

VOICES

SHARING IDEAS, GROWING SOLUTIONS.



The newsletter
for partners of
Developing
Countries Farm
Radio Network

October 2005, NO. 76

TREES HOLD DOWN THE SOIL AND KEEP BACK THE DESERT

The United Nations (UN) has designated 2006 as the Year of Desertification, marking ten years since the UN Convention to Combat Desertification came into force.

DESERTIFICATION is the degradation of drylands. It is caused mainly by climate variability and unsustainable human activities, especially overcultivation, overgrazing, deforestation and poor irrigation practices. Poverty is a main contributor to environmental degradation. Two-thirds of African lands are vulnerable to desertification and over 70% of African agricultural drylands are already degraded, making Africa the continent most severely affected by desertification.

Agroforestry is a key practice in the fight against desertification

Agroforestry is the integration of trees on the farm and in the landscape, and has long been practiced by African farmers as a way to adapt their crop and livestock production to environmental conditions and to develop extra sources of food and income. Several scripts in this package present agroforestry as a way to combat desertification. Script topics include:

- how farmers can benefit from improved fallows
- farmers planting trees in rural areas
- growing mango trees on drylands

Deforestation causes desertification

In Africa, as elsewhere, population increases have led to overcutting of trees and shrubs, exposing bare soils to severe winds, heat and intense rains. These forces combine to erode soil, form soil crusts, increase runoff, and compact the soil, all of which are major contributing factors to desertification.

How do forests halt desertification?

Forests slow water movement, capture nutrients, and build soil. Forest litter — leaves and other organic materials on the forest floor — absorbs the impact of intense downpours and releases water gradually and gently to the soil beneath. Water percolates into forest soils and re-emerges in springs that feed streams.

A variety of agroforestry practices are effective in combating desertification.

- **Agroforestry parklands:** Agroforestry parkland is the traditional system in which farmers deliberately preserve valuable mature trees growing on their cropland. In West African parklands, species used include *Faidherbia (Acacia) albida*, *Vitellaria paradoxa*, and *Parkia biglobosa*.
- **Improved fallows:** When fallowed fields are seeded with fast-growing trees, shrubs or vines, the practice is called “improved fallow.” In Southern and Eastern Africa, farmers have doubled maize yields and halved labour inputs by planting short-rotation nitrogen-fixing trees such as *Sesbania sesban*, *Gliricidia sepium* and *Tephrosia vogelii*. Fields are fallowed for two years, and then cultivated for three. The trees also suppress weeds and supply wood when cleared for cultivation.
- **Tithonia and phosphate rock:** When green manure from the shrub known as *Tithonia diversifolia* was combined with phosphate rock and applied to soils, maize yield increased dramatically in Western Kenya. Phosphate sources are common in many African regions, making this a promising strategy for addressing the phosphorus deficiencies common to many African soils.
- **Live Fences:** Fences made up of living shrubs and trees are increasingly used to protect off-season cash crops such as vegetables and cassava in the Sahel. Living fences also act as a barrier to wind-blown sand, and may offer significant protection against wind erosion.

Continued on page 3

PAST SCRIPTS

About Drought and Water Management

Partners interested in the topic of desertification are welcome to refer to past scripts about drought and water management (*scripts are archived on our website, www.farmradio.org*).

They include:

Package 71, number 10, June 2004

Supply water directly to plant roots with pitcher and drip irrigation

Burying clay pots in the earth and filling them with water allows direct irrigation of roots. Drip irrigation provides even, long-term irrigation. Both systems decrease water use and avoid evaporation.

Package 71, number 9, June 2004

A community builds a groundwater dam

A groundwater dam stores water in the streambed and allows removal of drinking and irrigation water during the dry season.

Package 71, number 8, June 2004

Harvesting water using earth banks

How an earth bank captures and stores water in the soil.

Package 71, number 7, June 2004

Use barriers to harvest run-off water for crops

Building ditches across the contour on sloping fields will slow run-off water and make it available for crops.

Package 71, number 6, June 2004

Farmers can catch more water in their fields:

Radio spots

Farmers can reduce the costs of irrigation by finding ways to hold rainwater in the soil and make it more available for crops. Examples include the use of barriers to stop or slow the flow of rainwater, using planting pits, and making cross-ridges between furrows.

Package 68, number 7, September 2003

Save time with rainwater harvesting

Setting up a downspout to catch rain off the roof and direct it to a container or pit saves time otherwise spent fetching water.

Package 64, number 6, July 2002

Farmer Phiri uses infiltration pits to combat drought

Using sand traps, infiltration pits, and small underground tanks to catch and hold water on the land.

Package 54, number 3, January 2000

Garden while you shower

Greywater from an outdoor shower can be directed downslope by a trench to a garden or an orchard.

Package 54, number 6, January 2000

A dryland garden tour

A tour of a garden in Zimbabwe highlights different ways to grow crops in drought conditions.



PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS for the next VOICES

We are looking for **STORIES** about activities and programs your station has planned for the upcoming **YEAR OF DESERTIFICATION**. Please e-mail bmckay@farmradio.org, or send a letter via regular post to DCFRN with your story.

Working with THE WORLD AGROFORESTRY CENTRE

Several of the scripts and articles in this package were developed as part of a special collaboration between the Farm Radio Network and the World Agroforestry Centre (formerly ICRAF), in Africa. Throughout the development and production of these scripts, the World Agroforestry Centre loaned its expertise to the Network. Members of its staff assisted with the selection of script topics and sent us documents related to the proposed subjects. Once scripts were in written form, staff from the Centre in different parts of Africa reviewed drafts, offered suggestions for improvement, and provided further contact information for broadcasters.

WE THINK that this collaborative effort made the package more useful for partners. Thanks to everyone involved!

The World Agroforestry Centre

For millennia, farmers throughout the tropics have nurtured trees on their farms for the many benefits they provide. Neither the concept nor the practice is new. The World Agroforestry Centre has transformed this ancient practice into a youthful science; the application of scientific methods to agroforestry is making a major difference to lives and landscapes.

The mission of the Centre is to change the way millions of farmers manage their limited resources. The Centre develops and promotes the use of agroforestry practices and addresses the urgent issue of policy reform. A longer-term goal is to provide tens of millions of poor farmers with sustainable ways to improve their livelihoods, and as they do so, to help protect the global environment.

A regional focus

The World Agroforestry Centre has several regional programs in Africa:

- East and Central Africa
- Southern Africa
- Sahel
- African Humid Tropics

Contact:

The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
P.O.Box 30677, Nairobi, 00100, Kenya
Phone +(254) 20 722 4 000
Fax + (254) 20 722 4 001
Email: icraf@cgiar.org
Web: www.worldagroforestrycentre.org

Photo: by Blythe McKay

Trees hold down the soil and keep back the desert *continued from front page*

- **Fodder Banks:** Fodder trees are planted and managed to produce fresh leaves during the dry season for livestock to eat. In the Sahel, two species in particular show great promise in fodder banks: *Gliricidia sepium* and *Pterocarpus erinaceus*.
- **Intercropping economic trees:** Both timber and non-timber trees are intercropped with annual crops or shrubs for cash, shade or increased soil productivity in the traditional *taungya* system. *Taungya* is practiced in West Africa and involves newly established tree plantations sharing the planting area with

crops until the plantation is fully established. It also includes wide-row intercropping systems where, for example, *Faidherbia (Acacia) albida* are planted in rows 10-20 metres apart within fields of millet.

Agroforestry, along with other beneficial practices such as conservation agriculture, can halt the march of desertification in Africa and around the world. Please consult the sources listed at the end of script 3 in this package for more information on agroforestry.

West Africa PARTNER PROFILE

FIFTY PER CENT of Farm Radio Network's Partners are in WEST AFRICA

Several Network partners have indicated they would like to know more about other partners in their countries with similar goals and missions. Based on this interest, we prepared the following profile of our West African partnerships. Information about partners in other parts of Africa will follow in future *Voices*.

NETWORK PARTNERS IN WEST AFRICA span 14 countries for a total of 137 radio broadcast partners, which represents nearly 50 per cent of our 275 radio partners! Overall, radio stations in this region broadcast in close to 70 different languages including Akan, Bambara, Dioula, English, French, Fulfulde, Hausa, Kabiye, Kotokoli, Krio, Malinke, Moore, Portuguese, and Yoruba. Nigeria, with 24 partners, holds the record for the country with the most Network partners. Ghana holds the record for the longest standing Network partners — Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and Bowiri Rural Radio Farm Forum — who joined the network in 1981 and 1983 respectively.

Radio programs developed by our partners in West Africa focus largely on agriculture, environment and health. These

themes were based on their listeners' demands and interests (indicated in DCFRN's Training Needs Assessment Partner Survey Report, 2003).

George Atkins Award winners from West Africa include:

- 1991** *Ahmed Baba Counta*, Head, Division of Educational Rural Radio of the Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting, Senegal.
- 1994** *Peter Afekoro*, an agricultural specialist with the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nigeria.
- 2004** *Sachia Ngutsav*, a producer with Radio Benue, Nigeria.

See page 6 for how your station can be nominated for the George Atkins Communications Award.

NUMBER OF RADIO PARTNERS PER COUNTRY IN WEST AFRICA

Benin(13)	Guinea-Bissau(2)	Niger(6)
Burkina Faso(13)	Ivory Coast(7)	Nigeria(24)
Gambia(1)	Togo(11)	Senegal(10)
Ghana(17)	Mali(22)	Sierra Leone(4)
Guinea(6)	Mauritania(1)	

*See insert for a list of all the stations/organizations by country.

DAKAR • SENEGAL



Photos: left and top right by Blythe McKay, DCFRN

LARRRA participants in Dakar, Senegal

LARRRA WORKSHOP

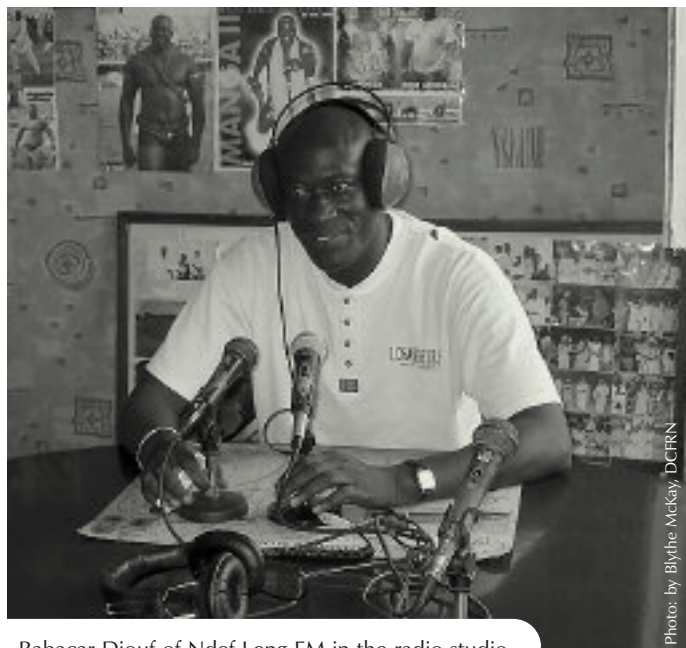
From June 6-11 in Dakar, Senegal, seven teams of agricultural researchers, radio broadcasters, NGO representatives and agricultural extensionsists from Niger, Senegal, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Benin learned how they could collaborate with each other and use radio as a tool to communicate agricultural research information to farmers and seek feedback from farmers.

THE TEAMS WERE PARTICIPATING in the Linking Agricultural Research and Rural Radio in Africa (LARRRA) workshop coordinated and facilitated by the University of Guelph, the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD), Réseau d'Expertise des Politiques Agricoles (REPA), and DCFRN. The workshop was funded by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Each of the teams learned skills on how to work as a team, how to write proposals for funding, and how to develop an action plan.

Farm Radio Network stations who participated at the workshop included Media and Technology from Bénin, Radio Bobo from Burkina Faso, Radio Rurale Locale de Fotouni and Voice of Oku from Cameroon, Radio Lepin from Ivory Coast, Radio Gabi from Niger, and Radio Diffusion Télévision du Sénégal.

COMMUNITY RADIO — SENEGAL



Babacar Diouf of Ndef Leng FM in the radio studio

Senegal Broadcasters Share Their Vision for Agricultural and Rural Development Programs

IN JUNE, nine community radio broadcasters from eight community radio stations across Senegal convened at AMARC's West Africa office in Dakar for a four-hour meeting with Blythe McKay, the Development Communication Coordinator of Farm Radio Network. Five of the eight stations represented are Network partners — Ndef Leng FM, Jokkoo FM, Radio Gaynaako FM, Timtimol FM and Byen FM de Mont-Rolland. The broadcasters discussed their priorities related to program development for rural audiences.

Priorities included:

- skill-building related to all areas of program development, from finding out what programs interest their communities, to collecting information for programs, to developing a proposal for funding for a program series on a particular topic, to evaluating program impact;
- creating partnerships between rural radio stations and research institutions to help develop quality content for their programs;
- acquiring broadcast/recording equipment;
- collaborating with and learning from other radio stations through field trips and exchanges.

WELCOME NEW NETWORK PARTNERS!

The Network becomes stronger with each new partner, so pass on our contact information to other broadcasters or organizations with radio broadcasting activities who share our goals. In this issue, we welcome three new partners:

- **Radio Comunitaria de Ulongue** in collaboration with **The World Agroforestry Centre** — Mozambique.
- **Tree Shade Media & Communications Agency** — Ghana. A community media organization that produces participatory rural development-oriented radio programs in northern Ghana.
- **Community Aid** — A community organization with a radio project in northern Ghana.

GEORGE ATKINS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD — CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The George Atkins Communications Award was established in 1991 to recognize rural radio broadcasters for their outstanding commitment and contribution to food security and poverty reduction in low-income countries. The award is named after Dr. George S. Atkins, the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network's Founding Director.

This year, the Network will award a Sony Minidisc recorder and microphone to the winning station. The award will be presented to a radio station or organization that demonstrates overall programming excellence in responding to small-scale farmers' needs as well as its commitment to the Network.

To be eligible for the award, organizations must be directly involved in broadcasting activities and have been a partner with the Network for a minimum of one year.

Nominate your organization or another Network partner. Please submit a statement (up to 1000 words) on why you think this partner should receive the award. Include any relevant information such as photographs, biographical information or samples of recent work with your nomination.

Send submission by regular mail, or Email to bmckay@farmradio.org by January 31st, 2006.



MOBILIZING FOR THE MDGS

RADIO SCRIPT WRITING COMPETITION

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A SONY MINIDISC RECORDER AND MICROPHONE! Enter “Mobilizing for the MDGs — Radio Script Writing Contest,” organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and by Developing Countries Farm Radio Network.

Contest Criteria:

Prepare and send us a script based on one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). You can use any of the following script formats: interview, spots, discussion between two hosts, drama (with different characters), or a story (told by one or two narrators).

Your script is to be prepared with input from rural people, especially farmers in your community. It must be no more than 500-1000 words, and:

- include background notes about the topic of the script and production notes for broadcasters;
- include references to information sources that you have used to prepare the script (i.e., farmers, agricultural institutions, NGOs, documents, etc.); and
- be easily adapted by broadcasters in other parts of Africa.

Read and listen to the 30 scripts included on the *Global Goals – Local Action* CD-ROM we recently sent to you. They will give you a good sense of the range of content and format we are looking for. Submissions are accepted in either French or English.

Deadline for Scripts:

Scripts must be received by DCFRN no later than **FEBRUARY 20, 2006.**

Once DCFRN Receives Your Scripts:

The scripts will be reviewed according to the contest criteria by a panel of judges. A winning script will be chosen for each of the MDGs (1-7). The winners will be announced in March 2006.

All entrants will receive feedback on their scripts.

Send your entry by e-mail, mail, or fax to DCFRN.

Note: All scripts received will become the property of DCFRN and UNESCO. Any publication of the scripts will credit the author.

Script Tips: THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING RADIO SCRIPTS

- The first few lines of any program will either grab the listener's attention or lose it. Make your introduction as catchy as possible.
- Include some kind of tension, a climax, and resolution of the tension when you are developing dramas or soap operas.
- When writing a drama, two-host discussion or interview: Each time a person speaks, limit them to one or two sentences to keep the action moving and the interest alive.
- When developing a drama, imagine that you can see the characters as actors on the stage acting out the story. If the actors are moving, it is an indication of a lively story. If there is no action, it may be an indication of a dull story line.
- Once you have everything down on paper, read your script out loud to make sure that it sounds natural and believable in the spoken voice.

Parting Words from Jennifer Pittet



This is the last information package with which I will be involved as Managing Editor. My time at the Network started more than twenty years ago(!) in 1984 when I was hired by George Atkins as Program Assistant. That job involved a lot of correspondence with partners and helping to print, copy and distribute the information packages. In more recent years I have been researching farming methods, and writing and editing scripts. Probably the most exciting change I have seen is the increased communication with partners by email. This has led to more script contributions from partners – and therefore a more relevant information package. It has been a sincere pleasure to work so closely with African partners to identify script topics and to develop and refine story lines.

I feel very lucky to have had such a fulfilling job for so many years and I hope to continue to participate in DCFRN activities every now and then. At the same time I will be pursuing education and work in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the following people who contributed scripts or articles to our most recent series about desertification and agroforestry. Thank you to everyone!

*Gladson Makowa, The Story Workshop, Malawi
Rachel Awuor Adipo, Ugunja Community Resource Centre, Kenya
Charles Ogada, Ugunja Community Resource Centre, Kenya
Aaron Kaah, Radio Oku, Cameroon
Data Phido, African Radio Drama Association, Nigeria
Femi Jarrett, African Radio Drama Association, Nigeria
Ogwang Bob, Radio Apac, Uganda
Jimmy Okello, Radio Apac, Uganda
Emily Elogu Anayo, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Uganda
John Van Zyl, ABC Uluwazi, South Africa
Heidi Braun, University of Guelph, Canada
John Njoroge, Kenya Institute of Organic Farming, Kenya
Elijah Danso, Forest Sector Development Project, Ghana*

GRANT INFO FOR BROADCASTERS

Finding ways to raise funds is a challenge faced by many Farm Radio Network partners. There are several foundations and organizations that offer grants to development-oriented organizations in sub-Saharan Africa.

DCFRN lists several funding opportunities on its website at <http://www.farmradio.org/english/bdg/bdg5e.asp>

The Communication Initiative lists awards for development communication practitioners on its website at <http://www.comminit.com/awards.html>

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) is a fund for women's organizations. AWDF funds local, national, sub-regional and regional organizations in Africa working towards women's empowerment. The AWDF is an institutional capacity-building and programme development fund, which aims to help build a culture of learning and partnerships within the African women's movement. In addition to awarding grants, the AWDF attempts to strengthen the organizational capacities of its grantees.

AWDF Contact Information:

African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)
25 Yiyiwa St. Achimota Forest, Ablenkpe
PMB CT89 Cantonments, Accra, Ghana
Tel: +233 21 780477 Fax: +233 21 782 502
General Enquiries: awdf@awdf.org
Grants Department: grants@awdf.org
www.awdf.org



**The newsletter
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Radio Network**

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

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