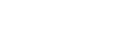
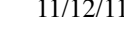
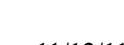
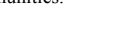
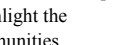
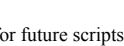
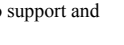
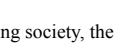
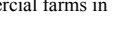
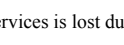
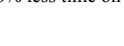
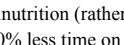
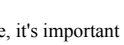
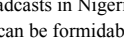
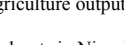
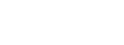
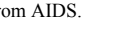
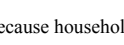
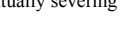
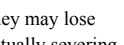
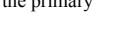
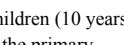
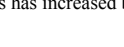
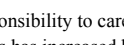
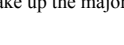
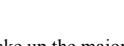
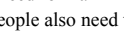
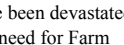
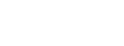




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DONATE NOW



September 2001 – Network News

Using radio to combat AIDS

Radio can be used as a tool to fight AIDS. By broadcasting informative, practical radio programs we can strengthen families and communities that have been devastated by the disease. Worldwide, there are about 35 million people living with AIDS. Two-thirds live in sub-Saharan Africa. These numbers demonstrate the need for Farm Radio Network partners to provide radio programs about AIDS so that their listeners can learn about and discuss ways to reduce the risk of infection. People also need to hear about ways to cope when they, or a family member or friend, contracts the AIDS virus.

It makes sense for Farm Radio Network to take action against AIDS. We have two decades of experience in addressing the needs of women: women make up the majority of small-scale or subsistence farmers. And in developing countries, especially in rural areas, it is women who are most affected by AIDS.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, more than half of HIV-positive adults are women. In South and South-East Asia, more than one-third are women.
- Many people return to their rural homes when they become sick from AIDS. Women head most poor rural households, and it becomes their responsibility to care for the sick while continuing to ensure the well-being of others in the household. In rural Uganda, for example, the working day of AIDS widows has increased by 2 to 4 hours to make up for labour shortages and loss of income.
- The increased burden on women has a ripple effect. Small children are often left unattended. Meals may be poorly and hastily prepared. Older children (10 years and above) are working longer hours, and their contribution to agricultural activities is increasing significantly. The health and diets of women – the primary caregivers and household heads – deteriorates as a result of exhaustion and less food intake.
- More households are headed by AIDS widows than AIDS widowers. Widows with dependent children tend to become entrenched in poverty. They may lose access to land, labour, inputs, agricultural extension, credit and other support services. The stigma of HIV/AIDS compounds their situation, eventually severing assistance from the extended family, which is often their only safety net, and the community.

The impact of AIDS on agriculture in developing countries is now being revealed, and the situation is alarming. Production has dropped significantly because households lose labour and spend time and money on medical treatment.

Statistics from Zimbabwe illustrate the impact:

- On small farms, the production of maize (a staple in the diets of rural people) declined by 61% last year due at least in part to illness and death from AIDS.
- Cotton production dropped by 47%; vegetables by 49%; groundnuts by 37%.

Studies in Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast also show adverse effects on agriculture.

The impact on agriculture is felt elsewhere, too. In Thailand, for example, one-third of rural families affected by AIDS experienced a halving of their agriculture output.

Enhancing public awareness to change risky behaviours is key to winning the battle. And radio is the most effective means of achieving this. Local broadcasts in Nigeria and Kenya account for at least part of a significant (>30%) increase in condom sales. If our radio partners throughout Africa join this battle, the results can be formidable.

It's also important to link AIDS to other development issues. In countries such as Uganda, where four-fifths of the population are involved in agriculture, it's important to talk about AIDS as an agriculture and food security issue.

Do listeners understand, for example, that AIDS will affect their food intake? In female-headed AIDS-affected households, it is food insecurity and malnutrition (rather than medical treatment and drugs) that are the family's most immediate threats. A survey in Tanzania found that a woman with a sick husband spends 60% less time on agricultural activities than normal.

Do farmers understand that AIDS will reduce their agriculture services? A study in Uganda reveals that 20% to 50% of all working time of extension services is lost due to HIV/AIDS.

Do farm workers understand their risks? A recent study for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization showed high levels of infection on many commercial farms in Kenya. On one sugar estate, one-quarter of the workforce was infected with HIV. Sadly, this situation is not unusual.

Harvard economist Jeffery Sachs says: HIV/AIDS damages society just as it does the human body. It begins by killing those parts responsible for building society, the women and breadwinners who sustain and safeguard the community as a whole. At Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, we are taking action to support and sustain rural livelihoods by helping broadcasters build awareness about AIDS, and how to prevent it.

From our partners

Every week we receive enthusiastic letters from our radio partners, describing how they use our information packages and suggesting ideas and topics for future scripts. The messages in these letters are clear: they stress the increased need for practical information to help them produce effective radio programs; they highlight the importance of reaching local, often remote, areas in need of information; they affirm that our material addresses the concerns of farmers and rural communities.

In two recent letters, our partners wrote:

It was a pleasure to receive your letter containing the scripts for radio programmes. I cannot describe how happy I am to have them. I am happy to inform you that my boss has asked that we create a spot specifically to use the scripts. We have decided to adapt them to suit our purpose and I am trying to develop a farm radio jingle for all the materials adapted from your scripts.

I also wish to inform you that we have already started a weekly programme with the Savannah Agricultural Research (SARI) in the northern region of Ghana.

*Sincerely,
Sadiq Hurruna
Simli Radio
Ghana*

The Farm Radio Network has been a source of vital information for our Community Radio Network (CRN). The October edition of your scripts discusses women and agriculture. The future of our nation very much depends on efforts we take now to empower women. Women are hard workers and mobilizing them is a positive step toward self-sustenance and the alleviation of poverty.

*Michael Joseph Gowon,
Community Radio Network
Nigeria*

Thanks to the support of generous donors, radio partners in over 100 countries – partners like Michael Joseph and Sadiq – can continue to provide important information to rural people in their countries.

Volunteer profile

As we continue to celebrate International Year of Volunteers, we recognize the work of one of the many dedicated volunteers on our team, Alison William. Alison has been a volunteer at Farm Radio Network for over two years, processing and verifying financial gifts, assisting in our library and completing a number of administrative functions. Alison even helped us with our move to the new office last year!

When asked why she volunteers at the Network, Alison said,

"The work is educational and enjoyable. I have learned so much volunteering here and I enjoy contributing to the community. And of course, I think it's important to help people in need."

And the staff certainly appreciate her involvement. Mary Hanson, the Network Librarian/Information Manager says about Alison,

"She's a wonderful person to have around. Alison will pitch in with whatever needs to be done! She's an asset to our team."

Thank you, Alison. We appreciate your good work and the work of all Network volunteers who have made the past 22 years, helping farmers and their families, so successful!

What are you doing on October 16th?

October 16th is World Food Day. 800 million people still do not have enough to eat – 70% of those live in rural areas. Take Action on the 16th! Create awareness about the problems associated with hunger and poverty:

1. Learn more about the issues involved with food insecurity.
2. Find 3 interesting statistics (there is one above) and share the information with a friend.
3. Ask them to join you in your support for events or projects that work to improve food security and poverty reduction.

For more information contact the UN Food and Agriculture Organization at world-food-day@fao.org or fax them at 39-06-57053210. Together we can fight hunger.

Thank you Friends of Farmers

Thank you to our Friends of Farmers – monthly donors who have pledged support to rural development throughout the year. Giving on a monthly basis helps keep our administrative costs low, while ensuring that most of every dollar goes towards our unique program to support people working for food security and poverty reduction. Friends of Farmers also helps us plan ahead and make long-term commitments to our partners.

Your continued support makes a tremendous difference to the future of radio partners and rural farmers around the world!

By joining Friends of Farmers, you pledge your support to Farm Radio Network by authorizing monthly donations. These gifts are withdrawn from your chequing account or charged to your VISA or Mastercard on the 15th of every month. If you are interested in learning more about becoming part of the Friends of Farmers plan, please contact our office or pledge your support on the enclosed coupon.