



## Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (DCFRN) is excited to announce our new action research initiative supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) – a 42-month project being implemented in five sub-Saharan African countries – Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania.<sup>1</sup>



### WHY RADIO?

Radio is the most accessible form of communication for rural households and therefore one of the best ways to share and exchange information about farming and food security with and among smallholder farmers in Africa. Farmers listen to local news, stories and music in their own language, without even needing to speak or read English or French. However, the effectiveness of radio in improving food security has not been well studied or documented, and there is a lot to gain by sharing and recognizing best practices.

As we enter a new era of low cost and accessible mobile phones, MP3 players and other widely available communication technologies, we need to learn more about how best to employ radio-based communication strategies to improve farmers' liveli-

hoods by responding to food security challenges and encouraging self-reliance.

### AFRRI RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Organizations working to improve small holder farmers' livelihoods through communication for development in Africa need to know:

1. How and in what ways is radio most effective in enabling smallholder farmers in Africa to address food security challenges that they face?
2. How can new communication technologies such as cell phones, satellite radio and MP3 players increase the effectiveness of radio as a sustainable, interactive development communication tool?

To answer these important questions, DCFRN, in partnership with

World University Service of Canada launched the AFRRI which is now being implemented in Mali, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi. The Project is a 42-month, participatory, multi-stakeholder action research program that discovers and documents best practices for using radio-based communications to enhance food security in Africa. To complement the research objectives, the project offers capacity-building and training services for participating radio broadcasters.

AFRRI main offices are in Accra, Ghana, and Kampala, Uganda, with project offices in Mali, Malawi and Tanzania. It is led by a Research Director (Accra) and Program Manager (Kampala) with National Research Coordinators implementing the Project in each country.

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation has made the grant to our partner, World University Service of Canada (WUSC). DCFRN designed AFRRI and WUSC has engaged DCFRN to implement it.

## WHO PARTICIPATES?

National Advisory Committees made up of representatives from farmers' organizations, radio broadcasters, research organizations, and government extension agencies provide advice and input in the development of action research plans. Once plans are in place, project partners will be supported in developing and broadcasting a variety of innovative radio programs using a wide range of formats that engage farmers in addressing food security priorities. By comparing farmers' knowledge and farming practices before and after the programs are broadcast, Project participants will learn how radio and other communication technologies can best be used to meet farmers' food security objectives. DCFRN will ensure that all participating radio practitioners benefit from what is learned from AFRRRI.

AFRRRI is selecting five radio stations to participate in the project in each country. We will be seeking out a mix of community, commercial FM, and public radio stations. Each station will be asked to: participate in designing the research project; produce and broadcast a

variety of programs for smallholder farmers; and participate in post-broadcast evaluations. Participating stations will benefit from training opportunities, access to equipment, and support for the production and broadcast of new programs.

## FIND OUT MORE?

For more information about AFRRRI, please contact the National Research Coordinator in

or Sheila Huggins-Rao, AFRRRI Program Officer at [shrao@farmradio.org](mailto:shrao@farmradio.org)



*DCFNRN works in collaboration with World University Service of Canada*

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