



FARM RADIO
INTERNATIONAL

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

The story of Wonder Agbodanu



Wonder Agbodanu and his wife tend to their rice field.

Being a farmer was not Wonder Agbodanu's first choice. But when circumstances forced him to leave his job in Accra, Ghana, he had no choice but to turn to the land. It was a radio program that helped him to succeed.

Wonder inherited a small plot of land in eastern Ghana, but began farming only after an injury cost him his city job. Though he didn't know much about growing crops, it was something he and his wife could do together. At first they grew peppers, but failed to earn a profit. The couple knew that many of their neighbours grew rice for a living, but Wonder didn't know where to start.

Then, one day, Wonder heard a farmer program on his local radio station, Volta Star, one of Farm Radio International's broadcasting partners. He listened as rice farmers shared tips and discussed farming challenges. Over time, the program guided Wonder and his wife through all the steps of planting, cultivating, harvesting, and marketing rice. Finally, the couple had hope.

Today, they make a good living from their land. Using the profits from selling rice, they have even branched out into growing cocoa. Wonder calls cocoa his "pension contribution." He attributes their success to faithfully listening to the radio. The farmer program his family relies on is produced with training, information, and support from Farm Radio International.

Supporting broadcasters in Africa to strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities

RESOURCES FOR BROADCASTERS

Our resources for broadcasters include radio scripts, issue packs, a weekly electronic news service, and an on-line community for use by hundreds of African broadcasters.

When he's not working at his radio station, George Atabong can usually be found in his garden nearby. There he tries new farming methods on a variety of crops, from tubers to fruit. Many of these ideas come from Farm Radio International's resources for broadcasters, including Farm Radio Weekly, which brings small-scale farmer news to George's e-mail inbox every week, and packages of radio scripts and issue packs, which are mailed to him several times a year. George is not the only one who benefits from these resources – so do the thousands of farmers who tune in to his regular farm radio program.

George is the program controller for Lebialem Community Radio, a long-time broadcasting partner of Farm Radio International. The station is dedicated to serving isolated populations in Cameroon's Southwest Province with information, education, and entertainment. George hosts a show called Farmers' Corner. The news stories and technical information gleaned from Farm Radio International's radio scripts and stories are a vital resource for him. He credits Farm Radio International with fostering his appreciation for sustainable agriculture and understanding of barriers affecting women farmers.

While George's knowledge and broadcasting skills have grown, so has his listenership. The station receives letters of appreciation from his listeners every week, describing how his program has changed practices in their own fields.

In 2011-2012, we developed innovative ways for broadcasters to access our resources on the internet. The highlight came in November 2011, when we launched our social networking site for African radio broadcasters, called Barza. On this website, broadcasters can establish a profile page, participate in online discussions, access radio scripts and other resources, and feature their station's work.

Photo: Broadcaster Aissata Diallo (right) interviews farmer Karim Coulibaly for a radio program on drought-resistant crops.



Highlights

- 408 broadcasting partners in 38 countries regularly use Farm Radio International's resources for broadcasters.
- 17 new radio scripts and issue packs were distributed to broadcasting partners and made available online through the George Atkins Script Service. Scripts covered a range of topics, from agricultural cooperatives to composting, and from poultry-raising to community health.
- 123 news articles for and about small-scale farmers were published in Farm Radio Weekly, reaching over 2,040 African subscribers (more than 70% of whom are radio broadcasters).
- 160 African broadcasters joined Barza where they participated in online discussion groups, accessed resources, and shared information about their work.

TRAINING FOR BROADCASTERS

Our training for broadcasters program helps the staff and volunteers at African radio stations to build the skills they need to produce highly effective agricultural radio programs.

Most radio stations in Africa – especially rural, community stations – are staffed by dedicated volunteers and employees who earn a modest honorarium. They come with little if any formal training in the skills needed to produce good farm radio programs. They may have studied journalism or agricultural extension – but radio broadcasting requires specialized skills. These broadcasters do their best to learn on the job, but they tell us that training is a top priority for them.

Since 2010, Farm Radio International (FRI) has adopted an “in-station” model of training. We chose this approach because it adds to the knowledge of all staff and volunteers, enabling the entire station to raise the quality of its programming.

In-station training embeds a skilled African trainer in a radio station for a month. During that time, the trainer assesses the needs of everyone involved in producing the station’s farmer program and then offers them a series of training modules, sometimes in groups and often one-on-one. Then, direct on-the-job coaching improves the entire production of the farmer program. Early indications are that this innovative approach makes a significant difference in the quality and effectiveness of agricultural programming produced at these stations.

Who are the trainers? Mulu Berhe is a good example. Mulu is an Ethiopian broadcaster with years of experience producing farmer programs. She – along with several of her peers from across Africa – completed an intensive “train the trainer” course. Mulu said that she joined the team because: “I want to help the people, the farmers of my country. They are the most important people in the world.”

After completing the workshop, Mulu was contracted by Farm Radio International to conduct three in-station training programs with Ethiopian radio stations. Thanks to Mulu’s training, these stations were able to produce very effective farmer programs on beekeeping, fruit production, and improved practices for growing teff. (Teff is a nutritious grain that is native to Ethiopia.)



Highlight

- FRI developed the skills of 19 African in-station trainers through intensive training workshops. These trainers delivered in-station training programs to six partner radio stations. More training is planned with other partner radio stations.

Photo: Trainer Charlie Traoré (right) works with a broadcaster on some of the technical skills required to produce better agricultural programs.

IMPACT PROGRAMMING

Through our Impact Programming strategy, we work with partners in a particular area to produce radio programs that inform and engage farmers on specific farming techniques that address identified needs.

Mariama Bomba looks forward to the day when food insecurity is a just a “bad memory” for the people of Mali. Unfortunately, food insecurity has been a reality for Mariama’s family for years. She has struggled to produce enough sorghum – their family’s staple food – to meet their needs. The farmer felt that she could boost her yields if only she could afford chemical fertilizer. But a series of radio programs showed Mariama that she had all the materials needed to help her crop flourish.

Radio Djédougou, a station that reaches Mariama’s community of Béléco, partnered with Farm Radio International to produce programs about millet and sorghum production. The programs focused on simple, sustainable practices for overcoming challenges with these traditional crops.

Mariama and others in her community enthusiastically embraced information on composting. She proudly displays her compost pit, where she has placed dried leaves, animal droppings, and food scraps. She is eager for the growing season ahead, when her crop will be nurtured by this home-made fertilizer.

In 2011-2012, Farm Radio International completed the groundwork needed to expand our Impact Programming. We established a regional office in Arusha, Tanzania – now registered as a national NGO, opened an office in Ethiopia, strengthened our offices in Mali and Ghana, and formed strategic working partnerships in Malawi and Uganda. Three projects began this year, with many others in the pipeline.

On World Radio Day, February 13, 2012, we published three research reports from the African Farm Radio Research Initiative, a study which proved the effectiveness of a specific kind of radio programming in improving food security. The reports can be found at www.farmradio.org.

Photo: Mariama Bomba demonstrates composting techniques that she learned through a specialized radio program.



Highlights

- In Ethiopia, two short radio series were produced, based on recent work by the International Livestock Research Institute. These included a series on beekeeping and a series on avocado and mango production.
- In Tanzania, a three-year project was launched to encourage farmers to plant beans alongside maize to improve soil fertility. The project is funded by AGRA and works with key national partners.
- In Mali, Farm Radio International carried out two participatory radio campaigns in partnership with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics. One is related to controlling a common weed, striga; while the other covers millet and sorghum production.



A message from Kevin Perkins, Executive Director

eRadio – sharing knowledge, giving voice

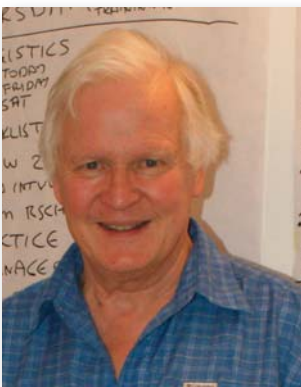
In early 2012, I had the privilege of seeing one of our broadcasting partners at work in Ghana. He sat in a broadcast booth, just like George Atkins (Farm Radio International's founder) would have 40 years ago when he hosted his farm radio program on CBC. But times certainly have changed! Our Ghanaian partner held a cell phone in one hand, while with the other he tapped away on a laptop. He was using the cell phone to conduct a live interview with a farmer. On his laptop he was queuing up the next song to play. Talk about multi-tasking!

Today's new information and communications technologies have been transformative. Smartphones and social networking websites create exciting new ways to spread information, share opinions, and get people talking about important issues. The majority of small-scale farmers in Africa cannot access the internet and smartphones. So our broadcasting partners provide the link, using these technologies to create better, more interactive radio programs that farmers *can* access.

Our work in 2011-12 demonstrated the re-emerging power of radio as a highly effective way to help African farmers. We developed innovative ways of providing resources like radio scripts to African radio stations, increased broadcasters' skills through training and coaching, developed and produced high-impact radio programs with partner stations, and integrated new – and affordable – technology into the production process. Our new web-based social network for African broadcasters (Barza), our on-line learning programs, and our experimental uses of interactive voice response, and low-cost digital recording and editing are important areas of innovation. They are helping our broadcasting partners to serve their rural communities like never before, sharing knowledge and giving voice to farmers.

Our expansion into these new areas would not have been possible without the remarkable support of our donors, volunteers, partners, dedicated and capable staff, and strong Board of Directors. I take this opportunity to offer profound thanks to everyone that has contributed to Farm Radio International's work over the past year. It is a privilege to continue working with you.

Kevin Perkins, Executive Director



A message from Doug Ward, Chair of the Board of Directors

Radio – The new frontier for farmer extension services

This year I was invited to Nairobi, Kenya to address an international conference on extension services. "Extension" is the name of a very practical government service that sends agricultural agents to help small-scale farmers keep up with best farming practices.

I was shocked to learn there hadn't been a major international meeting on extension for decades. Tragically, it was gutted – along with rural primary education – in the 1980s and '90s. Fortunately, extension is making a comeback. Speaker after speaker presented evidence that extension is needed now more than ever. If we are serious about helping farmers feed their families well and grow products for the market, we must invest in extension services. But there is a hitch: African governments are strapped for cash. They simply cannot afford to provide an extension worker for every 300 farmers like they did in the "good old days."

My speech had a simple theme: add radio! Extension workers can talk to farmers on air, as well as in the fields. Extension workers who are also broadcasters will be able to reach up to 10 times more farmers with timely, pertinent advice. Extension departments and radio stations in Africa are both dedicated to helping farmers. To serve more farmers, they need to find creative ways to work together.

Farm Radio International is helping to make this happen. We have designed a short course that African agricultural schools can use to train extension workers as broadcasters. Two colleges, one in Malawi and one in Ghana, have expressed interest in launching this course. And we encourage our hundreds of broadcasting partners to seek new opportunities to work with their local extension providers.

For decades, well-funded extension services helped small Canadian farms flourish. It is heartwarming to think that millions of African small-scale farmers might soon benefit from the same service – with a little help from radio, and a boost from Farm Radio International!

Doug Ward, Chair of the Board of Directors

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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Millions of small-scale farmers and their families benefited this year from the generosity of our friends and supporters. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the many individuals, groups, corporations, and foundations who gave to Farm Radio International. We would like to make special mention of the following funders:

Anne Burnett
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Water Integrity Network (WIN)

*With funding provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to WUSC, Farm Radio International implemented the African Farm Radio Results Initiative (AFRRI-2).

The support of thousands of Canadians makes Farm Radio International's work possible. Thank you for sharing our vision for stronger farming communities in Africa!

BOARD REPORT

The Board of Directors oversees management and operations to ensure that Farm Radio International stays true to its mission of supporting broadcasters to strengthen small-scale farming, and that it does so as efficiently, economically, and effectively as possible.

On an yearly basis, we:

- review strategic intentions, establish an annual work plan, and approve the annual budget;
- review the achievement of the work plan;
- support our Executive Director and evaluate his performance;
- ensure that we have appropriate board-level policies to focus and expedite Farm Radio International's work.

In addition, all directors serve on either our program committee or our fundraising and public relations committee.

Specific board initiatives in 2011-2012 included:

- conducting the first evaluation of relations with a strategic partner, Farm Radio Malawi;
- approving a revised Program Execution Agreement with World University Service of Canada (WUSC);
- augmenting our information-gathering process in order to better evaluate our expanding work in Africa.

We thank our donors, our Executive Director Kevin Perkins, and our dedicated staff in Africa and Canada for a year of exceptional achievements.

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Members of our Circle of Producers are loyal and generous supporters who have, over the years, donated over \$1,000 cumulatively. They enable us to provide services that help African broadcasters meet the needs of smallholder farmers.

Lazarus Laiser and Emmanuel Asamoah

winners of the 2012 George Atkins Communications Award

The George Atkins Communications Award recognizes rural radio broadcasters for their outstanding commitment and contribution to food security and poverty reduction in low-income countries.



Emmanuel Asamoah is the General Manager of Rite FM in Ghana. He was a catalyst in the station's adoption of a mission to serve the agricultural community and promote social development. Emmanuel currently hosts three programs, featuring agricultural entrepreneurs, research solutions to farmer challenges, and agricultural news of the week.

Lazarus Laiser is a journalist, media trainer, and agricultural radio program host with Habari Maalum Media in Tanzania. As a scriptwriter for Farm Radio International, his accomplishments include a reality series highlighting maternal health issues and an award-winning script about farmer innovation. Lazarus also played key roles in Farm Radio International's recent research initiatives.



FINANCIALS

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, Farm Radio International managed the resources entrusted to us by donors to deliver invaluable services to African broadcasters and small-scale farmers, with impressive, measurable results. An audit of our year-end financial statements was conducted by Deloitte & Touche LLP. Please contact us if you would like a copy of our complete, audited financial statements.

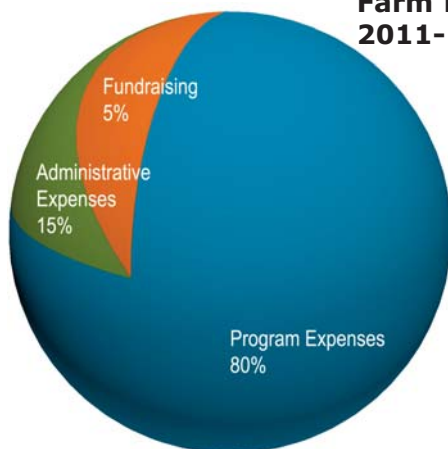
Statement of revenues and expenditures for the year ending March 31, 2012

	2012	2011
Revenues		
Donations		
<i>Individuals and groups</i>	278,419	352,378
<i>Foundations</i>	26,532	30,000
<i>African Farm Radio Results Initiative</i>	1,127,472	1,254,425
Canadian International Development Agency	133,337	199,996
Project grants	590,033	385,888
Investment	1,464	1,424
Miscellaneous	2,818	—
	<u>2,160,075</u>	<u>2,224,111</u>
Expenditures		
Program expenses	1,724,921	1,770,622
Administrative expenses	324,953	341,826
Fundraising	103,343	99,437
Total expenses	<u>2,153,217</u>	<u>2,211,885</u>
Net revenue	<u>6,858</u>	<u>12,226</u>

Statement of net assets as of March 31, 2012

	2012	2011
Assets		
Current Assets		
<i>Cash</i>	307,569	120,560
<i>Receivables</i>	42,620	190,983
<i>Advances to host field offices</i>	57,178	42,125
<i>Prepaid and deposits</i>	1,302	619
	<u>408,669</u>	<u>354,287</u>
Capital assets	—	1,961
Gift receivable	23,451	23,891
	<u>432,120</u>	<u>380,139</u>
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
<i>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</i>	133,712	104,396
Deferred contributions	139,362	123,555
	<u>273,074</u>	<u>227,951</u>
Net assets	159,046	152,188
Net assets consist of:		
<i>Unrestricted</i>	<u>159,046</u>	<u>150,227</u>
<i>Invested in capital assets</i>	—	1,961
	<u>432,120</u>	<u>380,139</u>

Farm Radio International 2011-12 Expenditures



FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL

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Front page photo: Women farmers share information about growing sorghum.