



Sharing Water and Sanitation

Success stories over the airwaves

More than five thousand children die every day from diseases caused by unclean water and poor sanitation. Of the 6.7 billion people in the world, two and a half billion do not have access to adequate sanitation, while 884 million people do not have access to safe water.

To address this serious public health challenge, Farm Radio recently produced a script package featuring nine scripts that share African water and sanitation success stories. The package was contained within a new issue of *Voices*, our newsletter for broadcasters, featuring articles and resources about water and sanitation.

Five of these scripts were produced in a new and innovative way. One radio station in each of five countries (Malawi, Mali, Uganda, Ghana and Tanzania) was invited to identify a community in its broadcast area that faced and then overcame a water and sanitation challenge. The station then recorded local stories of how people took action to provide safer water and better hygiene in their community. The resulting programs were broadcast by each station, and then converted into radio scripts for distribution to Farm Radio's full network of over 300 radio organizations in Africa. In this way, one community's success can become an inspirational model across the continent.

In Malawi, Dzimwe Community Radio documented the efforts of villagers to improve rainwater catchment systems for domestic and agricultural use.

In Mali, Radio Fanaka Fana highlighted a local community's efforts to bring ECOSAN latrines to the village. In Uganda, Voice of Teso profiled a community which expanded its production of high-value fruit trees by making modifications to its borehole so that it could be used for dry season irrigation.

In Ghana, Classic FM told the story of a village in which positive changes occurred when people organized to stop water-borne diseases. Aided by local and regional authorities, villagers found solutions which provided safe water for the many domestic and agriculture water needs of the village. In Tanzania, Radio Maria tells about villagers' efforts, led by the village Water Committee, to improve the availability of water by expanding water catchments and digging additional wells.

Farm Radio international's special package of scripts and articles about water and sanitation was supported by a grant from the Harbinger Foundation.



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Donor Profile – Anne Burnett

In the late '80's I was approached by Elizabeth Wilson, the then Executive Director of DCFRN and a friend from U of T days, to sit on the Board of the Farm Radio Network.

Elizabeth knew of my interest and participation on another board in the international development field.

Although my own background was in teaching and then business/government relations, my keen interest in development issues stemmed from my daughter Jill, a specialist in structuring micro-credit activities.

When Elizabeth described Farm Radio's direct way of offering basic agricultural knowledge and support to farmers who had little or no access to the printed word, I was immediately an enthusiastic supporter. At that time, the scripts were prepared in Canada with information from many sources, including some of the farmers themselves and mailed to the participating broadcasters.

My other major interest over the years has been in reproductive health.

I worked briefly after my retirement with an organization to try to persuade CIDA to put more support into safe motherhood programmes abroad. The maternal mortality rates for African women especially is nothing short of catastrophic.

It occurred to me a year or so ago that perhaps Farm Radio would consider liaising with Family Care International, a highly-regarded NGO which specializes in safe motherhood initiatives in the developing world. Together, they could produce scripts that would provide basic information that might avert tragedy by alerting both women and men to the danger signs during pregnancy and childbirth.

Thankfully, the Farm Radio Board, executive and African partners welcomed my suggestion. The ideas that have been generated for the scripts by this liaison are outstanding, some taking the form of a radio drama. What better way to transmit and stimulate interest is there than to hear some of your "neighbours" talking about such personal things?

I am so grateful to the Farm Radio International for the work it does and especially that it has embraced and expanded its script material to include "safe motherhood" issues.

REALITY RADIO

With support from Farm Radio donor, Anne Burnett, we have been able to experiment with a new approach to developing scripts about a challenging topic – maternal health. We identified a young, recently married couple in Tanzania who were planning to start a family. We asked whether they would be willing to be interviewed for a radio program once a month after becoming pregnant. Happily, they were more than willing to participate in this experiment in "reality radio". Over the next 9 months, Farm Radio partner Lazarus Laiser met with the couple and interviewed them about how they felt, how they were coping, and the plans they were making for the birth and care of their child. The interviews revealed the importance of men and women working together to plan for a safe delivery supported by a skilled birth attendant. The resulting scripts will be distributed to broadcasters in a series with the Farm Radio Weekly.

Radio promotes safe motherhood

Pregnancy-related problems that women face are many, and, in most cases, unpredictable. Some of them lead to death or permanent injury. The risk is especially high in resource-poor rural settings. In early 2008, Farm Radio International was pleased to receive funding from Anne Burnett to cover the writing of radio scripts on maternal health issues. Recent research on maternal health has emphasized the vital role of careful pre-birth planning and the involvement of both parents in planning and decision-making. We built this information into a two-part radio drama that was distributed in March 2008, and a nine-part audio testimony program that will be distributed through Farm Radio Weekly in 2009.

The Promise of Potatoes

The year 2008 was designated by the United Nations as the International Year of the Potato in recognition of the potato's importance in providing food security and alleviating poverty.

At a time when food prices are soaring worldwide, the potato offers some respite. Unlike major grains, the potato is not a globally traded commodity. Because only a small fraction of potatoes enter foreign trade, potato prices are driven largely by local production costs, not international markets, and are not strongly affected by rising prices seen in other foods. Potatoes can thus be recommended as a food security crop to help low-income farmers and vulnerable consumers alike ride out the current turmoil in world food supply and demand.

According to the International Potato Center, the potato produces more nutritious food more quickly, on less land, and in harsher climates, than any

other major crop. Potatoes are rich in carbohydrates, have the highest protein content of any root or tuber crop, and are rich in vitamin C and potassium.

In response to these and other benefits, world demand and production are growing. Over the last ten years, production has risen by an average of 4.5 percent per year. In sub-Saharan Africa, countries with the highest production include Malawi, South Africa, Rwanda, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Angola and Ethiopia.

In honour of the International Year of the Potato, the McCain Foundation has generously supported the production of six scripts on potatoes and root crops such as yams and sweet potatoes. Three of these scripts were included in package 86, while three others were distributed in Farm Radio Weekly.



2008 George Atkins Communications Award Winner Visits Canada

Rachel Adipo of the Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC) in Kenya, received the 2008 George Atkins Award during her visit to Canada this past November. The Award, named after founding director Dr. George S. Atkins, recognizes rural radio broadcasters for their outstanding contribution to food security and poverty reduction in low-income countries.

During Rachel's visit, she was able to talk to many Canadians and meet with Farm Radio supporters in Ottawa, Toronto and Guelph to discuss her work. It was a delight to meet this energetic 26-year old mother of two who is already a prolific scriptwriter, writing 6 scripts for Farm Radio International. Topics ranging from gender and property rights to organic farming and cooperative farm labour showcase the range of her talent. This year, her script, *Farmers can prepare for changing weather patterns* was a winner of the Climate Change Adaptation scriptwriting competition.



Rachel and Vijay Cuddeford (Managing Editor, Farm Radio) at an Ottawa reception.

The UCRC has been a Farm Radio partner since 2005. It operates in the Siaya District of Western Kenya. Rachel started with UCRC's Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Programme where she worked with both community groups and individual farmers. As a field officer, she learned from colleagues and then trained farmers on sustainable agriculture.

Rachel understands the importance of radio and has been on the task force at UCRC to start a community radio station in her district. This past year, UCRC was successful in securing a frequency for the station and is now looking for funds for equipment.

"I believe using radio as a way to keep local farmers informed is paramount to their livelihood and sustainability."

With her talent as a scriptwriter and work as a field officer, it is easy to see how Rachel helps Farm Radio meet the needs of local small-scale farmers.



New CIDA Funding for Farm Radio International Program

Farm Radio International is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a new 3-year, \$600,000 contribution from CIDA for a program called *Farm Radio for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods*. While in the past CIDA's contribution has been based on a 1 to 1 matching formula, for the new program, CIDA is providing \$3 for every \$1 contributed by a Canadian donor (up to \$200,000 annually).

Through *Farm Radio for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods*, we will continue our core service of researching and publishing new radio scripts grouped into packages, and distributing these to up to 375 radio practitioners in sub-Saharan Africa. We will also produce *Voices*, our newsletter for radio broadcasters, featuring tips, guidelines, resource materials, and information about members of the Farm Radio network. In addition CIDA's contribution will allow us to: offer Farm Radio Weekly, an electronic news and information service sent out weekly in English and French to at least 500 radio practitioners in Africa; develop and offer 3 unique skills-building workshops for radio personnel; and support farm radio networks in three African countries.

Every year, millions of African farmers will be able to benefit from listening to radio programs based on the services we offer through the support of CIDA and our Canadian donors.

Ottawa Bonspiel 2008

On November 15, 2008, a group of 55 people gathered in Ottawa for a great day of curling to support Farm Radio International. Most participants were beginners but that didn't stop them from having a blast. The event raised \$3,000 which will provide 30 African farmer's listening clubs with wind-up, solar-powered radios. Special thanks to event volunteers Louise Atkins, Brendan Carley and Stephanie Reid for making the day such a success.



If you would like to run a bonspiel or, if your local curling club is hosting a bonspiel and is looking for a charity to sponsor, please visit www.farmradio.org or contact Brenda Jackson at Brenda@farmradio.org or 613-761-3646.

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

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