

VOICES

SHARING IDEAS, GROWING SOLUTIONS.



The newsletter
for partners of
Developing
Countries Farm
Radio Network

March 2006, NO. 77

COMBATING DESERTIFICATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: WHO TO CONTACT

This year is the **International Year of Deserts and Desertification!** Many organizations and communities all across Africa are mobilizing to prevent or reverse the impact of land degradation which is contributing to desertification.

If your station is interested in desertification and what is being done to stop it in your country and other parts of Africa, here are some ideas of who you can contact to learn more.

UN Convention on Combating Desertification

In every country in sub-Saharan Africa there is an individual who is called the "focal point". These people and their organizations represent their countries on matters related to the UN Convention on Combating Desertification. These people should know what initiatives are taking place within the country as well as what commitments the country has made to fight desertification. A list of the focal points for each country can be found at the following website: www.unccd.int/focalpoints/focalpoints.php. For broadcasters without Internet access, please contact Blythe McKay at DCFRN and she will be able to help you access the required contact information.

There is also a growing list of Civil Society Organizations and NGOs who are focusing their work on fighting desertification. To learn which organizations in your country are involved visit www.unccd.int/ngo/menu.php.

Desert Margins Program

If you are based in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, South Africa or Zimbabwe, the Desert Margins Program has initiated projects to fight desertification in your country. To learn more about what is taking place, you can contact the Desert Margins Global Coordination Office based in Niger:

The Desert Margins Global Coordination Office
ICRISAT – Niamey
BP 12404, Niamey, Niger
Email: dmp-global@cgiar.org
Website: www.dmpafrica.net/index.htm

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

The CGIAR has several research institutions called "Future Harvest Centers" in Africa, and some of their research focuses on drylands and desertification. Depending on what topics interest your listeners, you might try contacting either the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), or the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). Each of these institutions has several offices in different regions of Africa (we have only listed one for you). Please consult the website address for information about the office closest to you.

Contact information:

ILRI

ILRI Kenya – Headquarters
P.O. Box 30709 Nairobi 00100, Kenya
Tel: + 254-20 422 3000 Fax: + 254-20 422 3001
Email: ILRI-Kenya@cgiar.org
Website: www.ilri.cgiar.org

World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)

United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
P.O. Box 30677-00100 GPO, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 722 4000 Fax: +254 20 722 4001
Email: ICRAF@cgiar.org
Website: www.worldagroforestrycentre.org

ICRISAT

ICRISAT-Bamako
BP 320 Bamako, Mali
Tel: +223 2223375 Fax: +223 2228683
E-mail: ICRISAT-W-Mali@cgiar.org
Website: www.icrisat.org

International Year of Deserts and Desertification Events

APRIL

- “International Geneva Symposium: Combating Desertification, Hunger and Poverty”. 11-12 April 2006. Geneva (Switzerland)
- Conference on Ecotourism in Deserts. Tunis (Tunisia)

MAY

- International Conference “Civil society and desertification”. Montpellier (France)
- Fourteenth Conference of the International Soil Conservation Organization (ISCO). Marrakech (Morocco)
- International Conference: “Women and Desertification”. Beijing (China)

JUNE

- Celebration of the World Environment Day under the topic Deserts and Desertification. Algiers (Algeria)
- June 17 – World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- International Film Festival “Desert Nights: Tales from the Desert”. Rome (Italy)
- UNESCO conference on “The Future of Arid Lands”. Tunis (Tunisia)
- Launching of the International Observatory on Environment and opening of the Centre to Combat Desertification. Ghardaïa (Algeria)

- Launching by UNEP of two publications: *GEO-Deserts* (June 2006) and *Environmental Management of Arid Lands* (during 2006).

SEPTEMBER

- International Symposium on Desertification and Migrations. Almeria (Spain)
- Scientific Conference on “Environmental Arid Lands Management and the Millennium Development Goals”. Nairobi (Kenya)

OCTOBER

- Designing a forward-looking strategy for effective implementation of the UNCCD. Buenos Aires (Argentina)
- High Level Conference on Deserts and Desertification (Heads of States and Governments). Algiers (Algeria)

NOVEMBER

- “Deserts and Desertification – Challenges and Opportunities”. Sdeh Boker (Israel)
- UNU International Conference: “Desertification and the International Policy Imperative”. Algiers (Algeria)
- Séminaire international sur les plantes à parfum, aromatiques et médicinales (SIPAM2006). Institut des Régions Arides, 2–4 November. Djerba (Tunisia)

Central Africa PARTNER PROFILE

The Farm Radio Network is continuing to respond to partner requests to learn more about other Network partners. In this edition of *Voices*, the focus is on partners in Central Africa. In this region the Network has a total of 49 radio stations and organizations representing nearly 18 per cent of our 277 radio partners! Radio stations in this area broadcast in 45 different languages, including English, French, Swahili, Pidgin, Lingala, Bassa, Ewondo, and Kikongo.

Cameroon, with 21 partners, holds the record for the Central African country with the most Network partners and the longest standing partnership. James Achanyi-Fontem of Cameroon Link has been active in Developing Countries Farm Radio Network for more than twenty years.

Radio programs developed by our partners in this region (based on results from a 2003 network survey) focus largely on health, children and youth, agriculture, environment, nutrition and gender/women issues.

George Atkins Award Winners from Central Africa include:

- 1996** **James Achanyi-Fontem**, Project Director of Radio Cameroon Farm Service, Cameroon Link, Cameroon
- 2005** **Aaron Kaah**, broadcaster, Voice of Oku and Abakwa FM in Northern Cameroon

NUMBER OF RADIO PARTNERS PER COUNTRY

Burundi	(2)
Cameroon	(21)
Central African Republic	(2)
Chad	(2)
Democratic Rep. of the Congo	(14)
Gabon	(1)
Rep. of the Congo	(5)
Rwanda	(2)

2005'S GEORGE ATKINS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD WINNER



AARON KAAH from VOICE OF OKU IN CAMEROON

Aaron Kaah, a broadcaster with Oku's Rural Radio Station 95.2 FM, nicknamed the Voice of Oku, has been active in many DCFRN activities. He has worked as a radio broadcaster and producer with the Voice of Oku for six years and is keenly interested in improving the health of his community. Aaron is also working with Abakwa FM, a commercial radio station in northwest Cameroon which has just joined the Farm Radio Network. Aaron is committed to expanding his capacity as a broadcaster and was one of the first broadcasters to join our electronic-based broadcaster discussion group — a project focused on providing training and resource links for DCFRN's African partners. Aaron has regularly provided information for *Voices*, DCFRN's newsletter and training publication. Some of the topics Aaron has written about include beekeeping, agroforestry, and women in Africa. We are pleased to award this year's George Atkins Communications Award to this dedicated individual.

The Oku Rural Radio Station 95.2 FM, located in the North West Province of Cameroon, is a community station that has been a DCFRN partner since 1999. It broadcasts in Oku and Pidgin. The station was established in 1998 to create awareness among the Oku people about sustainable food production, food sufficiency, and other topics to improve livelihoods.

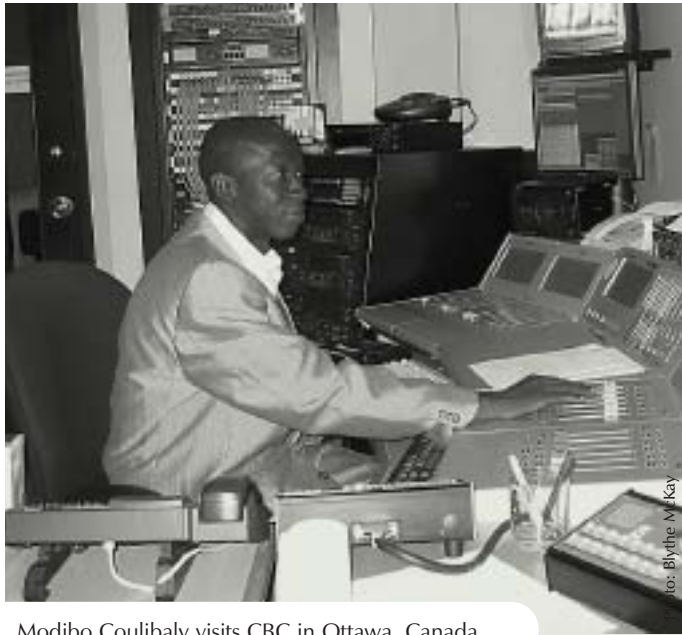
PHOTOS:

ABOVE: Aaron Kaah (right) with Blythe McKay of DCFRN in Dakar, Senegal for the LARRRA workshop.

BELOW: George Atkins (left) presenting the 2005 George Atkins Communications Award to Mr. Joseph Ayafor, first secretary of the Cameroon High Commission (accepting the award on behalf of Aaron Kaah).



PARTNERS VISIT OTTAWA



Modibo Coulibaly visits CBC in Ottawa, Canada.



Charles Ogada braves the Ottawa winter weather in front of Canada's Parliament Buildings.

Farm Radio Network partners from West and East Africa have visited our Ottawa office over the last few months. Both were in Canada as a result of their partnership with Canadian Crossroads International. In October 2005, Modibo Coulibaly spent two days in Ottawa. Modibo is the director of Radio Fanakan, a community radio station in Mali, and also the coordinator of ARCOM, a community radio network of 30 radio stations in Mali. More recently, Charles Ogada from the Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC) in Kenya paid a visit to our office in February 2006. The opportunity to meet our partners face to face is an invaluable occasion for learning how we can collaborate to improve the work Farm Radio Network does.

WELCOME NEW NETWORK PARTNERS!

- **Radio Évangile Développement de Bobo** – a community radio station – Burkina Faso
- **CADDTK (Collectif des associations pour le développement de Djiddah Thiaroye Kao)** – a group of community associations with a community radio project – Senegal
- **Abakwa FM** – a commercial radio station in northwest Cameroon
- **Radio Rurale Locale de Ouaké** – a community radio station in Benin
- **OAPDER (Organisation d'appui aux projets de développement ruraux)** – an NGO in Benin
- **Prime Radio** – community radio station – Uganda

**correction – in the June 2005 Voices we wrote that Radio Fidemiel is based in Rwanda when in fact it is in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

Broadcaster Discussion Group FOCUSES ON MDGs



The Farm Radio Network's e-mail based discussion group began buzzing again in late February. Radio partners from all over Africa have been participating in a discussion about the usefulness of the CD-ROM on the Millennium Development Goals. We will be hosting more discussions on different topics in the future. The diversity of the radio partners participating in the discussion group has guaranteed a richness and vibrancy in the discussions so far. If you would like to join the discussion group, please send an e-mail to Blythe (bmckay@farmradio.org).

EMAIL DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY RADIO FOR DEVELOPMENT

PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD – radio broadcasters, academics, students, practitioners – participated in a stimulating e-mail discussion from January 23rd to February 17, 2006. The discussion focused on:

- The **enabling environment**, including policy frameworks, legislation, regulation, funding, technical aspects, advocacy and implementation strategies for media reform.
- **Sustainability**, including financial, social and institutional aspects and the relationship between sustainability and social impact.
- **Assessing social impact**, including measuring effectiveness and ensuring community participation.

A report summarizing the debate, conclusions and recommendations is being written and will be available online and in hard-copy. Please visit the following website to access the report and learn more about what was discussed www.id21.org/communityradio/. Several Farm Radio Network partners participated in the discussion. Kwesi Ghartey-Tagoe kindly gave us permission to reprint one of his submissions in our newsletter. Here is what Kwesi had to say about sustainability and community radio in Ghana.

I am Kwesi Ghartey-Tagoe, the head of Radio Peace 88.9 FM in Winneba, Ghana, a founding member of the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN). I have been involved in Community radio for some time now and have been following the e-discussions with a lot of interest.

Indeed social sustainability is a crucial aspect of community radio. In Ghana, the initiators of community radio have been individuals or a group of individuals from particular communities. They, out of their own resources and support from donors, have been able to mobilise community members to action. The beginnings were difficult because community members needed to appreciate the concept of community radio. Commercial radio which is found all over had dominated the airwaves. Notwithstanding, through a series of community consultations, community members have come to appreciate the role of radio in their lives. They seem to have discovered their voice to speak on issues that affect them directly. Their own voices are heard on radio and this has given them the confidence to live. They have been part of programming and programme production. They have devised their own programmes on Community Participation in Local Governance (CPLG) and Community Participation in Natural Resource Management. Participation is key thus community members identify themselves with the programmes. Indeed, they own them. This ownership of programmes has sustained pro-

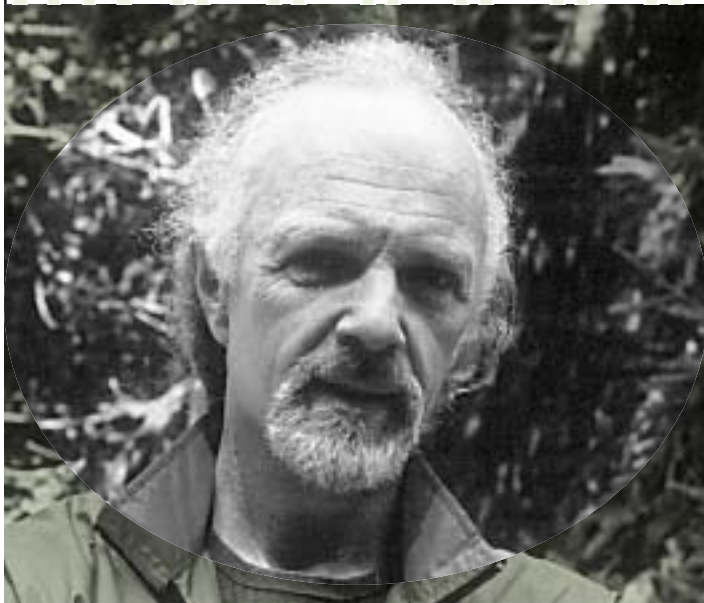
grammes and programming in community radio. Community members freely share their culture and traditions, their core values, and they know the positive things “their” radio is doing in their lives.

We also believe that training is essential if community radio is to be sustained. Thus it is taken very seriously. We have been able to put together a training manual which is actually being used in other African countries and has been translated into French.*

Financial aspects of community radio, are really nothing to write home about. The stations are most of the time in the red. We still rely on donor funding to carry out most of our programmes. Community members often volunteer their time mostly for free but for how long can this be sustained? The disadvantage is not having well qualified people to help out. Practical suggestions in this area will be appreciated. Thank you.

*The training manual is entitled *Building Participation into Training for Community Radio*. It is an introductory training manual drawn out of home-grown training workshops. You may contact the Ghana Community Radio Network secretariat via e-mail, gcbs@ghana.com for more information.

Introducing Vijay Cuddeford



Hello to everyone. In September 2005, I became Acting Managing Editor at DCFRN, replacing Jennifer Pittet, with whom I have worked since 1997, writing scripts and doing research for the Network. As Acting Managing Editor, I now co-ordinate the research, writing, editing and review of script packages, and contribute to the newsletter.

I studied sustainable agriculture at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, and, for the last nine years, I have consulted to many national and international non-profit organizations, including DCFRN and World Wildlife Fund Canada. My consulting work focuses on sustainable agriculture, pest management and pesticide policy, food security and environmental issues. I am also the managing editor of a publication which focuses on biological pest control.

I have some practical experience in agriculture: In the 1970s, I lived and worked on a farm in Israel, and, as part of my degree program at Waterloo, I interned at an organic farm. When I have the opportunity, I love to grow a few vegetables and herbs.

Working for DCFRN allows me to combine several of my passions: international development, writing and editing, sustainable agriculture, and striving for a just world and a healthy environment.

I live with my wife and daughter at the foot of a mountain overlooking an inlet of the Pacific Ocean in North Vancouver, Canada. I love good music and food, running, dancing and reading.

H5N1 AVIAN FLU: FOOD SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Avian flu has recently been found in Africa. This disease, which affects chickens and other poultry, can be passed on to humans from sick birds. The following precautions can be taken to prevent humans becoming ill from the virus:

1. The greatest risk of exposure to the virus is through the handling and slaughter of live infected poultry. Good hygiene practices are essential during slaughter and post-slaughter handling to prevent exposure via raw poultry meat or cross contamination from poultry to other foods, food preparation surfaces or equipment.
2. Home slaughtering and preparation of sick or dead poultry for food is hazardous: this practice must be stopped.
3. Conventional cooking (temperatures at or above 70°C in all parts of a food item) will inactivate the H5N1 virus. Properly cooked poultry meat is therefore safe to consume.
4. The H5N1 virus, if present in poultry meat, is not killed by refrigeration or freezing.
5. Eggs can contain H5N1 virus both on the outside (shell) and the inside (whites and yolk). Eggs from areas with H5N1 outbreaks in poultry should not be consumed raw or partially cooked (runny yolks); and uncooked eggs should not be used in foods that will not be cooked, baked or heat-treated in other ways.
6. There is no epidemiological evidence to indicate that people have been infected with the H5N1 virus following consumption of properly cooked poultry or eggs.

Source: FAO www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/special_avian.html



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

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