

**Developing Countries Farm Radio Network****Farmers reap benefits thanks to generous Canadians**

A quarter century ago, an ordinary man with an extraordinary vision imagined a world where farm families in developing countries would transcend the poverty and isolation that were barriers to a better life. He pictured a communication network that would help small-scale farmers exchange practical, appropriate techniques on how to increase their food supply and improve their family's education and health. He believed that by sharing – information, resources, talent and skills – we could make the world a better place.

Today, his vision is a reality. *Developing Countries Farm Radio Network* has become an important link for hundreds of broadcasters – and hundreds of millions of rural radio listeners – in Africa, the Americas and Asia. And it all began with a bumpy bus ride...

A fortuitous bus ride

It's April 29, 1975, and George Atkins, a farmer and long-time voice of CBC's noon farm radio broadcast is squeezed into a bus bouncing through the Zambian countryside. He's been invited to Zambia to take part in a workshop for Commonwealth farm broadcasters. He's seated between two African colleagues, Oyewole Erinle from Nigeria and Abdul Sessay from Sierra Leone. What George learned on that bus ride would change the course of his life and lay the groundwork for the founding of the Farm Radio Network.

Talking with his colleagues, George discovered that African broadcasters were in desperate need of relevant, practical information for the small-scale farmers in their audiences. With few information sources, broadcasters relied on government-supplied information that often promoted the use of costly fertilizers, pesticides and modern machinery – advice their listeners could neither afford nor use.

"I was certain that practical solutions existed within the developing world," George remembers. "Small-scale farmers just needed a way to exchange low cost, appropriate farm methods with

*Farm broadcasters in the field*

each other, that they or their ancestors developed." So George set about creating a communications network capable of sharing the valuable knowledge of farmers in developing countries.

With start-up funding from Massey-Ferguson, George wrote to broadcasters who were already talking to farmers. He offered to provide them with useful information free of charge – if they

would also share farming tips from their region. Soon George had assembled a small library of simple techniques practised by farmers in developing countries; and recruited the charter members of Developing Countries Farm Radio Network.

An innovative idea

By 1979 – four years after his bus ride in Zambia – George sent the first package of radio scripts to 34 broadcasters in 26 countries. The *News of Network* quickly spread. Demand for scripts increased, as did membership. The University of Guelph and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) were early supporters, later joined by hundreds of individual Canadian donors. The Network was reaching millions of people. It was an innovative idea that offered a practical response to people's needs.

A quarter century later, Farm Radio Network is internationally recognized for its expertise in developing content for farm radio broadcasts and for its unique collection of scripts.

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Celebrating 25 years of radio for rural development

We get by with a little help from our friends

In honour of our 25th anniversary, we asked some friends to write a few words about what the Network has meant to them over the years. Here are excerpts from some of the responses we received. If you'd like to read more from our partners and friends, please visit our website at www.farmradio.org.

"It was very interesting and rewarding to participate in this worldwide exchange of grassroots level information – learning how farmers in one place controlled soil erosion, for instance, and then making this information available to farmers in other areas who faced similar challenges.

All too often the work of small-scale farmers is undervalued, despite the huge contributions they make to feeding their families, their communities and their nations...I appreciate the fact that the Network acknowledges and respects small-scale farmers' knowledge and creativity, and recognizes their capacity to adapt ideas to their use if given access to appropriate information."

– Dr. Magda Burgess, former researcher/writer

"I will remember learning the full story of Developing Countries Farm Radio Network in my early years at the helm of Massey-Ferguson. What a stunning and imaginative initiative it was for helping multitudes of poor village-level farmers. They, in fact, were being bypassed by the multi million dollar development schemes financed by agencies in Northern countries. The Network was providing these farmers with information on ways they could increase their food supplies and improve their nutrition and health.

Even though Massey-Ferguson was belt tightening in the extreme, this was one company activity I would not abandon under any circumstances. My heartiest anniversary congratulations to Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, moving with the times, yet maintaining its original concept and ideals over a quarter of a century. For this I credit the Network's board and staff, and its volunteers both in Canada and overseas. I equally recognize the support of thousands of individual donors, many of whom, appreciating the enormous value of the Farm Radio Network, have contributed regularly since the very early years. Congratulations to you all!"

– Victor Rice, Former President and CEO of Massey-Ferguson

"I've been involved with Farm Radio Network for twenty years. Some of the first scripts I remember working on were: *Choosing cassava cuttings for planting*, *Preparing a home first aid kit* and *Termites are good chicken feed*. In the late 1990s we began to include relevant social issues. Now, the scripts in each package are more integrated. We select an issue and each script deals with a particular aspect of that issue. For example, in January 2002, we highlighted the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security and included scripts such as *A community revives a traditional method of grain storage during hard times*, *An AIDS widow learns her rights*, and *Successful enterprises bring income in times of crisis*."

– Jennifer Pittet, Network Coordinator

"I joined the Farm Radio Network team in 1980, with the job of building the network of participants in countries where French and Spanish are spoken. Of course, we were well aware that French and Spanish are the languages of the cities, while the languages of the farmers – those we wanted to reach – were Waloff, Quechua, Quiche, Tagalog and so many others. So it was the job of the broadcasters to interpret the scripts in the local language and cultural mode of those they served.

Since 1989, when I left the Network, there have been many changes in communication technologies. Radio though, has endured, and continues to prevail as the most immediate and effective communication tool for people who don't speak English, French or Spanish – those on the other side of the 'digital divide' – those whose transistor radio, slung between the horns of their carabao, brings them timely and useful information in words they understand."

– Helen Aitkin, former Project Manager



Plant seeds for the future... leave a lasting legacy

Have you ever wanted to give more, but felt you couldn't? If so, you may be surprised to learn that with careful planning, you can. You can enjoy financial benefits and leave a lasting legacy to the causes you believe in. No matter what your current age or income level, planned giving can help you do more than you've ever imagined.

Making a planned gift to Farm Radio Network is easy, flexible and rewarding. A simple way to make a significant contribution is by leaving a bequest in your will. Other options include gifts of life insurance policies, stocks and annuities. There are many ways to give – your tax or legal advisor can help you determine what's best for you. Not only will you contribute to helping rural people in developing countries, but you could also reduce your taxes, supplement your income and maximize the benefits to your estate and loved ones.

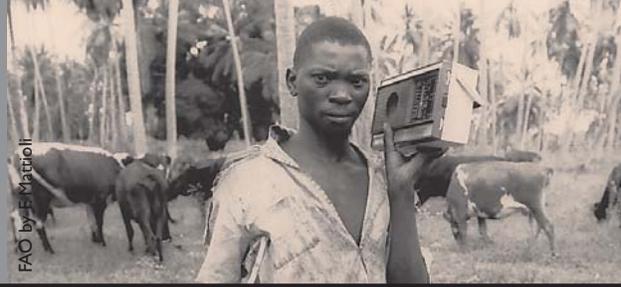
Your gift goes further

DID YOU KNOW THAT, thanks to our cost-sharing agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), every dollar you give to support rural broadcasters and small-scale farmers triggers another contribution? And, the financial support from Canadian sources is more than matched – by the in-kind contribution of volunteers and partners around the world! Farm Radio Network provides an excellent return on your charitable investment. Make a special donation today and multiply the impact of your gift.



... ever since it was a 'kernel of an idea' in George Atkins' mind, I have seen the kernel sprout, grow, mature and blossom to produce an awesome example of one dream that not only turned into action, but is having a major global impact.

– Dr. Mark Waldron, first Chair of the Board of Directors



Transmissions from the field: Feedback from our broadcasters and listeners

Ever wonder how your donation helps? Take a look at these excerpts from some of the many letters we receive from our partners and their listeners:

“Since I joined in the 1980s the Network has grown bigger and bigger. You cannot imagine how much our listeners have benefited. They keep thanking us for patiently answering their questions. And we keep telling them that the answers we get – in most cases – are from the Farm Radio Network.”

– James Achanyi-Fontem, Cameroon Link, Cameroon

“ABC Ulwazi, the education and development radio production house in South Africa, wishes the Farm Radio Network all the best on its 25th anniversary. We always look forward to the material that you send us, and we always find items to use “as is” or to adapt for programmes on health and agricultural issues. These scripts and information enhance our programmes and make our work more worthwhile. Please keep it up!”

– John van Zyl, ABC Ulwazi, South Africa

“We have found the Farm Radio Network to be very educative and informative, especially the series on caring for children in rural communities. Even if the scripts are produced far from here they are very relevant to our situation in Zimbabwe... They are written in simple language which is easy to translate.”

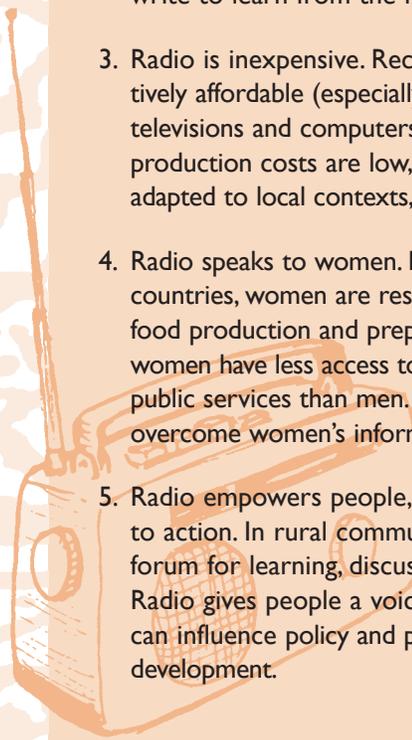
– John Masuku, Radio Voice of the People, Zimbabwe

“My name is Gariba and I am a retired agricultural extension officer doing small scale farming in my village where most of the farmers rely on me for modern technology and experience. I wish to thank you for your reliable and informative broadcast scripts that are translated into our local language and broadcast on Radio Savannah Tamale, here in northern Ghana. The authors are very innovative and think as a farmer’s friend. The programmes, especially the radio dramas, are very well presented. I wish to say Kudos to the producer for linking our rural farmers with scientists and extension workers through the magic of radio. Thanks to you, Developing Countries Farm Radio Network.”

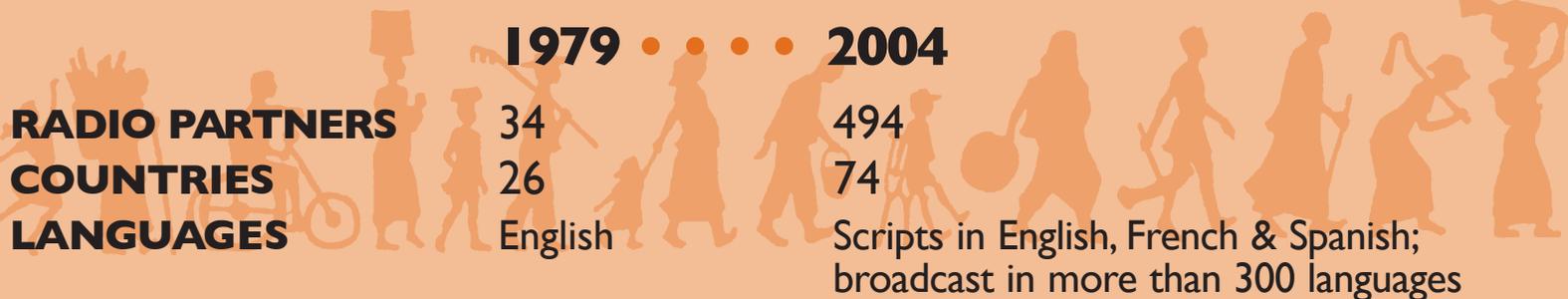
– Gariba Abukari, Ghana

5 Reasons why radio rules

1. Radio knows no boundaries. Even people who live in remote areas without phones or electricity usually have access to a radio.
2. Radio reaches poor and illiterate people. In Africa, one in five people own a radio – and these are often shared. And, you don’t need to know how to read or write to learn from the radio!
3. Radio is inexpensive. Receivers are relatively affordable (especially compared to televisions and computers!) and, because production costs are low, messages can be adapted to local contexts, in local languages.
4. Radio speaks to women. In developing countries, women are responsible for most food production and preparation. But women have less access to education and public services than men. Radio helps to overcome women’s information barriers.
5. Radio empowers people, and calls them to action. In rural communities radio is a forum for learning, discussion and debate. Radio gives people a voice so that they can influence policy and participate in development.



Then and now: the growth of a network





I have evaluated Network scripts with my audience (students, farmers' associations, housewives, and rural groups) through radio chats, field visits and workshops. I've obtained an 85% response of acceptance to the topics but most importantly, is that they put them in practice. Thanks a lot.

– Pedro Luis Garcia Carchi, Radio Cristal de Ventanas, Ecuador

Protecting your interests:

DCFRN one of the first to sign ethical fundraising code



Our work would not be possible without you – our donors. We appreciate your choice to support us and want you to have confidence in your decision. That's why we were among the first charities to adopt the Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (CCP). This Code establishes standards for fundraising practices, accountability and financial disclosure that meet the needs and expectations of the Canadian public.

Now CCP has launched their ethical code logo. It identifies charities, like ours, that are governed by the ethical code. It's your assurance that your donations are used wisely and appropriately. If you would like more information, please visit the CCP website at: <http://www.ccp.ca>.

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"We continue to provide reliable and relevant information in formats that are ready to use by broadcasters with limited budgets and time," explains Nancy Bennett, Executive Director. "But today, we do so much more. The scope and complexity of information that farmers need is much greater today. And, in addition to supporting an international information exchange, we have training activities and other projects to develop the capacity of broadcasters to meet local needs using local resources."

A network in full bloom

One thing that hasn't changed is Farm Radio Network's commitment to helping farmers produce more food, and improve rural livelihoods. When asked what he dreams of for the Network in the next 25 years, George responds simply, "I hope that we'll continue to use radio to help the poorest of the poor people in developing countries."

"We encourage everyone who has contributed to our success over the years – farmers, broadcasters, staff, volunteers, and donors – to celebrate our accomplishments," says Nancy. "Farmers around the world are reaping the benefits of 25 years of growth, thanks to you."



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

Contact us at:

**Developing Countries
Farm Radio Network**

416 Moore Avenue, Suite 101

Toronto, Ontario M4G 1C9

Tel: 416-971-6333

Fax: 416-971-5299

Toll Free: 1-888-773-7717

Email: info@farmradio.org

www.farmradio.org

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Now it's even easier to support rural development – we are accepting on-line donations. To make a secure online donation, visit our website donations section at www.farmradio.org.

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