio’s scripts to ensure technical accuracy.

Dr. Fitzsimons in the field in Liberia.

Supporting broadcasters in developing countries to strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities.



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