

# Network News

SEPTEMBER 2003

## Helping children on farms and in rural areas

The health and safety of children – 40% of the world's population – is of utmost concern to many Canadians concerned about sustainable development. It is also one of our greatest development challenges.

Children in rural areas of developing countries often lead difficult, even dangerous lives. Children take on many responsibilities that many Canadians would consider hardships. They walk several kilometres each day to collect water and firewood. They spend hours tending field crops or caring for livestock, often alone and without adequate food and water; boys often are separated from family for days at a time. In addition to their farm responsibilities, girls also care for younger siblings. As families struggle to cope with financial difficulties, they are sometimes unable to meet the nutritional, educational and emotional needs of children.

Some children work as farm labourers, and may not have any family support at all. They are often overworked, mistreated, or forced to work in unsafe conditions. As agricultural labourers, they are given the responsibilities and workloads of adults without the proper training or supervision.

Consider other recent statistics that reflect the urgent need to protect children:

- Each day, 6,000 children and youths are infected with HIV.
- By 2010, there 25 million children will be orphaned due to HIV/AIDS.
- 50 million children are underfed. More than half of all child deaths worldwide are attributable to malnutrition.

In response to this growing need, we are producing scripts and training materials for radio programs about children in rural communities. This December, our partners will receive materials to help them discuss, on air, child safety and labour issues on the farm, the safe use of pesticides, and appropriate tools and workloads for children. Materials will also provide resources for radio programs about how to care for children with HIV/AIDS, prenatal care and infant nutrition, and how children can cope with the stress of working and assuming adult responsibilities.

The Farm Radio Network provides radio scripts, training materials and a newsletter to assist broadcasters in their programming about children and health. Newsletter articles provide both background information and suggest practical program ideas. For example, broadcasters can provide a forum for children to speak out, give oral testimony of their life experiences, and see themselves reflected in the stories of others.

Children around the world need to be healthy, safe and secure if we are to achieve long-term stability and sustainable development. We need to work together to make the welfare of children a priority. With our help, radio broadcasters in the Farm Radio Network are able to make a real contribution to children's well-being.

Many of our partners already have ongoing children's programs. For example, BUSH Radio in South Africa airs three programs organized by the Children's Radio Education Workshop. These programs are created and aired by youth. The initiative also trains up to twenty young people, who then produce and broadcast their own weekend radio shows. As partners in the Farm Radio Network, BUSH Radio can share its experience and expertise with other rural radio stations in Africa and around the world.



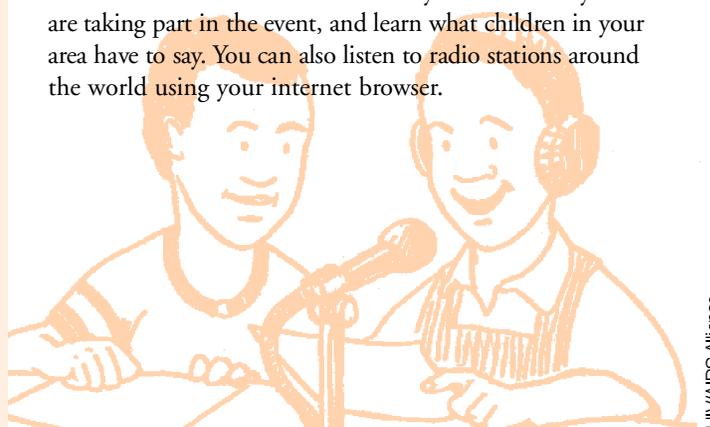
CIDA

## December 14th is for children

December 14<sup>th</sup> is International Children's Day of Broadcasting, when broadcasters around the world air programs with, about and for children. The largest broadcasting campaign for children in the world, it is both a celebration of children's creativity, and a chance for them to actively participate in the media. Children and youth tell their own stories on television and radio, and even produce, write or host their own programs.

Activities that include children in broadcasting help improve the lives of children by providing a unique platform to voice their concerns, discuss their rights and share their experiences. Increasing participation of marginalized groups and including voices not always heard in the media are important steps in bringing about meaningful, positive change.

In preparation for the International Children's Day of Broadcasting, we are developing child-centered scripts and training materials for radio broadcasters. You too can be part of this special celebration. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, make a special effort to listen to or watch stations in your community that are taking part in the event, and learn what children in your area have to say. You can also listen to radio stations around the world using your internet browser.



HIV/AIDS Alliance

## Update: Radio series to address conflict



Our broadcaster kit, “Conflict resolution and reconstruction” was distributed to our radio partners in June. Scripts in the kit covered issues important to those affected by war, such as planting survival crops, rebuilding seed supplies and coping with the realities of refugee camps. Response to date has been encouraging and enthusiastic. Here is one of the comments we received:

*I was very happy to receive [the conflict] package. My radio station affiliate, FM Awagna, is located in a conflict zone:*

*Casamance (southern Senegal). One of the goals of our radio station is to contribute to conflict resolution and lasting peace in the region. Your package truly responds to our immediate circumstances, especially as this is our pre-winter season and there is a seed shortage throughout Senegal at this time... your package could not have come at a better time.*

Mamadou Goudiaby – *Reseau des Radio Rurales et Locales du Senegal*

Thanks to all donors who made the production of this kit possible!

## Sharing farmers' creativity and innovation

Innovation and experimentation are important to farming and rural life. Innovations can be as simple as reorganizing a plot of land, or using a new storage technique. These simple changes can increase agricultural production and help manage the farm more efficiently. In Mexico, for example, farmers used velvet beans growing in their fields to increase soil fertility and improve maize yields.

The Farm Radio Network is one of the most effective ways to share farmer innovation stories. Listeners of our partners' programs use their local radio station to share experiences, and work cooperatively to address problems. With the help of programs developed with our support, farmers learn how to manage resources, increase yields, modify tools and reduce labour. On-air dialogues that offer new perspectives can help small-scale farmers – who usually don't have access to extension, training or the internet – share information relevant to their situation, and improve their knowledge and understanding of factors important to agricultural development.

The Farm Radio Network's fall series will highlight farmer success stories and encourage on-farm experimentation. For example, the script “Compare farm methods on different test plots” demonstrates how one farmer increased his yield after trying new techniques.

Positive accounts such as these do more than share information. Learning about the trials and triumphs of other small-scale farmers in the South helps to build the confidence needed for experimentation and innovation. Understanding that we often have the means – and the responsibility — to address our problems is an important step to building self-reliance and creating sustainable solutions to poverty and hunger.

## Privacy update

Many donors are concerned about the security of their private information entrusted to the charities they support. Recent legislation to protect the privacy of individuals has been enacted, and Farm Radio Network is compliant with this. In addition, we have adopted the Code of Ethics of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, and follow the Donor Bill of Rights of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

For more information about our fundraising and privacy policies and practices, please visit our website at [www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org).

### Supporting broadcasters to strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities.

Contact us at Developing Countries Farm Radio Network  
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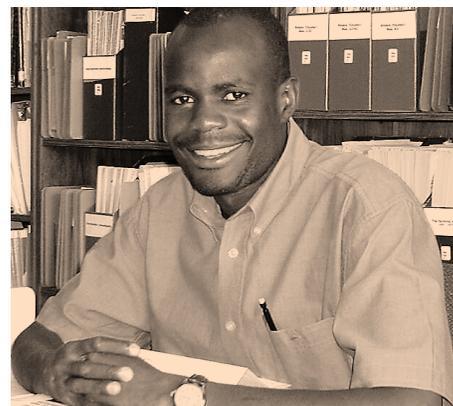
Charitable Registration Number (BN) 11888 4808 RR001

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## Volunteer has passion for radio



Ken Jawoko, Network volunteer

Farm Radio Network volunteers bring a diversity of skills and expertise to our work. They often bring enthusiasm for radio for development, inspired by our unique program and its amazing potential for change. And sometimes, they bring directly relevant experience that fuels their commitment to our organization. Take Ken Jawoko, for example.

Ken has volunteered at Farm Radio Network since February 2003, working in our library and assisting with fundraising campaigns. Before arriving in Canada, Ken worked as a broadcast journalist in Uganda. He was attracted to journalism because he wanted to “work with media to advocate for the rights and needs of marginalized people.” We recently asked Ken to share a bit about his background:

*My first few weeks in Canada, I came across Farm Radio Network on the Internet. I wanted to get involved in volunteer activities that would help me gain Canadian work experience and also meet new people. One of the main things that attracted me to the Network was that they were involved in educating farmers through radio programs and dramas - something that I was actively involved in before migrating to Canada.*

*I worked as a broadcast journalist in a community radio station in rural Uganda. Our aim was to inform local people about social, political and economic issues, while at the same time entertaining listeners. I covered issues like health (HIV/AIDS, malaria, clean water, sanitation), poverty eradication, security and politics among others. I hosted talk shows on the air, and invited a variety of guests to discuss these issues, including farmers, politicians, civil society leaders, health experts and other stakeholders.*

*Sometimes at the station we wished we had external inputs, since we did not always have all the materials we needed for broadcasts. I believe most rural radio stations the world over face similar challenges – many do not have well-researched, reliable information. Organizations like Farm Radio Network do a tremendous job by meeting that need.*

A special thank you to all the committed volunteers, like Ken, for supporting our work and the work of our radio partners worldwide!