

# VOICES

SHARING IDEAS, GROWING SOLUTIONS.



The newsletter  
for partners of  
Developing  
Countries Farm  
Radio Network

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## Rebuilding rural lives and livelihoods

Most communities are affected by conflict of some kind. Your community may not be affected by armed conflict, but it is probably affected by local disputes. For example, many communities are involved in conflict over natural resources, such as land or

water. Broadcasters have a role to play in conflict prevention, analysis, resolution and rebuilding. Following are some of the issues that are important to discuss on your radio programs to help your listeners, especially farmers and refugees, address and overcome conflict.

### Food security and conflict

#### Issues

Conflict leads to serious food emergencies and hunger. During war, food supplies, including livestock, are often ruined. Transportation and marketing routes may be cut off. Farmers and their families may be killed, wounded or forced to leave their communities. In addition, the transportation, supplies and services needed for future food production may be destroyed.

So conflict leads to food insecurity, but the reverse is also true. In other words, lack of food security can become a source of conflict. Food security is an important part of conflict prevention and is essential for re-building society and keeping peace once a war ends. The path to food security starts in the fields of the farmer, where she or he cultivates crops and tends livestock.

Lack of food security (which includes safe and adequate water supplies) is also at the root of many resource management conflicts – for example watershed or forest management, and land tenure disputes.

#### Programming

Talk about sustainable food production and emergency crops. Broadcast stories about local farmers who have found ways to grow enough to eat during times of crisis. Demonstrate through drama and real-life stories how self-sufficiency leads to security for rural people. Keep in mind that people will have limited resources – less time and less money to buy farm inputs. Programs might include:

- How to introduce a new crop in your new home
- Save and store seeds as a security measure
- Local crops that improve your long term security
- Adapt planting methods if regular planting material is no longer available
- Increase your self-sufficiency with a home garden
- Organic farming can provide a secure future
- Innovations for harvesting rainwater in your community

See script #s 1, 2 & 3 in this package

### Family issues

#### Issues

Women and children, and other groups such as the elderly, are often left behind in rural communities as men enter the conflict as soldiers, or migrate in search of employment. Widows are often left with limited resources to sustain their families; or children themselves may become responsible for their families. They may have to take care of younger siblings, and enter the work force for the first time.

Men and boys suffer intense trauma as they enter conflict as soldiers – often at a very young age – and are forced to leave their families and communities behind.

#### Programming

Broadcast stories aimed at the needs and interests of women and older children or teenagers, who are now heads of households, working hard to feed their families. Topics might include:

- How women and other farmers can pool their labour to carry out household and farm chores more efficiently
- How to start a revolving loan or livestock fund
- How to form local marketing associations
- Rebuilding lives through small-scale enterprise (using examples of businesses that can be profitable in your community)

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## Bernardo Caamal Itza wins Atkins Award

We are very pleased to announce that Bernardo Caamal Itza of Radio Xepet in Yucatán, Mexico, is the winner of this year's George Atkins Communication Award. The award is given annually to a Network partner who demonstrates excellence in the use of radio to contribute to positive change in rural communities.

Bernardo joined the Farm Radio Network in the summer of 1991 and has been a regular contributor of script ideas. He became interested in radio while studying agriculture and plant sciences at the University of Chapingo and began hosting and producing his own agricultural program at Radio Xepet, "La Voz de los Mayas" (the Voice of the Mayans). The station has been broadcasting for over twenty years, emphasizing sustainable farming practices and the benefits of traditional knowledge.

Bernardo produces "Arux K'at" (Elf of the Mayab), which aims to preserve and strengthen indigenous knowledge through programs about traditional herbal medicine, understanding weather patterns, and issues of family, culture and heritage. Presented as a drama, the series follows the experiences of Arux K'at, the Elf of the Mayab, and Moyal Ek, a Mayan boy, to "develop alternative approaches to farming that help recapture ecological aspects that coexisted with local culture in the past." Bernardo regularly invites the audience to contribute their knowledge and experience to enrich the programs and to promote communication amongst the local Mayan population.

Radio Xepet also provides daily market information, regular bulletins about regional agricultural trends, and analysis on important farming issues. Most of the agricultural shows are broadcast in the Mayan language in the afternoon when farmers return home from the maize fields.

Bernardo recognizes the value of community feedback and tells us that Radio Xepet seeks to "continuously evaluate radio programs on the air in order to meet the expectations of the audience." He regularly uses Network materials and comments that the scripts "support

us with information on agricultural topics and health. They also give us new directions where we can obtain more information."

### **Congratulations to Bernardo and everyone at Radio Xepet!**

You can contact Bernardo at: *Radio Xepet, "La Voz de los Mayas"* Colonia las 3 Cruces, Peto, Yucatan, MEXICO CP 97931

The Network also acknowledges the following George Atkins Communication Award nominees for their outstanding work:

ABC Ulwazi • South Africa

Beatriz Garcia • COMUNALT, Colombia

Ruben Elizal de Hernandez • Sancti Spiritus, Cuba

Doctor Nora Heinzmann • Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria Pro-Huerta, Argentina

Vijay Angadi • Farm & Home Unit, All India Radio

K. Ponnusamy • Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture, India



## Call for nominations

The George Atkins Communication Award was established in 1991 to recognize rural radio broadcasters for their outstanding commitment and contribution to food security and poverty reduction in low-income countries through participatory development communication.

This year, Developing Countries Farm Radio Network will award two cash prizes valued at \$250.00 (US) each. One award will be presented to a rural radio station or organization that demonstrates overall programming excellence in responding to small-scale farmers' needs. A second award will be presented to a rural radio station or

organization that demonstrates excellence in the adaptation of a Farm Radio Network script, providing evidence of how the program benefitted the local community.

To be eligible for these awards, organizations must be directly involved in broadcasting activities and have been a partner with Farm Radio Network for a minimum of one year. Applications are available on request from our Toronto office or by contacting Naomi Fraser at [nfraser@farmradio.org](mailto:nfraser@farmradio.org). Deadline for applications is December 31st, 2003.

# Promoting peace on the radio

Radio broadcasters have an important role to play in all stages of a conflict. Our partners at the Cooperative Work Association for Alternative Communication (COMUNALT) are working to address conflict resolution in the Cauca region of Colombia. Beatriz Elena Garcia produces a radio program called *La Tulpa* (The Hearth) where interviews, dramas and updates on current events allow listeners to explore issues of peace and understanding. Here are some ways *La Tulpa* looks at issues surrounding conflict as well as some other things to keep in mind:

## Your role as information providers

Radio is the most effective way to reach people in times of conflict. In all stages of a conflict — pre-conflict, during conflict and post-conflict — information is the most important resource. As an information provider, you are helping your community make decisions, both during the emergency and over a longer period of time when rebuilding begins. You have a responsibility to ensure that your listeners receive accurate and impartial information about issues concerning their health and security, and to provide instructive information about shelter, medical aid and food relief. It is critical that your information sources be checked and re-checked to ensure your information is correct, up-to-date and complete.

## There are more than two sides to every story

The issues surrounding a conflict are rarely black and white, but people often reduce conflicts to a confrontation between two opposing parties. Radio programs should help listeners to understand an issue from a variety of perspectives. Broadcasters need to first educate themselves — about the conflict itself, as well as any local issues that may play a role in conflict resolution. You can do this by seeking answers to the following questions:

- What is the conflict about? Which groups are involved in the conflict? What are their goals?
- What are the major issues involved in the conflict, such as economic inequality or political discrimination?
- What are the needs of the parties and what are their fears? Are these realistic?
- What potential outcomes are there, other than one side imposing itself on the other?
- What is the extent of the conflict's effects, both within and outside the conflict areas?
- What is the history of the conflict? What are the deeper roots, especially cultural? What have been the attempts to resolve it?
- Who is initiating reconciliation efforts?
- What is the nature of the relationship between the adversaries?

## Beware of escalating tensions

While radio can help prevent the escalation of violence by providing a platform for discussion and the peaceful resolution of problems, exaggeration or inaccurate description of a situation can have negative consequences. Broadcasters have an enormous responsibility to accurately report on events leading up to and during a crisis, as well as investigating the long-term consequences of a conflict. Question your use of language, being careful not to use words that might escalate tensions. Always be precise about what you know. Use strong language in only the most serious of situations.



## Promote dialogue

Radio is an effective medium for bringing people together and acting as a vehicle for discussion during all stages of a conflict. Broadcasters can provide an arena for discussion on the air, but they can also encourage listeners to talk between themselves about the issues raised. Invite all of your listeners to share their experiences and ideas for resolving conflict. Remember to include the voices of women, children and other marginalized groups. How are women and children affected differently in times of conflict? How do people cope in these situations? Who do they turn to for help? Dialogue promotes understanding between groups in dispute, and helps individuals to deal with feelings of frustration or helplessness without resorting to violence. Discussion also helps people work towards solutions to problems by identifying common ground and building tolerance for differences. *La Tulpa* reminds us that “in peaceful resolution, dialogue, mutual respect, and the acceptance of one another are included with the understanding that all of us have dignity and everyone has the right to have a different opinion.”

## Look deeper

Conflicts create many long-term burdens on communities in affected regions. It's important to remember that emotional and psychological effects may not be visible. By using a variety of programming techniques, from dramas to interviews, you can

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## Promoting peace on the radio

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explore the ways that people's daily lives are affected by conflict, and provide a platform for individuals to express their feelings of uncertainty, and also of hope. Programs might include the experiences of people who are separated from their families during a conflict, or how communities can work together to find practical solutions when food and clean water become scarce. Radio can also help individuals look deeper into the sources of a conflict, and identify ways to apply peaceful resolutions. *La Tulpa* developed a short drama to illustrate how open dialogue and a sincere attempt at understanding another group's situation can avoid a crisis.

## Support efforts for peaceful solutions

Radio can support a range of efforts for peace on both a local and national level. Programs should promote cooperation between various peace-building efforts, and identify and explore different resolution initiatives. Community members, aid workers and local authorities will all have different perspectives on how resolutions can be achieved. *La Tulpa* explored the unique perspective indigenous communities can bring to resolving conflicts. Communities with a strong connection to their environment and to each other may more readily recognize the consequences of both positive and negative actions.

Radio has the power to help individuals and communities cope more effectively at all stages of conflict. The dissemination of basic information that is reliable and independent "responds to both a need and a right for war or crisis-affected populations, but it also represents life, accountability and empowerment."

## References

Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick. "What is Peace Journalism? What a Peace Journalist Should Strive to Do," from *Activate: The Quarterly Journal of IMPACS*. Winter (2001).

Loretta Hieber. *Lifeline Media: Reaching Populations in Crisis (A guide to developing media projects in conflict situations)*. Media Action International (2001).

Beatriz Elena Garcia. "*La Tulpa*" Number 20. Popayán, Colombia (2003).



## Examples of community radio initiatives to resolve conflict



Radio Daande Douentza in Mali, West Africa, played a role in conflict prevention in a dispute between local herders and farmers. The dispute arose because the two groups were competing for water and arable land and the herdsmen allowed their animals to trample the farmer's land. Traditionally farmers had

allowed herders to use their fields, knowing that in return they would benefit from the livestock's manure as fertilizer. The staff at Radio Daande Douentza produced a series of public service announcements reminding herders and farmers about this traditional collaboration. Then, if fighting did break out between farmers and herders, the station reported the incidents so that local administration could respond immediately. The station also encouraged farmers to post messages on the radio about when they would be finished harvesting. The herders listening to Radio Daande Douentza knew they could then safely move across the farmers' fields.

When Liberia held its first democratic elections ever in 1997, radio was there. A radio production facility called Talking Drum Studio (TDS) created programming that informed the public about the election and polling procedures. Today Talking Drum Studio uses drama, roundtable forums, and news programs to promote peace and reconciliation among competing groups. TDS also does outreach in small communities through its Community Services Unit. Outreach staff visit and monitor problems in local communities, and follow up by facilitating discussions and mediation, among other tools, with local people. These sessions are recorded, taken back to the studio, and then incorporated into programs for broadcast by TDS.

A radio soap opera called "New Home, New Life" aired for the first time in Afghanistan in 1994. The story line originally focused on the repatriation of refugees, and on rebuilding the nation. As the lives of the characters unfold, the program explores issues of community participation in development, conflict resolution, awareness of land mines, and practical issues such as farming and health. Soap opera was chosen because it can realistically reflect real-life situations, and it allows repetition of key messages as needed. *New Home, New Life* airs three times a week and is a project of BBC World Service.

# Resources

## Radio resources

**The Right to Refuge** is a radio project of BBC World Service Trust that targets audiences in regions where refugees are a priority issue. Each program has different stories and concerns, but the main aim is to give voice to refugees themselves, particularly women, children and the elderly. Radio programs have been produced in 9 languages: English, Russian, Spanish, Albanian, Serbian, Croatian, Indonesian, French, Urdu and Persian.

**Contact:** BBC Worldwide Limited, Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT UK. Tel: 44(0)20 8433 2000, Fax: 44(0)20 8749 0538. **Available online at:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in\\_depth/world/2001/road\\_to\\_refuge/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/world/2001/road_to_refuge/default.stm)

The **IRIN Outreach Radio** project supports efforts towards conflict resolution and reconciliation by providing local radio broadcasters in Africa with audio programs in local languages (also in French for Burundi). Programs cover developments in the peace process, refugees and internally displaced persons, justice and the law, health, HIV/AIDS, women's issues, the environment and human rights. Available free to local African broadcasters by Email, fax, tape, satellite, and internet ([www.irinnews.org/radio/Default.ASP](http://www.irinnews.org/radio/Default.ASP))

**Contact:** Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland. Tel: (41 22)917-1234, Fax: (41 22)917-0023, Email: [ochagva@un.org](mailto:ochagva@un.org)

**Working with the Media in Conflicts and Other Emergencies**  
This guide outlines the importance of media — particularly radio — for people in conflict situations, as well as the role media can play in conflict prevention and resolution, and post-conflict peace-building. Includes challenges and options in communication interventions, training, case studies, a glossary of radio program formats, and a list of organizations providing training, programming and conflict information. Available free of charge from the Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, DFID, 1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE Tel: +44 (0) 20 7023 0000, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7023 0016. Email: [enquiry@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@dfid.gov.uk) **Available online at:** [http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/chad\\_media.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/chad_media.pdf)

**A Dialogue on Cultivating Peace** Designed specifically for community radio, theatre or multimedia, this drama script is about the cultural spirit of community-based approaches to managing conflicts over natural resources. Based on original case studies from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, it is written in four acts, each about six minutes long. Producers are encouraged to adapt the script to their communities and situations using local knowledge and understanding. Script also includes production notes and ideas. **Contact:** International Development Research Council, 250 Albert Street, PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Canada K1G 3H9. Email: [pub@idrc.ca](mailto:pub@idrc.ca) **Available online at:** [www.idrc.ca/conflict/producer\\_e.html](http://www.idrc.ca/conflict/producer_e.html)

## Publications

**Forced Migration Review** provides a forum for the exchange of practical experiences, information and ideas between researchers, refugees and internally displaced people and those who work with them. Published three times a year in English, Spanish and Arabic and available free of charge to individuals and groups in developing countries from: Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St. Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA UK. Tel: 44 1865 280700, Fax: 44 1865 270721, Email: [fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:fmr@qeh.ox.ac.uk) **Available online at** [www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org)

**Combat AIDS: HIV/AIDS and the World's Armed Forces**  
Publication focuses on conflict and HIV with an emphasis on prevention programs for young male soldiers and peacekeepers. Available free of charge to individuals and organizations in developing countries from: Healthlink Worldwide, Cityside, 40 Adler Street, London E1 1EE, UK. Tel: +44 20 7539 1570, Fax: +44 20 7539 1580, Email: [info@healthlink.org](mailto:info@healthlink.org) **Available online at:** <http://www.healthlink.org.uk/COMBAT%20AIDS%20PDE.pdf>

## Other resources

**e-TALC Health Development CD-ROM** e-TALC is a project of Teaching-aids At Low Cost (TALC), which distributes health, educational and training materials through electronic publications. The CD-ROM material is aimed at those working in the health field in developing countries, and includes selected Farm Radio Network health and nutrition scripts among contributions from other development organizations. A limited quantity is available free of charge from: e-TALC, PO Box 49, St Albans, Herts AL1 5TX UK. Tel: +44 (0) 1727853869, Fax: +44 (0) 1727 846852, Email: [e-talc@talcuk.org](mailto:e-talc@talcuk.org) Website: [www.e-talc.org](http://www.e-talc.org)

**Sharing Knowledge for Community Development and Transformation: A Handbook** A handbook for women and men living and working in villages, towns and rural areas to facilitate community development through access to information. Published by the Oxfam Horn of Africa Capacity Building Program and available from Oxfam Canada, 880 Wellington Street, #400, Ottawa, Canada K1R 6K7. Tel: 613-237-5236. Email: [enquire@oxfam.ca](mailto:enquire@oxfam.ca) **Available online at:** <http://www.oxfam.ca/publications/downloads/SK%20Handbook%20for%20Web.pdf>



## Rebuilding rural lives... *continued from front page*



Interview men, women and older children about how their roles in the family have changed after conflict. Which family members are now responsible for food production, food preparation, family nutrition and health care?

Discuss the issues that result when men return to your community after fighting as soldiers. Are the soldiers welcomed back or shunned? Use fictional drama to portray different situations and viewpoints. Using true stories from the community may contribute to more tension.

**See script #s 4 & 8 in this package**

## Refugees and health

### Issues

In emergency situations, overcrowding and poor hygiene contribute to the spread of diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, measles, malaria and respiratory infections. Malnutrition and hunger, due to a shortage of nutritious food, are common.

In addition to physical ailments, people who have lived through conflicts often have psychological, social and emotional needs due to their experiences of broken or separated families, violence and abuse, and death. Women may be sexually abused and left to deal with the emotional trauma and health problems resulting from the abuse.

Women and children comprise 70-80 percent of the refugees and internally displaced people uprooted by violence in the world. Research the situation of refugees in your area. Who are they, where are they living, what are their stories? Create programs that put a human face on the experiences of refugees, as opposed to simply reporting statistics.

### Programming

Air programs that encourage people in emergency situations to think for themselves, and to use any resources they have to improve their wellbeing. For example, it is especially important for women to continue breastfeeding in emergency situations; so public service announcements that reinforce that message may be appropriate.

Allow space on your programs for women, and even children, who are now responsible for the care of their families, to identify and voice their immediate needs. Consider broadcasting directly from refugee communities or conducting interviews from refugees' homes.

Produce dramas that reflect the many difficult feelings and emotions that listeners experience during and after conflict. This will reinforce that the feelings they are having are normal. Refugees in your listening area will also need basic information about epidemics and other health problems that are common during emergency situations.

**See script #s 9 & 10 in this package**



**Developing  
Countries  
Farm Radio  
Network**

*Supporting broadcasters to  
strengthen small-scale farming  
and rural communities.*

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