



Dear broadcasting partner,

Welcome to package 94! We offer you a total of 15 brand new scripts and two issue packs in this package. It has two themes – first, the Participatory Radio Campaigns (PRCs) developed through Farm Radio International’s African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI), and second, agricultural co-operatives.

In *Voices*, the feature article focuses on the two themes and summarizes the different items (scripts and issue packs) in the package.

We are happy to recognize the achievement of Fatogoma Sanogo of Radio Fanaka in Mali, who is the winner of this year’s George Atkins Communications Award. He receives the award as a result of his innovative market information program.

We are pleased to announce the launch of Barza, the online community for African radio broadcasters. Over 100 people from 18 countries have signed up so far! Information on how you can participate in this vibrant community is in *Voices*. We hope you join us on Barza. In addition to helping you connect with your peers across Africa, Barza will soon be the best place to go for a wide range of radio scripts, tools and tips for better farm radio programs.

Voices also contains a profile of Radio Ada, a community radio station in Ghana that was involved in AFRRI. We also welcome a record number of new broadcasting partners.

As always, we hope that you use all the materials in this package to create interesting, informative, participatory and entertaining radio programs. Please share your feedback with us – we love hearing from you.

Happy reading!

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Managing Editor

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Issue Pack: African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI)

1. Introduction – true stories about how AFRRI Participatory Radio Campaigns (PRCs) and Market Information Services (MIS) programs helped small-scale African farmers

Story 1: Neem PRC in Ghana: Georgina Kare, a farmer in Odumase, Ghana says, “I learned about neem from the AFRRI program. I cut the dry leaves of the neem tree and put them in a sack and then sprinkled them on the garden eggs (eggplants) ... That was last year. This year I am intending to increase my farm and see if it can help me more. I got 30 Ghana cedis from my very small farm, and my family and I also ate many of the garden eggs.”

Story 2: Marketing Information Services (MIS) in Tanzania: Happytime Shilingi raises local chickens, grows rice and maize, and sells his produce at the local village market once a week. Before Radio Maria broadcast its MIS program, his main marketing challenges were his lack of awareness of which markets were the best, the low prices offered by middle-men, and his inability to sell all 30 of his chickens.

Shilingi was interviewed on Radio Maria’s MIS broadcast, and listened to program broadcasts between March and June 2010. When he heard the prices for chickens from various markets, he stopped selling his products at such a low price, and was better equipped to bargain with middle-men. Inspired by advice offered through the MIS program, he and his neighbours organized a group to pool their chickens and market them collectively. After the station broadcast the group’s contact information, buyers came from Dar es Salaam, Morogoro and Iringa to buy chickens directly from them at prices ranging from 6,000 to 9,000 Tanzanian shillings – much better than the prices they received from local middle-men.

Story 3: Compost PRC in Mali: Adama Coulibaly is a farmer from Massala, in south-central Mali. He says: “I cannot understand farmers who say that the rainy season is not good for them when it comes to production. I have a brother who works in Bamako. Each rainy season he sends me money to purchase agricultural inputs like fertilizer. But this year, when the radio campaign began on ORTM Ségou, I started producing compost. I split my field into two sections. On one hectare I put compost and on the rest I put fertilizer. After three weeks, the plants that received compost far exceeded the others in height! I told myself: ‘I knew.’ I told my brother that we could now use the money he sends us for other things. I only want to say thank you to Fousseyni Diarra at ORTM Ségou Radio. He is a star for us farmers.”

2. Background information on the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI)

This section provides basic information on AFRRI. It explains how the AFRRI project worked, introduces and defines Participatory Radio Campaigns (PRCs) and Market Information Services (MIS) programs, and briefly describes five PRCs and provides an overview of MIS programs featured in this package.

Introduction to AFRRI

The African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) investigated the capacity of radio to address and improve the food security of small-scale farmers in five African nations: Ghana, Mali, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi. The project began in May 2007 and was completed in December 2010. AFRRI was implemented by Farm Radio International in partnership with World University Service of Canada (WUSC), with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

AFRRI aimed to discover, document and disseminate best practices for using radio-based communications to enhance food security in Africa. Prior to AFRRI, investments in radio programs for farmers had assumed that, because radio is the most accessible and relevant medium for farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, agricultural information provided on the radio was meaningful and helpful. But there was very little hard evidence to back-up this claim. Very few studies had carefully measured the changes resulting from programming for farmers. It was also unclear what *kind* of radio programs and what *type* of radio stations might be most effective in reaching farmers, increasing their knowledge, and supporting them to introduce improved practices. Without this evidence, it was difficult for funders and other resource-providers to know whether, how and on what scale to invest in farm radio. Therefore, a key goal of AFRRI was to gather evidence on how farmers' knowledge, attitudes and practices could be expected to change as a result of listening to radio programs for farmers.

To gather this evidence, AFRRI helped radio stations develop, broadcast and evaluate a series of Participatory Radio Campaigns. Two "rounds" of these campaigns reached about 40 million farmers. The first round of 24 campaigns was completed in mid-2009, and the second in June 2010. Outcome evaluations of the campaigns were conducted in January 2010 and July 2010, respectively.

Participatory Radio Campaigns (PRCs)

After reviewing traditional approaches to radio campaigns, the AFRRI team and its partners agreed that a new model was needed. AFRRI created a model that emphasized participation and dialogue with farmers, and that valued farmers as decision-makers rather than passive recipients of information distributed via radio.

The PRCs focused on helping farmers make an informed decision on whether or not to adopt a new farming practice. The PRC approach acknowledges that farmers understand and can express their own needs, can evaluate options if they have the right information, and can make decisions to adopt – or not to adopt – a particular practice. It actively engages farmers in identifying and choosing the theme of the campaign. It features their voices, perspectives, concerns and questions.

PRCs were implemented through the following eight steps:

- 1) *Community rapid appraisals*: Participatory Rapid Appraisals were conducted in 100 communities (four per participating radio station, each typical of the area served by the radio station). This research gathered information on what farmers need and how farmers use radio.

- 2) *Improvement selection:* Knowledge partners (for example, agricultural research institutions and university extension services) were engaged to help identify established agricultural practices. The PRC looked for practices that had been evaluated and found to have a positive effect on food and nutrition security for resource-poor, rural farmers when widely adopted. The PRC favoured practices that were low-tech and could be implemented with readily available resources.
- 3) *Formative research:* In focus group discussions, information was gathered about listeners' knowledge, attitude, and behaviour/practices regarding the agricultural practice; their radio listening habits; and their preferences with regard to radio program style. Organizations that provide agricultural education and related products and services were also identified.
- 4) *Campaign design:* Workshops brought together radio staff, farmers, extension workers, local NGOs, and others, to design a four-six month long PRC. The design process was supported by a PRC Manual produced by Farm Radio International. Each PRC included four stages, with farmers at the centre of each stage: 1) launch of campaign and identification of improvement; 2) discussion of improvement in relation to the needs and practices of local farmers; 3) farmers are encouraged to make an informed decision about adopting the improvement; 4) discussion of how to implement the improvement, including troubleshooting of any problems encountered.
- 5) *Broadcast:* Campaigns were broadcast at a reliable, predictable time, a time that farmers had identified as convenient for them to listen.
- 6) *Monitoring and evaluation:* The campaigns were evaluated in terms of their progress towards established objectives. Mid-course corrections were made as necessary. Data was gathered through written logs of each PRC episode, analysis of listener feedback (via letters, SMS, e-mails, calls-in, etc.), focus group discussions (with adult men, women, and youth in listening communities), and the detailed observations of "case farmers" (three per radio station) – ordinary farmers who agreed to keep a record of their responses to PRC programs..
- 7) *Summative evaluation:* Town hall meetings were held for each radio station and its associated communities. Through these discussions, the strengths, weaknesses, and lessons learned from the first round of PRCs were identified. This helped to shape improvements to the second round of campaigns. Farmers, extension workers, broadcasters, partner NGOs and other stakeholders also met for small group discussions and participatory activities for one or two days.
- 8) *Outcome evaluation:* At the conclusion of the second round of PRCs, an outcome evaluation was conducted in each country. Tools used for this evaluation included 4,500 household surveys (300 per radio station) in 90 communities, farm visits and field measurements, key informant interviews, and collection of data from other sources, such as national agricultural extension services.

It should be underlined that, while PRCs clearly have a useful role to play in radio programming for farmers, they are not the only form of agricultural radio that small-scale farmers need. Other services, such as Marketing Information Services, weather forecasts, and regular, reliable farm programs are also important.

A snapshot of some of the PRCs produced through AFRRI

This section briefly describes five of the PRCs conducted. Each of these PRCs is the subject of a script in this package. A number of additional scripts on other PRCs will be distributed via Farm Radio Weekly over the next few months.

1. Fruit production in Uganda (Mega FM, Gulu)

Why was this topic chosen?

As a result of the prolonged war in northern Uganda, many fruit trees were cut down, a big setback to agricultural activities. Farmers expressed interest in growing more fruit trees, to improve their household food security and in recognition of the good market for fruit in the area. Planting fruit trees would also increase the density of trees in an area which had been heavily deforested during the war. A program entitled *Tet tipuwaa* or “Under the shade” was launched on November 18, 2009.

Measures of success

The campaign goals included the following:

- An increase in the number of fruit tree seedlings farmers acquired and planted
- An increase in the acreage of land devoted to growing fruit trees
- More farmers seeking information on cultivation of fruit trees
- An increased number of farmer groups established

Key messages in the program

The program focused on a number of key messages, including:

- The importance and benefits of fruit trees
- Sources for high-quality fruit tree seedlings
- Information on where to market fruit
- Information on appropriate climatic and soil conditions for growing fruit trees; and
- The names of major service providers and the types of services available for fruit tree cultivation

Radio formats used in the program

- Field and studio interviews
- Call-ins, text-ins and letters
- Vox pops
- Music

Results

The PRCs evaluated results in three different kinds of communities. Members of active listening communities (ALCs) were able to listen to the campaign and interact with broadcasters and knowledge partners such as extension workers. Members of passive listening communities (PLCs) were able to listen to the campaign but did not interact with broadcasters or knowledge partners. Control communities (CCs) could not receive the radio signal or interact with broadcasters and knowledge partners.

The fruit production campaign resulted in 46% of farmers in ALCs starting to grow fruit trees, compared to 31% of PLC farmers and 5% of CC farmers. In addition, a Market Information Services program (conducted at the same time) led to farmers getting higher prices for their fruit.

2. *Improved shea butter processing in Mali (Radio Fanaka, Fana)*

Why was this topic chosen?

The women of Wolodo asked for help in adding value to the shea nuts they harvested. Their main concern was to earn much more money from shea butter. This is their main activity in the rainy season.

Measures of success

- Increased number of women using the methods for enhanced shea butter processing
- Formation of women's groups to improve successful production and marketing of shea butter

Key messages in the program

- how to collect shea
- marketing shea nuts
- the benefits of a social organization working for women
- how to build a women's group
- stages of preparation of enhanced shea butter
- marketing shea butter

Radio formats used in the program

- Field interviews, talk tapes
- Soundscape
- Community discussions, panel discussions
- Phone-ins
- Mini-documentary
- Mini-drama

Results

- Forty-one per cent of farmers in ALCs started using enhanced processing of shea nuts since the campaign, compared to 21% in PLCs and 0% in control communities. Also, the campaign has enabled women in the area to form organizations for the promotion of shea butter.

3. *Vetiver grass in Malawi (Zodiak Broadcasting Station, Lilongwe)*

Why was this topic chosen?

Hilly terrain covers three-quarters of the land in the Mvera Extension Planning Area. According to local farmers, deforestation, soil erosion and surface water run-off threaten sustainable environment and agricultural production. Using vetiver grass is seen as a sound method to help control soil erosion and surface water runoff. A program entitled *Mlera nthaka* or "Soil conservation" started broadcasting on November 7, 2008 and completed its last broadcast on May 8, 2009.

Measures of success/objectives

- to raise awareness and encourage farmers to plant vetiver grass
- to raise farmers' awareness of the importance of vetiver grass in reducing soil erosion
- to give farmers information on planting and managing vetiver grass
- to link farmers with other institutions providing similar services

Key messages in the program

- Information on the types and qualities of vetiver grass
- Information on the benefits of vetiver grass
- Information on where to access vetiver planting materials
- Information on how to establish and manage vetiver grass

Radio formats used in the program

- Phone-outs, field interviews, discussions with content specialists, extension officers and farmers;
- Talk tapes, spots;
- Community discussions, phone-ins, and songs on vetiver grass developed and sung by communities;
- Listener feedback through monthly feedback program, through letters and SMS from farmers, through radio listeners club, and through village evaluation meetings

Results

- Forty-four per cent of farmers in ALCs began planting vetiver grass since the campaign, compared to 45% in PLCs and 19% in CCs.

4. Compost in Ghana (Radio Ada, Big Ada, east of Accra)

Why was this topic chosen?

The land in the area around Radio Ada has been degraded through erosion, bush fires, soil mining and acidification. The major problem facing local farmers is low productivity, a result of infertile soil. Farmers and other stakeholders felt that education on using compost would help reduce soil infertility, enhance yields and increase household food security as a result of better year-round availability of food and increased income from the sale of produce. Also, because PRC1 had encouraged farmers to pen roaming animals such as goats and pigs to stop them from eating crops, the farmers had a new source of manure. PRC 2 built on PRC 1 by finding a useful purpose for this manure. A program entitled *Wabi nye ngla, wabi nye ngla yi ome*, or "Men and women farmers, let's hoe," was broadcast from January 10 to May 25, 2010.

Measures of success

- More farmers using compost
- More listeners requesting information on using compost
- More farmers practicing mulching
- The practice of bush burning stops

Key messages in the program

- Understanding the causes of soil infertility
- Understanding the need to use animal manure
- Different methods to apply animal manure
- Types of animal manure
- Information on compost production and application
- Proper handling and application of animal manure

Radio formats used in the program

- Studio and field interviews of farmers, extension workers, and other agricultural experts,
- Talk tapes, panel discussions, community discussions, dramas,
- Phone-ins and phone-outs, text-ins, vox pops

Results

After the PRC, 68% of farmers in ALCs had starting using compost, compared to 48% of PLC farmers and 0% of CC farmers.

5. One-to-one maize planting in Malawi (Nkhotakota Community Radio, Nkhotakota)

Why was this topic chosen?

Maize is the second most important staple in the radio's broadcast area. One-to-one planting boosts per-hectare yield, cuts down on weeding requirements, and reduces soil erosion. The Ministry of Agriculture had already established green belts as plots for demonstrations of innovative and new technologies; these can be used for 1-1 maize planting. *Phindu muulimi* or "Productive farming" began broadcasting on September 28, 2009 and ended March 19, 2010.

Measures of success

- Increased number of farmers adopting 1-1 maize planting
- Increased acreage of 1-1 maize planting in comparison to traditional planting practice (three per planting station)
- Vigour in growth of maize
- Bumper harvest, e.g. 35 bags per acre
- No weeds in the fields
- The fields should draw more attention to passersby who come and learn from the owner
- Farmers will be able to buy all the necessities required in their homes

Key messages in the program

- Information on land preparation
- Addressing misconceptions about 1-1 planting
- Formation of farmer groups
- Information on manure and herbicide application
- Information on weeding, pest and disease management
- Information on record keeping
- Information on crop management

Radio formats used in the program

- Studio and field interviews,
- phone outs and phone ins, letter write-ins,
- poems,
- panel discussions,
- traditional music,
- vox pops,
- debates.

Results

Thirty per cent of farmers in ALCs started one-to-one maize planting, compared to 33% in PLCs and 13% in CCs.

Market Information Services (MIS) programs in Mali, Ghana, Uganda, and Tanzania

Why was the topic chosen?

During the participatory rapid rural appraisals, approximately 80% of respondents across all five AFRRRI countries identified MIS as a need. Existing services lacked the sustainability, reliability and effectiveness to meet farmers' needs. In response, the original AFRRRI plan was modified to include MIS instead of a third campaign.

Measures of success and key messages

Measures of success, objectives, and key messages varied somewhat by country, though all programs shared the following goals and included appropriate messages to achieve those goals:

- small-scale farmer/listeners are empowered to improve their market position vis a vis traders and other middle-people in the market,
- farmers are better informed about prices in nearby and regional markets,
- farmers have access to a range of other market information that improves the prices they receive for their products through means such as group marketing, better choice of crops, and more effective storage and processing.

Radio formats used in the program

Methods varied from country to country, but essentially each radio station researched and broadcast market prices from local and regional markets, often broadcasting live from the market. In many cases, farmers were invited to call in and offer their produce, and discuss marketing issues.

Results

The MIS programs resulted in many success stories. Here are two:

- 1) Emelia Awakese says that Radio Ada's MIS programs in the greater Accra, Ghana region have been of great help: "I listen to the market information and go to low price areas to purchase farm produce, and then go to high price areas to sell the produce. The earnings from the sale of my own farm produce doubled because of the program. In just one season, I was able to earn Ghana cedis 3,000, of which I used part to pay school fees for my daughter and two sons. I also used GH¢ 700 to purchase roofing sheets to roof my new house. And I also saved GH¢ 1,000 at the bank. I am very excited."

- 2) Nasur Odur says that the MIS program on Mega FM in Gulu, Uganda has helped him apply his knowledge of using farmer groups to pool together crops and market them. This has enabled his farmers' group to access more stable prices. He says that the information offered by the radio changed his mindset and gave him a better understanding of how farmers can operate in a market: "Understanding the value of sorting and grading produce, storing and selling at a time of scarcity, contacts of buyers, and frequent updates of market prices have been a big support to farmers." After exploring the bigger markets in Lira, Nasur realized the benefit of purchasing produce at harvest, then storing and selling when prices rise. Since 2010, he has increased his acreage, built a house, and hired labourers to work on his land. His children are educated to senior secondary level, there is an improvement in their nutrition, and he has opened a savings account in a bank.

3. How can radio broadcasters use PRCs

Participatory Radio Campaigns as conducted in AFRRI are intensive, long-term projects, which require baseline research, careful and detailed planning, networking between many types of stakeholders throughout the campaign, and thorough evaluation processes. Thus, they are not easy to reproduce.

But our experience and evaluation of PRCs show that they have a remarkable impact. There are many lessons from the PRC methodology that can be applied to other forms of farm radio. These lessons can be put into practice by rural radio stations anywhere, no matter what their operating budget.

Here are some of the major lessons from our PRCs:

Involving farmers in radio programming: The PRCs showed that involving farmers in choosing the topic of programming, the time that PRC episodes (and repeats) are broadcast, selecting or even creating music for the "signature tune," giving them opportunities to interact with broadcasters – especially through ICTs such as mobile phones – and continually interacting with them throughout the campaign, results in greater adoption of practices which can improve household food security.

Incorporating ICTs: The PRCs showed that ICTs are a valuable tool for enhancing farmers' engagement and interaction with broadcast programs, and that they increase listenership and improve the effectiveness of broadcast messages.

Even passive listeners benefit: The PRCs showed that, when even a small number of farmers are engaged by a radio station on a continuous, interactive basis, listeners in other communities benefit by learning about and introducing agricultural practices which can improve household food security. Furthermore, many farmers in more distant communities that did not hear the original broadcasts, develop an interest in receiving more information and knowledge about the practices, and begin to introduce them.

Make a multi-episode plan with stages and objectives: If you want your program to cover a theme over an extended period of time, it helps to make a plan for the whole program. Think

about the stages or phases and the objectives for each phase. Plan the kinds of formats you will use. Develop a “core story” that runs through the whole program, linking everything together. This planning process will lead to a better produced, more entertaining program that achieves great results.

Take a “story-based” approach to your programs for farmers: Putting a “story” about a real farmer at the core of your program will make it more memorable, engaging, and effective. A *core story* is a brief narrative which conveys the core message of a campaign in story form.

Specifically, in a campaign’s core story:

- the character and situation of a specific farmer are revealed
- the farmer struggles with the *campaign problem*
- the farmer resolves the problem **by taking action himself or herself** and successfully implementing the *campaign improvement*

Following VOICE standards: Farm Radio International and its partners developed a set of standards to support the planning and evaluation of effective farm radio programs. We call these standards the VOICE standards.

Value. We value farmers. We respect them for their hard work in producing food for their families and the markets, often in the face of major challenges. We talk in depth with farmers to understand their lives and to learn how radio can be of service to them.



Opportunity. We provide farmers with the opportunity to use radio in ways that help them to be active participants in development. We help them to:

- bring their voices to radio,
- identify issues of concern to them,
- discuss those issues, and, if required,
- organize to improve their situation



Information. We provide the information farmers need to safeguard and improve farming and the quality of rural life. We present the information in ways that help farmers understand it and use it. This information includes:

- discussions among local farmers about matters of concern to them
- news about what farmers in other regions and countries are doing
- reports on market prices for local products and the cost of farm inputs
- reports on weather and other growing conditions
- comments from extension workers and others who support farmers
- research, scripts, dramas etc. from organizations which support farmers (e.g. Farm Radio International)
- emergency messages and instructions in times of emergencies such as floods
- campaigns to encourage farmers to scale up implementation of improvements that farmers themselves have determined can boost local food security in a sustainable fashion.



- **Consistency.** Farmers can count on us. We broadcast to them on a reliable, regular basis, at least weekly, at a time when they say they are available to listen. Where necessary, we broadcast at two different times for the convenience of both women farmers and men farmers.



- **Entertainment.** We take great effort to broadcast programs that farmers find irresistibly attractive as well as useful. There is no excuse for boring farm radio programs!



4. Further resources on AFRI

List of AFRI Reports

- Participatory Radio Campaigns and food security: How radio can help farmers make informed decisions. <http://bit.ly/farmradioprc>
- Marketing on the Airwaves: Marketing information services (MIS) and radio. <http://bit.ly/farmradiomis>
- The new age of radio: How ICTs are changing rural radio in Africa. <http://bit.ly/farmradioict>
- Strengthening the broadcaster: Capacity development in the African Farm Radio Research Initiative. <http://bit.ly/farmradiocapacity>
- Other AFRI reports: <http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/afri/info.asp>

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Growing fruit trees: A Participatory Radio Campaign in Uganda helps farmers earn income, improve the environment and enhance household nutrition

Notes to broadcaster

Mega FM is based in the northern town of Gulu, in Uganda. The station was established by the British government through the Department for International Development, in partnership with the Ugandan government. Mega, which means “mine” in the Lwo dialect, is renowned for its peace-building activities in a region that experienced one of the most brutal conflicts in the world for over two decades – the Lord's Resistance Army rebellion. The radio has a mission to provide relevant, timely and accurate information on improved methods of farming, farming for a business, and other agricultural issues, using specialists from various farming sectors.

In 2008, Mega FM collaborated with Farm Radio International's AFRRRI project (African Farm Radio Research Initiative), an action research project that investigated the effectiveness of radio as a tool for improving food security for African farmers, and how ICTs can help radio to more effectively communicate food security issues to farmers in Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Mali and Malawi.

Cultivation of fruit trees was the second radio campaign broadcast by Mega FM, following the promotion of modern beekeeping in the first radio campaign. Both campaigns ran for six months. The decision to focus on fruit trees came directly from farmers in the three communities of Coo Pee in Gulu district, Abululyek in Oyam district, and Pagak in Amuru district. These were the research communities where farmers adopted fruit production while listening to the radio campaign. Other research communities included the control community that did not listen to the campaign at all, and the passive listening communities that listened to radio without any contact with broadcasters or agricultural extension support.

As a result of the prolonged war in the region, many fruit trees had been cut down, which farmers said was a big setback to their agricultural activities. The farmers expressed interest in growing more fruit trees to improve their food security because there is a good market for fruit. For example, a fruit juice company called Britania buys various kinds of fruit for juice. The fruit purchased includes oranges, mangoes and pineapples. Another reason that farmers selected fruit tree cultivation was to increase the density of trees in the northern part of Uganda. Northern Uganda was heavily deforested during the war.

A program entitled *Tet tipuwaa* or “Under the shade” was launched on November 18, 2009. In addition, Mega FM piloted an ICT program in which SMS messages on fruit production were sent to farmers, and SMS messages alerted farmers to upcoming programs.

For more information on the AFRI project, visit Farm Radio International’s AFRI website at <http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/afri/>

This script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Characters:

- Producer of farmers’ program – Grace Amito

Lead farmers in the communities:

- Okello Tom (male)
- Akot Janet (female)
- Okwera Peter (male)

Extension workers:

- Abwola Samuel, District forestry officer, Gulu (male)
- Nyombi Tombo, Range manager, National Forestry Authority (male)

Host: Hello, listener, my name is Grace Amito and I am the producer and presenter of the farming program here on Mega FM in northern Uganda.

Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda’s economy, employing more than 70% of the population, including 80% of women. It contributes 43% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product. Ugandan farming depends on the rains and on basic technologies such as the hand hoe. Ninety per cent of farming is carried out by small-scale farmers on pieces of land averaging only one hectare in size. Reforming farming in Uganda is fundamental to improving Uganda’s economy. Radio stations like Mega FM have played a very big role in reforming the economy.

Mega FM broadcasts farming programs from Monday to Friday. The program topics range from animal husbandry to beekeeping to growing rice, beans, potatoes, and fruit trees, to mention only a few.

In November 2009, Mega FM collaborated with the African Farm Radio Research Initiative, or AFRI, to broadcast a series of programs that promoted growing fruit trees in northern Uganda. The fruit tree program was called *Tetipu waa*, which means “under the shade.” It was broadcast every Wednesday from two to three p.m. Most of the programs were pre-recorded. But once a month, we had a live talk show where I invited specialists from the Forestry Department and the National Forestry Authority to answer farmers’ questions and address their fears. I was the presenter and the producer of the program, assisted by Afaya Nickie in the studio.

Listeners might ask, “What evidence was there that farmers – female, male, and youth – were interested in learning about growing fruit trees?” The answer is that farmers from the three active listening communities of Coo pee, Abululyec and Pagak chose this practice. During discussions with the radio station, AFRRRI staff and other collaborators, the farmers said that this particular food improvement should be the focus of the radio campaign. There was a lot of support in the area for growing fruit trees. A few farmers were already growing them and the weather in the area is favourable for growing fruit trees. Also, there is a ready market for fruit in and around northern Uganda. Fruit trees grown in the area include mango, orange, avocado, jackfruit, passion fruit, guava, papaya, pineapple and banana.

There was also a lot of expert support for farmers who wanted to adopt fruit production. For example, the tree nursery section at Gulu University Faculty of Agricultural Sciences grafted improved varieties, and farmers were able to obtain seedlings. Also, the district office of the National Agricultural Advisory Services, the National Forestry Authority, and the district forestry department worked closely with farmers. As well, farmer groups worked on marketing the fruit.

I will be back after a short musical break to tell you more about Mega FM’s Participatory Radio Campaign on growing fruit trees.

Short musical break

Host: Welcome back to our program on Mega FM’s Participatory Radio Campaign on growing fruit trees.

In the campaign, Mega FM wanted to communicate a few key messages to farmers:

Firstly, plant improved, mature fruit tree seedlings.

Secondly, explain the benefits of growing fruit trees.

Thirdly, explain good management practices, including fertilizer application, pest and disease control, weeding, pruning, and irrigation during dry spells.

Fourthly, give information on post-harvest management of fruit, marketing of fruit, and record-keeping for marketing fruit.

Many other topics were addressed during the campaign. These included:

- adding value to fruit, including storage and transportation of trees and fruit, branding of produce, and fruit preservation;
- conservation of indigenous tree species and woodlots;
- the importance of indigenous trees as habitat for wildlife, forage for bees, construction materials, a source of herbs, a source of animal feed, and a source of both animal and human medicines;
- fruit trees as a source of income;
- how trees prevent soil erosion;
- the nutritional value of fruit;
- the medicinal value of fruit trees;
- how forestry creates employment;
- trees as windbreaks; and

- trees for marking boundaries.

Mega FM also conducted an experiment on the usefulness of SMS messages during the campaign. The goal was to learn how interactive Information and Communication Technologies, or ICTs, could improve radio's ability to increase farmers' adoption of agricultural practices such as growing fruit trees. Before the program, I was trained how to use the ICT equipment, including a modem. The producer was asked to collect farmers' telephone numbers in the target areas. A total of 500 telephone contacts were collected and loaded into the computer.

Farmers were able to get information via SMS on the availability of quality planting material for different varieties in nearby farms and nurseries. This helped farmers to get quality planting materials without significant travel. SMS messages also included other information on growing fruit trees as well as market prices.

During the fruit tree campaign, the station also sent SMS alerts to listeners in the active listening communities to alert them of the forthcoming radio programs so that they could tune in at the right time and listen to the campaign. These alerts were sent out at least 30 minutes before the campaign program was broadcast. Those who received the messages were asked to notify other community members by word of mouth since they did not have mobile phones.

After the campaign, AFRRI and Mega FM interviewed farmers from the three communities to determine the impact of SMS alerts on the listenership of radio campaigns, and the usefulness of the other information sent via SMS messages. In each community, 20 people were interviewed – five adult men, five adult women, five young men and five young women.

The Participatory Radio Campaign programs and especially the SMS service received widespread praise, mainly because farmers were able to command good prices from buyers.

Short musical break

Host: As a broadcaster, the Participatory Radio Campaign played a big role in changing my radio programming. One change is that the number of people who listened to my program went up. This was because the SMS messages I sent attracted many listeners. I remember that one farmer use to boast in his village that whoever wants to talk to the popular lady should contact him!

Most people – including Mega FM staff – used to think that the farming program was only for the poor and illiterate. But now it became the darling of programs! I received many visitors, both farmers and forestry specialists, who came for clarifications and wanted to know how they could partner with the radio station.

I also started selling improved grafted seedlings from the National Agricultural Research Organization centre in Kawanda, from which I earned a good amount of money. I bought grafted mangoes and oranges at 1800 Ugandan shillings from Kampala and sold them at 2500, to cover the cost of transport to Gulu. In 2009, I sold 45,000 grafted mangoes and oranges to individual

farmers and institutions. The majority of the other traders were selling them for 3500, but pricing mine at 2500 attracted a lot of buyers.

We'll be back after a short break to talk to some farmers about how the Participatory Radio Campaign worked for them.

Short musical break

Host: Now it's time to hear from some farmers. Here is Okello Tom, a farmer from Abululyec.

Okello Tom: I was very happy to receive SMS messages which included market prices. I have always been cheated by middlemen who give me the lowest price for my produce.

Host: Akot Janet is a farmer from the Oyam district of Uganda. She was asked if she had benefited from receiving market prices via SMS messages. Here is her response:

Akot Janet: I used to sell my crop for a very low price, just because I had no idea how the market was moving. I often felt confused when I was dealing with traders. I thought that I had to take the first bid the trader offered. This information on fruit tree growing has given me a lot of encouragement to start planting trees to improve my income. I have a number of mangoes and pawpaw trees, but I didn't know that fruit could earn me a living.

Host: Here is farmer Okwera Peter.

Okwera Peter: The first time I received SMS messages on my mobile phone, I received the latest market prices. I also received information on traders who were offering deals, plus basic knowledge on growing fruit trees. Now I can choose what to plant because I have all the basic information I need. I can also inform colleagues and friends. I can tell them what price they should get. I can even encourage more farmers to grow fruit trees.

Host: Mega FM sent information by SMS on market prices and growing fruit trees. We also told farmers which government organizations could help fund farming projects and how to form themselves into groups.

The program *Tetipu waa* interviewed a number of farmers and specialists in the Forestry Department. One was Samuel Abwola, the district forestry officer in Gulu. When we asked him about how farmers could benefit from growing fruit trees, he had this to say:

Samuel Abwola: Fruit trees purify the environment by cleaning the air, improving soil quality, preventing erosion, creating animal habitat, and sustaining valuable water sources. They also improve nutrition. When there is more communication between buyers and sellers, there is greater trust. Understanding increases. When farmers have more knowledge, they are better able to understand and use commercial agricultural products like tractors, pesticides, fertilizers, and manure. Agricultural supply companies also become more willing to explore the small-scale farmer market. The radio programs helped a lot with this.

Host: Nyombi Tombo is the range manager for the National Forestry Authority. When asked about the benefits of using radio to disseminate agricultural information and about sending SMS messages to farmers, he had this to say:

Nyombi Tombo: Up to 80% of households in my village of Lamwo own a radio. Radio is still the main source of information for many people. In my village of 40 households we have no electricity. One of the reasons why mobile phones are accessible is that they don't need to be charged very often. They can be taken to local trading centers and charged for only 500 Ugandan shillings (*Editor's note: about US\$0.20*).

Host: Here's district forestry officer Samuel Abwola again.

Samuel Abwola: Growing trees on and around small farms has many benefits for a farm family. They provide products needed for household use such as fuelwood, construction materials, fruit, and other tree foods. They provide farming inputs such as animal fodder and green mulch. They reduce farmers' environmental risk by protecting against soil erosion and degradation. And they make the farm more financially stable by adding to the diversity and seasonal spread of farm products.

For farmers to fully benefit from growing fruit trees, Market Information Services such as those supported by agriculture ministries should regularly provide prices for fruit as well as grains and other staples. Without these prices, farmers are left in the dark. They do not know what price to start from when bargaining. Extension services should be trained to help farmers develop and use market information. This should include helping farmers develop group marketing so that their fruit gets to international markets.

Host: Okello Tom, what are the first steps towards successful production of fruit trees?

Okello Tom: First, a farmer needs to decide how big a farm he or she can manage. You must ask yourself how much money you need for the lifestyle you want or need. The National Agricultural Advisory Services is providing free fruit seedlings. But there is no sense planting lots of fruit trees if you do not have the funds to support large production. It is better to start small and expand as your income grows.

Find out which are the best seedlings to plant to meet your goals. Learn how to properly take care of your trees and how to protect them from disease. Find other people with successful farms and learn from them.

Host: And here is farmer Okwera Peter.

Okwera Peter: I chose to plant about 40 orange trees, specifically Valencia oranges, after listening to the radio programs on Mega FM. I've had some unfortunate experiences with planting trees before, but growing orange trees was no problem at all. When the program was broadcast, it sounded like planting and making money from the fruit was as simple as counting to one! I made up my mind and bought Valencia oranges from an agricultural expert in the district who had participated in the radio programs. The orange trees are now three years old. The trees

started producing fruit late last year. But they didn't produce many fruit. When I contacted the man I bought the fruit trees from, he told me that the stems of the oranges were still not strong enough to support many fruit. I am happy, however, that the size of the oranges I harvested was amazing, and they were very nice to look at. I was able to sell the oranges for 1000 Ugandan shillings each (*Editor's note: about US\$0.40*), compared to 50 shillings (*about US\$0.02*) for local oranges.

Host: Thank you. We will be back after a short break with the conclusion to our program on Mega FM's Participatory Radio Campaign on growing fruit trees.

Short musical break

Host: Before the campaign, environmental degradation in northern Uganda had reached alarming levels because of the longstanding conflict. During the 20-year insurgency, trees were cut indiscriminately for timber and firewood. This led to soil erosion and a reduction in soil fertility. Unbelievably large tracts of forest, which had previously protected water catchment areas and prevented soil erosion, were completely destroyed. Today, erratic rains cause anxiety for farmers. The period between November and April, which was the normal crop growing and harvesting period, is now unpredictable.

The Participatory Radio Campaign on fruit production helped to address these problems. It improved household food security by encouraging consumption of fruit, increasing the availability of firewood for cooking, and increasing household income from selling fruit at the available markets.

As a result of the campaign, many farmers began growing fruit trees. In those communities which could listen to the radio programs, receive SMS messages, and receive extension support, 46% of farmers started growing fruit trees. In communities which could listen to the programs but received no other support or information, 31% of farmers began fruit tree production. In communities which could not listen to the programs, only 5% of farmers began growing fruit trees.

In 2009, there was an increased demand for tree seedlings. As mentioned above, I sold 45,000 grafted seedlings. Also, a good number of farmers consulted extension services. Young farmers in schools became more aware of the benefits of tree planting. Farmers also consulted the radio station about planting trees. Altogether, an increased percentage of youth, women and men farmers started growing fruit trees.

The people who started growing fruit trees are still doing it now. The program started in 2009, so most of the trees planted by the farmers are still growing.

Dear listeners, there is a beginning and an end to everything. For now, I am sorry that I need to wish you goodbye. Remember that fruit tree growing is the right way to go if we want to further sustainable development. This is Grace Amito saying bye till we meet again.

Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Grace Amito, Mega FM, 2010 George Atkins Communications Award winner, and producer of the farming program on 102 Mega FM, Gulu, a Farm Radio International broadcasting partner.

Reviewed by: Emily Arayo, former National Research Coordinator, AFRRI-Uganda.

Information sources

Interviews with farmers:

- Okello Tom, February 13, 2011
- Akot Janet, February 13, 2011
- Okwera Peter, March 28, 2011

Extension workers:

- Abwola Samuel, District forestry officer, Gulu, March 27, 2011
- Nyombi Tombo, Range manager, National Forestry Authority, April 14, 2011

Further information:

- Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries website.
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- IICD, 2009. *Farmers in Uganda Access Timely Market Information*.
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- For more information on the AFRRI project, visit Farm Radio International's AFRRI website at <http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/afri/>

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Improved shea butter changes the life of women in the Fana region of Mali

Notes to broadcaster

Shea butter is made from the fat of the shea nut. The shea nut tree grows in dry savannahs from West Africa eastward to Ethiopia. Shea nuts are traditionally used for the treatment of some diseases, as well as in cosmetics, for massage, for the production of soap, in many cultural practices, and to earn income to feed rural families in West Africa, and particularly in Mali.

The manufacture of improved shea butter, which is produced by women, is important for balancing family budgets. Rural women are the main actors in the whole shea nut industry, including harvest, processing and marketing. The collection of the nuts, the manufacturing of the nuts, the processing into butter, and the sale of products is an exclusively feminine domain. Rural women are also the main users of shea products.

But despite all these important uses, the processing of shea nuts remains limited. Improved processing of shea butter could increase the use of shea butter by women in cities. For most women in cities, even though shea is called "the king of butters," the butter has a reputation of having a foul smell and other negative qualities that limit its sale.

To help improve the quality of shea butter in the town of Fana, in the Koulikoro Region of southwest Mali, Farm Radio International and Radio Fanaka conducted a radio campaign as part of the African Farm Radio Research Initiative. Thanks to this campaign, rural women learned a new method for preparing improved shea butter. In this script, through a series of interviews conducted in the villages of, Dien, Ballan and Wolodo in the Fana region, women's groups explain to us the different steps in the preparation of improved shea butter, and how this technology has improved their lives.

The script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. In that case, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

Characters:

Mariam Dao, Radio Fanaka's host

Mariam Koné, reporter/journalist at *L'Annonceur* journal

Mrs. Awa Traoré, farmer and vice-president of the women's association of Wolodo village

Mrs. Mah Diarra, farmer and president of the women's association of Ballan

Mrs. Sitan Fomba, farmer and deputy president of the women's association of Dien

Host: The following radio program is based on the real-life experience of women in Fana, Mali. It reports on the implementation of the AFRRI project in Mali. By the end of this radio script, we'll discover how the improved shea butter called *Shitulu ngana* has changed the lives of women in the region. We'll be back after a short break with our program. (*Editor's note: Shitulu ngana is the formal name of this type of shea butter in the Bambara language. Tulu ngana is the short form of the name.*)

Short musical break

The host: Dear listeners, good evening! Once again, we say thank you for choosing Radio Fanaka, broadcasting at 100.4 FM. Welcome to our weekly show *Rural women and development*. Today, our program reports on a radio campaign conducted by Radio Fanaka that focused on a production technique for improved shea butter. Back home, we have a proverb that says, "It's not just a husband who notices a good woman." In other words, when something is recognized as good or useful, everyone wants it.

Mariam Koné is a journalist at the 100% female *L'Annonceur* journal. Mrs. Koné conducted interviews with women from the villages of Ballan, Dien and Wolodo. In this program, she reports to women in Bamako and elsewhere how the lives of women in these three villages have been changed thanks to the new technique for producing shea butter. This new technique was publicized through a project in which Radio Fanaka collaborated with Farm Radio International's African Farm Radio Research Initiative, or AFRRI. The women that Mrs. Koné interviewed are beneficiaries of this project. Let's follow their story.

Local song praising shea tree and its blessings. Then the furious rhythm of a tomtom welcomes reporter Mariam Koné to a village. Mariam's beautiful voice, mixed with the noise of pestles, of singing birds, and of car engines, introduces us to the village of Wolodo.

Mariam Koné: Good evening, dear listeners. We are today in Wolodo, a village located 45 kilometres west of Fana in the rural district of Zan Coulibaly. The village is beside Mali's National Road #6. When I arrived in the village, I saw a landscape of plants on each side of the asphalt, into which the village nestles like a dream.

After leaving the vehicle, I was welcomed by the president of the village women's group, Mrs. Awa Traoré. With her were a large number of women and men, including the chief of the village, with an accompaniment of tomtom players. It was a festive atmosphere. Radio Fanaka had made an announcement the day before to inform the village of my arrival and ask villagers to give me a warm welcome. We are now under the palaver or meeting tree in the village of Wolodo. We are meeting with the women who produced improved shea butter this year. I'm starting my interviews by addressing Awa Traoré.

Rhythmic hit of pestles on mortar up, then hold under the conversation

Mariam Koné: Hello, Awa. I learned that you produce very good quality shea butter here. Can you explain to us what kind of shea butter it is?

Awa Traoré: Hello, Mariam. Indeed, we have been producing improved shea butter for a while. We call it *Tulu ngana*, which means “the best of all butters.”

Mariam Koné: How long have you known about this improved shea butter?

Awa Traoré: Since the AFRRI project arrived at Radio Fanaka in 2007.

Mariam Koné: How did the AFRRI project help you to start making *Tulu ngana*?

Awa Traoré: Radio Fanaka broadcasts programs on new approaches to agriculture that help ensure food security. The project started by coming to our village and asking us what we were doing and what our needs were. The men talked with the project people, and so did the women. Then the researchers presented a summary of these interviews to us. The men had asked for information about making compost. That was the men's priority. But our association, all of us, the women of Wolodo, asked for help in adding value to shea butter. Because that's what we know. Our main concern is to earn much more money from shea butter. Throughout the rainy season, it is our main activity.

Mariam Koné: I understand. Please continue.

Awa Traoré: So that's when Mariam Dao, a host at Radio Fanaka, started coming with another broadcaster to talk to us about improved shea butter. Her programs were broadcast early every morning on Radio Fanaka. Then, another woman came from Bamako and settled here to teach us techniques for producing improved shea butter.

The women of the village were trained to manufacture improved butter. Radio Fanaka gave us radio sets and pre-paid units for our cellular phones so we could participate in the show – and especially so we could phone in and give our points of view. Never before had any radio station done anything like this. It should be said that we participated in every show! It was really an occasion for us to ask questions to the host on details of making improved shea butter that we had not understood.

Mariam Koné: This means that each of you here can produce the improved butter. Can you explain the different steps in the manufacturing process to our listeners?

Awa Traoré: Of course! Contrary to the butter we used to manufacture in our grandmother's way, improved shea butter is manufactured in a very particular way, with great care. For a start, one must not store the nuts in a pit dug in the ground. Once the nuts are collected, they must be boiled in an aluminum pot for about forty minutes. After the cooking, we spread the nuts on non-synthetic bags made of cotton or other natural fibres. These bags are one and a half metres above the ground to avoid contact with impurities such as dust or mud.

Mariam Koné: Why?

Awa Traoré: Because mud has a negative effect on the nutritional value of the butter. Also, if you skip a step in the manufacturing process, you won't get improved butter.

Mariam Koné: Ok.

Awa Traoré: Once the nuts are dried, we shell them, always in a clean place. After that, we pound them, then wash them at least five times. Then we spread them again under the sun. We always spread them on non-synthetic bags away from the soil. We have built a little floor made of small branches attached together to spread the nuts on. Once they have been dried, we roast the nuts again at medium heat in the aluminum pots, without water this time. This is just to heat them up and takes a very short time. After that, we take them to the mill to break them down into a powder.

Mariam Koné: OK. What's next?

Awa Traoré: The next to last phase is the processing of the powder into a chocolate-coloured dough by adding water. To prepare for this stage, women must wash properly, and remove any jewellery they're wearing, such as silver rings, earrings and other metals. Once the dough is ready, we put it in the aluminum pots, which have been thoroughly cleaned beforehand.

Now we are at the last phase of making improved shea butter. We cook the dough on a wood fire at more than 100 degrees until we see clean and refined oil in the pot. We then strain the butter through a clean piece of cotton fabric. This straining operation is repeated up to five times to make sure that the butter is rid of any impurity. After that, we stir the oil in one way only to avoid little lumps in the butter.

Mariam Koné: What do you mean by saying, "We stir the oil in one way only"?

Awa Traoré: I mean that if you stir from left to right, the ladle must never go in the opposite direction, that is, from right to left. Once the oil is solidified into butter, we finally have our *Tulu ngana*. Do you see why we call it the king of butters?

Mariam Koné: Awa, can you tell us more about the difference between improved shea butter and butter manufactured in the traditional way?

Awa Traoré: The first difference is the degree of care we take during the manufacturing. The work requires a lot of effort. But the result is perfect! Another difference is in the manufacturing stage. The old method degrades our environment. The oven requires a lot of wood and it smokes constantly. Worse, traditional shea butter processing leaves a lot of residue. Improved shea butter leaves no residue, which means that the butter is thicker. Even better, the fact that we do not put the nuts in the pit and that we repeatedly wash the nuts prevents the butter from having a bad odour. So the difference is huge.

Mariam Koné: Awa, do you have a sample of improved shea butter here?

Awa Traoré: Yes! Here it is (*sound of a container being opened*). It is very white and odourless.

Mariam Koné: Oh yes, the butter is oily and very soft. Even better, it doesn't have a bad odour. What are the benefits you get from this improved shea butter?

Awa Traoré: The first benefit is that we can use it in our homes. Shea butter became more popular with this new formula. We now use it as cooking oil to replace imported oils and oils produced here in Mali. Most importantly, it makes the skin smoother, it has no bad odour, and it can be sold more easily.

Mariam Koné: Tell me about selling the improved shea butter. How is that going?

Awa Traoré: An NGO called *The Association Conseil pour le Développement*, or ACOD Niètaaso, works on protecting shea trees. One of its key activities is creating income-generating activities for rural women. It started a project to support women from Fana and Zegoua to produce and market improved shea butter. Wolodo village was just granted a facility called the "House of Shea." This facility will have a multifunctional mill, an administration office, and a store. The facility is still being constructed.

In the meantime, women from Wolodo sell their shea butter at the Marka-Kungo weekly market every Tuesday. This market hosts buyers from Bamako, Segou, Fana, and from as far away as Koutiala. Farmers from nearby villages also attend the market. The women from Wolodo and elsewhere also sell amongst each other in the village and in neighbouring villages.

Mariam Koné: Awa, at what price do you currently sell your butter?

Awa Traoré: I can sell a small ball of improved butter for 50 FCFA (*about 10 US cents*). The same-sized ball of non-improved butter sells for 25 FCFA. When shea butter is sold at the Marka-Coungo market, it is in a calabash. Some calabashes weigh between four and six kilograms. So the butter is sold by the kilogram. If the butter has no smell, the price may reach FCFA 600-650 (*about US\$1.25-\$1.35*) per kilogram. At the beginning of the rainy season, it can even sell for more than FCFA 750. In the market, it's generally traders from the big cities who buy.

When the House of Shea is operating, the marketing of shea butter will be totally changed. Instead of the women of Wolodo selling unprocessed shea butter, there will be on-site processing and sale of processed products, which will add further value to the butter. The House of Shea will manufacture soap, butter for the skin, and butter for the hair. Those products will be sold in supermarkets in the city and also in Europe, America, and elsewhere in Africa.

Mariam Koné: Thanks, Awa. (*Pause*) I will now speak with Mrs. Mariam Dao, a broadcaster from Radio Fanaka. Mrs. Dao, Mrs. Awa Traoré just told us that you participated actively in the AFRRRI project on improved shea butter manufacturing. Could you tell us more?

Mariam Dao: Indeed. Radio Fanaka's production team went to each village to help them identify the problems that make their everyday life difficult. Together, we saw that if women in the rural city of Zan Coulibaly were trained, they could change their way of making shea butter. Once we arrived in the villages with extension workers, it was easy for us to identify their

problem. That's how we started the different steps of manufacturing. Every week, I took advantage of my show *Women's rights* to talk about the virtues of shea butter, and especially improved shea butter. Through a series of trainings on making shea butter and programs co-hosted by shea butter experts, AFRRI Mali's expectations that women would earn income and improve their food security were soon met. The women quickly understood the methods. Their first try at making improved shea butter in Wolodo village was a real success.

Mariam Koné: Mrs. Awa Traoré also said that Radio Fanaka allowed them to participate in the show. How did that go?

Mariam Dao: One of the objectives of the AFRRI program was to give rural people the opportunity to explain their problems themselves and attempt to find adequate solutions. Radio broadcasters cannot speak on behalf of others. But if the villages can identify their problem, it is much easier for us to help them.

Mariam Koné: What were the challenges related to the program on improved shea butter?

Mariam Dao: The main challenge is that some villages such as Dien and Ballan haven't had a chance to produce improved shea butter. Although they have benefited from the advice of extension workers and from radio programs, the weather has been unpredictable and they lack equipment such as pots, bowls and containers for making shea butter.

Mariam Koné: Thank you, Mariam, for these important details.

A local song by women from Wolodo

The host: After visiting Fana, our reporter went to the village of Ballan. Let's listen.

Amidst the sounds of goats, donkeys and especially hens and axes chopping wood, the reporter introduces us to the village of Ballan.

Mariam Koné: We are still following the path of improved shea butter. We are in Ballan, a village in the rural city of Guegneka, five kilometres from Fana. There are fields in front of the village. Behind the fields is a village divided in three parts. The fields of Ballan village are filled with shea trees whose branches bend under the weight of green shea fruits. This is a good sign for the women of Ballan.

As we enter the village, we can see pits of shea nuts that we must walk around in order to get to the public place. We are welcomed by Mrs. Mah Diarra and her women's group under the big palaver tree, where we are invaded by small multi-coloured birds. The name of the women's group is *Benkadi*, which means "agreement." (*To the women*) Good evening!

Women's voices: (*Together*) Good evening!

Mariam Koné: I have heard that the women of Ballan can produce improved shea butter, the butter that you call *Tulu ngana*. Is it true? Who can answer my question?

Mah Diarra: I can.

Mariam Koné: OK, but first introduce yourself to our listeners.

Mah Diarra: My name is Mah Diarra. I'm the president of the Benkadi group of Ballan. We learned about new agricultural approaches to ensure food security through shows broadcast by Radio Fanaka. After that, radio staff discussed food security challenges with the men of the village. Making compost was the men's priority. But the main concern of women's groups was to take better advantage of shea butter. The production of shea butter is one of the key activities of women in the village.

That's when Radio Fanaka's host Mrs. Mariam Dao told us about improved shea butter. Even better, she came to the village with an extension worker to explain how to make it. Radio Fanaka gave us radio sets and mobile phone cards so we could participate in the show and give our points of view. But we haven't produced any butter this year.

Mariam Koné: Why not? Is it because you hadn't understood all the steps of the manufacturing?

Mah Diarra: We understood them, but we had unpredictable weather ... And consequently, the shea trees did not produce any fruit last year.

Mariam Koné: I noticed that the shea trees are going to bear fruit this year. This means that you're going to produce shea butter.

Mah Diarra: Especially *Tulu ngana*, if we manage to find materials such as aluminum basins, rubber barrels and aluminum pots, to help us with processing.

Mariam Koné: Thank you for welcoming us so warmly, and especially for your kind attention.

The host: After Ballan, Mariam takes us to Dien, five kilometres from Fana.

Mariam Koné: (*To the radio audience*) I'm now in Dien, near the road linking Fana to Djoïla. My journey has just crossed that of women coming from a courtesy visit to the president of the Dien's women's association. They happily welcome me! (*To the women*) Good evening, ladies.

Women: Good evening!

Mariam Koné: I'd like to visit with you for a few minutes.

Women: There's no problem. But be quick because it's time to go make dinner.

Mariam Koné: Okay!

(*To the radio listeners*) I was received by the women's village association's president, Mrs. Nadjé Mariko. The yard was clean and surrounded by a wall on two sides. I could see and hear small animals and farm birds. I spoke with one of the women in the group.

(To Sitan Fomba) I am Mariam Koné. I heard that women from Dien know how to produce improved shea butter. Is it true?

Sitan Fomba: Yes!

Mariam Koné: OK, Madam. Please introduce yourself to our listeners.

Sitan Fomba: My name is Sitan Fomba, and I'm the deputy president of Dien's women's association. Yes, we learned how to produce improved shea butter or *Tulu ngana* thanks to Radio Fanaka's AFRRI project.

Mariam Koné: How did the AFRRI Mali project help you make *Tulu ngana*?

Sitan Fomba: The programs broadcast by Radio Fanaka informed us about different new approaches to ensure food security. The main concern of women's groups and associations in the village was to take better advantage of shea butter. But we haven't produced any butter this year.

Mariam Koné: Why not?

Sitan Fomba: The shea trees produced no nuts this year.

Mariam Koné: Are there other obstacles that prevent you from producing *Tulu ngana*?

Sitan Fomba: We lack materials such as aluminum pots, non-synthetic bags and other tools.

Mariam Koné: Dear listeners, this interview from Dien brings our show to an end.

Signature tune up for five seconds, then fade and hold under host

Host: This report by Mariam Koné is a lively account of AFRRI activities in Mali, in the Fana region. The Participatory Radio Campaign changed the lives of rural women in the Fana region. This was thanks to advice given through the show and the different demonstration sessions carried out by female extension workers. Thus, women from the Fana region in Mali made improved shea butter manufacturing a for-profit activity. Indeed, in Wolodo village, the bad smell and other inconveniences of shea butter are now only a bad memory.

On this note, we hope you'll join us again for another show. Thanks kindly for being with us, and enjoy the rest of the programmes on our radio station! Bye!

Fade signature tune up and out

Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Mariam Koné, a journalist at the journal "L'Annonceur"

Reviewed by: Modibo G. Coulibaly, Director of Regional Office, West Africa, Farm Radio International

Information sources

Intercoopération website: <http://www.dicsahel.org/>. Intercoopération is a Swiss NGO, and part of its mission is to protect the shea forest.

Malian Ministry of Environment website: <http://www.environnement.gov.ml/>

AFRRI Mali. Report of the Participatory Radio Campaign (unpublished)

Interviews with:

Mrs. Awa Traoré: President of the women's association in Wolodo,

Mrs. Mah Diarra: President of the Benkadi group in Ballan,

Mrs. Sitan Fomba: Deputy-President of the women's group in Dien,

Mrs. Mariam Dao: Host at Radio Fanaka

All interviews conducted in April, 2011.

Thanks to:

Farm Radio International West Africa Regional Office, Bamako, Mali.

Village chiefs of the three regions (Wolodo: Kissima Traoré, Ballan: Bafing Diarra, Dien: Amadou Fomba)

Radio Fanaka, Fana, Mali.

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Effective use of vetiver grass: A participatory radio campaign in Malawi helps farmers keep soil on their fields and money in their pockets

Notes to broadcaster

Between 2008 and 2009, Farm Radio International's African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) worked with five radio stations in Malawi to produce Participatory Radio Campaigns (PRCs). The goal was to find out how radio can help farmers adopt effective and low-cost farming methods.

In three of the communities involved, the use of vetiver grass to conserve soil and water was selected as an improved farming technology. Zodiac Broadcasting Station, which has many listeners in these communities, was the radio station involved in the campaign.

Zodiac's PRC produced weekly interactive programs on this topic for six months, working in co-operation with local communities, extension workers, and specialists in water and soil conservation.

This script briefly summarizes the PRC, presents some interviews conducted with farmers and extension workers after the completion of the campaign, and presents some new interviews with farmers on the results and benefits of the radio campaign more than one year after the completion of the PRC.

The AFRRI project showed that a carefully researched and planned Participatory Radio Campaign on an agricultural improvement chosen by farmers can provide widespread benefits, not just in targeted areas, but in communities outside the direct intervention areas.

For more information on the AFRRI project, visit Farm Radio International's AFRRI website at <http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/afri/>

The main objective of this script is to report on the successful PRC in Malawi. But it may also start you thinking about the value of more actively involving farmers in your programming. You might want to ask community members what are the most important food security issues for women and men farmers in your listening area. Farmers like to hear their own voices on the air, and those of their neighbours. You can include farmers through call-in shows, by recording interviews on farms, in markets, in-studio, or in discussions with extension workers and other agricultural workers at the station.

This script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script

on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Characters:

Host (studio presenter)

Field reporter/producer (George Kalungwe)

Community members:

- Maliseni Joseph (male)
- Pansipowuma Ngoni (female)
- Group village headman Lavu (male)
- Salome Lonely Banda, lead farmer (female)

Extension workers:

- Mathews Kalimwayi, Agricultural Extension Development Officer
- Mac-Noel Amos Kaipanyama, Mvera Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator

Location: Lavu village, Mvera Extension Planning Area, Traditional Authority Chiwere, Dowa District, Central Region, Malawi

Host: Hello, listener, I am ... (*name of presenter*) welcoming you to the program. In this program, we shall learn how Zodiak Broadcasting Station, also called ZBS, conducted a Participatory Radio Campaign in Malawi on the use of vetiver grass to conserve soil and water. The campaign was part of the African Farm Radio Research Initiative or AFRRI.

Here's how the campaign started. First, the radio station and AFRRI staff conducted a survey to identify the biggest food security problems faced by local farmers in 15 communities in Malawi. Five radio stations were involved and each station visited three communities. Three of the stations were community-based and two were national broadcasters.

The villages selected had to be close to the radio stations, they had to be predominantly farming communities, and had to have similar topographies.

Of the two national broadcasters, one was public and the other privately run. ZBS was the private radio station involved. A radio program called *Mlera Nthaka* was a central part of the ZBS campaign on vetiver grass (*Editor's note: Mlera Nthaka means "soil conservation" in the Chichewa language*).

The program was broadcast every Friday starting at 6:30 p.m. and repeated on Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. for a period of six months, from September 2009 to February 2010. It was produced by George Kalungwe and hosted by Teresa Chirwa.

The two broadcasters were actively involved in the research, for example by conducting listener surveys and conducting an evaluation of the project after it was completed. They were also trained in effective farm radio production, along with broadcasters from other radio stations taking part in the research.

ZBS conducted its survey in the three villages of Lavu, Lovimbi and Makombe in the area of Traditional Authority Chiwere in the Dowa District in Central Malawi.

The survey found that these three communities are very hilly and thus prone to soil and water running off fields. Even when the farmers applied chemical fertilizer or organic manure in their fields, the crops could not thrive or yield well because nutrients were being washed away by rainwater.

In consultation with the farmers, vetiver grass was chosen as a “technology for improvement.” It was thought that vetiver’s ability to reduce soil erosion would help address the farmers’ problem.

So why was vetiver chosen as a possible solution? Here are the attributes of the grass:

Insert – explanation of vetiver attributes

Vetiver is believed to have originated in India. It is a fast-growing, deep-rooted perennial grass. When planted with the first rains, it establishes within a few years. Its roots form a dense mesh within the subsoil and below, making the grass capable of withstanding droughts and heavy rainfall.

When soil is dug up and formed into a ridge and plants are sown on top of it, this is called a marker ridge. In a field with marker ridges on the contour, vetiver is planted on the upper slope of the marker ridges. Vetiver helps to filter out sediment from running water. Over a period of time, this sediment forms terraces which are particularly useful on very steep slopes.

Vetiver is relatively easy to maintain and costs little.

Planted in single rows, vetiver forms a thick hedge which effectively reduces rainfall runoff, thereby minimizing soil erosion. By slowing down runoff, it helps to retain moisture within the soil, and also nutrients which would have otherwise been washed away.

Vetiver does not host any pests or diseases of concern to agriculture, including termites. However, fire can damage the grass when it is established, or fully destroy it when it is not fully established.

Vetiver adapts to a wide range of rainfall, temperature and soil zones. If there are extreme weather events such as drought and floods, it recovers very easily when the weather improves.

It tolerates a wide range of herbicides and pesticides.

Like many other types of crops, vetiver is sensitive to shading and competition from weeds, especially during the first year of establishment. A substantial amount of shade will reduce its growth. Vetiver grows best in a weed-free environment.

Because of its ability to reduce erosion, the grass is also effective in reclaiming gullies. When combined with other practices – for example the use of organic or inorganic fertilizer,

conservation agriculture, and agroforestry – it can help to restore the fertility and moisture levels of highly degraded soils.

The grass does not strongly compete with main crops in a garden. Vetiver seed has low viability, which reduces the chances that it will become a weed.

After trimming the plant, the grass can be used as livestock feed or bedding, and also for thatching houses.

Host: Prior to the start of the campaign, a campaign design workshop was held with soil and water conservation specialists, extension workers, farmers' representatives, AFRRRI staff and broadcasters. The purpose of the meeting was twofold: to select key information that farmers needed to know regarding the use of vetiver grass, and to clear up misconceptions which farmers had about the grass.

The key information included: construction of marker ridges, construction of vetiver nurseries, and how to take care of hedgerows.

Among other misconceptions, some farmers believed that vetiver attracts mice and termites to the field, takes up nutrients meant for crops, and prevents crops from receiving enough sunlight.

The campaign radio programs were interactive because most of the information came from farmers in the study communities. Farmers were also given the opportunity to provide feedback through face-to-face interaction with extension workers and monthly focus group discussions, as well as by SMS messages and phone calls to the producer.

Those who could not afford an SMS or a phone call were encouraged to write letters and drop them at the area's agricultural extension office. These letters were collected by the producer during recording and listenership monitoring visits. The program on the last Friday of every month was dedicated to feedback. Extension workers and agriculture experts responded to questions and comments about vetiver. Thus, the project earned its name of Participatory Radio Campaign or PRC.

Prior to the campaign, farmers in the study villages of Lavu, Lovimbi and Makombe could not harvest enough food to last them year round. The program brought a significant change, according to farmers and extension workers. Now let's hear from some farmers who were interviewed by our field reporter, George Kalungwe.

Pansipowuma Ngoni: My name is Pansipowuma Ngoni. Before I started listening to this program, I had two places in my garden that used to be washed away by rainwater. After learning how to use vetiver, I tried it. Now, water no longer cuts across my garden. These days when I apply organic manure as fertilizer, my maize crop looks healthier than before because nutrients are not being washed away from the garden.

We have constructed a vetiver nursery in our area through a club which we formed. I am offering the grass to those in need. They can come and collect some. We have plenty of it.

George Kalungwe: What has been the impact of your decision to use vetiver?

Pansipowuma Ngoni: It will have a long-lasting impact. Previously, soil erosion was a big problem here, but now we have managed to deal with it. Our village is now food secure. The organic manure we apply in our gardens works better when the field is protected by vetiver grass.

George Kalungwe: And now we will speak to farmer Mr. Maliseni Joseph. Mr. Joseph, what action did you take after listening to *Mlera Nthaka*?

Maliseni Joseph: Before, I would not allow any grass to be grown on marker ridges, let alone vetiver. Experience told us that marker ridges produce healthy crops. Even if you don't apply fertilizer, you are assured of getting something from the marker ridges. However, through this program, I learned that marker ridges produce healthy crops simply because of water runoff. What I mean is this: The marker ridges trap all the nutrients washed out of the garden. Therefore the maize grown in the marker ridges takes up those nutrients. So when you plant vetiver in a field to prevent soil from washing away, it means that all the nutrients remain in the field. The result is that you have a healthy crop all throughout the field.

When I heard about vetiver on the program, I approached the extension worker and asked him to assist me, because my field is very steep. There were many places where water used to cut through. I had given up. I just let water make a passage through my field. The extension worker, Mr. Kalimwayi, told me to construct marker ridges, and I planted the grass there. This year I did not have problems with water runoff.

George Kalungwe: Are you doing anything to encourage fellow farmers who might be facing similar problems to use vetiver grass?

Maliseni Joseph: Yes. I tell everybody whose fields are on hilly locations to construct vetiver hedgerows. It is not proper just to let water cut through your field. It reduces the amount of planting area. You can have a big plot, but you may not harvest enough due to soil erosion. Those who do not have vetiver should come and find us.

Insert – poem by villager

Redson Positani: My name is Redson Positani. I come from Lovimbi village, Traditional Authority Chiwere. I have a poem about vetiver grass.

Why did you come here, vetiver, when you knew that I, water, was already here?
Without you, I could have established my base here.
I used to be very happy when I made tunnels in their fields.
Vetiver, you are so bad.
Before you came, I used to make very smooth passages in their fields, as shiny as a child's gums.
I could have established my base here if you had not come.
I used to walk tall, taking all the nutrients from the field and dumping them in the river.

My friends used to be happy there, for I brought them food.
You have frightened me, vetiver.
Can you see that these days I'm walking in the bush because you have spread your roots
across all fields?
You are as green as water hyacinth.
You have dressed all the slopes I was fascinated to run down all the way to the stream.
Coupled with marker ridges, you have dealt me a heavy blow.
Can you see now that people are happy and their fields are strong like a door stopper?
You have filled all gaping gullies; they are smooth as though bald.
They are now able to harvest enough maize to fill their granaries to the top because of
you.
You have strengthened the soil like tarmac.
Starting from today, I fear you a lot.

Host: This is a special program reviewing the impact of a Participatory Radio Campaign, or PRC, carried out by Zodiak Broadcasting Station, a privately run radio station that was one of five radio stations that took part in the African Farm Radio Research Initiative in Malawi.

The campaign was designed to investigate how radio can assist farmers to adopt improved farming technologies. We are looking at how Zodiak FM conducted a PRC to teach farmers about the use of vetiver grass to conserve water and soil.

George Kalungwe: As you have heard, based on advice they heard in this program, people in the villages of Lavu, Makombe and Lovimbi established communal nurseries which have benefited many people. So how are they taking care of these nurseries? Maliseni Joseph?

Maliseni Joseph: When people ask for the grass, we do not just give it to them. We have made rules. For example, a person must first show us proof that he or she has constructed marker ridges. When we are sure about this, we help the farmer plant the grass in the garden. Some people do not know how to make the hedgerows, which are very necessary for the grass to work perfectly.

George Kalungwe: Group village headman Lavu, what measures have you put in place to make sure that the nursery is well taken care of?

Group village headman Lavu: We have given each other specific days of the week where we come to weed the nursery to ensure there are no other types of grass growing there. We want vetiver only. The extension officer also comes to visit us to see how we are taking care of it.

Host: Water runoff is one of the most serious problems faced by farmers across Africa, and in Malawi in particular. Effective use of vetiver grass can minimize this problem, as shown by the Participatory Radio Campaign carried out by ZBS.

Now George, another key message in the PRC was how farmers should take care of their vetiver nurseries in preparation for the next season. How was this message relayed to the farmers?

George Kalungwe: To answer that question, I am joined by Mr. Mathews Kalimwayi, an extension worker in Mvera Extension Planning Area.

Mathews Kalimwayi: The most important thing is that farmers continue inspecting their nurseries, especially in the dry season when other natural grasses are drying. It is also very important to avoid bush fires during this time. When necessary, they should even irrigate.

We advise farmers to construct a one-metre firebreak around their vetiver nursery. When other grasses outside the nursery catch fire, their nursery will be saved. We also tell them to watch for livestock that can destroy the grass by eating it.

George Kalungwe: I notice in the nurseries that most of the vetiver plants are small. Should farmers also trim vetiver in the nursery?

Mathews Kalimwayi: When they have just planted their grass in the nursery, usually it is small, so they cannot trim it. However, after six months the grass normally grows taller than 30 centimetres. That's when we encourage them to trim it. The best time to trim vetiver in the nursery is May or June as they finish harvesting their produce, or December to January during the onset of the rains.

George Kalungwe: You've talked of protecting the grass from fire in the nursery, but what about vetiver that is in the field? How can it be protected against fire?

Mathews Kalimwayi: We discourage burning of fields after harvest. Instead, farmers are taught to cut their crop residues, for example, maize, and place them in between ridges. They should not heap the residues, because sometimes children burn the heaps as they hunt for mice. Fire is very destructive when it enters a farmer's field.

George Kalungwe: Talking to some of the farmers, they say that sometimes they forget to care for the vetiver after harvesting their crops. They say they are very busy selling their produce, or they want to relax and forget about farming altogether.

Mathews Kalimwayi: What I would suggest is that whenever farmers go to harvest their crops, they should first of all, before they start harvesting, spare a few minutes each day to trim one vetiver hedgerow. The next day, trim another row. Doing it this way makes the work easier. They will find that by the time they finish harvesting their crops, they have also finished trimming all the vetiver hedgerows in their field. The same thing also applies to vetiver nurseries. They should find time to pass by the nursery and trim part of the grass, and then proceed to the field to harvest their crops.

Music and songs by local villagers about vetiver

Host: Listener, we are looking at how farmers made use of messages aired in a Participatory Radio Campaign conducted by Zodiak FM of Malawi as part of the African Farm Radio Research Initiative. This campaign was aimed at educating farmers living in highland areas to reduce water and soil runoff by using vetiver grass.

Kalungwe: I also asked an extension coordinator about the impact of the campaign.

Mac-Noel Andrew Kaipanyama: I'm Mac-Noel Andrew Kaipanyama. I am the Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator for Mvera. To answer your question, we have seen a tremendous change.

We had been telling farmers about vetiver for a long time. But not many people followed our advice. But following the radio campaign, we have seen nurseries established in these villages. Many people have constructed vetiver hedgerows in their gardens. Now we have four vetiver nurseries where people can get the grass for free.

Host: How can this kind of change be linked to a radio campaign? Lead farmer Salome Lonely Banda has the answer.

Mrs. Salome Lonely Banda (lead farmer): We knew that if we did not follow what the Zodiak producers told us, they would be discouraged and stop coming here, and then we would no longer be heard on radio.

Sometimes we went to the meetings simply to see the radio personalities that came to do the recordings and conduct the research. But in the course of doing so, we learned many things.

Although some of us were not interviewed, we were given an opportunity to compose and sing songs about vetiver and organic manure. Through the songs, all of us were heard on the program.

Host: That was Mrs. Salome Lonely Banda, a lead farmer in Mvera Extension Planning Area in Malawi's Central Region district of Dowa. Her voice ends our program. In today's program, we reviewed the impact of a Participatory Radio Campaign conducted in the area by Zodiak Broadcasting Station as part of the African Farm Radio Research Initiative. We saw that a carefully planned radio campaign which involves farmers and experts in the identification of important issues and implementation of radio programming can increase the number of farmers who adopt agricultural improvements. These methods improve their farming, their food security and their life.

If you have any questions or comments about the AFRRRI campaign conducted by Zodiak in Malawi, contact:

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You have been with me (*name of host*).

Acknowledgements

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Reviewed by: Rex Chapota, Executive Director, Farm Radio Malawi, a Farm Radio International strategic partner and Kufasi Shela, Chief Land Resources and Conservation Officer, Karonga Agricultural Development Division.

Information sources

Interviews with:

- Maliseni Joseph, interviewed June 4, 2011
- Pansipowuma Ngoni, interviewed June 4, 2011
- Group village headman Lavu, interviewed March 17, 2009
- Salome Lonely Banda, lead farmer, interviewed June 19, 2009
- Mathews Kalimwayi, Agricultural Extension Development Officer, interviewed March 5, 2009
- Mac-Noel Amos Kaipanyama, Mvera Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator, interviewed April 11, 2009

For more information about using vetiver grass, consult the following sources:

- Vetiver Network International: <http://www.vetiver.org/>
<http://vetivernetinternational.blogspot.com/>
- Vetiver System (Vetiver Grass): Water and Soil Conservation (video):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWLML4tJfMM>
- Bunderson, W.T., Jere, Z.D., Hayes I.M., Phombeya H.S.K., 2002. *Landcare Practices in Malawi*. Malawi Agroforestry Extension Project. Publication No. 42.
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACSO48.pdf

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Using compost as fertilizer gives good yields and conserves soil: A Participatory Radio Campaign in Ghana

Notes to broadcaster

The African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) was a participatory action research and radio-based project. Its goal was to discover and document best practices in using radio to meet small-scale farmers' needs for agricultural information in Ghana and four other African countries (Malawi, Mali, Uganda and Tanzania). It was implemented from April 2007 to September 2010. In essence, AFRRI was trying to answer the following key questions:

- How can radio most effectively help small-scale farmers in Africa to meet their food security challenges?
- How can new technologies such as cell phones, satellite radio and MP3 players increase the effectiveness of radio as a sustainable, interactive development communication tool?

By investigating these questions, Farm Radio International and other stakeholders were able to identify some effective ways to use radio to have maximum impact in promoting food security in Ghana and in Africa in general.

In Ghana, a mix of commercial, public and community radio stations were selected for the AFRRI project. One of the stations was Radio Ada, a rural community radio station in the eastern part of the country. Working with AFRRI, the station implemented a PRC to help area farmers adopt the use of compost, known locally as *ico* fertilizer, to fertilize their crops.

Three communities in the station's listening area were chosen as "active" communities" for the project: Adedetsekope, Ayisah, and Ceasarkope. Farmers in these communities interacted extensively with the project. They were interviewed on the radio; they gave feedback on-air; and they helped choose the PRC theme. They were also given the opportunity to compare the cost of using chemical fertilizers to the cost of using compost.

This script tells the story of this successful PRC. It shows how farmers and radio stations can collaborate to produce and present programs for the benefit of both. The end result was good yields and increased soil conservation.

This script is based on actual interviews. You could use it as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Characters:

Presenter: Field reporter/producer

Host

Community members:

- Emmanuel Narteh Wudah – male farmer
- Eunice Dornyo Osabutey – female farmer
- Tetteh Tottemeh – community leader, male farmer
- Mary Mensah – female farmer

Host 1: Good morning, listeners, this is (*name of radio station*). My name is (*name of host*), your regular host of (*name of program*).

Host 2: And this is (*name of host*). Today we are going to tell you the story of a successful project, a unique project that brought farmers and radio broadcasters together. The project fought for a common cause: food security and poverty reduction by using low-cost *ico* fertilizer or compost. This fertilizer gives you good yields and preserves your farmland for many years. You don't need to buy it from a store. It can be found behind your house, just close by you.

I hope you want to hear about this success story and its benefits. If you do, I beg you to listen to this program to the end.

Musical interlude for one minute

Host 1: Welcome back. I am now going to tell you all about this unique project. The project started in 2007 and ended in 2010. It was three years long in order to have enough time to broadcast a series of programs that could have a positive impact on local farming practices, and enough time for evaluation and review – to see what worked well and what could have worked better.

Three communities were involved in the project: Adedetsekope, Ceasarkope, and Ayisah, all in Dangme East, close to Radio Ada.

Farmers in these areas used only *ico* as fertilizer during the project. They compared their yields using *ico* fertilizer with yields from chemical fertilizers. The cost of *ico* was also measured against that of chemical fertilizers bought from agrochemical distributors. We shall hear later in the program from farmers in these communities.

Host 2: But before we listen to the farmers, let's listen to one of the extension officers who was attached to the project. We asked him how farmers came to use compost as a preferred fertilizer.

Extension officer: Soil fertility in these areas is a problem. Over the years, farmers' yields have gone down because of the sandy nature of the soils here. When it rains, the soil drains easily and doesn't retain moisture. To increase yields, farmers had to rely heavily on chemical fertilizers. And the prices of chemical fertilizers from the agrochemical shop have increased over the years. So we needed to find an alternative way to maintain good yields.

Over the years, we as extension officers have rolled out projects to help farmers maintain or increase yields because of the poor soils. It was already known that animal manure and compost were good sources of soil fertility. But they were not widely used, because compost was not available in large quantities.

At the same time, there was the problem of animals like goats and pigs roaming freely and destroying crops. The first radio campaign by Radio Ada encouraged farmers to keep these animals in pens so they didn't destroy crops. So when farmers enclosed their animals in pens, their manure became widely available for use in farms.

Musical interlude for 30 seconds

Host 1: *Ico* or compost is a mixture of animal manure and decomposed household refuse such as the peels of food crops. The word *ico* is also used to describe animal droppings or manure used for planting. It is commonly used as a supplement to chemical fertilizers.

Host 2: The campaign identified many practices in radio which can help meet small-scale farmers' needs for agricultural information. These practices include using the farmer's own language in broadcasts, and including an attractive opening signature tune that reminds the farmers that it's time for the program to begin and gives them time to assemble.

The broadcasters at Radio Ada and the AFRRI staff documented the opinions of farmers who listened to the programs in a variety of ways. There were focus group discussions and individual interviews. Listeners provided feedback via letters, SMS messages, call-ins, listening group feedback forms, and farmer diaries. Also, the project conducted evaluations which revealed farmers' overall assessment of the campaign.

Host 1: During the project, there were two kinds of listening communities: active and passive listening communities. Members of active communities listened to the programs, interacted with the broadcasters, and received extension officers' support. In passive communities, farmers could listen to the broadcast but did not interact with the station, or receive direct support and coaching from extension officers or other experts.

Farmer Emmanuel Narteh Wudah lives in one of the active listening communities. His opinion is based on what he sees and hears in both active and passive communities. Let's listen to him.

Farmer Emmanuel Narteh Wudah: The campaign programs were popular in both active and passive listening communities – and even beyond these areas. Farmers from other communities and districts told us that they heard us farmers on the radio programs. They wanted to know how we became involved in the programs so they could participate too.

Some groups – especially men – took their small radios wherever they went so that they could listen to the programs in the fields, markets and other socializing places.

Most of the farmers who listened to the programs were satisfied with the frequency and broadcasting schedules of the radio campaigns, with a few variations in the timing of repeat broadcasts.

It was a good thing that the programs were aired when most farmers were in the house to listen. Farmers like me could relax and listen to the radio with great concentration. This was the only time when families were together and could listen to the radio together.

Host 2: You have just heard from a farmer who was involved in the project. We will be back after a short break.

Music interlude for 30 seconds

Host 1: Welcome back! Men, women and youth were all involved in the campaign. They fully participated in the programs in various ways. They decided on the program content and the timing of broadcasts, and they were treated as experts in what works for them – or not – in the fields.

Host 2: Let's listen to Madam Eunice Dorny Osabutey, a woman farmer, about her participation in the project.

Madam Eunice Dorny Osabutey: I listened to the program one day and decided to try the things they were discussing. The program talked about using manure and compost for our plants instead of the chemical fertilizers we had been using. After listening, I decided to get some compost from a friend. I saw a positive change in my plants after just three weeks of applying it.

Farmers also like to hear from people who have expert knowledge. We like hearing them interviewed in the studio or in the field talking to farmers. It is also good if a program uses local music and recordings of women's dance, poetry, humour, theatre and songs. These draw and hold the audience and provide a change of pace from all the information; they allow the listener to pause and reflect. I thought that the broadcast of the programs during the project was perfect.

I was happy to get another alternative for the costly chemical fertilizers. I was also happy to hear farmers like myself on radio programs, especially women and youth farmers.

Host 1: You have just listened to Madam Eunice on the importance of hearing the voices of women and youth farmers as well as those of experts. We will be back after a two minute break.

Musical break for two minutes

Host 2: Composting is a valuable farm practice. Compost is a mixture of animal manure and rotting household refuse like cassava, plantain, cocoyam peels and left over foods. It enriches the soil and maintains soil fertility for a long time. It is not difficult to find or to make compost. Farmers who use compost talk of its numerous benefits. One benefit is the price. The price of compost is often 80% less than the price of chemical fertilizers. Farmers in the area welcomed the promotion of compost by Radio Ada through the AFRRI project because of its many

benefits, including its low price and the fact that, because they are now penning their animals, animal manure to make compost available.

Composting is not new in our communities. In the past, people used to grow vegetables on abandoned refuse dumps. Plants cultivated at these places grew well and gave good yields. Schools and backyard gardens used animal dung as fertilizer. And compost doesn't just provide nutrients to plants, like a good fertilizer. It also helps the soil retain moisture, helps prevent soil erosion, and can improve resistance to disease and pests.

Host 1: Papa Tetteh Tottemeh is a community leader. He has something to say about the cost and benefits of compost.

Tetteh Tottemeh: When I learned about compost from the radio program, I decided to give it a try. I saw it was good for my crops. I started preparing my own compost by buying a mini-bag full of animal manure for one and a half pesewa from livestock and poultry farmers (*Editor's note: about \$US0.01. In Ghana, one hundred pesewa equal one cedi*). Four mini-bags are enough for an acre of land and give maximum yields. After using *ico* for three seasons, I was able to increase my yields. And I saved about 80% of the cost of chemical fertilizers. Pests and diseases were also reduced when I used *ico* on the farm. Local farmers are also making money by selling animal manure to other farmers. So now farmers do not throw away animal manure and organic refuse.

In fact, the radio programs on compost were very good. We wish to thank Radio Ada and AFRRRI for the project. It has given us low-cost and lifelong alternatives to costly chemical fertilizers which sometimes brought many pests and diseases. I now use only *ico* for my onion farm and I have been getting good yields.

Host 1: That was Papa Tetteh Tottemeh.

Musical interlude for two minutes

Host 2: The campaign programs progressed from week to week. This step-by-step movement helped the farmers to also make progress. They moved from having better knowledge of compost and manure to discussing it with others, to making a commitment to use compost, to actually applying it. The program was broadcast at least once a week for 30-60 minutes, at a convenient time for farmers to listen. It was also repeated at a different time in the same week. These repeat broadcasts served two groups of listeners – those who missed the first broadcast, and those who wanted to review information they were not able to understand well on the first broadcast.

Host 1: Let's hear from a woman farmer who usually listened to the repeat broadcasts and discover the reasons why she did so.

Farmer Margaret Mensah: The repeat programs were very good for us. Sometimes we missed the broadcasts. But because of the repeat, we heard all the information we had missed. The station ran spot promotions of the compost broadcasts for weeks before the campaign, and throughout the campaign. This was also helpful because it reminded us of the broadcast time.

Mobile telephones gave us an opportunity to be part of the program at any time. Radio used to be a one-way medium. But the campaign changed that. It allowed farmers to phone in and participate in discussions. Hosts could also phone out to experts, to hold them accountable for their advice on specific implementation issues.

Of course, broadcasters could not get to every village to record our voices. But they could phone out to ensure that voices from all areas were heard. We could also use our mobile phones to exchange SMS messages with the radio station. Letters, suggestions, field interviews and discussions also gave us the opportunity to discuss matters with the stations.

Host 2: My dear listener, you have heard for yourself the words of our farmers. There seems to be strong support for campaign programs that use interactive formats. The formats used in the campaign included narration, expert interviews, panel discussions, phone-outs and phone-ins, local music and soundscapes, and where possible, jingles, dramas and quizzes.

A campaign like this is not a good time for a radio station to “go it alone.” Instead, it is a time to reach out to all organizations that can help the campaign be as thorough and effective as possible. Extension services are a prime example. Some NGOs can play important support roles, too. Schools and private businesses that sell farming inputs can also play crucial roles.

Host 1: The campaign run by Radio Ada turned out to be very successful. Sixty-eight per cent of farmers in the active listening communities started using compost as a result of the broadcasts. Forty-eight per cent of farmers in the passive listening communities adopted the use of compost. In contrast, no farmers in those communities who did not receive the broadcasts adopted composting. This shows the effectiveness of Radio Ada’s PRC.

Host 2: Many radio stations in rural areas in Africa say that they serve the people through their programs. But many of these stations do not involve listeners in their programs. The AFRRI Participatory Radio Campaigns run by Radio Ada and other stations show the many benefits of involving community members in their programs.

It is on this note that I wish to end this report on a project that was undertaken to promote and measure the impact of adopting *ico* or compost among farmers in the listening area of Radio Ada. Until we meet again next time, it is bye for now.

Host 1: Bye for now.

Acknowledgements

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Reviewed by: Ben Fiafor, Regional Field Manager for English Speaking West African Countries, Farm Radio International; and former National Research Coordinator, AFRRI Ghana.

Information sources:

Interviews with:

Richard Wusah, Producer and Presenter of farmer program on Radio Ada and an Extension Officer of Dangme West District, May 25, 2011.

Samuel Tetteh, Extension Officer at Dangme East District, May 26, 2011.

Emmanuel Narteh Wudah, male farmer, May 25, 2011.

Eunice Dornyo Osabutey, female farmer, May 27, 2011.

Tetteh Tottemeh, community leader and male farmer, May 26, 2011.

Mary Mensah, female farmer, May 25, 2011.

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Nkhotakota Community Radio's Participatory Radio Campaign on 1-1 maize planting: Improving food security for Malawi's small-scale farmers

Notes to broadcaster

Between 2007 and 2010, Farm Radio International's African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) worked with five radio stations in Malawi to produce Participatory Radio Campaigns (PRCs). The goal was to find out how radio can help farmers adopt effective and low-cost farming methods.

Nkhotakota Community Radio was one of the stations involved in AFRRI. For the second of the two PRCs conducted by the station, 1-1 (one-to-one) maize planting was selected as an improved farming practice. Nkhotakota's PRC produced weekly interactive programs on this topic for six months, working in co-operation with local communities, extension workers, and agricultural specialists.

This script briefly summarizes the PRC. It includes an interview with the producer of the program, and presents interviews conducted with two farmers and an extension worker. These interviews were conducted sixteen to eighteen months after the completion of the campaign.

The AFRRI project showed that a carefully researched and planned PRC on an agricultural practice chosen by farmers can provide widespread benefits, and can have positive impacts beyond the radio listening areas.

For more information on the AFRRI project, visit Farm Radio International's AFRRI website at <http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/afri/>.

While the main objective of this script is to report on the successful PRC in Malawi, it may also start you thinking about the value of more actively involving farmers in your programming. You might want to ask community members what are the most important food security issues for female and male farmers in your listening area. Farmers like to hear their own voices on the air, and those of their neighbours. You can include farmers through call-in shows, by recording interviews on farms, in markets, in-studio, or in discussions with extension workers and other agricultural workers at the station and in farmers' fields.

The script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Host 1: Welcome to the program. Today, we will tell you about a project conducted by Nkhotakota Community Radio in Malawi, in collaboration with Farm Radio International's African Farm Radio Research Initiative, or AFRRI. Nkhotakota Community Radio broadcast a Participatory Radio Campaign, or PRC, on the topic of 1-1 maize planting.

Host 2: In today's program, we report on that successful PRC. Stay tuned to hear more about how this unique project not only helped bring greater food security to the District of Nkhotakota, but how it involved farmers closely in the production and broadcast of the programs and put farmers' voices on the air!

Thirty second musical break, fading out under voice of host

Host 2: Welcome back. Farm Radio International is a Canadian NGO that conducted a project called the African Farm Radio Research Initiative or AFRRI from 2007 to 2010. The project took place in five African countries – Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Ghana and Mali.

Host 1: One of AFRRI's unique creations was the Participatory Radio Campaigns or PRCs. These PRCs were broadcast by local radio stations and involved local farmers. In each campaign, farmers were asked to choose an agricultural practice that would help them increase their food security. This practice then became the focus of the campaign.

Host 2: Not only farmers, but extension workers and other agricultural experts helped make the decision on which farming practice to choose. Once the practice was chosen, farmers and others helped shape the actual content of the program.

The farmers interacted with the radio station throughout the campaign. As well as listening to the radio programs, they used their mobile phones to talk to hosts and producers. They also received information about 1-1 maize planting on their mobile phones. That information helped farmers make a choice whether or not to adopt 1-1 maize planting.

Host 1: Maize is the second most important staple in the radio's broadcast area. Local farmers had heard a lot of things about 1-1 planting. They had heard that it boosts yields, cuts down on weeding requirements, and reduces soil erosion. But there were many misconceptions about 1-1 maize planting. Farmers had heard that 1-1 planting required more fertilizer, and that it was very labour-intensive to grow. One of the goals of the campaign was to correct these misconceptions.

Host 1: The farmers and other agricultural experts who decided to focus on 1-1 maize planting in the campaign were confident that it would bring greater food security to farmers in the area. So, in September 2009, AFRRI and Nkhotakota Community Radio launched a PRC on 1-1 maize planting.

Musical break for 10 seconds

Host 2: On September 29, 2009, Nkhotakota Community Radio broadcast the first segment of a weekly program called *Phindu muulimi*, which means "Productive farming." The program was

broadcast on Wednesday evenings for the next six months. Victor Asumani produced the program and Ganizani Njanje was the usual host.

The program mixed studio and field interviews, poems, vox pops, and debates with more interactive formats like phone-outs, phone-ins, responding to listeners' letters, and panel discussions.

It broadcast information and advice on 1-1 planting techniques and discussed its benefits and challenges. It encouraged farmers to freely interact with broadcasters and agricultural experts.

Host 1: After six months, it was clear that the program had succeeded in encouraging farmers to adopt 1-1 maize planting. Researchers found that 30% of farmers in communities that could listen to the program and interact with broadcasters and agricultural experts had adopted 1-1 maize planting. In communities that listened to the program but did not have that kind of interaction, 33% of farmers adopted the practice. In communities who could not listen to the program and had no contact with broadcasters or agricultural experts, only 13% of farmers adopted 1-1 maize planting.

Host 2: But did this success persist? In September 2011, eighteen months after the completion of the campaign, Clare Likagwa from Farm Radio Malawi interviewed two local farmers and an extension worker on their experience with 1-1 planting before, during and after the campaign. In July 2011, Farm Radio International interviewed Victor Asumani, from Nkhotakota Community Radio. We will hear the interviews Clare Likagwa conducted with the farmers after a short break.

Short musical break

Clare Likagwa: Can you please introduce yourself, sir?

Abasi Abibo: I am Abasi Abibo. I live in Chikombe village, in Traditional Authority Mphonde. I am 52 years old and I am a farmer. I grow cassava, maize and rice, but mostly maize.

Clare Likagwa: How long have you been growing maize?

Abasi Abibo: I have been practicing 1-1 maize production for three years now, but have been growing maize for eight years.

Clare Likagwa: How did you hear about 1-1 maize planting?

Abasi Abibo: From extension workers. We had just a few extension workers, but we are lucky enough to have a radio station we rely on here in Nkhotakota, which we call Radio Nkhotakota. Whatever extension workers do not manage to inform us about directly, we hear on the radio from them. Also, Nkhotakota ran a radio campaign on 1-1 maize planting.

Clare Likagwa: When you listened to the campaign, what did you do?

Abasi Abibo: I followed all the recommendations. For example, I realigned the ridges to 75 centimetres spacing, I prepared planting stations at 25 centimetres spacing, and I applied two handfuls of manure per planting station. I also followed the recommendations on fertilizer use, and made tied ridges to keep moisture in the field. After that, we weeded on time and kept visiting the field to look for pest invasions.

Clare Likagwa: How big was your 1-1 maize planting plot during the campaign, and what was your yield?

Abasi Abibo: I farmed about one acre, and I harvested 60 bags. I used two 50-kilograms bags of fertilizer.

Clare Likagwa: Many people believed that 1-1 maize planting was labour-intensive and fertilizer-intensive. What was your experience?

Abasi Abibo: When I tried the practice, I realized that this was mere talk, just rumours. I did not face any challenges.

Clare Likagwa: Did you change your maize production in the season following the radio campaign?

Abasi Abibo: Last year, I added half an acre, making one and half acres.

Clare Likagwa: Why did you increase your plot size?

Abasi Abibo: To investigate whether the practice was profitable. I did find it to be profitable, because my yields increased. Even though there was inadequate rainfall, I managed to get 66 bags.

Clare Likagwa: Did you face any challenges during the post-campaign growing season?

Abasi Abibo: The major challenge was inadequate rainfall. The rainfall was so little that I had lower yields. We did our land preparation on time and planted with the first rains, but there was a long dry spell in between that affected the yield.

Clare Likagwa: What support services are available to encourage you to continue with 1-1 maize planting?

Abasi Abibo: Total LandCare organization supports farmers to practice new farming technologies like conservation agriculture in maize. The organization's main job is to help farmers get maximum profits from their farming. So it teaches farmers practices such as laying maize stalks as mulch in conservation agriculture. They also assist with credit on inputs, though most of the resources come from the farmers themselves.

Also, lead farmers are trained by government agriculture extension officers. They simply extend that training to us. We have one male lead farmer in our community who helps out when the assigned extension officer is busy.

Clare Likagwa: How would you describe your relationship with broadcasters during the campaign?

Abasi Abibo: We had quite a good relationship. The broadcasters reminded us of issues we might have forgotten and informed us of new activities and practices. They still do that service.

Host 1: We'll return after a short break to speak with a female farmer.

Short musical break

Clare Likagwa: Hello, madam, can you introduce yourself?

Magret Kamanga: I am Magret Kamanga of Traditional Authority Mphonde. I am a farmer practicing 1-1 maize planting. I am 28 years old, married with four kids.

Clare Likagwa: How did you start practicing 1-1 maize planting?

Magret Kamanga: When I arrived here in 2005, I joined a group of people who were practicing 1-1 maize planting. The group taught me the practice. They told me that their agriculture extension officer taught them.

Clare Likagwa: What was your experience like in the beginning?

Magret Kamanga: I practiced on a quarter-acre field. At first, I followed the traditional custom of using widely spaced ridges. But as I learned from the group, I realigned the ridges to 75 centimetre spacing and the plant spacing to 25 centimetres. After planting, I was told to apply fertilizer at the right timing. When the plant had three leaves, I added fertilizer at the base of the stem. Three weeks after that, I applied fertilizer on the surface of the ground.

Clare Likagwa: How were your yields compared to previous seasons?

Magret Kamanga: Previously, my yields were very low. I planted three seeds per station, from which I got one good cob, and the other two were underdeveloped. But with the 1-1 planting, every plant had a well-developed cob. From a quarter acre, I got 15 50-kilogram bags.

Clare Likagwa: Do you know about the 1-1 maize planting radio campaign?

Magret Kamanga: Yes, I listened to it on the radio and interacted with some of the broadcasters who came to the community.

Clare Likagwa: By the time of the radio campaign, you were already knowledgeable about 1-1 maize planting. Did you gain any added advantage by listening to the campaign?

Magret Kamanga: The radio campaign gave me more knowledge and skills on issues with which I was not familiar.

Clare Likagwa: Can you give me some examples?

Magret Kamanga: The radio campaign reminded me of the timeliness of farming activities. For example, when the radio said it was time for weeding, I rushed to the hoes and weeded my field. When they said it was time for fertilizer application, I took heed of that advice. Previously, I would do these activities, but not on time.

Clare Likagwa: Is there anything else you are doing differently since the radio campaign?

Magret Kamanga: Yes, currently I am practicing 1-1 maize planting along with conservation agriculture practices such as laying maize stalks in the field. That practice was also highlighted in the radio campaign.

Clare Likagwa: What are your plans concerning maize production?

Magret Kamanga: I want to continue with 1-1 maize planting and conservation agriculture. The practice is most beneficial to me. It is not labour-intensive. I am able to finish all I need to do in the maize field quickly. That gives me time to concentrate on my rice and cassava fields.

Host 2: We'll return after a short break to speak with Victor Asumani, the producer of the 1-1 maize planting programs at Nkhotakota Community Radio.

Short musical break

Interviewer: Good morning. We know that quite a few farmers adopted 1-1 maize planting after the campaign. Has the acreage in 1-1 maize planting risen, stayed the same or dropped since the end of the Participatory Radio Campaign?

Victor Asumani: It is increasing. Some people in neighbouring districts such as Salima are also adopting it. The government of Malawi is promoting 1-1 planting.

Interviewer: Are other organizations still promoting it?

Victor Asumani: Yes. The Ministry of Agriculture itself is promoting it. As a radio station, we are working hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Agriculture. And some other organizations are still promoting it. These organizations and the radio station are working with the Ministry of Agriculture. From those organizations, we get information and broadcast it on the radio.

Interviewer: Do you think the campaign was successful?

Victor Asumani: That's a very big question (*laughter*). But yes, the campaign was successful. I say that because, sixteen months after the campaign, people are still practising what they were

taught during the campaign. For broadcasters, it was successful because we are using the knowledge we gained in the campaign in other programming.

Interviewer: I would like to ask you a few questions about how the campaign affected your role as a broadcaster. First, did the campaign change the way you interact with your audience?

Victor Asumani: Yes, it changed in a few ways. First, the radio team and some of the AFRRI team visited farmers in their fields and conducted a focus group. We did not do this kind of thing before the campaign. But because of the campaign, we had the chance to meet face to face with the farmers. Secondly, the farmers participated by making suggestions and questions through letters, and through phone-ins and phone-outs.

Interviewer: Is that kind of interaction with your audience still going on?

Victor Asumani: Yeah, but it is on and off. The station doesn't have any means of transport, except for one or two bicycles which we use only for nearby areas. Whenever transport is available, we go to the farmers. We are still doing call-ins and call-outs, but not frequently. Many times we use letter writing. We sometimes go to the fields to interview farmers, and sometimes they come to the station, when they have a problem or have a suggestion for something to be put on the program.

Interviewer: As a broadcaster, what did you learn by conducting the campaign?

Victor Asumani: My lesson from the campaign is that people in communities learn a lot when you go straight to them. They learn and they change easily when you involve them in the programming. At the same time, we should be demonstrating what they heard on the radio, so that they can come and see a field of 1-1 maize. That way, they see what I was talking about on the radio. So, involving the farmers is a good tool for changing farmers' practices.

Host 1: After a short break, Clare Ligawka will interview an extension worker who worked on the radio campaign. Stay tuned.

Short musical break

Clare Likagwa: Can you introduce yourself, Madam?

Florence Magomero: I am Florence Magomero, the Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator for Mphonde Extension Planning Area.

Clare Likagwa: How is 1-1 maize planting progressing in your area?

Florence Magomero: It is increasing. If I compare the two growing seasons since the radio campaign to earlier, many more farmers are adopting the practice.

Clare Likagwa: In your view, why are more farmers turning to 1-1 planting?

Florence Magomero: There are three reasons. In the first place, things are changing because of the radio campaign. Farmers no longer believe that 1-1 planting requires a lot of fertilizer. Also, they understand that “supplying” is not overly labour-intensive. By supplying, I mean replacing seedlings in stations where seeds did not germinate. It looks like the campaign helped to correct these kinds of misconceptions.

Secondly, when there is an increased amount of fertilizer in an area, more people want to grow maize. The government of Malawi’s fertilizer subsidy program has increased the amount of fertilizer. There has been an increase in 1-1 maize planting following farmers’ stories of high yields from 1-1 planting.

Thirdly, the government has intensified its efforts to identify and train lead farmers. These farmers become models for the community. Their practices are trusted by the community and their households are food secure. They help train fellow community members. Here in Mphonde, we have 42 lead farmers. And there were lots of demonstration plots for 1-1 maize planting in various communities.

Clare Likagwa: How would you compare the 1-1 maize planting practice between the campaign and post-campaign seasons?

Florence Magomero: We saw the biggest difference during the last growing season. Out of 10 fields we visited, we found seven or eight doing the 1-1 planting and only two following the traditional practice of three plants per station. During the 2009-10 season, we had more than 2500 farm families practicing 1-1 maize planting on more than 260 hectares. But last season, the number of farming families more than doubled, and the number of hectares rose to more than 2000 hectares!

Farmers’ attitudes are changing, too. They used to say they couldn’t practice 1-1 maize planting because it is fertilizer-intensive. But now the majority of them have changed their minds. They say that if you don’t have enough fertilizer to do your entire field with 1-1 planting, it is better to plant part of your field with 1-1 planting than to plant your entire field in the traditional way. Farmers are paying attention simply to what works in their fields rather than listening to rumours about the fertilizer-intensity of 1-1 planting.

Clare Likagwa: What supports are available to assist in the promotion of 1-1 maize planting in this area?

Florence Magomero: There are quite a number of support services. We have a 1-1 maize planting variety trial that involves a lot of farmers. In addition, there are lead farmers who are assisting in promoting 1-1 maize planting. In the extension planning area, each subdivision now has an extension worker, so all farmers will be reached or will be able to access the extension officer regarding their farming. All this suggests that this growing season we can expect a further increase in adoption of 1-1 maize planting as compared to last season.

Also, the Total LandCare organization that works with us has registered more farmers to practice conservation farming. This incorporates 1-1 maize planting.

Bring up music for five seconds, then fade and hold under host

Host 1: Today, you have heard about Nkhotakota Community Radio's Participatory Radio Campaign on 1-1 maize planting. We have heard from the producer of the program, and we have heard from local farmers and an extension officer.

Host 2: The campaign was successful in getting local farmers to adopt 1-1 maize planting. More and more farmers in the area are adopting 1-1 maize planting, thanks to the PRC broadcast by the radio station, and the support of other organizations.

Host 1: Thanks for listening to our program today. Bye for now.

Host 2: Bye.

Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Vijay Cuddeford, managing editor, Farm Radio International

Reviewed by: Rex Chapota, Executive Director, Farm Radio Malawi

Information sources

Interview with Victor Asumani, producer, Nkhotakota Community Radio, July 22, 2011.

Interviews with Magret Kamanga, Abasi Abibo, and Florence Magomero, conducted by Clare Likagwa of Farm Radio Malawi, September, 2011.

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Improved Market Information Services programs increase farmers' income and knowledge, part one

Notes to broadcaster

Farmers work hard to produce a good crop. After all their work, buyers sometimes come to their farms, or meet them at the market, and pay farmers far less than they need to survive.

What can farmers do about this situation? How can they find out which crops will give them the best price? There are a few responses to that question. One is: listen to Marketing Information Services (MIS) programs on a local radio station. MIS programs tell farmers the current prices in the markets, so that they can start the bargaining process equipped with up-to-date knowledge on prices and market conditions. Thus equipped, farmers may decide to take their produce to the local market. Or they may go to a nearby market that offers better prices. But these options are only possible if the local radio station offers an MIS program. Unfortunately, that's a big "if."

From 2007 to 2010, Farm Radio International conducted a project called the African Farm Radio Research Initiative, or AFRRI for short. The project was strongly participatory, in part because it asked farmers to identify those issues which were most important to them. Many farming practices became the focus of a Participatory Radio Campaign, or PRC. As well as farming topics, farmers indicated that they were very interested in Marketing Information Services (MIS). In response, AFRRI worked with five radio stations in four countries to broadcast enhanced MIS. This script reports on those programs.

This script talks about the creative and effective MIS programs that were broadcast as part of AFRRI. These programs go far beyond simply reading out market prices on the air. They educate farmers on how to plan for the coming year; they alert farmers to price trends for different crops, and they tell farmers which commodities are "hot" and which are not. On some programs, farmers can phone in and talk on-air to broadcasters, and ask questions of extension workers. On other programs, broadcasters help connect buyers and sellers.

This is the first part of a two-part series on MIS. This script talks about MIS programs in Mali and Ghana. Part two talks about programs in Uganda and Tanzania and makes some observations about the best ways to broadcast MIS programs.

Host 1: Hello, listeners. Today is the first part of a two-part program on Market Information Services broadcast on the radio. Market Information Services, or MIS, gather, distribute and sometimes analyze information on market prices and other market information. This kind of information is very valuable to crop farmers and livestock keepers, and also to traders,

processors and everyone else involved in handling farm products. With new technologies such as mobile phones now widely available, MIS programs can even more effectively help farmers to increase their income and improve their food security.

Host 2: That's right. (*Pause*) Farm Radio International is a Canadian NGO that works with African rural broadcasters. Between 2007 and 2010, the organization conducted a project called the African Farm Radio Research Initiative, or AFRRRI for short. Early research for the project found that farmers wanted to know about farming practices that would increase their food security. But they were also thirsty for knowledge on how to market their farm products more effectively. So AFRRRI helped radio stations to operate MIS radio campaigns in four AFRRRI countries. In these four countries, five radio stations broadcast MIS programs targeted at small-scale farmers.

This program reports on MIS campaigns broadcast by stations in Mali, Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania. In part one of the program, we'll talk about campaigns in Mali and Ghana. In part two, we'll talk about Uganda and Tanzania.

Host 1: Let's start with Mali. Research in Mali showed that farmers were interested in learning how to earn a better income from selling their livestock in markets. This income would help them expand their production of livestock and grains.

Host 2: Radio Fanaka broadcasts from the town of Fana in southern Mali. The station broadcast an MIS program entitled *Aw Ni Sugu*, which means "Thank you for being at the market." The program was aired from March to June 2010, and was produced and hosted by broadcaster Fatogoma Sanogo.

Host 1: Mr. Sanogo visited nearby markets on Wednesdays and Sundays. He interviewed traders and farmers about the prices of the products they were selling, and the benefits and challenges of marketing. He recorded these interviews for broadcast, using market sounds as background to convey the energy and atmosphere of the market. Besides these live interviews, the program used a variety of radio formats to engage farmers, including call-outs, call-ins, and in-studio interviews.

Prices were given for a wide variety of crops and animals, but the program concentrated on cereals, poultry and other small livestock. After the broadcast, the host took phone calls and SMS messages from listeners with specific questions, such as prices or the specific market stalls he visited.

Host 2: Before the MIS campaign, there was very little discussion of markets and prices on the radio in Mali. Now, says Mr. Sanogo, farmers discuss prices and market challenges with other farmers on-air.

The host recalls a highlight of the program: he travelled to the nearby village of Dien to interview Tarafa Fomba, a local farmer and vaccinator of chickens. Fomba explained that he helps farmers get more money for their chickens by vaccinating them. He told the audience that farmers can increase the market price of their chickens by having them vaccinated. After his

service was advertised on the program, Tarafa Fomba became very busy and, as a result, expanded his business.

Host 1: Here's another success story. Mariam Traore is one of 60 local women who grow salad vegetables. Before the MIS campaign, she had found it difficult to earn a decent income. Although her husband and children enjoyed the fruits of her labour, she wanted to earn more by selling her good quality vegetables at the market. But the costs of travelling to the market were high, as were the taxes on selling goods at the market.

Radio Fanaka's MIS program interviewed Madame Traore on her farm. The host described her produce over the radio. He even sampled her produce on-air, describing the taste, quality and texture. Farmers called into the show, asking where they could buy the produce, and wanting Madame Traore's contact information. People began travelling to her farm to buy salad vegetables.

Mariam Traore now earns up to 1500 CFA (US\$3.20) per week, double her previous income of 500-750 CFA (\$1.05-\$1.60). She is well-known around Wolodo for the very good quality of her salad vegetables. She now earns enough at her farm gate to travel to the market to sell her produce. She and the other women farmers in her village split the costs of travel and taxes, and travel to the market together. The story of Mariam Traore and her women's group shows how an MIS program can increase income by using creative ways to connect sellers to buyers.

Host 2: AFRRI and Radio Fana evaluated the MIS program after the completion of the campaign. A survey showed that 68% of the people in communities that could hear the programs and received additional extension advice had listened to the programs. In those communities which could listen to the program but did not receive extension advice, 41% of farmers had listened to the MIS program. So the MIS program was quite well-known in Radio Fanaka's listening area. It was estimated that the program had 114,000 listeners. Of those that listened, 95% of community members found the information on the MIS program "always useful." It also appeared that the radio was broadcasting information that farmers wanted to hear. More than four of five survey respondents said that they were most interested in hearing local market prices on the area. A very similar percentage said that they actually heard local prices on the program.

Fatogoma Sanogo continues to produce and broadcast an MIS program on Radio Fana. However, with the end of AFRRI, his capacity to travel to markets outside of Fana has diminished.

Host 1: Let's take a short break. When we return, we'll move on to talk about MIS in Ghana.

Short musical break

Host 1: Welcome back. Before the MIS campaign started in Ghana, farmers were struggling with the cost of transporting their goods to market, and with the dominant role of "market queens" and other intermediaries in the marketplace. The new MIS campaign addressed these issues directly.

Host 2: Two stations broadcast MIS campaigns in Ghana: Radio Ada and Volta Star. At Radio Ada, radio staff collected prices and described market conditions at four different markets. Volta

Star had two separate programs, one in the Akan language and another in Ewe. The host of the Akan program interviewed traders and farmers at the main market, and used volunteers to collect prices from four other markets. The host of the Ewe version collected information from markets in five communities and interviewed farmers on their marketing challenges.

Host 1: Radio Ada's program targeted crops and livestock, plus fish and farming inputs. The program broadcast the prices of major local crops. Some segments focused on the conflict between farmers and middle-women or middle-men. Volta Star's program looked at how to eliminate specific market challenges. These included a measuring system seen as unfair by farmers and a disorganized market arrangement that made it difficult for farmers to sell their produce.

Host 2: Radio Ada's program provided 30 minutes for phone-ins, and received up to 12 calls per program. There were occasional call-outs, and the host also received mobile calls from farmers off-air, asking questions and seeking clarification. Volta Star's program recorded the voices of farmers on their farms and in the market, and aired their concerns. The host sent text messages to more than 50 farmers, alerting them to the start of the program. These farmers then relayed the alert to other farmers in their communities.

Host 2: Staff at Radio Ada believe that the AFRRI MIS program improved on earlier MIS programs because it involved farmers and traders. Prices *were* mentioned in earlier programs, but they were considered not very helpful to farmers. Currently, Radio Ada's MIS program is off the air, and farmers are pressing for its return.

Volta Star staff also think that involving farmers and letting them choose the topics to be discussed made the biggest improvement to their MIS program. One host says that the MIS program improved farmers' access to the market by building consensus between farmers and their buyers, and eliminating suspicion and mistrust, while improving the flow of market information. Volta Star's programs are also off-air now, and farmers have been asking for their return.

Host 1: Ok, let's listen to some Ghanaian farmers. Emelia Awakese grows vegetables and raises poultry in a community within Radio Ada's broadcast area. She sells her produce to middle-women at several markets. Her biggest challenge is low prices caused by a glut of produce at the market. Sometimes the situation is so bad that she brings her produce home and goes to another market the next day. She says the MIS program has been of great help.

Emelia Awakese: I listen to the market information and go to low price areas to purchase farm produce, and then go to high price areas to sell the produce. The earnings from the sale of my own farm produce doubled because of the program. In just one season, I was able to earn 3000 Ghana cedis (*Editor's note: approximately US\$1880*), of which I used part to pay school fees for my daughter and two sons. I also used 700 Ghana cedis to purchase roofing sheets to roof my new house. And I also saved 1,000 Ghana cedis at the bank. I am very excited.

Host 2: Edwin Saho grows *okro* and maize in the community of Hipko, in Volta Star's listening area. He also expressed unhappiness with middle-men. But the MIS program helped him know where to sell his crops, and what varieties of crops were needed.

Edwin Saho: We got to know through the program that the market wanted the *labadi* and *abalavi* varieties of *okro*. These give higher yields, have longer shelf life, and the traders pay more for them ... We therefore changed our seed and now we earn more money ... Even more importantly, the radio has made Hikpo farmers popular. Hikpo is mentioned on-air because we have so much *okro* at a cheaper price and needed traders to come and buy in bulk. Through the program, I made a profit of 300 Ghana cedis, which is three times what I would have earned without the program. The program is so good and must be continued.

Host 2: A system called Farmers' Phone was implemented in Ghana. This allowed farmers to make calls to three different phone numbers. These numbers connected farmers to pre-recorded campaign programs and market prices. They could also leave a message for the program host. More than 4300 calls were made to Farmers' Phone across the country between the end of January and the end of May 2010. Almost half of these were related to market prices. This shows the popularity of services that offer market prices and other marketing information. It also shows the potential of new technologies such as mobile phones to support more effective MIS programming in Ghana.

Host 1: As in Mali, an evaluation was conducted at the end of the campaign. The survey showed that listeners to both Radio Ada and Volta Star appreciated the new type of MIS because it went beyond simply announcing market prices. The programs discussed farmers' issues, engaged with farmers, and dealt with the challenges of transportation and market intermediaries. By listening to discussions of market conditions directly from the markets, farmers could plan their transportation ahead of time. They could decide which market would give them the best prices for their produce, and which markets had the lowest prices for purchasing produce.

Host 1: You've been listening to a program on Marketing Information Services in Mali and Ghana. Next time, we will present part two of our program on MIS programs, and will look at MIS in Uganda and Tanzania. Goodbye for now.

Host 2: Goodbye.

Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Vijay Cuddeford, managing editor, Farm Radio International

Reviewed by: Sheila Huggins-Rao, Manager, Impact Programming, Farm Radio International

Information sources

The information in this script is taken from a report entitled, *Marketing on the Airwaves: Marketing information services (MIS) and radio*. The report is available [in English only for now] at: <http://bit.ly/farmradiomis>

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Improved Market Information Services programs increase farmers' income and knowledge, part two

Notes to broadcaster

Farmers work hard to produce a good crop. But after all that work, buyers come to their farms, or meet farmers at markets, only to have the buyers pay farmers far less than they need to survive. Farmers are often underpaid by market intermediaries – middlemen or middle-women.

So what can farmers do? Do they have any options? Well, there are a few good answers to that question. One is: listen to Marketing Information Services (MIS) on a local radio station. MIS programs tell farmers the current prices in the markets, so that they can start the bargaining process equipped with up-to-date knowledge on prices and market conditions. Thus equipped, they may decide to take their produce to the local market. Or they may go to a nearby market that offers better prices. But these options are only possible if the local radio station offers an MIS program. And unfortunately, that's a big "if."

From 2007 to 2010, Farm Radio International implemented a project called the African Farm Radio Research Initiative, or AFRRRI for short. This project was strongly participatory, in part because it asked farmers to identify those issues which were most important to them. These farming issues then became the focus of a Participatory Radio Campaign, or PRC. As well as farming topics, farmers indicated that they were very interested in marketing information services. In response, AFRRRI worked with five radio stations in four countries to broadcast enhanced marketing information services. This script is a report on those programs.

This script talks about the creative and effective MIS programs that were broadcast as part of AFRRRI. These programs go far beyond simply reading out market prices on air. They educate farmers on how to plan for the coming year; they alert farmers to price trends for different crops, and they tell farmers which commodities are "hot" and which are not. On some programs, farmers can phone in and talk on-air to the broadcasters, and ask questions and get more information. On other programs, broadcasters help connect buyers and sellers.

This is the second part of a two-part series on MIS. This script talks about MIS programs in Uganda and Tanzania and makes some observations about the best ways to broadcast MIS programs. Part one reports on MIS in Mali and Ghana.

Host 1: Welcome to part two of our program on Marketing Information Services. Yesterday, we talked about MIS programs broadcast in Mali and Ghana. Today we will talk about MIS campaigns in Uganda and Tanzania. Then we will talk about some of the lessons learned by conducting these campaigns. (*Short pause*) Let's start with Uganda.

Host 2: There were many MIS programs on the radio in Uganda at the time the AFRRI radio campaign started. But Ugandan farmers wanted more interactive, informative and timely services. They wanted programs that would help them understand the market more broadly and provide a wider range of prices. Stations wanted to provide these services, but found it challenging to provide and fund effective, long-term MIS programming.

Host 1: To address farmers' wishes, Mega FM designed and broadcast an MIS campaign from Gulu, in northern Uganda. Grace Amito was the host of the program. The program gathered prices from local markets and from organizations that collect market information across the country.

Mega FM broadcast a 45-minute MIS program every Monday. The program broadcast prices of the main crops from local and national markets, but also talked about group marketing, adding value to crops, and how to understand and use market information.

Host 2: Farmers were strongly involved in the MIS program. When hosts visited markets, they interviewed farmers and broadcast their discussions. Farmers also called the station to discuss marketing issues on-air with the host and with agricultural experts.

Host 1: The MIS program became one of the most popular shows on Mega FM. This success was partly due to the program's regular and frequent interactions with farmers – on their farms, in the markets and at agricultural shows. Mega FM staff believe that these interactions created bonds of trust and confidence that were stronger than those possible only by providing market prices. Incorporating listener feedback was a big improvement over simply broadcasting prices with little audience interaction. Here's host Grace Amito.

Grace Amito: We previously broadcasted issues that were "assumed" to be the challenges of farmers, and we did not give thought to research. But through AFRRI ... our radio has gained a lot of learning.

Host 1: Here's a farmer success story. Nasur Odur grows beans, maize, *simsim* and groundnuts in Oyam District. His key marketing challenge is the poor road system, which results in very high transport costs. The lack of useful marketing information is also a worry, as are changing market prices.

Mr. Odur's main challenge of low prices was addressed by regularly listening to MIS programs that broadcast prices at district and national markets. He recalls that Mega FM's earlier MIS program did broadcast prices, but that he was not keen to follow because he did not know the meaning of the prices.

Nasur Odur: When Mega FM explained the use of the price announcements and the benefit that farmers could receive from using these prices, I started following. And when I discovered that they could match with some prices in the markets, I began using the radio price announcements to help me know the selling price.

Host 1: With his new knowledge of prices, Mr. Odur faced some challenges with middle-men. They complained that his price was always high. But Mr. Odur felt that having a price in mind made him comfortable with negotiations.

Nasur Odur: Sometimes they want you to mention a very low price. Then they mention the lowest price. But if you are aware of the current price, you bargain accordingly, because you know where you will stop and you have determined the price below which you cannot sell.

Host 2: Mega FM and the AFRRI team conducted a listener survey after the campaign. The survey showed that 94% of listeners in communities that could hear the program and that received extension support were aware of the program. In communities which could hear the program but received no extension support, 90% of listeners were aware of the program. Almost two-thirds of survey respondents in both types of communities said that Mega FM's program was "always useful." And more than 80% of survey respondents said that Mega FM's MIS program was always relevant to the products they bought and sold.

Host 1: The evaluation concluded that a key to Mega FM's success with the MIS program was the strong involvement of station staff. Grace Amito's commitment to her work shows how radio stations can play an effective role in helping farmers achieve success in the market.

Mega FM's popularity and its decision to work with agricultural businesses attracted sponsors who are now supporting a continuation of the MIS program. The station's approach provides a successful model for other radio stations who want to create ongoing MIS programming.

Host 1: Let's take a short break, then move on to Tanzania.

Short musical break

Host 1: Radio Maria broadcasts from Songea, Tanzania. Lilian Manyuka hosted Radio Maria's twice weekly MIS program, which was a five-minute segment on a program called *Heka Heka Vijijini* (Busy busy in the village). The program was prepared by a reporter at the local market. Information was also collected by reporters at other markets across the country, from a government ministry, and directly from farmers.

Radio Maria's program broadcast market prices for major crops. It also aired other market information, such as the number of chickens available in villages and the contacts of those who wanted to buy local chickens. There was also a focus on promoting marketing groups.

Host 2: Farmers were involved in Radio Maria's MIS program. They were interviewed on-air about their marketing challenges, and there were call-outs before the program to identify farmers

with products to sell. Farmers who wished to be linked to buyers sent their contact information to the station.

Host 1: The program was popular with farmers, particularly the part of the show that announced prices in distant markets. Radio Maria broadcasters felt that the program helped farmers make the link between growing crops or raising livestock and producing for the market. When farmers have accurate and timely information on the location of markets, crop and livestock prices, and how much of a particular crop each market requires, they have more bargaining power with the middle-men who visit their communities.

Host 2: The program succeeded in helping farmers get higher prices for their chickens. Before the program, farmers typically received 3-5,000 Tanzanian shillings (US\$1.75-2.90) per chicken. After the program, the price rose to 6-9,000 Tanzanian shillings (US\$3.50-5.20).

Host 1: Here's a farmer success story. Happytime Shilingi raises local chickens, grows rice and maize, and sells his produce at the local village market once a week. Before Radio Maria's MIS campaign, his main marketing challenges were not knowing which markets were best for him, the low prices offered by middle-men, and his inability to sell all 30 of his chickens.

Mr. Shilingi listened to program broadcasts and was interviewed on the program. When he heard prices from different markets, he stopped selling his products at a low price, and felt better equipped to bargain with middle-men. He and his neighbours organized a group and pooled their chickens, inspired by the MIS program. After Radio Maria broadcast the group's contact information, buyers came from distant cities such as Dar es Salaam, Morogoro and Iringa to buy chickens at very good prices.

Host 2: Radio Maria and AFRRI distributed a survey to listeners after the campaign was completed. The survey showed that 62% of listeners found the MIS program to be very useful at providing information on the products that the farmers were selling. Two-thirds or 67% of survey respondents found the programs useful for providing information about the produce they were buying.

Radio Maria's program challenged farmers to produce for the market and helped them re-orient their production towards the market, rather than towards buyers and middle-men. When farmers heard about the high demand for chickens in other markets, they improved the quality of their chickens to meet the demand. The outcome was that farmers earned more income and linked with other farmers to sell higher quantities.

The demand for MIS programming from Radio Maria's listeners led to the development of a new program. *Kutoka Sukoni* is an MIS program which is currently broadcast on Radio Maria, which reports from various markets across the country.

Host 1: That concludes our report on AFRRI Marketing Information Services programs in four countries. They developed a broader approach to farmers' marketing challenges, an approach that went beyond simply announcing market prices. Using new technologies such as cell phones helped farmers to participate in discussions about changes in prices, how to increase their yields,

how to solve transportation challenges, and how to deal with middlemen. The hosts provided additional information to farmers when requested, and linked them to potential buyers.

Radio stations that broadcast improved MIS programming through Farm Radio International reported that their market price programs became more popular. When AFRRRI ended, many of the radio stations continued to provide similar programming because of listener demand.

Stay tuned. We will be back in a minute to wrap up and talk about what we learned from these programs.

Short musical break

Host 1: So, what did we learn from these MIS programs? What lessons should a radio station keep in mind if it wants to create effective MIS programs?

Host 2: We are going to list six important lessons from the MIS programs. Here's the first: because existing MIS programming is limited and under-financed and because radio stations cannot manage it alone, partnerships with different kinds of organizations are needed. These partnerships will help stations provide regular, accurate and well-documented information to farmers.

Host 1: So establishing partnerships is the first important lesson! The second lesson is strongly related to the first. Radio stations are not equipped to broadcast ongoing MIS programs without external funding or carefully planned revenue. Stations must develop creative ways to find funding for their MIS programs.

Host 2: External funding or carefully planned revenue! That is the second important lesson. Here's the third lesson: remember that farmers want more from MIS programs than just prices. They want to know all possible ways to increase their income from the crops they grow and the livestock they raise. They want to understand how markets work, and how to decide which crops to grow. The better they understand the market, the more success they will have.

Host 1: So the third lesson is that farmers want and need more than just market prices. The fourth lesson is related to the third: farmers are always looking for better ways to sell their products. They need information on better marketing strategies, for example how to form farmer groups, how to get better prices at the farm gate, and other successful approaches.

Host 2: So the fourth lesson is that MIS programs should give farmers information on better marketing strategies. Here's a fifth lesson: remember that women will benefit from greater access to market information. But for women to benefit, a station must target MIS programming on issues that affect women specifically, such as the production of shea butter in West Africa, or specific roles that women play in crop production and processing. If MIS programs target men only, women's marketing opportunities will continue to be limited. This has a negative effect on all families.

Host 1: So the fifth lesson is: design MIS programming that speaks to women's specific interests

and roles. Now here's the sixth and final lesson. Interactive technology systems such as Farmer's Fone are a popular and effective way to share market prices. Farmers used the service regularly, even when they had to pay for the call. But remember that stations will need training and support in order to effectively use these kinds of services.

Host 2: That concludes our report on AFRRI's four Marketing Information Services programs. Thanks for listening and goodbye for today.

Host 1: Goodbye.

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Contributed by: Vijay Cuddeford, managing editor, Farm Radio International

Reviewed by: Sheila Huggins-Rao, Manager, Impact Programming, Farm Radio International

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Issue Pack: Agricultural co-operatives

1. Introduction – two true stories about agricultural co-operatives

Story 1¹: Makuyuni lies on the main road between Arusha and the Serengeti and Ngorongoro National Parks in Tanzania. Streams of tourists pass through the area. But just a few kilometres from the road is a totally different world. Small-scale farmers farm small, arid plots of land. Simple houses are spread along dusty, potholed tracks that wind through the hills. Many people must walk several kilometres to fetch water.

The Swedish Cooperative Centre supports MWIWAMO, a local network of farmers' groups in the area. MWIWAMO works in several ways to increase farmers' incomes. "The majority of our members are actually women," according to field worker Luhekelo Sanga. Members are organized in groups of around a dozen. They receive training and individual advice from field workers. Gender equality is a common focus of their activities. Few women own land themselves. The women do most of the agricultural work, but the men control the resources and determine how they are to be used. MWIWAMO works to identify ways to increase income from the small farming niches that are traditionally identified as women's work, such as growing vegetables.

The women who work with MWIWAMO have also invested in keeping chickens. Now that they know more about feeding, preventing illness and ways to build small henhouses, their operations have grown and their income has increased. Beekeeping and honey production also increase incomes. Large wooden beehives hang in the trees outside Anna Saloni's house. Anna and the other members of the beekeeping group were trained to use more modern beehives to increase honey production. They also learned how to package honey in jars with beautiful labels and how to expand beyond local markets, for example by targeting supermarkets.

Like several other women, Anna Saloni has received help to build an earthen tank to store water. She also uses it to store maize and other crops that need protection from rats and other pests.

Eight members of MWIWAMO have received two months' training as para-veterinarians. "Especially during the rainy period, the animals get sick a lot. I try to help my neighbours as much as I can," says one of the new vets, Zakayo Saitabau.

¹ Adapted from Swedish Cooperative Centre, 2010. *The Toughest Job in the World*. Downloadable at <http://www.sccportal.org/partners/Southern-Africa.aspx?M=News&NewsID=4086&PID=69>

Story 2²:

A healthy crop of tobacco grows in Henry Chikanga Nyasulu's fields, and a huge spread of maize dries in the sun on his homestead. His land includes two beautiful brick houses with corrugated iron sheet roofing. Nyasulu is Treasurer of the Joka Smallholder Farmers' Association in Malawi.

Born in 1966, Mr. Nyasulu dropped out of school early because his father lacked the money for school fees. He worked as a tenant farmer in the early 1990s, and was trained to grow tobacco. Returning home, he used some of his earnings to buy cattle and two goats, began tobacco farming and joined the Msaope Club of Mawiri Group Action Committee. The 1995/1996 growing season was a good one. Mr. Nyasulu earned more money than he ever had in his life – 22,000 Malawi kwacha (about \$US145).

He was happy with his earnings, but the Club had some problems, including the loss of tobacco bales during transport and marketing. So when Mr. Nyasulu first heard on the radio about the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and its activities to help small-scale farmers, he and the other members of the Club decided they could benefit from NASFAM's guidance. In 1999, the Club was accepted and became one of the founding members of the Joka Association.

Following its acceptance into NASFAM, transporters came to the farmers' land to collect the bales, and the Club had its first season without any losses of tobacco. Mr. Nyasulu thought that the 22,000 Malawi kwacha he made when he first joined the Club was a large amount. But the profits from his first season as a Joka member were three times as much!

Mr. Nyasulu was trained by the Joka Association on crop diversification. He decided to spread his income base and increase his food security by growing more cash and food crops, including paprika and maize.

Mr. Nyasulu's standard of living has increased dramatically: "The moment I joined the Association, I knew I had struck gold. Ever since then, all I have made are profits. In this period alone, I have bought five more cows ... Last season I built another house, and because I grew a lot of maize, I have added three more barns." Unlike many in the village, he no longer has to worry about providing food for his family.

This year, Mr. Nyasulu grew three and a half acres of tobacco and expects to make around 80,000 Malawi kwacha net profit (about \$US525). He also grew three acres of soybeans, paprika, maize and 12 acres of cassava. When asked the secret to his success, Mr. Nyasulu spoke very directly: "First and foremost is the fact that I make sure I attend all Association meetings. It is there that I get information on good farming methods. I make sure that I follow the advice given by the Association advisors and implement what I have been taught in Association trainings. Another contributing factor is that I closely supervise my workers and I work with them, because I am the one who attends the trainings and I need to make sure that what my workers are doing is in line with what I have learned."

² Adapted from ACIDI-VOCA. *Joka Smallholder Farmers' Association*.
http://www.acdivoca.org/site/ID/nasfam_nyasulu

He adds, “Over and above this, I owe my success to my wife who has been a constant help from the time I joined the Association – though I must admit that initially I did not want to bring her in the business wholly. However, my attitude changed completely when the Association started the gender program. That is when we were taught the importance of doing farming business with our spouses. Now I see my wife as part of the whole business. Ever since then, she knows how much we have marketed and I consult her on how much we should spend and what to do with the rest of the money.”

2. Background information on agricultural co-operatives

This section gives basic information on agricultural co-operatives. Please consult the resources in section 4 for more information.

Definitions³

The International Co-operative Alliance defines a co-operative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.”

The seven internationally recognized co-operative principles are:

- voluntary and open membership;
- democratic member control;
- member economic participation;
- autonomy and independence;
- provision of education, training and information;
- co-operation among co-operatives; and
- concern for the community.

An *agricultural or farmers’ co-operative* is a group in which farmers pool their resources in certain ways. Most agricultural co-operatives in Africa are *agricultural service co-operatives*, which means that they are owned and operated by members and provide different kinds of services to individual farmer members. There are two main types of agricultural service co-operatives, *supply co-operatives* and *marketing co-operatives*. *Supply co-operatives* provide their members with inputs for agricultural production, including seeds, fertilizers, fuel and machinery services. *Marketing co-operatives* assist their members with processing, packaging, distribution, and marketing of farm products (both crop and livestock). Some co-operatives provide both input services and marketing assistance. In addition, farmers within and outside of co-operatives often rely on *credit co-operatives* to finance both working capital and investments.

The other type of agricultural co-operative, which is much less common in Africa, is an *agricultural production co-operative*, in which production resources such as land and machinery are pooled and members farm jointly.

³ Information in this section from the following websites: <http://www.ica.coop/coop/index.html> ; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agricultural_Cooperatives; <http://www.ica.coop/coop/principles.html>; <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2009/cooperatives/Chambo.pdf>; <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/10129/1/46010040.pdf>

It should also be noted that local agricultural co-operatives often create second tier co-ops to create economies of scale. For example, a group of primary co-operatives might work together to build central storage facilities, get better prices for bulk inputs, market much more effectively, and achieve greater political influence. All this might be achieved through the creation of larger, for example regional, co-operative entities.

Benefits of co-operatives

Agricultural co-ops offer three kinds of benefits⁴ – economic, social and political:

Economic benefits: Agricultural co-ops create opportunities for farmers to increase their income. This can alleviate poverty at the local and national levels. Co-ops can help farmers access farming inputs, storage facilities, credit, and market information, and can improve the marketing of their products. Co-operatives create employment opportunities and allow disadvantaged groups to organize themselves for their economic benefit.

Social benefits: Co-ops provide social benefits by protecting members from risks and addressing important social problems. The profits made by co-operatives can be used to benefit members as they see fit, through democratic decision making, for example by establishing medical clinics and daycare facilities. Other social benefits of co-operatives include:

- improving farmers' living and working conditions;
- providing financial services to help members respond to unexpected problems;
- making production and consumption credit available to small-scale producers;
- offering production, health, funeral and life insurance and protecting buyers from adulteration of commodities; and
- taking social actions such as care for the aged, children and handicapped, and creating employment for socially disadvantaged people.

Political benefits: Co-operatives can play a vital role in public life and civil society. They can express their views on issues that affect their communities' welfare, including environmental conservation, public health care and education. The contribution of co-operatives to civic life is founded on the fact that they provide opportunities for members to participate in democratic decision-making processes. The principles of voluntary and open membership and democratic member control ensure that the co-operative is a school for values such as honesty, transparency, and equity.

3. Production ideas

There are many ways to create effective and entertaining radio programs on agricultural co-operatives. Here are some suggestions:

- ***Write and produce a five-minute drama*** about a farmer who joins an agricultural co-operative to address a specific problem or problems related to marketing products, purchasing

⁴ Information in this section is from International Labour Organization, 2010. *The hope for rural transformation: A rejuvenating cooperative movement in Rwanda*. Co-op Africa Working Paper No. 12.
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/ent/coop/africa/download/wpno12cooperativesinrwanda.pdf>

inputs, storage, farming practices, or other issues. You could contrast his or her positive experience with a farmer facing the same problems who chooses not to join a co-operative and does not receive the benefits of membership.

- **Interview members of a co-operative** about their experiences. These interviews could be conducted in the field or in the studio. You might begin with questions such as:
 - ◆ Why did they join the co-operative? What were the problems they were facing that they hoped to address through joining a co-op?
 - ◆ What benefits does the co-operative provide for them – including economic, social and perhaps even political benefits?
 - ◆ What do they particularly like about membership in the co-operative? What things could work better in the co-operative?
 - ◆ How are they required to participate in the co-operative?
- **Interview an expert on agricultural co-operatives** from the government, from an NGO, or from a farmers' organization. Questions might include:
 - ◆ What kinds of farming or rural problems do co-operatives effectively address?
 - ◆ What advice do you have for farmers who are interested in joining a co-operative?
 - ◆ Do co-operatives have specific benefits for women farmers?
 - ◆ How can co-op members ensure that leaders (and others) conduct the business of the co-operative fairly and avoid corruption?
- **Produce a call-in or text-in program.** Invite an expert on agricultural co-operatives or local members of a co-operative to the studio, and ask them to make a presentation about the co-operative. Then invite callers to call or text questions on issues such as how the co-operative operates, the benefits, the costs, and how to join a co-operative.
- **Produce 4-6 radio spots** on the benefits of co-operatives, or the steps required to create an agricultural co-op. Each spot could start with the same “punchy” lead line and discuss one important element, including:
 - ◆ How co-operatives can increase farmers' incomes;
 - ◆ How co-operatives can reduce the cost of farming inputs;
 - ◆ How co-operatives can increase access to credit;
 - ◆ How to run a co-operative to minimize corruption; or
 - ◆ The seven principles of co-operatives (see above).
- **Host or chair a roundtable discussion** on agricultural co-operatives in your community. Invite various representatives, including progressive farmers, civic and traditional leaders, agricultural entrepreneurs, leaders or members of women's groups, extension workers, and representatives of NGOs. If the discussion lacks excitement or entertainment, you could play “devil's advocate” by pointing out some of the problems that have occurred with individual co-operatives.
- **Interview members of nearby (or distant) communities** that have successfully addressed problems by establishing or joining an agricultural co-op. Follow up with a call-in or text-in program which considers whether this solution would work for farmers in your community.

- **Hold a contest:** Invite listeners to submit poems or songs about agricultural co-ops and offer a prize to the best ones. Broadcast all the good submissions on-air.

4. Further resources on agricultural co-ops

Some of your most useful resources will be members of local agricultural co-operatives. These people, especially long-time members but also new members, can offer insight into how co-ops work, and can refer you to others with interesting perspectives on co-operatives. As well, you can consult the following organizations, radio programs, online/print documents, and videos.

Resource organizations focusing on agricultural co-operatives

1. Agriterra: <http://www.agriterra.org/en> (English), <http://www.agriterra.org/fr> (French)
2. Appel Foundation: <http://www.appelfoundation.org/index.htm> (English)
<http://www.appelfondation.org/fr/any%20mody.htm> (French)
3. Canadian Co-operative Association: <http://www.coopscanada.coop/> (English);
<http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/orphan/Bienvenue-sur-le-site-francais-de-l-ACC> (French)
4. Co-op Works: <http://www.coopworks.org/>
5. Cooperative Alliance of Kenya: <http://www.cak.coop/>
6. Co-operative College of Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya: <http://www.cooperative.ac.ke/>
7. International Co-operative Alliance: <http://www.ica.coop/al-ica/> (English),
<http://www.ica.coop/fr/> (French)
8. International Federation of Agricultural Producers: <http://www.ifap.org/>; Fédération Internationale des Producteurs Agricoles: http://www.ifap.org/accueil/fr/?no_cache=1
9. Le Réseau des Organisations paysannes et Pastorales du Sénégal (RESOPP):
<http://www.resopp-sn.org/>
10. Moshi University College of Co-operative and Business Studies, Moshi, Tanzania:
<http://www.muccobs.ac.tz/>
11. MVIWATA, the National Network of Small-Scale Farmers Groups in Tanzania:
<http://www.mviwata.org/>
12. Réseau des organisations paysannes et des producteurs agricoles de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (ROPPA) : <http://www.roppa.info/spip.php?article99&lang=fr> (French)
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Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Vijay Cuddeford, managing editor, Farm Radio International

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Gender mainstreaming in farmers' co-operative: Groups in Ghana achieve food security for small-scale farmers

Notes to broadcaster

In Ghana, the issue of gender inequality is a challenge to many development organizations that aim to ensure food security and improve lives in rural communities. Even though it is widely accepted that women contribute about 50 per cent of the country's food, the majority of them are excluded from decision-making processes.

It is also well known that when women lack control over resources such as land, they are unable to make decisions and take actions to help improve their family's income.

Without control over family income, for example by growing cash crops, women contribute their time and labour only to maintain subsistence levels, and are more severely affected by poverty than men. Cultural norms and values place a lot of burdens on women, which bar them from activities such as planting crops that cover large areas of land or owning a plantation. This also limits their ability to promote innovative farming practices that would help their families escape perennial hunger.

It is for this reason that the non-governmental organization SEND-Ghana has spent a lot of effort and resources over the years in East Gonja District in the Northern Region of Ghana helping farmers to understand gender equality and its benefits.

SEND-Ghana's livelihood program places gender equality at the centre of its efforts to empower farm families. Its programs assist farmers' efforts to work together to increase their incomes in order to feed their families and provide education to their children. SEND-Ghana's efforts in gender mainstreaming, developing farmers' co-operatives, and creating community credit unions have been funded and supported by the Canadian Co-operative Association.

Traditionally, women's roles in Salaga, the capital of East Gonja District, have been to provide farm labour while at the same time acting as caregivers to the family. It has been considered out of place for a man to help a woman prepare a home meal or wash and feed a baby.

Gender equality means equality at all levels of education and in all areas of work, equal control over resources, and equal representation in public and political life.

Today, the call to eliminate gender disparity in all sectors of life by development works

cannot be over emphasized. Gender advocates say, “We cannot enjoy development without security, we cannot enjoy security without development.” Indeed, security issues in the East Gonja District are very critical. The area has experienced a lot of ethnic conflicts, making it difficult for farmers and their families to enjoy peace in their homes.

This script focuses on the importance of sharing farmers’ knowledge on gender equality so that other farmers can benefit. It is based on a farmers’ co-operative group that was established to fight perennial food shortages in the Eastern Corridor of Northern Ghana, otherwise known as “the food triangle of Ghana.” Farmers in this area traditionally practice shifting cultivation, planting crops such as yams, maize, millet, sorghum, groundnuts, cassava and rice. For the first time, these farmers are learning new techniques in mixed cropping and planting cash crops such as soya beans. The other equally important activity carried out by the farmers’ group is gender sensitization. The Kanlade community farmers’ co-operative group is one of over 200 groups established in the program area by SEND-Ghana in northern Ghana.

The script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Fade up signature tune for 10 seconds then under host

Host: Welcome, dear listener, to your favourite program *Vom Yella*, which means “Life matters” in the Frafra language. Today’s program is about gender mainstreaming in rural farmers’ groups. Gender mainstreaming is usually talked about in government offices or in large organizations but not so much among rural farmers. On the air is your host Lydia Ajono, reaching you from Radio Style. Today we will join a farmers’ co-operative group in Kanlade, in the city of Salaga, in the Northern Region. We will hear about their gender sensitization program and their efforts to diversify their crops. Stay tuned.

Fade up signature tune for two seconds then out

Host: Welcome again. Today we will focus on gender and farming as a way to achieve the national goals of gender equality and women’s empowerment, especially in the Salaga area. Join me now as I talk to Madam Margaret Ajokumah and Mr. Sebewie Lawali. First, we will shed some light on what motivated Madam Ajokumah to join a farmers’ group and share information on gender equality in farmers’ co-operative groups.

Margaret Ajokumah: Thank you. First of all, let me thank SEND-Ghana and the radio station for giving us this opportunity to share our story. There is a saying in our language: “If you see a dog running, there is something that is chasing it, or it is chasing something.” My marriage was almost broken about two years ago, and I had almost run away from this relationship. But I thank the farmers’ co-operative group that saved my marriage. I joined the group with my husband. He attended the initial farmers’ meeting and told me to accompany him to the next meeting. When I

attended the meeting, I realized that it was a condition of the co-operative group for all members to be couples.

Host: What did you learn at the meeting that day?

Margaret Ajokumah: Traditionally, men are in charge of all cash crops, especially yam, which is the main staple food crop for the family. But that day I learned that women could also grow soya beans and process the beans into marketable products such as soya dawadawa spices or soya kebab. I was so happy to hear this that my husband and I quickly registered our names and later paid the fee of five Ghana cedis (*Editor's note: approximately US\$3.30*).

Host: How did you and your husband farm before joining the couples' co-operative group in your community?

Margaret Ajokumah: My husband never helped me with the household chores. But since the regular educational talks at the farmers' co-operative group, he helps in bathing the children and preparing them for school. He also fetches water for the home with his bicycle. He buys clothes for me and the children.

Before the farmers' co-operative group, he treated me like I did not matter. There were always arguments at home because my children and I were always struggling to get our daily meal.

I am now buying and selling food in the Salaga big market. With the money I earn doing that, we repay our loans with the community credit union established by SEND. We also have enough to feed the family and pay the children's school fees.

Host: How many children do you have?

Margaret Ajokumah: We have three children – two boys and one girl. Currently, the first boy is at the Tamale Polytechnic, the other is at the senior high school in Tamale, and the lastborn is still in junior high in Salaga town.

Host: Earlier you talked about the peaceful atmosphere in your home. What is your definition of peace?

Margaret Ajokumah: When I say peace, I mean that there is enough to feed the children, enough to buy them clothes, pay their school fees, provide necessary books, and pay for their health insurance. And there is enough so we can keep aside some money in case of emergencies or to contribute to the needs of my father or my husband's extended family.

Host: Now let us look at the role you play in the couples' farmers' co-operative. You mentioned in our pre-discussion that you have been talking to friends about joining the group. How do you do this?

Margaret Ajokumah: I reach friends in the market when they come to buy things from me, and also at funerals or marriage ceremonies. Apart from that, we organize sensitization meetings once a month to give talks on motherhood, sanitation and other issues.

Host: What are some of the challenges you face in trying to achieve your goals with the co-operative group?

Margaret Ajokumah: We have many farming challenges. But the main ones are the unreliable weather conditions. Sometimes the rains don't come early, or they come too hard and flood the crops.

The other concern is the cost of chemical fertilizers for growing maize and rice, as well as tractor services. Marketing is another challenge. After harvesting, the market for yams and soya beans is especially poor.

Host: What do you think could be done to help reduce or solve these problems?

Margaret Ajokumah: I think we should continue with the education activities the group is doing. Because, despite all these challenges, the couples' co-operative groups are doing much better than those who are not in the groups.

Host: Thank you for sharing your good story.

Margaret Ajokumah: I appreciate it, and I hope you will always come to our community.

Host: In case you've just joined us, you're listening to *Vom Yella*. On today's program, we are discussing the couples' farmers' co-operative model in the Salaga area of the East Gonja district of Northern Ghana. A member of the group named Margaret Ajokumah just told us how she benefited from the program initiated by SEND-Ghana. Joining us to continue the discussion is Sebewie Lawali, the chairman of the group. But first, let's enjoy this traditional music.

Play traditional music for two minutes

Host: Welcome back. Before the break, we heard from Madam Ajokumah. And now, Sebewie Lawali, the chairman of the Kanlade couples' co-operative group, is here to continue our discussion. First, what was the main aim of setting up the Kanlade farmers' co-operative?

Sebewie Lawali: Thank you. Before I go on, I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the role our wives and mothers play in the group, especially Mrs. Ajokumah. She has never relented since she and her husband joined the group two years ago.

The idea of a couples' farmers' co-operative was introduced to support our families and communities to avoid perennial hunger and give quality education to our children.

The Kanlade farmers' co-operative was established about 10 years ago to encourage farmers – and especially men – to appreciate the role their wives play in farming and home management.

The group's values are based on love, trust, unity, transparency and accountability, as well as peaceful co-existence.

Host: How do you relate these values to your activities?

Sebewie Lawali: The first condition for membership is that all members be couples, widows or widowers. To belong to the group, you should be a person who is ready to abide by the rules of the group. That means that you are ready to promote love, unity, and peace in your home and demonstrate that you are not only a husband, but also a friend to your wife and children.

By respecting and adhering to these ground rules, we are gradually achieving some of the objectives we have set up for ourselves in farming and community development.

Host: What are some of the co-operative's achievements?

Sebewie Lawali: There are some you can't easily quantify. For instance, peace. I know that some of my colleagues used to quarrel almost daily with their wives or were not concerned about their children's education. But that has all changed. I can also say that practically all our group members are exhibiting these qualities of love, unity and peace. This is the result of the gender education that is going on in the group meetings all the time.

We have also done away with the traditional farming practice of shifting cultivation and adopted intercropping and crop rotation. This is helping many families because there is such a shortage of land that families cannot afford to let it lie fallow. Even when land is available, it is less fertile than it used to be 20 or 50 years ago.

We have divided the co-operative into smaller groups for our gender education activities. Each smaller group is made up of 18 men and 18 women. One smaller group has 12 men and 12 women. Altogether, we have over 200 members in the larger Kanlade couples' co-operative group.

Host: What other activities do you organize, alongside sustainable farming?

Sebewie Lawali: Apart from crop production, we also have commercial activities. These include petty trading, dressmaking, hairdressing, and food processing. Other income-generating activities include processing shea butter, groundnuts and oil, and producing *dawadawa* (*Editor's note: dawadawa is a cube-shaped snack made from fermented fruit seed paste*). These are some of our strategies to ensure food security in the home and to reduce poverty.

Host: When you look back at where you were personally, what has been the benefit to you and your family?

Sebewie Lawali: The number one benefit from the groups is the gender sensitization. I am empowered today. I can now advise my fellow men on gender issues. I can advise them that gender is not about women alone or about women controlling their husbands, like some men thought. I can testify that I used to leave all the housework to my wife, but that now I share the

work with her. An example is cooking and bathing my children and even washing my wife's clothes. I never did this before the formation of the group. I was raised to understand that cooking is for my wife. For a man to do that, you would not be respected by your colleagues.

But this perception can be changed. And the benefits of understanding gender equality and putting it into practice are enormous, rather than holding beliefs that promote conflict and poverty in the home.

Host: What challenges has the group experienced?

Sebewie Lawali: The challenges in crop production include irregular rainfall, because our farming depends greatly on rainfall. When the rains don't come at the right time, we get low crop yields. Or when they fall early, at the time the crops need no rain, there is too much and it can even cause flooding.

The other challenge is getting tractor services, or transportation to transport the farm produce to the house after harvesting. We also face poor market prices for our produce. We are always being cheated by middlemen traders from big towns and cities.

Apart from these farming challenges, the biggest problem in the community is excessive drinking of alcohol, especially among the youth. This is causing a great deal of tension in families.

Host: What are you doing to solve this problem?

Sebewie Lawali: We are operating some community mobilization and sensitization activities involving the district agriculture office, SEND-Ghana and other civil society groups. These will help us continue to educate our people and the youth on some of these social problems.

We have also appealed to the Ministry of Agriculture through our District Assembly. We have asked the Ministry to support farmers with subsidies for tractor services and fertilizers, and also to encourage irrigated farming in the dry season.

What is working and yielding results are the farmers' couples' co-operatives. We will continue to promote this model until farmers in the whole district adopt it.

So these are some of the measures the group is implementing. But we lack capacity or knowledge. So we are seeking support from partners who might be knowledgeable in these areas or have the resources to support the group.

Host: Thank you so much.

Sebewie Lawali: I thank you for the opportunity.

Fade up signature tune two seconds, then under and out

Host: We learned many things today, especially how couples' co-operative groups have helped many families in Kanlade in the city of Salaga in northern Ghana. We have learned how the group has helped to ensure peace in the family and reduce the perennial food shortages. The couples' understanding of gender equality and their practical demonstration of this in their homes has helped to strengthen relationships and marriages.

I believe you have also learned something today to help your lives. Don't miss the next episode of *Vom Yella* on Radio Style.

Have a blessed day. Till we meet again, bye.

Signature tune for 10 seconds then fade out

Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Lydia Ajono, Community radio producer and volunteer at the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN).

Reviewed by: John Julian, Director, International Communications & Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association; and Andrea Vandette, Program Analyst/Assistant in Canadian Co-operative Association's International Development Unit, and, from November 2010 to April 2011, Gender Program Officer with SEND-Ghana, based in Salaga.

Information sources

Interviews:

Mr. Sebewie Lawali, chairman, the Kanlade farmers' co-operative group, Salaga, Northern Region, Ghana.

Madam Margaret Ajokumah, member and gender peer educator in the Kanlade couples farmers' co-operative group, Salaga, Northern Region, Ghana.

Mr. Eric Atta, SEND-Ghana Co-operative Information Officer in charge of the Salaga District.

Mr. Raymond Avatim, SEND-Ghana program manager in charge of East Gonja District, Northern Region, Ghana.

The entire SEND-Ghana management and staff team, Northern Region, Ghana.

Interviews conducted on April 18, 2011

SEND-Ghana website:

http://www.sendwestafrica.org/west/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=7&Itemid=64

Information on gender and co-operatives on the Canadian Co-operative Association website at <http://www.coopscanada.coop/>

Information on gender on the Eldis website at <https://cms.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender>



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Co-operatives introduce the ‘Trusted friend’ approach to microfinance in northern Ghana: A sure way to fight poverty and hunger

Notes to broadcaster

The town of Kpandai is the capital of Kpandai District in the northeastern corridor of Ghana. The land around Kpandai combines forest vegetation with Sahelian vegetation and savannah grassland.

The main occupation is farming and there are also commercial activities such as yam trading. Crops grown in the area include yams, cassava, plantain, maize, cocoyams, rice, groundnuts, and a variety of beans. Kpandai is known for its high-yielding yam variety called *Laribako* sweet yam.

Kpandai used to be one of the food baskets of Ghana. But the town is fast losing its past glory. Over the years, it has suffered the effects of ethnic conflicts and the harmful impact of changes in the weather. This has often contributed to low crop yields and post-harvest losses.

In 1996, a commercial co-operative program was introduced by the NGO, SEND-Ghana, with funding from the Canadian Co-operative Association. Today, the program has expanded to over 200 communities in the Northern Region of Ghana. Fifteen years of community mobilization and sensitization have resulted in a very strong co-operative known as the Kpandai Co-operative Credit Union (KCCU), which is now offering microfinance services.

The microfinance services use the *Trusted friend* approach to savings and loans. In this script, broadcaster Lydia Ajono talks to some of the Trusted friend co-operative groups. She explores the viability of their commercial activities and shows how the groups have helped members to feed their families and pay for their children’s school fees.

The script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Cue in signature tune, then fade out under voice of presenter

Presenter: Hello and good day to you, our cherished listeners and farmers. It is another day and time to tune in your usual program, *Vom Yella*, on Radio Style (*Editor's note: Vom Yella means "Life matters" in English*). I am your presenter, Lydia Ajono. Today, we continue our series on co-operatives in the Kpandai District of Ghana's Northern Region. We shall be looking at rural commercial co-operative groups and how they are fighting poverty and hunger. This program will focus on women's groups, and especially on microfinance.

Rosemary Sonlari is the group leader of the hairdressers *Trusted friend* co-operative. Mama Dodoi is leader of the women baker's co-operative group and has been trained to encourage and teach gender awareness to children, both at her bakery and at her church. These women will be sharing their stories on the program today. Please stay with us.

Cue in traditional music for two minutes. Fade out.

Presenter: Welcome back. If you have just joined us, you are listening to *Vom Yella*. Madam Rosemary Sonlari and Mama Dodoi are group leaders of women's commercial co-operative groups in Kpandai. They will share their success stories after 15 years of experience. First is Rosemary Sonlari, leader of the women hairdressers' co-operative group. I asked her the reason for organizing the co-operative.

Madam Rosemary Sonlari: In 1996, I was among the first women to attend gender sensitization meetings offered by SEND-Ghana in Kpandai town. Issues raised at the meeting focused on environmental cleanliness and home management. Among the home management topics were teaching our girls and boys to respect each other's roles in the home. At that time, there was a great need for women in Kpandai town to tackle sanitation. Children were always sick with malaria, which thrived in the filth of the town. I took the idea and further discussed it with my hairdresser colleagues. We decided to form this group to start doing education on environmental sanitation.

Presenter: Why did you change from sanitation education to a commercial co-operative?

Rosemary Sonlari: Actually, we did not change. The group is continuing with the sanitation education. But what happened is that the NGO, SEND-Ghana, introduced microfinance to us. We embraced it with all our hearts, because at that time the hairdressing business was just a struggle to survive.

I did not know how to manage my finances, or how to do basic bookkeeping. I did not know how to tell the difference between capital and profit. I never tried to save any of the money I earned. I realized that many of my colleagues were in the same situation. Hence, we created the Trusted friend approach to allow our hairdressers' group to access microfinance loans from SEND-Ghana.

Presenter: How does the Trusted friend approach work?

Rosemary Sonlari: The Trusted friend approach creates a team of five women who receive loans from the bigger co-operative group, which is the rural women's commercial co-operative group. Having a five-woman team ensures that the group will be able to repay the loan and also save some money.

Presenter: How much does each member contribute before she is allowed to take out a loan?

Rosemary Sonlari: We started with monthly membership dues of five Ghana cedis (*Editor's note: about US\$3.30*). The Kpandai Co-operative Credit Union savings and loan scheme allows 17 weeks for a group to get and repay a loan. While making the loan payments, individuals must make deposits in individual savings accounts. This ensures that by the time the loan repayments are completed, the group members have enough savings to act as seed money for another venture or investment. When the scheme started about 15 years ago, the first loans were six cedis per person. Today, each member can get up to 200 cedis (*Editor's note: about US\$125*). So if there are five people in a Trusted friend group, the total amount of loans for the group is up to 1000 Ghana cedis (*Editor's note: about US\$625*).

If one person defaults on their loan, the group members have to repay the loan from their own savings. This is a large amount of money. So the Trusted friend small groups are always working hard to support each other not to default on their loans.

Presenter: How has this microfinance scheme helped you personally and helped your family?

Rosemary Sonlari: Personally, it has helped me to gain knowledge of running a business and of working in a team. At first, I did not know that working in smaller groups to get loans and to save money was far better and easier than doing it alone. In the group, we learn leadership skills. And we learn how to sustain the trust we have cultivated over the years as members, not only in the co-operative group but in our hairdressing businesses.

Personally, I have expanded my business from two to 10 apprentices. I can now buy more hair products from different dealers and pay for them without relying on credit, as I used to do.

Presenter: How about your family? What benefits do they enjoy?

Rosemary Sonlari: I now buy nice clothes for my family, especially my two girls, and of course my husband. I contribute to paying the children's school fees and cooking good food for them. This is all because I earn more income from the business now than before joining the co-operative group. Also, through the SEND-Ghana microfinance education, I have gained knowledge in gender equity and I make efforts to practice it in my home. For instance, my in-laws didn't used to support the idea that my husband help cook for the children or the boys cooking and sweeping. But now they have come to practically benefit from the gender equality skills my husband acquired from the gender training sessions.

Presenter: You may have had some challenges along the way. What are some of these challenges?

Rosemary Sonlari: Yes, one of the main challenges is getting men to participate in some of our community sanitation activities. The other one is that the cost of hair products is ever-increasing, making it difficult to continue to make a profit.

Presenter: Thank you so much. Now let us hear from Mama Dodoi.

Mama Dodoi is 49-year-old baker with three children. She says she learned how to bake bread many years ago, when she worked as a labourer for one of the big bakers in the city. I asked her why she left the job and joined the Kpandai rural women's commercial co-operative.

Mama Dodoi: Actually, I am one of the women who first started the group. I stopped being a labourer and started my own baking. I started baking small round balls of bread, targeting schools and the very poor who could not afford the big loaves.

Presenter: What is the capacity of your business?

Mama Dodoi: Currently, I bake about five to 10 maxi-bags of bread flour a week, which is about eight kilograms of flour. My children, especially my boy, help me do all the baking and distribution. I don't hire other people to work with us. Apart from selling to the general public, I also have special orders.

Presenter: What improvements has the co-operative group brought to you personally?

Mama Dodoi: Oh, if I wanted to list them all, we might not finish today. But I will just give two main examples of the improvements in my life. First is my children's education. I have been able to send all my children to school. They have completed their basic levels and are pursuing higher education in the city. Secondly, through group training activities, I have learned to train other women and educate them on home management. Because of that, I serve in my church in the women's fellowship group. The gender education from the co-operative group has also helped me to train my boy and other male children of my relatives, and today they appreciate gender roles

Presenter: What are the things that are not working well in the co-operative group that you wish you could change?

Mama Dodoi: To me, things are okay. You know, change takes time. Our people always want to see others try and succeed at something before adopting it themselves. But I would like the leaders of the group and SEND-Ghana to sponsor needy children to attend school at the tertiary level. That would help increase the numbers of Kpandai children in university or polytechnic institutions.

Presenter: Thank you. The Trusted friend model used by the Kpandai rural women's commercial co-operative of the Kpandai Cooperative Credit Union is growing from strength to strength. The co-operative groups are involved in many types of rural income-generating activities, ranging from food processing such as shea butter extraction to crafts. Also, the continuous sharing of knowledge on gender equity has empowered the women to be assertive

and further lead their communities in key decision-making processes such as giving equal opportunities to boys and girls.

The power of co-operatives cannot be overemphasized at the Kpandai Co-operative Credit Union Associations. The residents of this fast-growing small town have a good and memorable story to tell the next generation. Join us again at the same time next week for another exciting episode of *Vom Yella*. Till then, bye.

Play signature tune for 10 seconds to end program

Acknowledgements

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Information sources

Interviews:

Rosemary Sonlari, leader of the Kpandai rural women's commercial co-operative group, Kpandai, Northern Region, Ghana.

Mama Dodoi, Founding member of the Kpandai rural women's commercial co-operative group, Kpandai, Northern Region, Ghana.

Mr. Raymond Avatim, SEND-Ghana program, manager in charge of East Gonja district, Northern Ghana.

The entire SEND-Ghana management and staff team, Northern Region, Ghana.

Interviews conducted on April 18, 2011

For further information:

SEND-Ghana website:

http://www.sendwestafrica.org/west/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=7&Itemid=64

Canadian Co-operative Association website: <http://www.coopscanada.coop/>

Eldis gender reports: <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender>



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Dairy farmers reap the benefits of working together in a co-operative society

Notes to broadcaster

Agriculture is the backbone of many African economies. Yet farmers continue to be some of the poorest people on the continent. A close scrutiny reveals that there are many challenges confronting the agriculture sector. Limited access to farming inputs, poor infrastructure, lack of access to markets, and climate change are the biggest challenges to agriculture in Africa.

Farmers have a responsibility to look for creative ways to improve their income and food security. Governments have a responsibility to create a favourable environment for farmers to make good money from their farming businesses.

In Kenya, the combination of farmer enterprise and government effort is evident in the success of co-operative societies. We are seeing that farmers benefit when they pull together in organized ways to solve the challenges they encounter on the farm. The co-operative movement provides an opportunity for farmers to improve their income and food security from their own efforts. The United Nations has named 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. You can find more information at the following website:
<http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>.

This script captures the experiences of people who have been involved in a successful co-operative society in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya.

Here are some suggestions for using this script. You could:

- Host representatives of a successful co-operative society in your country or local area.
- Do a field interview with members of a co-operative society in your area and ask them to talk about their experiences and plans for the future.
- Write a drama of a meeting at a co-operative society.
- Adapt this script by using voice actors to represent the speakers. If you choose this option, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

Signature tune for 10 seconds, then under

Host: Good evening, dear listener. Welcome to your favourite farming program. Today, we explore the role that co-operatives and co-operative development play in improving the livelihoods of farmers in rural areas.

SFX: *Sound of cows for five seconds, then under*

Narrator: In the highlands of Uasin Ngishu district in the Rift Valley Province in Kenya, a quiet revolution is taking place. Two years ago, dairy farmers in the area decided to pool their resources together and start a co-operative society. They named it Kabiyet Dairies. Two years later, farmers are producing more milk and getting more than twice the price for their milk.

SFX: *Sound of people chatting for five seconds then under*

Narrator: It is mid-morning in Kabiyet, a village about 70 kilometres from Eldoret town. There is an air of excitement among the people gathered at the market. To farmers in this area, today is a special day. The local co-operative society is paying farmers for the milk that they have delivered to the co-op throughout the month.

Mrs. Cecilia Jepchumba is one of the many dairy farmers gathered here. She has two cows and delivers 25 litres of milk every day to the co-operative. The money she receives today will go towards buying essentials and paying school fees for her first-born son who is attending Form One in a nearby secondary school.

Yet, such a steady income has not always been the case for Mrs. Jepchumba.

Farmer Jepchumba: If you look around, you will notice that our farms look good. The conditions are ideal for farming. People here are never hungry. But they have been poor. Those with big farms plant wheat and make good money. But the majority of us with small pieces of land plant maize and beans. These crops fetch poor market prices because farmers harvest their crops and sell them immediately. At harvest time, a 90-kilogram bag of maize sells for as little as 400 Kenyan shillings (*Editor's note: approximately \$5 US dollars*). So we earn very little money for our produce.

Narrator: Mrs. Jepchumba was convinced by a neighbour to become a member of the new group that farmers in the village were joining in large numbers.

Farmer Jepchumba: I had only one cow that gave us 10 litres of milk. We sold the milk to vendors, who later sold it in Eldoret town. The income from the milk and our two-acre farm was not enough to cover the needs of our three children. My neighbour told me that the co-operative society would give us an alternative market for our milk. When we delivered milk to the co-operative society, we saw that the prices were good. So we decided to buy another cow. We looked for an improved breed. It was expensive, but we knew we could make more money by selling the milk.

Narrator: That was two years ago. Today, she has two mature cows and a pregnant heifer. For Mrs. Jepchumba and other women in the co-operative, despite the hardships, empowerment has come to their households.

Farmer Jepchumba: In the *Kalenjin* community (*Editor's note: the Kalenjin people live in the Rift Valley area of western Kenya*), cows are considered a man's affair. When I registered as a member, many men said I wouldn't last in the group. But my children encouraged me, and they promised to take good care of our cows so that they can produce more milk. When they have the time, like after school, my boys cut Napier grass for the cows.

The women in this village who are members of the co-operative meet once every month to discuss and share ideas on how to improve our dairy farming.

SFX: *Sound of cows and of a farmer hoeing, five seconds then down and out*

Narrator: Away from the market, Vincent Maritim is busy weeding his Napier grass, the main fodder crop for his four cows. He delivers about 42 litres of milk to the co-operative society daily. He says the co-operative has improved his life.

Farmer Vincent: I earn more money than I used to. I'm able to take care of the needs of my family. It is laughable that two years ago, I would sell a litre of milk for nine Kenyan shillings. What I get now is much more than an average farmer in my village can expect.

In addition, I spend less on transport, both in terms of hard cash and also in terms of the time that I need to bring milk to the central collection point. Imagine 2,000 of us spending at least 30 minutes each every day to deliver milk to the dairy. That is so many hours wasted! Instead, we could be doing things on the farm that increase milk production. The dairy owns a truck that goes round each morning and evening to collect milk from farmers and deliver it to the dairy. I milk my cows and wait for the truck at the road, which luckily passes by my farm. It is easier, cheaper and less bother for us farmers.

Narrator: Are the benefits limited to the money you get and the money you save?

Farmer Vincent: The benefits go beyond money. The co-operative gives me the opportunity to share the experiences of other farmers – to see how they take care of their animals and solve pest and disease problems. I'm talking about real knowledge exchange.

There is also the feeling that we are doing something together as a village, as a community, as the people of Kabiyet. We are stronger when we are together than when we are doing our own things individually.

Narrator: For Vincent and the other members of Kabiyet Co-operative Society who deliver their milk to the Kabiyet Dairies, the future looks bright thanks to their plan to work together.

SFX: *Sound of tractor and noise of milk containers, five seconds then under*

Host: Those are the stories of two successful dairy farmers in Kabiyet. We are privileged to have with us in the studio two other people who are helping to make this success happen: the chairman of Kabiyet Dairies Limited, Mr. Abraham Rugut, and Mr. Eliud Makhoka, a farmer trainer.

Welcome to the studio.

Guests: Thank you.

Host: Let's start with you, Mr. Abraham Rugut. When was the co-operative society started?

Chairman: We started our project in 2008. At that time, half the people in the area were living in poverty. Our business was launched on the 1st of June 2009. On that day, we received a cooler to chill our milk. The cooler was donated by the East Africa Dairy Development project. But on that day we didn't know that we were going to get any milk! Fortunately, we managed to collect more than 1600 litres of milk. We had been talking to farmers since 2008. I must tell you that farmers in our area are known to be very difficult people to deal with! *(Laughter)*

Host: In what ways are the people difficult to deal with?

Chairman: Let me give you some history. The people living in Kabiyet came from Tinderet. These are the people who gave the Europeans a hard time when they were building the Kenya-Uganda Railway from Mombasa to Kisumu near the Ugandan border. *(All laugh)*

But we were prepared; we knew that things were not going to be easy. We talked to them for about four months before they agreed to join the co-operative. And, because we were open in our discussions, the farmers were very positive about the venture. That is why we were able to collect more than 1600 litres of milk on the first day of business. And the quantities rose. On the second day we collected better than 2200 litres and on the third day, we hit the 3000-litre mark. This was very impressive!

This trend continued and by December 2009, we were collecting about 25,000 litres of milk per day. At the moment, the dairy collects 36,000 litres of milk every day.

Host: How many members does the co-operative society have?

Chairman: We have a membership of about 4,200 farmers. Three-quarters of them have paid the membership share price of 5,000 Kenyan shillings *(Editor's note: about 60 US dollars)*. The rest have paid in part and are continuing with their payments.

Host: You have said that you started by collecting about 1600 litres of milk per day, and within a short time, this rose to more than 30,000. What accounts for this dramatic increase?

Chairman: First of all, we have worked very hard to teach farmers good methods of producing milk, in order to have more milk and higher quality milk.

Secondly, we have done several things that have motivated the farmers to join the co-operative in large numbers. Farmers in the co-operative pay 800 Kenyan shillings for artificial insemination services instead of the usual rate of 2,500 (*Editor's note: 800 Kenyan shillings is about 10 US dollars and 2500 Kenyan shillings is about 30 US dollars*). We also have an agro-vet shop where farmers buy inputs at slightly lower prices than the prevailing market rates. They can also get the inputs on credit. The input charges are deducted from the payment the farmer gets at the end of the month for milk that is delivered to the co-operative society.

The third thing that we have done as an incentive for our farmers is to open a village bank where our farmers can deposit, save and withdraw their cash. Farmers are saved the trouble of travelling to Eldoret or Kapsabet for banking services. These towns are about 70 kilometres away, so this is a big saving in time and money.

Host: What benefits have local farmers realized from this dairy co-operative?

Chairman: Look at the volume of milk: 36,000 litres of milk every day represents a lot of money. This money has changed people's lives. It is safe to say that the number of people living in poverty has been reduced. Before we started this project, milk in Kabiyet was selling at eight to 10 Kenyan shillings per litre. After the project started, the price rose gradually to 24 shillings per litre. This is a very big improvement to the incomes of farmers in this area.

When farmers join together in a group, they can ask for better prices because they have bigger quantities. For example, if I had 20 litres of milk, I could only sell at the local market. If I couldn't sell to the local market, then I would sell to middlemen. But with a co-operative like ours, we can bypass all the exploitation by middlemen. Kabiyet Dairies acts like an agency. We are able to negotiate and sell directly to Kenya Co-operative Creameries, the biggest milk processor in the country.

Host: What lessons have you learned in the course of developing this farmers' co-operative?

Chairman: We focused on bringing together farmers with a common interest. However, this alone cannot guarantee success. Kabiyet Dairies has made impressive strides in using better technologies to improve the status of our farmers. I want to give you two examples. First, our farmers are improving the quality of their herds through artificial insemination. That means they are moving away from the low-yielding traditional breeds and enjoying increased milk production. The other is the installation of a milk cooler, through a partnership with the East Africa Dairy Development project. We could not handle such a large volume of milk without a cooler. This is how technology is contributing to the success of the co-operative society.

Host: Mr. Eliud Makhoka is Director of Lengo Agriculture and Demonstration Centre, based in Eldoret. He was contracted by the Kenya Dairy Board to help the Kabiyet farmers improve the quality of their fodder crops. Mr. Makhoka, what should farmers think about if they want to start and manage a profitable co-operative society?

Mr. Makhoka: It is said that two people cannot walk together unless they are in agreement. This is the most important principle of the co-operative movement: that the people who come together

to form a co-operative should have a common interest. This might be the only thing that will hold them together when there is conflict, or when the group experiences hard times. Members must know exactly why the co-operative was formed and what contributions are expected of them.

Let me add that corruption is one of the biggest killers of co-operative societies. Examples of corruption include cases when co-operative leaders spend farmers' funds on expenses that have not been approved, or purchases that reward scheming leaders and bring no returns to members. Farmers need to make sure that the co-operative has prudent financial planning and forward-looking leadership.

Host: What is the future of the co-operative movement in Kenya?

Mr. Makhoka: Co-operative societies will be very relevant and important for small-scale farmers in Kenya and across Africa. Small-scale farmers in Africa face many challenges that can only be overcome through group efforts. For example, dairy farmers in a group can pull together resources and purchase a feed-mixing machine. They can purchase and share different kinds of equipment.

At the same time, co-operative societies improve the strength and resilience of communities in rural areas. Development organizations will tell you that it is much easier to implement a health or education project in an area where there is a successful co-operative society. Co-operatives help people have a better understanding of the common good. Therefore, people are more willing to take part in initiatives that benefit the wider community, rather than just thinking of their own families.

Host: One last question to all of you: what needs to be done to ensure that the benefits you have talked about are spread to farmers all across the country?

Chairman: I have two concerns: one is to increase the viability of existing farmers' groups and wherever possible nurture them and transform them into full co-operative societies. This will help spread the benefits that come from farmers working together in an organized manner. Also, it is true that many farmers lack planning, management and financial skills. Co-operatives can help address this by offering farmers opportunities to acquire these skills.

Host: Mr. Makhoka, let me put your question differently: what needs to be done to ensure that the co-operative movement moves to the next level?

Mr. Makhoka: We have to be creative in managing co-operative societies. Sometimes, the amount of money that is needed to purchase inputs means that farmers have little money in their pockets. Adding value to raw agricultural crops is one way to address this lack of cash. Farmers earn more if their co-operative societies are able to sell value-added products directly to the market.

Let me end by saying that, while a lot of effort has gone into the establishment of new co-operatives, we also have to look at ways to further develop new markets and the infrastructure

needed to reach these markets. So, on the one hand, co-operatives have to work on adding value to their products and investing in marketing, even if it means joining hands with other co-operatives with common interests. On the other hand, the government should invest more on infrastructure such as roads, railways and information technologies to enable farmers to reach these markets.

Host: Dear listeners, that concludes our discussion for today on how co-operatives can help boost farmer incomes. If you want to start a farmers' group, joint marketing group or co-operative society, talk to the agricultural or livestock extension officer in your area, or visit the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing offices in your district.

Until next week same time, bye for now.

Signature tune up, hold and out

Acknowledgements

Contributed by: John Cheburet, The Organic Farmer, Nairobi.

Reviewed by: John Julian, Director, International Communications & Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association.

Information sources

Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing, Kenya: <http://www.cooperative.go.ke>

Interviews with:

Mr. Abraham Rugut, Chairman, Kabiyet Dairies

Mr. Eliud Makokha, Director, Lengo Agricultural and Demonstration Centre

Mrs. Cecilia Jepchumba, farmer

Mr. Vincent Maritim, farmer

Interviews were conducted on 25th February 2011.



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Membership in farmers' organizations brings farmers economic, social and political benefits

Notes to broadcaster

“One finger alone cannot pick up flour,” as the proverb says. In other words, “United we will win.” Inspired by this proverb, small-scale farmers in Burkina Faso have been organizing to improve their farming production and their lives for over three decades. Today, you will rarely find a village without a producers’ group, either male or female. Over time, farmers realized that only a group allows them to be strong and speak out with some credibility to their technical and financial partners in development. So, they made the decision to organize themselves into farming groups by crop or commodity sector, for example, rice farmers, cotton farmers, etc. Today, partnerships, co-operatives, federations, and confederations abound in the rural landscape of Burkina Faso.

Their objectives are noble: to contribute to the well-being of their members, to help increase farm production, to get good prices for farm products, to ease members’ access to microcredit, and to improve technical farming skills.

Boudry is the principal town of a department in the province of Ganzourgou. It is about a hundred kilometres from Ouagadougou, the capital, and includes 72 villages. In this department in 2005, a number of groups united to create the *Union Départementale des Producteurs Agricoles de Boudry*, or UDPA-B. The members of this group are small-scale farmers. They grow cereals, rice and cotton. In addition, within their group, they are gaining the knowledge and skills that will allow them not only to improve their lives, but also to assume responsibilities they didn't believe they could manage.

This script shows how being part of a co-operative or group can allow women to gain new confidence, and also shows how involvement in the democratic governance of a co-operative can be a training ground for participation at other levels of governance.

The script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

Host: Small-scale farmers in Burkina Faso have been organizing to improve their farm production and their life for more than three decades. “A single finger cannot pick up any flour,”

says the proverb. Today, partnerships, federations and confederations are increasingly common in rural areas of the nation.

The *Union Départementale des Producteurs Agricoles de Boudry*, or UDPA-B, is one of these farmers' organizations. Our reporter, Adama Zongo, met with and interviewed two members of UDPA-B.

Prosper is a member of the farm producers' group in Yaïka, a village located in the Boudry department of Burkina Faso, in the centre of the country. The forty years of his life do not show on his face, which expresses a certain self-confidence. He is married and the father of two young girls and three boys. His group joined UDPA-B five years ago.

Prosper: We now know that the popular proverb that says: "United we will win," really makes sense. Before we joined UDPA-B, our group was unable to benefit from the support that other groups in that organization enjoyed. Indeed, members in those groups received seeds, fertilizers and small loans to support their farming activities. We could not remain indifferent to that situation. So we decided to join UDPA-B in order to benefit from the advantages it offers to its members.

Host: Today, the UDPA-B incorporates seventy groups, of which twenty are women's groups. The organization represents about two thousand male and female producers. The people we met in two villages of Boudry seem satisfied with the actions that UDPA-B has taken on their behalf. Elisabeth is a young woman from the Boéna group, a founding member of the UDPA-B. Here is what she had to say:

Elisabeth: (*In an excited and eager voice*) It is thanks to the UDPA-B and to my group that I am granting you this interview. You know that it is difficult for a woman to speak out. And it's even worse to speak into a mic! But the group and UDPA-B have transformed me so that today, I have confidence when I speak. I'm not afraid anymore.

Host: Elisabeth can't wait to share her experience in UDPA-B with us.

Elisabeth: (*Excited and eager*) I can't tell you all the good that the group did for us, through the UDPA-B. For instance, every year I buy school supplies for my daughter. She's been going to school for three years. I hope that she can study for a long time, so she can have some prestigious position in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital city. I also contribute to buying medication when my children or my husband or I get sick. Today, I have a wardrobe, and it is with a sense of serenity that I go to wedding and baptism ceremonies, and to information meetings. The different financial contributions that I must make are no nightmare anymore for me. I'm not saying that I'm rich, but I don't complain too much. I am thankful to God.

Host: As you heard, Elisabeth is happy even if she is not rich. Indeed, let's recall this proverb: "Money cannot buy happiness." Elisabeth is a hard-working woman. She earns her living by the sweat of her brow.

Elisabeth: I obtained a plot of land in a reclaimed swamp that is divided into lots. It is twenty metres long by ten metres wide. On this land, I grow onions during the dry season and rice during the winter. This allows me to earn money and to meet a few needs. Thanks to the UDPA-B, I obtained a small loan from the co-operative savings and credit bank. With that money, I bought sorghum that I germinate for a few days, then sell to women who make *dolo* (*Editor's note: millet beer*). This allows me to make some profit. So, all in all, I'm able to make a bit of money when the season and the prices are good.

Host: Let's get back to Prosper, who has only good things to say about his group and about UDPA-B. Prosper has been trained as a producer of black-eyed pea seeds. He credits UDPA-B and his group for his success.

Prosper: UDPA-B organized trainings for the members of the different groups. For example, I became a producer of black-eyed pea seeds. Other producers became facilitators who hold information and awareness sessions about violence towards women, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, and the fight against female genital mutilation. As for me, I work on raising awareness about the adoption of improved seeds. We are very much exposed to climate unpredictability around here. We are not sure of the seasons' cycle anymore. This is one big reason why UDPA-B helps its members get inputs at reasonable rates.

Host: As well as improving the economic and social situation of its members, UDPA-B also helps them become more responsible in their lives. Prosper is proud of the audience he enjoys today in his region. He tells us more.

Prosper: Thanks to UDPA-B, I have an audience when it comes to talking about black-eyed pea seeds. People listen to me when I speak and I feel that I have a responsibility. Some members represent UDPA-B during meetings in the capital. Some of them made a lot of friends and became famous while chairing sessions. Others feel like they have grown wings, and are seeking to win the next municipal elections. All this has been made possible thanks to the groups, with the support and drive of UDPA-B. I don't know what would have happened to us without these organizations. I invite each and every one of us to hold each other's hands so we can accompany each other in our quest for a better life.

Host: We have listened to Elisabeth and Prosper, members of two groups that are part of the *Union départementale des producteurs agricoles de Boudry*, or UDPA-B. We have the feeling, based on their testimonies, that we have met very satisfied persons. We wish a lot of courage to the organizations that work tirelessly for the economic, social and political promotion of rural people.

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Reviewed by: John Julian, Director, International Communications & Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association.

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- The representatives of the Yaïka and Boéna groups, members of the *Union*.
- The representatives of the UDPA-B

Information sources

Interviews with:

- Simon Pierre Nana, general secretary of the Union départementale des producteurs agricoles de Boudry
- Mrs. Elisabeth Kaboré, member of the women's group of Boéna
- Prosper Congo, member of the farm producers' group of Yaïka

The interviews were conducted on July 2 and July 3, 2011.

Further information

Quel rôle pour les organisations paysannes du Faso? Un entretien avec Bassiaka Dao, président de la Confédération paysanne du Faso (CPF). *Sos Faim*, #99, p. 19-21, Février/Mars 2011.

http://www.sosfaim.be/pdf/publications/defis_sud/99/complet.pdf



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Rice co-operatives bring prosperity to Benin

Notes to broadcaster

The story of farm co-operatives in Benin is very rich. From the colonial period (1910-1960) to the era that followed independence (1960-1974), the revolutionary years (1975-1989), and the democratic era, several farm co-operative movements were born. Among these, the Rice Farmers Coalition Council of Benin (CCR-B in French) was created very recently.

Born in 2006, the CCR-B received attention very quickly with its vision of being a dynamic and first-choice organization in the rice sector at the national scale. In line with that vision, the organization's mandate is to:

- Represent rice producers in Benin in all acts of civil, administrative and political life relative to farming in Benin;
- Maintain and defend, with no exception, the interest of rice farmers in Benin and in all places; and
- Promote professionalization of rice producers and coordinate any actions in the context of rice production in Benin.

Today, the CCR-B incorporates six regional unions of rice farmers, about fifty community associations of rice producers, and hundreds of village groups of rice producers.

This radio script introduces you to the co-operative spirit within the Regional Union of Rice Farmers of the Ouémé and Plateau departments (URIZOP), which is a member of the CCR-B. The objective of this script is to show the importance and the need for a well-organized farm co-operative.

The script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

Characters:

Host of the show: Félix Houinsou

Guests:

- Emile Houansou, rice farmer in Dangbo
- Albert Azon Gnadja, rice farmer in Adjohoun

- Jeanne Ahouangnimon, rice farmer in Dangbo

Signature tune

Host: Dear listeners and friends of Radio Immaculée Conception in Cotonou, Benin, hello. Welcome to your favourite show dedicated to agriculture. During today's show, we will tell you about the importance and the need for farmers to get organized in farming co-operatives. We have three guests in the studio. They are Mr. Emile Houansou, Mr. Albert Azon Gnadjia, and Mrs. Jeanne Ahouangnimon. They are all rice farmers and members of the Regional Union of Rice Farmers of the Ouémé and Plateau departments, also called URIZOP. They're going to tell us about their experience with co-operative life.

Dear guests, hello and thanks for responding to our invitation.

Guests: *(Together)* Hello.

Host: I'll introduce you to our listeners. Mr. Emile Houansou is right in front of me. He's a rice farmer and the president of URIZOP. On my right is Mr. Albert Azon Gnadjia, and on my left is Mrs. Jeanne Ahouangnimon.

I'll address my first question to you, Mr. Emile Houansou. Tell us the reasons that motivated you to form a farmers' co-operative.

Emile Houansou: United we'll win, as they often say. So our first objective was to get together to become stronger in order to defend our interests as rice farmers, and to organize the rice industry in the Ouémé and the Plateau departments.

We formed a co-operative to help each other understand and manage issues such as labour, soil, finances, management and all the other things which are the foundation of rice production. We also needed good skills to better manage our post-harvest activities and the marketing of our rice.

You know that banks and microfinance institutions do not normally grant credit to farmers. Because the weather is unpredictable, these institutions believe that agricultural production is also unpredictable. So they are not certain that farmers will repay their loans. But when farmers work together and gather in co-operatives, banks and microfinance institutions have more trust in them. Consequently, farmers can receive credit. This allows us to acquire enough working capital to improve our farms. That's another reason we were motivated to form a co-operative.

Host: Mrs. Jeanne Ahouangnimon, why a farm co-operative focusing only on rice? Is it because rice is the only crop grown in your region?

Jeanne Ahouangnimon: No, we don't grow only rice. We produce many other crops, such as maize, cassava, yam, sweet potato, hot peppers, and vegetables. We also do fish farming, and raise poultry, goats and pigs. There were peasant co-operative organizations long before the rice co-operative was started. These organizations dealt with all agricultural crops. So, following the

advice “Don’t bite off more than you can chew,” we decided to put together a co-operative dedicated exclusively to rice.

Host: Mr. Azon Gnadja Albert, you’re the general secretary of URIZOP. How does someone become a member of URIZOP?

Azon Gnadja Albert: First, you must be a rice farmer in your village. Then, you must belong to a rice farmers’ association. Your rice field must be at least one acre or two-fifths of a hectare in size. When you have a rice field this large, the village group in your community accepts you as a member. Also, your farmers’ association must be registered with the Community Association of Rice Farmers. And it’s the Community Association that registers with URIZOP. URIZOP in turn is registered with the Rice Farmers Coalition Council of Benin, or CCR-B. CCR-B is the national organization.

Host: How many members does URIZOP have today?

Azon Gnadja Albert: URIZOP was created in 2006 and now has 1,473 rice farmers. These farmers are spread around all the communities that produce rice in the Ouémé and Plateau departments.

URIZOP incorporates 90 village groups. The 90 village groups are in the communities of Adjohoun, Dangbo, Bonou, Aguégué and Adja Ouèrè. In other communities, some rice farmers are organizing to register with URIZOP. Our door is open wide to welcome all rice farmers who share our ideals.

Host: Mrs. Jeanne Ahouangnimon, what are the ideals of URIZOP?

Jeanne Ahouangnimon: We wish URIZOP to be a rice co-operative that brings more prosperity to its members. To accomplish that, we are currently working to change Ouémé and Plateau departments into a powerful rice area where URIZOP gets rice farmers’ land ready for planting before the season starts. Our vision is also to improve the quality of the rice we cultivate, and to secure the markets to sell our harvest.

Host: Mr. Emile Houansou, because you three farmers are not from the same community, please explain how the co-operative spirit expresses itself in the different groups that are members of URIZOP?

Emile Houansou: The co-operative spirit shows itself in our mutual assistance: “one for all and all for one.”

In the past, everybody used to gather on a communal plot to farm together. But farming communal plots did not create success for rice farmers and did not help them earn more income. So we stopped the old practice of farming on communal fields. With URIZOP, everyone has a separate field, but follows the guidelines of the co-operative. The co-operative is like a melting pot where rice farmer members exchange and share information to improve our farming activities.

Host: How does URIZOP function?

Emile Houansou: URIZOP is a co-operative with operations throughout the two departments. Its head office is in Adjohoun. It incorporates all community associations of rice farmers in the Plateau and Ouémé departments. In turn, each community association incorporates all the village associations of rice farmers. All the community associations meet in a general assembly to elect a Board of Directors. This Board elects from among its members an executive board. To manage administrative and financial affairs, URIZOP hires staff, including a technical advisor, two members of a technical team and, soon, a secretary/accountant.

URIZOP has a Control Commission composed of three members. That commission manages the businesses of the co-operative. URIZOP's technical team takes care of the daily activities of the organization.

Host: What are those daily activities?

Emile Houansou: In the communities, the members of the technical team provide advice to rice farmers and work alongside them. They pass along information from the members to the executive board, and vice versa. If there are any difficulties, the technical team tries to address the situation. If the situation cannot be addressed by the technical team, the executive board intervenes.

However, the community associations have considerable authority. These associations seek financial and material resources in their respective communities. For example, the associations take responsibility for collecting the paddy rice, which they send to processing centres.

Host: What financial resources does URIZOP have, and how is it able to ensure that it can pay the salaries of the staff it employs?

Emile Houansou: URIZOP's basic resources come from registration fees and social share payments from its members. Apart from its roles as the farmers' representative and as a service provider, URIZOP operates several businesses. This gives us some operating money. But since 2009, we have also benefitted from the help of our technical and financial partners.

Host: What are "registration fees" and "social share payments"?

Emile Houansou: Each community association member of URIZOP pays around 25,000 CFA Francs (about \$US50) as a registration fee and 100,000 CFA Francs (about \$US200) as a social share payment. Some members may pay one or more social share payments.

Host: Could you please clarify how these member payments work?

Emile Houansou: The registration fees are used as operating capital for URIZOP. We deposit the social share payments in the bank, and use them as guaranteed capital to get credit from micro-finance institutions, or to buy fertilizer for members and supply them with other services.

Host: One larger issue that many members of co-operatives don't understand is the need for second-tier co-operatives such as URIZOP to support themselves by building in their costs of operation. Could you clarify exactly how URIZOP builds in its costs?

Emile Houansou: We have serious difficulties collecting share payments from different members. So to ensure that we have enough funds to cover our costs of operation, we set aside 10% of the selling price of each kilogram of crop sold by each rice farmer. That is how URIZOP ensures that it builds in its operational costs.

Host: Mrs. Jeanne Ahouangnimon, since its creation, what has URIZOP accomplished concretely?

Jeanne Ahouangnimon: Since the beginning, URIZOP members have benefited from the CeRPA's technical support (*Editor's note: See note at end of script about CeRPA*). CeRPA offers training to rice farmers in village groups.

Also, URIZOP works with international partners. Through these partnerships, URIZOP owns four facilities for storing and processing rice. Well before those facilities were built, we started working with the agro-business company ESOP as a consultant. ESOP is an agro-business enterprise which provides services to farmers' organizations. ESOP buys the paddy rice from us at harvest and processes it. Then it markets the rice under a label that is in high demand in Benin and in Togo. As a shareholder of ESOP, URIZOP allows ESOP to use its rice mill, and ESOP pays back URIZOP the profits it earns from the milled rice.

Host: Mr. Albert Azon Gnadja, apart from those partnerships, what else has URIZOP accomplished?

Albert Azon Gnadja: We improved many rice fields. Thanks to its partners, URIZOP donated 170 drying covers and 45 motorized pumps to its members. We also distributed nets to protect rice fields against bird attacks. URIZOP distributed rice seeds to all its members in the previous season. All those donations helped to triple production.

To better motivate the rice farmers, URIZOP is currently making efforts to buy back their harvest. URIZOP is taking the rice farming sector seriously and will expand the area of rice farming in the upcoming season.

Host: Give us some statistics on the quantity of rice harvested since the launch of URIZOP activities until today.

Jeanne Ahouangnimon: I will just give you the statistics for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011, not to look too far back. In 2009, the production in the region was only around 200 tonnes. We had the potential for greater yields, but it wasn't being taken advantage of, so we could not make a big profit.

In 2010, there was improvement; production was over 2000 tonnes. During the farming campaign that just ended, we estimate the production at 6000 tonnes. These increases are due to

the support of our partners. Today, the average yield is four tonnes per hectare. In the past, we barely reached three tonnes, but today, in the main rice farming areas, we can harvest up to seven tonnes per hectare, without fertilizer. This explains the improved overall yield.

Host: How is the crop is marketed?

Jeanne Ahouangnimon: First, URIZOP signs a contract with groups of rice farmers at the village level. That contract specifies that URIZOP will send its technical team into the field to help rice farmers during the whole cycle of rice cultivation in order to obtain a good quality crop. After the harvest, URIZOP collects the whole crop from the villages and sells it to ESOP and CAFROP. Those organizations then take care of milling, packaging, and selling it to consumers. URIZOP collects money from ESOP and CAFROP, then distributes it to rice farmers according to the quantity of crop sold by each farmer.

I should mention that CAFROP is a new section of URIZOP. It was recently created in order to improve rice production in Ouémé and Plateau departments.

Host: Dear guests, as rice farmers, what advantages have each of you received from URIZOP?

Emile Houansou: Truthfully, being a member of this co-operative brings me a lot of advantages. First, it allowed me to benefit from many training opportunities on the different stages of growing rice: from land preparation to harvest. It also helped me to understand how to evaluate income statements, how to understand marketing techniques, and how to manage a producers' association.

Thanks to Africa Rice Center, we have access to high-yielding varieties of seeds. We also have access to new rice varieties and innovations in rice farming. Because of all that, it's prestigious for me to be a rice farmer because rice farming brings me a lot of money. I don't even envy civil servants. The income from my rice is clearly better than their salaries.

Albert Azon Gnadja: Since I have been with URIZOP, it's a great relief for me. I found solutions to all the difficulties I had before. As soon as I joined, I benefited from trainings. Thanks to these trainings, I now know the technical details of rice production. I know how to make a rice seed bed, how to calculate the quantity of seeds necessary for the size of my rice field, how to calculate the date on which I must apply fertilizer, and the dose needed for my field.

Unlike in the past, when I was working without knowing what I was doing, today I can calculate all the production costs for my rice. This allows me to calculate the price at which I should sell my harvest. At first, since I didn't know these techniques well enough, my field was a little less than half a hectare. But since I joined URIZOP, my field grew to two hectares. And I earn a lot. My rice harvest is six tonnes per hectare. This allows me to meet the needs of my family. I used to have an old motorcycle, but I have bought a new motorcycle.

Jeanne Ahouangnimon: Personally, I was lucky to have worked in the 1970s in the rice farming zone of what was then called the National Corporation for Irrigation and Hydro-farming Installations, also called SONIAH. When I joined URIZOP, I noticed a big difference. I worked

for SONIAH as a labourer. But I didn't earn enough to meet my family's needs. With URIZOP, I have my own rice field. I have easy access to all the things I need to grow rice. I can manage the income from my harvest appropriately. This allows me to better meet my family's needs. I have built my own house. Joining this co-operative brings me all the advantages that my colleagues mentioned earlier.

Closing signature tune in background under host's voice

Host: Farmers' co-operatives like the Regional Union of Rice Farmers of Ouémé and Plateau departments are not common in Benin. But they provide a good example! We invite all farmers to follow it. Why? Because working within a co-operative can bring prosperity. On this note, we will end our show. Thank you to all our guests. And thank you, dear listeners. Goodbye!

Fade in of signature tune, hold, then progressive fade out

Acknowledgments

Contributed by: Félix Houinsou, Radio Immaculée Conception, Benin, a Farm Radio International broadcasting partner.

Reviewed by: John Julian, Director, International Communications & Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association.

Notes:

- Ouémé and Plateau: The map of Benin is subdivided into 12 departments. Ouémé and Plateau are two neighbouring departments in southeast Benin. They both border on Nigeria. URIZOP is the co-operative formed by the merger of the rice producers' associations in these two departments. It is one of six regional co-operatives that form the national organization called the Rice Farmers Coalition Council of Benin (CCR-B).
- CeRPA: Regional Centre for Farming Promotion. CeRPA is a state institution under the umbrella of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. It is responsible for extension work, supervision, and technical support to farmers. CeRPA is a regional institution, hence departmental. In many principal towns, CeRPA has a branch called a Community Centre for Farming Promotion (CeCPA). CeCPA has direct contact with farmers, herders and fishermen who live in different villages.

Information sources

Interview in March 2011 with Mr. Émile Houansou, Mr. Albert Gnadjia and Mrs. Jeanne Ahouangnimon, rice farmers and members of URIZOP's Board

Thanks to:

Emile Houansou, President of URIZOP's Board

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Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society Limited

Notes to broadcaster

A co-operative or co-operative society is an organized group of individuals who voluntarily come together for a common interest. Their activities are based on the needs of the members and sometimes those of their community. In Kenya, the members of a co-operative society contribute financially towards starting up the organization. After the society is registered, it can receive loans or grants. A co-operative society operates with guidelines and ground rules to ensure proper management.

In Kenya, the type of co-operative society is based on the kinds of activities the organization carries out. There are several types of co-operative societies, including producers' co-operative societies, marketing societies, and consumers' co-operative societies. There are also credit co-operatives that provide financial support to community members. Another type is the farming co-operative society, where small-scale farmers come together to jointly produce and sell their products. This includes the whole value chain, from inputs and labour to the final product.

Kenya's Co-operative Act stipulates that a co-operative society has an open membership with a minimum of ten members. The maximum number is determined by the members of the co-operative. Members join the organization by choice, though the members' interests are protected by the state in a registered co-operative. In other words, the state protects members against any kind of mistreatment.

This script talks about a farmers' co-operative society whose members are soybean producers. The co-operative was started in 2005 and is still active today.

This script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

Characters:

Host

Interviewer

Chairman Alfred Mdeizi

Coordinator Chris Onyango

Mama Jacinta Anyango, member and project beneficiary

Mr. Ayub Mdachi, project beneficiary

Host: Good evening, listeners, and welcome to today's program on co-operative societies. Today, we will travel to the western part of Kenya, to a place called Stella in the Migori District of the province of Nyanza. Here, the Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society has overcome many hurdles to attain success. Listeners, if you have questions concerning farmer co-operatives, get ready for some answers today. But before we visit the co-operative, let's have a musical break. Then our field interviewer will introduce you to the people who will explain the work the co-operative has done. Stay tuned.

Musical break

Interviewer: Welcome back, listeners. I will first welcome the Chairman of Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society, Mr. Alfred Mdeizi. Mr. Mdeizi, please feel welcome and tell the listeners how your co-operative society was started and who started it, and the reasons the co-operative was started.

Chairman Mdeizi: Thank you. The members of the Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society first came together in 2003 as an informal group. The group was composed of a core of ten like-minded people and twenty other farmers. Tobacco and sugar cane were the major cash crops in the area. But everybody in the team was concerned about the effect of tobacco on the environment and on health. We were also concerned about poor management in the sugar cane sector in this area. Farmers felt that the people who managed sugar cane only responded to their needs after a long time, or after farmers' protests. Some farmers burned down their sugar cane plantations because of not being paid on time by the managers, who would not explain the reason for the delay in payment. Some farmers abandoned sugar cane without any idea what crop would next bring them success. The tobacco farmers were also crying foul because growing tobacco was hazardous. Also, tobacco farming depletes the soil. Seeing no immediate solutions, we sat together in my house and talked about how to move forward.

Interviewer: In your meetings, did you come up with an activity to generate income?

Chairman Mdeizi: We contributed money to our kitty, but this was not enough. In the meantime, I had a friend whose daughter knew of an international organization called the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute, or TSBF. She thought that TSBF could partner with our group of farmers. So she helped us link up with TSBF in 2005. TSBF was promoting soybean and interested in doing field tests with farmers. They wanted to see if soybean would do well in this area, and which varieties would do best.

At the time, we did not have any formal structures or even an office. We conducted meetings in my home. The group agreed to register as the Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society Limited under the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing. We then came to an agreement with TSBF and together we established field demonstrations for research.

Interviewer: From what you've explained, we can call you chairman cum founder of Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society Limited, right?

Chairman Mdeizi: Yes, indeed. I spearheaded the establishment of the co-operative as I had already been involved in the farmers' movement in Kenya.

Interviewer: Was it easy to convince farmers to switch from other crops to soybean?

Chairman Mdeizi: It was not so easy. But the farmers realized that there were many advantages of soybean over the other crops. Soybean matures faster than sugar cane, which takes two years to mature. And tobacco is not safe both for the soil or human health. Soybean is suitable for household use, while sugar cane and tobacco cannot be used as household food.

Interviewer: How is the co-operative unique?

Chairman Mdeizi: The co-operative is unique because it did not start with any money. Instead, it started with the goal of improving farmers' livelihoods and helping them solve the problems they faced. Most co-operatives are formed in order to make money, but we had community in our minds and hearts.

Interviewer: How do you operate?

Chairman Mdeizi: We operate in seven zones. In each zone, there is a representative who reaches out to the wider community members. These, in turn, represent their local farmer members. All are soybean farmers.

Interviewer: Has the number of members increased?

Chairman Mdeizi: Yes. We started with thirty, and we currently have over 750 registered members, with more than 1500 unregistered. Our coordinator Chris Onyango can talk more about this.

Chris Onyango: In all seven zones, we held awareness meetings, chief's barazas and field days to introduce unregistered members to the co-operative (*Editor's note: A baraza is a meeting where issues and problems are discussed*). We also established farmer field schools where farmers who do not belong to the farmers' groups can learn about soybean production – from land preparation to harvesting.

Interviewer: What are some of the challenges you have faced?

Coordinator: One of the hurdles was convincing farmers to start growing soybeans. This was tricky and took time. Competition with the tobacco and sugar companies was stiff. To some extent, these companies visited the farmers and gave them all the inputs they needed. We did not have the resources to do this. So farmers who liked things easy opted for the sugar and tobacco companies.

Earlier, it was also a challenge to find funds to reach out to farmers who were not within walking distance. But this is easier now. The co-operative depends on sales to pay its staff. Extension is a challenge. We have over two thousand farmers to reach and only one extension staff to coordinate all the activities. I have tried to limit the number of outreach visits as much as possible by meeting the farmers in groups. This helps ease the workload.

Interviewer: It sounds like you coordinate a lot of the field work. And I suspect you interact a lot with the farmers. Please mention some of the benefits you have seen in the community from growing soybeans.

Coordinator: There are many. Soybean is a cash crop for farmers. Also, it's suitable for domestic use, and so it contributes to food security. Apart from selling soybean as single variety planting material or mixed varieties for processing and home consumption, you can add value to soybean. It can be made into products such as soy milk, soy yogurt, soy beverages, soy samosas, cakes, doughnuts, chapattis and many other products.

Sugar cane takes two years to mature. Then farmers must wait still longer for the factory to pay them after harvest. By contrast, if you plant soybean continuously on the same piece of land, after two years you will have received more than three times the income you would get from selling sugar cane. Soybean also replenishes the soil. By contrast, tobacco and sugar cane are heavy consumers of nitrogen, and need expensive fertilizers.

Interviewer: You have talked about success stories. How visible are these success stories? If I were to go to the community, would I notice them?

Coordinator: I can talk of success stories that I see in the community. I see that livelihoods are visibly improved. Some farmers add value in their own households apart from the actions of the co-operative.

The co-operative supplies a school program with soy milk and yogurt. The program targets HIV-positive children. Their caregivers can testify that the children are stronger than before they started eating soy foods, which boost the immune system. Another success is that the co-operative is able to buy seeds from farmers right at their doors. So farmers are saved the time and money needed to travel to the co-operative's facility.

It would be a good idea to talk directly to some beneficiaries about the benefits. After a short break, we can visit with Mama Jacinta Anyango and Mr. Ayub Mdachi.

Musical break

Host: Welcome back. The interviewer drove with the co-operative's chairman to Mama Jacinta's tailoring shop, about three kilometres away. The chairman introduced the interviewer to Mama Jacinta Anyango. She gives her side of story.

Mama Jacinta Anyango: I am Jacinta Anyango, a beneficiary of the soybean program. I got engaged at the initial stages of the program, and I am also privileged to be the treasurer of the co-operative society. Since I started, I have been trained in soybean production, management and value addition by TSBF. I was most interested in adding value. Now, I not only help at the co-operative society, but I am also invited to bake cakes for some weddings.

I must be truthful and say that I learned to bake cakes through the co-operative; I did not know how to bake a cake before that, even with products other than soybean. I also occasionally bake cakes for people by request. I have earned a lot, as I am paid directly by those to whom I provide

my services. Being involved with the co-operative has earned me a name and reputation. And it's so easy to find me. Just ask for Mama Cake. You'll find me easily if you are here in Rapogi shopping centre.

Interviewer: Mama Jacinta, do you think that what you are doing currently is enough? Does it meet community demand?

Mama Jacinta Anyango: It's not enough. That is why we keep on raising awareness through any meetings or forums we can reach. I want, if not everybody, then most people to understand how soybean reduces expenses in the household. Just from soybean you can make a drink for breakfast and have it with soybean crunchies, cake, *mandazis*, samosas, or chapattis (*Editor's note: crunchies are fried soybeans and mandazis are a kind of fried bread*).

Interviewer: What is the level of women's participation?

Mama Jacinta Anyango: It's not bad, but males still outnumber females in all the seven zones that we work in.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, Mama Jacinta.

Host: The coordinator and the interviewer then walked to Mr. Ayub Mdachi's home. He had just come back from the farm. The coordinator introduced the interviewer and Mr. Mdachi, and the talk continued.

Mr. Ayub Mdachi: I have been engaged in the co-operative for three years now. I had known about Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society before. But I only found out about soybeans when they promoted them in a sensitization forum. I readily agreed to start growing soybeans because I already bought soybean products from the supermarket, because I do not drink tea but soybean drinks.

I depend only on farming for my livelihood. But since I started growing soybean, I am able to pay school fees with ease. Today, I know that using soybean is cheaper than going to the market every day for bread. I can use a two-kilogram tin of soybeans for five days, at a cost of 100 or 120 shillings. If I were to buy bread every day, it would be ten loaves in five days at forty shillings each, which is expensive, about 400 shillings. Soybean is also more nutritious than bread.

Interviewer: You have an interesting soybean story. But one question, Ayub, have you experienced a difference with your other farming activities from using soybean?

Mr. Ayub Mdachi: As I am a dairy farmer, I tried something that turned out well. I feed my cattle with soy okara (*Editor's note: soy okara can also be called soy grits. It is the leftovers after making soy milk*). I have learned how to make dairy feed using soybean, a little maize and salt, which is better than the dairy feed bought from the agro dealers.

I have compared the two by feeding dairy cows with the two different products. I get 10 litres of milk per day from one cow when I use the dairy meal from the agro shops. But with soy dairy

meal, I get 18 litres per day. I am a happy man because I can support my family just from one single crop, soybeans. At first, I didn't know soybean could be used for dairy feed – and even poultry feed. But now I can confirm its amazing value. And this is in addition to human consumption in my home.

Interviewer: I know, listener, that after hearing these wonderful things from Mama Jacinta and Ayub, you might be interested in copying what they have done.

Chris, some more questions for you. Just listening to these beneficiaries, there are a lot of positive experiences. As a coordinator, do you have the knowledge and ability to train members in adding value and feed processing?

Coordinator: Yes, we have the knowledge and ability to train the members in these areas. I have learned a lot, and some of the farmers learned through me directly instead of from TSBF. Sprint Kenya Limited produces dairy meal using soybean, and through them I was trained to do the same.

Interviewer: What are some of the strategies in place to make sure that the co-operative is sustainable?

Coordinator: To help sustain the project, we have developed a seed refund strategy. Farmers are given seeds for planting. After harvest, they must return twice the amount of seeds they were given.

The co-operative is currently targeting southern Nyanza, which takes up half of the province, before we try to reach further and target the national and international markets. Also, the co-operative has committed stakeholders like the Ministry of Agriculture, TSBF, and the Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing. These organizations have been instrumental in the success of the co-operative.

Interviewer: Would you say that you are meeting the demand of your buyers?

Coordinator: Currently, we produce up to 60 litres of soy yogurt per day. But because there is demand for more, we are aiming to get a machine with greater capacity. Then, we can serve our consumers more effectively.

Interviewer: What are your future plans to help the project move forward?

Coordinator: We are currently using a normal *posho* mill (*Editor's note: A posho mill grinds maize and other grains into flour*), but we are hoping to get a mill specifically for processing soybeans. We have already identified a bigger market, so we are not worried about marketing our soybean seeds and grains.

Interviewer: Obviously, the project is economically successful. We have heard how it increases income and reduces expenses. Is it socially accepted in the community, and does it have political support?

Coordinator: Yes, of course. I say this because there are different tribes in this area, in fact four who are actively involved in the project. Also, both men and women can practice soybean farming. Women are mostly trained in adding value as they understand the nutritional issues better. The youth can participate in every aspect, including production, management and adding value. In terms of political will, I have never heard of or personally experienced any misunderstanding with politicians. So I would say that they support the project. In fact, some members of their families are project beneficiaries.

Interviewer: Any last words, Chris?

Coordinator: Let's keep on talking about this co-operative initiative that attracts people from different origins – people from all walks of life, this co-operative where people can learn that crops new to their communities can be grown both for food and as cash crops, and where they can learn farming practices which work for the good of all. Otherwise, may God bless you and please come again.

Musical break

Interviewer: Thank you very much to Chris, the chairman of the co-operative, and everyone else that we heard from today.

Listeners, this brings us to the end of our program on co-operatives. Today's co-operative was the Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society, which is based in the western part of Kenya. As you heard, the co-operative's main activity is soybean production, management, value addition and marketing. They have worked hand in hand with the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute. Until we meet again, bye bye.

Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Rachel Awuor, Ugunja Community Resource Centre, Ugunja, Kenya, a Farm Radio International broadcasting partner.

Reviewed by: John Julian, Director, International Communications & Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association.

Information sources

Interviews with:

- Alfred Mdeizi Sagwa – Chairman, Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society Limited, April 13, 2011
- Chris Onyango – Coordinator, Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society Limited, April 14, 2011
- Jacinta Anyango – Treasurer/beneficiary, Uriri Farmers Co-operative Society Limited, April 13, 2011
- Ayub Mdachi – Beneficiary, April 14, 2011



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Amizero Co-operative helps Rwandan households manage domestic waste

Notes to broadcaster

For over two decades, Rwandan people have been experiencing difficulties related to the war and the genocide, and their consequences. The Rwandan government has established a favourable environment to consider and address women's problems. Several initiatives have been created to help women. In these government initiatives, women are being encouraged to recognize their strength and look for solutions to their problems.

As part of this process, several associations were born. One of these not-for-profit associations is the Amizero Association, a women's co-operative whose goal is to provide assistance to women in distress. Its activities include agriculture, small businesses, management of household wastes in the city of Kigali, and strengthening the capacity of women. Unlike the agricultural producer co-ops featured in the other scripts in this package, the women's co-operative featured in this script is an urban worker-owned co-op.

The Amizero Association has tried to assist its members to develop themselves despite the difficulties related to the changes in the country after the war and genocide. The present script may inspire women in Rwanda and elsewhere to recognize their potential to find solutions to their problems within themselves.

The script is based on actual interviews with group members. Like other scripts in this package, it is an example of how co-operative groups can help members meet their individual goals, while contributing to larger community or even national goals.

You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Fade in music for 20 seconds, then fade out under the voice of the host

Host: Dear friends and listeners of Radio Salus, hello and welcome to today's show, a show that talks, as usual, about the environment. The title of today's show is: "Women earn a living by helping households manage domestic waste." In this show, we are going to talk about how women in the Amizero Association are making efforts to manage household waste in the city of Kigali. We are also going to talk about how this household waste management project allows

women from Amizero to earn their living. The show is prepared and presented by Jean Paul Ntezimana. Stay tuned!

Background music fades in for five seconds then out

Host: Dear listeners, more than half of the Rwandan population are women. Women take care of the family in many ways. These women include widows, heads of families, women with physical disabilities and traumatized women, healthy women, and women from all walks of life. But not all women have the same economic capacity. Today's show talks about women who earn their living by helping households manage domestic waste. We will be talking with members of the Amizero Association Co-operative's *Abakunda isuku* group. *Abakunda isuku* means, "those who like cleanliness and hygiene."

But before speaking to the members of the Amizero Association in the field, we will hear from Floride Mukarubuga, the President of Amizero Association. Mrs. Mukarubuga also founded *Abakunda Isuku* and other co-operatives. She tells us briefly about the Amizero Association.

Floride: The Amizero Association is a not-for-profit group founded even before the 1994 genocide. Our objective is to provide assistance to all kinds of women in distress – genocide widows, AIDS widows, all kinds of women in distress.

Because our beneficiaries are very numerous, we formed groups to better organize the activities that women can do to help themselves. We have many groups. We trained them in agriculture, in braiding hair, in wicker work, in small business, and in the management of domestic waste.

We also thought that it would be a good idea to supervise the women's children in the absence of their mothers. Women used to go to work but their children stayed at home. It was a problem. So we created a supervision centre for our beneficiaries' children.

Fade in background voices, hold for 10 seconds, then fade and hold under: Take, wait, ok, pass me another bag, there, oh it's heavy ...

Host: We are in Kacyiru, a neighbourhood in the city of Kigali. Bags of domestic waste lie in piles along the street. Women and girls come and add other bags to the piles. Flies circulate amongst the bags. About a hundred metres away, a truck is parked and intense activities are happening around it.

Fade up background voices for five seconds, then under

Host: A lady about forty years old is supervising the work. Her name is Mrs. Kantengwa Marianne.

Marianne: The person in charge of hygiene here in Kacyiru invited us to come and help them load this domestic waste onto the truck and take it to the main dump in Kigali. I don't know if we're going to finish today because they have a lot of waste. I've heard that it's been a while since they have rid their households of this waste.

Host: Mrs. Marianne, why are you working with domestic waste?

Marianne: It's about fighting dirt, it's about hygiene, and it's about health! We thought about this project way back, and started around the year 2001, when we saw hygiene problems here in the city. At that time, we started a waste management project in the district of Nyarugenge. Cleaning up households involves a combination of activities: participating in the clean-up of the city, transforming waste into fuel so that inhabitants no longer cut trees for firewood and destroy the forests, and finding compost to fertilize our gardens in the valley of Kicukiro district, here in Kigali. Amizero has been making little bricks from domestic waste to replace the wood used for cooking fires. All this is meant to improve our living conditions.

Host: You have many projects! Are all these projects still ongoing?

Marianne: It's not easy! With the 2005 national law on safeguarding the environment, the district confiscated the plots that women owned in the valley. So, making manure for fertilizer has slowed down and stopped. Today, we have a Belgian researcher who is studying how we can improve the production of household fuel from waste so that we can almost completely replace the use of firewood. We have improved how we transport domestic waste. As you can see, we're using a truck, and it's our truck!

Host: How important is this job for you, Marianne, personally?

Marianne: Where can I start? This is the only job I've ever had. I have three children, and this job helped me educate my children. Two of them are in secondary school; the other one has already completed his secondary school education.

This job helps me build and support my family. My family doesn't suffer from poverty like before. I have also learned how to discuss things with others. I'm not shy about speaking out anymore. Discussing things is very important. I get a lot of advice from discussions with the other women. I'm not alone anymore.

In the past, I don't know if I could say that I had any income. When we started the project, I had a monthly income of 10,000 Rwandan francs (*Editor's note: about \$US17*). Today, because we experienced spectacular growth, I earn 25,000 francs (*about \$US42*). That's quite something for me!

Host: Thank you, Marianne. But before letting you go back to your work, do you have something more to say about the importance of this work?

Marianne: Really, I don't know how to talk about it – it's so important. I told you that in the past I had no income, and today I get some. Also, I have health insurance, and I have been trained in several areas: health, family management, and family planning.

Background music fades in then out

Host: Dear listeners of Radio Salus, you're listening to our show on the environment. The title of our program today is: "Women earn a living by helping households manage domestic waste." We

are with the members of the co-operative *Abakunda isuku*, a branch of the Amizero Association. A big thank you to Marianne! Since she's leaving us to continue her work, we will take this opportunity to speak to the people of this neighbourhood.

Jeanne Umurerwa: My name is Jeanne Umurerwa and I live here in Kacyiru. As you can see, we have no place to throw our domestic waste. This is the city. In the countryside, they make compost with domestic waste, but here it's impossible. We keep waste in bags. When the waste truck doesn't come quickly, the smell becomes more and more intense at home. When there are two or three waste bags at home, the smell is bad. What gives some relief is that Amizero doesn't ask a lot of money. We pay 1,000 francs (*Editor's note: about US\$1.70*) a month per household, so it's not expensive! That's very important. Amizero helps us enormously!

Host: Thank you, Jeanne, and have a nice day.

Background music fades in then out

Host: Before leaving Kacyiru, dear listeners, here's another very active lady, working from the back of the truck. She is standing next to a man who is about thirty years old, and they are both wearing red overalls as their uniform. Wearing a traditional cap, with sweat on her forehead, Domitille Uwafurika continues working. She receives bags of domestic waste and then empties them, sorts the waste and returns the bags to the residents. Here is the sound of the work.

Background voices: Take, wait, ok, pass me another bag, there, come on over here too, ok, again, who's left? Me! Come, come!

Fade voices and hold under Domitille's voice

Domitille: I'm sorting the biodegradable wastes, the plastics and the metals. It's an order from the environment people. It's not easy at all, but we do it to follow their instructions. That law makes our work a bit slower. Instead of making four trips to the dump with the vehicle or even six, we now make only three per day. However, we are committed to working for a healthy environment! After collecting this waste, we carry the sorted wastes to the big garbage dump in Nyanza.

Background sounds fade in for five seconds then fade under

Domitille: It's very hard work – the smell, the strength that we need to use, it's really difficult. However, we benefit from it. My work helps me educate my three children and I contribute to my family, together with my husband. But today, prices are going up and they are more than my salary. When we started with the co-operative, I made 700 francs per day (*about \$1.17 US*). Today, I work for 800 (*about \$1.35 US*), but the value remains the same, or is even less. But what I must highlight is that my life has changed because of the many trainings provided by Amizero. I'm 42 and I have only three children. If I wasn't a member of Amizero, and if I hadn't benefited from its trainings, I would have many children. You are familiar with how typical Rwandan families have many children, right?

Fade up background sounds and hold for five seconds, then cross fade into short musical break

Host: Dear listeners, we are almost at the end of our show on the environment. But before closing, Floride will tell us about Amizero's vision.

Floride: Because the government wanted to promote commercial production and entrepreneurship, we have transformed our groups into commercial co-operatives. Our vision is most importantly to strengthen those co-operatives. Today, our technical assistance to those co-operatives has lessened because we want the co-operatives to become more independent and self-sustaining. We are staying at the strategic level only, by giving training, advice on management and operations, and project analysis. We want to focus on designing projects for the development of co-operatives. We are also working with a Belgian researcher to improve the production of fuel from waste. If this project succeeds, it will really be a big thing.

Host: Dear listeners, the management of domestic waste is very important for the environment, and for health. Let's hope that you listeners are going to sort your waste at home to set aside the biodegradables, the plastics and the metals, like Amizero does. Let's hope also that nobody will despise the work. Everything that is done well can bring benefits, as the members of Amizero say.

Thanks to all the members of Amizero for your efforts to clean up the households and the city in general. This is another co-operative effort that is helping members' lives and helping the environment for all. Thank you, dear listeners, for following us. You were in the company of Jean Paul Ntezimana. See you next time!

Acknowledgments

Contributed by: Jean Paul Ntezimana, journalist at Radio Salus, Rwanda, a Farm Radio International broadcasting partner.

Revised by: John Julian, Director, International Communications & Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association.

Information sources

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Interviews with:

- Mrs. Mukarubuga Floride, President of the Amizero Association (interviews on April 21 and August 17, 2011)
- Marianne Kantengwa, agent of Abakunda Isuku, Amizero Association (interview on August 19, 2011)
- Domitille Uwafurika, agent of Abakunda Isuku, Amizero Association (interview on August 19, 2011)



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Many heads are better than one: The story of Ngolowindo Co-operative

Notes to broadcaster

Co-operatives offer many benefits to their members. Co-operatives help farmers to market their crops, access farming inputs, and diversify their income. By doing so, they increase their incomes, improve their food security, and help them to take care of their families' health and education.

Like other farmers, members of agricultural co-ops sometimes face challenges related to marketing, income, the sustainability of their farming business, and so on. But when all members address these issues together, solutions can be easier to find.

The script is about Ngolowindo Co-operative in Malawi, how it came into being, its achievements and challenges. It highlights the strength and benefits of co-operatives. This script could encourage co-operatives, clubs, associations and individuals to learn how to reduce some of their fears and problems and maximize their profits while remaining sustainable.

This script touches on financial worries that the co-operative is experiencing. You might want to interview an expert on co-operative businesses after airing this script. A good co-operative business plan should ensure that the rates paid for electricity and rates charged on loan repayments cover the costs of equipment depreciation, so that, for example, pumps can be replaced as necessary. When equipment is received through grants, it is especially important to ensure that co-operatives thoroughly consider how they will sustain themselves, including the costs of maintaining and replacing donated assets. Perhaps the co-operative could obtain a long term loan and ensure that loan repayment rates are sufficient to cover the loan and other overhead costs.

This script is based on an actual interview. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a farmers' co-operative in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers, and, if you so choose, adapting the script by changing the names of the characters and the details of the situation. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the people involved in the original interviews.

Theme song up, then hold low under presenter

Presenter: Welcome, listener, to *(name of program)*, which comes to you every *(name of day)* on your radio station. As usual you are with me, *(name of broadcaster)*.

Theme song up and cross-fade into presenter's voice

Presenter: Dear listeners, today we have the true story of Ngolowindo Co-operative, or the “ever smiling tomato,” as the co-operative is known. The story covers the co-operative’s coming into being, the mountains it is climbing, and the main strengths that contributed to its success. What are some of the problems the co-operative members have survived in the past 27 years? Are they going to survive the serious challenges they are facing? These are the questions we will explore in our program today.

(Pause) Ngolowindo is situated in the Central Region of Malawi, about 10 kilometres east of Salima. I have visited Ngolowindo Co-operative a number of times. It is an enterprising co-operative, with a lot of resources and potential, some of which you will hear about during the following interview. Let me hand you over to our reporter, who will chat with the president of the co-operative.

Music for 10 seconds, then fade out

Reporter: Greetings, Madam. I am Gladson Makowa. I would like to talk with you to learn about your co-operative. Could you kindly introduce yourself?

Eluby: My name is Eluby Tseke.

Reporter: What position do you hold in the Ngolowindo Co-operative?

Eluby: I am the president of the Ngolowindo Co-operative.

Reporter: When did Ngolowindo start?

Eluby: As an irrigation scheme, it started in 1984. But as a co-operative, it started in 2001.

Reporter: How did the irrigation scheme start?

Eluby: It came together like any other development project that governments implement. It started with the District Assembly. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, as it was called in those years, started the project. They visited the Traditional Authority to brief him, and then they briefed all village headmen about the project. The European Union contributed some money and the Government of Malawi managed the project.

Reporter: How did the idea of growing into a co-operative come about?

Eluby: In 1998, the Department of Irrigation handed over the irrigation scheme to the people. So we continued working on our own. Then we received some visitors from Bunda College. After seeing how hard-working and united we were, they advised us to transform our project into either a co-operative or an association. They advised us to call the Ministry of Industry and Trade and ask them to come and teach us about co-operatives and associations.

Reporter: What did you choose?

Eluby: We chose to be a co-operative. We had heard that a co-operative is a group which is formed by people according to their own wishes, with everyone's needs and problems being treated equally. Members of a co-operative contribute finances together as capital, and put together their mind, interest and time. Whether the co-operative makes a profit or loss, they all share. So the people unanimously voted to become a co-operative.

Reporter: What is the secret behind your co-operative's success and your group's long life of more than 25 years?

Eluby: The organization has stayed together this long because it fulfills the needs of the people. Also, we have different committees which look after different issues in the co-operative.

Reporter: What are these committees?

Eluby: We have a management committee, and under this we have sub-committees such as irrigation, marketing, discipline, credit, education, and asset sub-committees.

Reporter: What are the duties of these sub-committees?

Eluby: The assets sub-committee looks after all the co-operative's tools and equipment. It rents out tools and makes sure that all equipment is returned. The discipline sub-committee enforces rules and order among the members.

Reporter: What rules do you have in the co-operative?

Eluby: Thou shall not steal. If found stealing, members are dismissed. Thou shall not commit adultery. We are trying to prevent the spread of the HIV and AIDS pandemic among members. We make sure that no one is found having sex with a fellow member in the group. If you are found in this act, you are dismissed.

Reporter: Do you mean that marrying a fellow member is prohibited?

Eluby: No. But we do not want promiscuity in our group. If a married man is found with an unmarried or married woman, both are dismissed. Or if a married woman is found with another married man or an unmarried man, they are dismissed. We do not want the co-operative to be a source of HIV and AIDS or to end people's marriages.

Reporter: Do people like these rules?

Eluby: Yes, they are happy. And they are the ones who made these rules. These are some of the rules that sustain our co-operative.

Reporter: What is the duty of the marketing sub-committee?

Eluby: The marketing sub-committee buys the crops which the co-operative members grow, and then sells them to our markets.

Reporter: How does the sub-committee find markets?

Eluby: Markets are sometimes found before we start farming, and sometimes when the crops are about to mature. We agree before the farming season starts on how much land and how much quantity of each crop we will grow, and who shall buy from us.

Reporter: Other farmers are finding it difficult to find markets. How do you manage?

Eluby: We manage because many major buyers are familiar with us. They know us and they know that we produce very good quality fruits and vegetables.

Reporter: Are there any differences between farmers who are co-operative members and those who are not members?

Eluby: Oh yes, there are many differences. Members receive good profits, which help them to buy and sustain their homes. Sometimes we have poor rains and people harvest less food in a year and have no money. When this happens, we are able to support them to plant and grow more food and earn money by using a fund which consists of profits made from selling winter crops,

Reporter: If a member fails to produce enough in the winter cropping season due to unforeseen problems, do you have insurance that covers such problems?

Eluby: We have never had problems to the extent that farmers default on loan payments. They always manage to pay back all loans.

Reporter: Oh, so you have loans and credit!

Eluby: Yes. The credit committee manages loans. This committee distributes loans and collects the repayments from members.

Reporter: What kind of loans?

Eluby: The co-operative buys inputs in bulk to benefit from quantity discounts. Then it gives these inputs to our members as a loan. We deduct the loan repayments during harvest time. We also give loans to purchase electricity to pump water. We installed electrical pumps under the ground to pump out water. The co-op must pay the water charges every month. This electricity charge for pumping water is also deducted from farmers as a loan repayment.

Reporter: How do you collect the money to pay for electricity?

Eluby: We charge per ridge. We plan every year how many hectares we are going to assign to each and every crop. For example, if we plan to grow two hectares of tomatoes, we charge a fixed amount of money per ridge. Each ridge is 100 metres long.

Reporter: How much is the electricity charge per ridge?

Eluby: Currently, we charge 650 Malawian kwacha per ridge, which is about four US dollars per ridge.

Reporter: Earlier when I came to visit Ngolowindo, you told me that your major problem was the high cost of electricity. How are things now with electricity charges?

Eluby: High electricity tariffs are still our major problem. We are still requesting the government to promptly finish the negotiations with the electricity supplier so that we can receive a subsidy on electricity prices. Our bills are still very high.

Reporter: How much do you pay per month?

Eluby: When we use only one pump, we pay about 125,000 kwacha per month (*Editor's note: approximately \$US820*).

Reporter: How much per month do you collect from the members?

Eluby: We do not collect per month but per harvest, about every three months for irrigated crops. Irrigated crops are harvested every three months during the dry season. Then, we collect not less than 300,000 kwacha per harvest (*Editor's note: approximately \$US2000*).

Reporter: Is 300,000 kwacha enough to pay for the entire electricity bill?

Eluby: This is not enough. We manage to pay for the whole electricity bill only when we grow high-value crops like tomatoes. But we lose money when we use these pumps to water maize. Maize does not give high returns compared to high-value crops like tomatoes.

Reporter: The co-operative has lasted for a long time without collapsing from these high electricity tariffs. Who supports you?

Eluby: With the help of the government, we are still negotiating with the company that supplies the electricity. The electricity supply company is saying that we should enter into an agreement. They say that they can charge us a reduced rate if we agree to use electricity at night only.

Reporter: When are you going to sign this agreement?

Eluby: We are waiting for the Department of Irrigation to finish the negotiations on our behalf.

Reporter: Do you have any employees to whom you pay a salary?

Eluby: Yes, we have a number of them – a driver, a cashier, a stores clerk, and two watchmen.

Reporter: If you have a driver, it means you have a car. How did you obtain it?

Eluby: There was an Italian non-governmental organization between 2002 and 2004 called Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries, which was funded by the European Union. The project provided a pick-up truck for us.

Reporter: What else did this NGO help you with?

Eluby: They bought us the vehicle; they built a storage warehouse, a cold room, dug one well and installed a pump. They enlarged the water storage tank and expanded the area of irrigated plots with canals from 14 hectares to 17. They also trained us for six months on co-operative management. The project lasted for three years.

Reporter: How do you make sure that your water expenditures are in line with your income?

Eluby: We collect the money from farmers during the time when the crops are sold. Usually, we agree on the buying price with members before they grow the crops. The price at which we buy their crops is set by the co-operative. The price is a bit lower than our real market price. That's because the funds that the co-operative uses to pay its employees and other overhead costs are deducted off the top. We also deduct the cost of electricity, inputs and other purchases off the top.

Reporter: Can you give us an example of the prices you pay farmers and your selling prices at other markets?

Eluby: Our selling prices depend on demand at the market. But we try to make sure that we sell at a higher price than the other traders. For example, if we have a market which buys from us at 80 kwacha per kilogram, we might buy from the farmer at 60 kwacha. We buy using a weighing scale and pay per kilogram, while other small traders just guess the prices. Farmers know that we are fairer than the other vendors. We do not bargain; we have fixed prices. We buy everything from our members and then plan what to do with the crops later. Other vendors just buy enough for themselves, as much as they can manage.

Reporter: You talked about farmer loans. How different are your loans from other bank loans?

Eluby: We buy things in bulk and cheaply. At that cheap buying price, we charge 15% interest, while the banks charge between 25 and 35%. Mind you, we only give loans to our members.

Reporter: Are the members benefiting from this deal?

Eluby: The farmers are happy. Some have built houses, bought livestock, paid for secondary school fees for their children and other dependents, and enjoyed many more benefits.

Reporter: If people are indeed enjoying the membership, how many members do you have?

Eluby: We are 145 members, and we have 25 applicants whose applications we are scrutinizing.

Reporter: What qualifications do you look for in a member?

Eluby: We do not want those who have been convicted of theft, or those who suffer from epilepsy. We have a water tank which is always open and we have big water canals, so we do not want any accidents with people with epilepsy. We want hard-working people. We know them, because they are the people with whom we live in our villages.

Reporter: If members have lost their loved ones and have a problem, how are they supported?

Eluby: We have a social welfare account to which all members contribute. This account helps those who have big problems, like the funeral of a close relative such as a child, husband or wife. We have both Christian and Muslim members. We support members according to their faith.

Reporter: What are the major problems which the co-operative is facing?

Eluby: Currently, all three pumps in our three wells are down. Therefore, this year we have not yet seriously started irrigated farming. We have planted, but there is a shortage of water because the irrigation pumps are broken. We are still searching for new pumps. This is the scariest problem that we have ever faced. Remember that we spend much of our income on high electricity tariffs, and we are still negotiating with the electricity supplier to reduce these charges. Also, we do not have stable buyers who can purchase all of our products. We have some buyers, but we need more markets. And the markets which we have found do not offer opportunities for contract farming. Those are our major problems.

Reporter: If you have not seriously started farming this year, what will you do to make sure that you grow some winter crops?

Eluby: We took the pumps to electricians and mechanics, but they told us that they are worn out completely, and that we just need to replace them. We want to buy new ones before the irrigation season ends. We are still discussing this in our group.

Reporter: The government buys pumps for other small-scale farmers ... how has it helped you?

Eluby: They have not yet helped us. Maybe they are still looking at how they can help.

Reporter: How much do pumps cost at the market?

Eluby: A small durable pump sells for 300,000 kwacha (*\$US2000*). Big ones like the ones which we use sell for around 800,000 kwacha (*US5250*).

Reporter: Are you going to grow any irrigated crops this year?

Eluby: Our winter season starts in February. We planted tomatoes in February, but they have not done well because of the water shortage. Right now, we are still coming up with ways to find a pump.

Reporter: Do you have sufficient funds in the account of your co-operative to survive?

Eluby: I will not reveal the amount, but the co-operative is not ending. We are still meeting and coming up with ways to sort out the water pump problem. We will try to negotiate with some companies to pay a deposit and pay the rest later. That is one of the options we have.

Reporter: But at least you have enough money to pay the deposit to a company – is that correct?

Eluby: The money we have is enough to pay a deposit for a smaller pump, but we feel that is not a good choice for a big garden like ours. We need a bigger one. That is why I say we are still looking for other options.

Reporter: Can fuel pumps work?

Eluby: No, not at all. They cannot do the work we need. Our wells are 70 metres deep, so the fuel pumps cannot manage it. Even if they could, they might be more expensive to run.

Reporter: Finally, what are you going to do to make sure that Ngolowindo, the ever smiling tomato, continues to smile, as your motto says?

Eluby: I just encourage all the members to remain united, and contribute to the purchase of the needed pump, so we can continue enjoying the good life which we have been enjoying. I also call upon well-wishers to help us in this problem.

Reporter: Thank you for sparing this time for us. Today we have heard and learned from Mrs. Eluby Tsekwe of Ngolowindo Co-operative in Salima, Malawi on what is involved in running co-operatives, and about the advantages and some of the challenges which they face.

Do not forget that in co-operatives you share ideas, gains and losses. As old wise men say, many heads are better than one, and it is better to join a group where you can learn something. Form clubs and improve your bargaining power and knowledge. You were with me, your reporter, Gladson Makowa.

Acknowledgements

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Information sources

Interview with Mrs Eluby Tsekwe, president of the Ngolowondo Co-operative of Salima District, Central Region of Malawi, June 2, 2011.



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