

# VOICES

SHARING IDEAS, GROWING SOLUTIONS.



The newsletter  
for partners of  
Developing  
Countries Farm  
Radio Network

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## RURAL WOMEN AND GIRLS HAVE DISTINCTIVE HEALTH ISSUES

DCFRN's mission is to support broadcasters in developing countries to strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities. Some of the most critical problems facing these communities are health issues such as HIV and AIDS, reproductive health, malaria, tuberculosis, and water-borne diseases. Rural women have specific health issues, not only for biological reasons but because of vulnerabilities based on their social roles as mothers, caregivers, farmers and householders.

This package addresses a range of rural women's health issues, including the intersection between HIV/AIDS and domestic violence; the impact of selenium consumption on HIV positive individuals; maternal and child depression; female genital cutting; the loss of agricultural knowledge when parents die of AIDS; the health (and economic and social) benefits of fonio in West Africa; health concerns related to women and farming tools; a story of women improving their lives through processing shea butter; modifying old traditions so that they work today; and the practice of "breast ironing" in Cameroon and other West African countries.

The scientific facts behind two of the scripts in this package require a little explanation.

*Continued on page 2*



PHOTO:  
Women's  
group in  
Dapaong,  
Togo.

## Rural women and girls have distinctive health issues

*continued from page 1*

First, script #2 talks about the effects of selenium on HIV positive individuals. HIV/AIDS can deplete levels of many nutrients, including selenium. Selenium cannot prevent HIV infection, and it is not a cure. However, selenium deficiency is associated with decreased immune system activity and a high risk of death in the HIV/AIDS population. Selenium and other antioxidant nutrients help protect cells from oxidative stress, thus potentially slowing progression of diseases associated with HIV. There is insufficient medical evidence to routinely recommend selenium supplements for individuals with HIV/AIDS, though supplements may help. But it is certainly important for HIV-positive individuals to consume recommended amounts of selenium in their diet. Script #6 mentions the possibility that fonio can be a beneficial grain for those with diabetes. Some scientific experiments have shown that, compared to other grains, fonio and millet porridges have a lower glycemic index. This means that it is a superior grain for persons like diabetics who have to carefully monitor and control their blood sugar levels. This should not be taken to imply that eating fonio can cure diabetes. Rather, consuming fonio and millet will help prevent diabetes and limit the impacts on diabetics when other good nutritional practices are followed.

## Many past DCFRN scripts have focused on gender and nutrition, including:

- 81.7 Gender and HIV/AIDS
- 78.4 Nutritious Foods are Important for All Babies, Rich or Poor
- 73.7 Share farming knowledge with your children
- 70.3 Nutrition – advice to an expectant mother
- 69.2 Sometimes old ways need to change
- 62.6 Women save time on the farm
- 57.10 My body, myself: A bittersweet choice
- 52.9 Deforestation and health: a woman's perspective

There are many other script topics related to gender and health that broadcasters can explore. For starters, this script package does not speak of men's special health issues, which is a whole other field for information and scripts. Other radio program topics you might consider for your audience include:

- Problems with women's access to anti-retroviral therapy medicines/programmes
- Safe pregnancy, birth and after-birth practices
- Indoor air pollution (from solid fuels, etc), and women's health
- Why are HIV infection rates in Africa so much higher for women than men?
- Gender, work and health

## Additional resources:

### United Nations websites:

- World Health Organization gender and women's health websites:  
<http://www.who.int/topics/gender/en/> and  
[http://www.who.int/topics/womens\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/womens_health/en/)
- United Nations WomenWatch Directory of UN Resources on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women – Women and Health website:  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/asp/user/list.asp-ParentID=3003.htm>
- UN Millennium Campaign: Goal 5 (Improve Maternal Health) website:  
<http://endpoverty2015.org/goals/maternal-health>

### NGOs:

- Engender Health <http://www.engenderhealth.org/>
- International Women's Health Coalition:  
<http://www.iwhc.org/index.cfm>
- Rainbo – Health and Rights for African Women:  
<http://www.rainbo.org/>
- International Center for Research on Women:  
<http://www.icrw.org/>
- IPAS: <http://www.ipas.org/>

### Other websites:

- Development Gateway – Population and Reproductive Health website:  
<http://topics.developmentgateway.org/population>
- Development Gateway – Gender and Health website  
<http://www.developmentgateway.org/gender>

# STAY TUNED FOR...

**Package 83** (March 2008) – a final decision on the theme is pending, but it will likely focus on water and sanitation, farm labourers' issues and/or maternal health.



# GOMBE FARMERS WELCOME DCFRN SCRIPTS

By Umar Baba Kumo, Gombe Media Corporation, Nigeria

Farmers in Gombe State, Nigeria, now receive the latest information on agriculture and participate in radio discussion programs on how to improve their farming activities. This development followed an agreement by Gombe Media Corporation (GMC-Radio) to broadcast DCFRN scripts in a 30-minute Hausa language program: *NOMA TUSHEN ARZIKI* (*Farming, a Source of Wealth Generation*), presented every Saturday by Adamu Musa Okonko.

So far, a number of DCFRN scripts have been modified and broadcast to meet local community needs and situations. They include: *Raising Rabbits for Meat and Profit part 1&2*, *High Quality Crops Improve Income and Reduce Poverty*, *A Law on Bush Fires*, *Avian Flu*, as well as scripts on the environment, livestock and HIV/AIDS.

The new radio program *NOMA TUSHEN ARZIKI* also invites farmers and agricultural experts to discuss identified local problems and offer solutions, either generated from the scripts or from practical farming experiences.

The partnership with DCFRN has become a good source of program material to both Gombe Media Corporation and our listeners, due to the fact that, despite our massive coverage of agricultural activities, we still lack innovative radio programs to educate our farmers on simple community-initiated farming practices and techniques.

We broadcast these scripts to about one million listeners, the majority of whom are farmers. The scripts are relevant, simple and easy to adapt to local languages and settings. Scripts that deal with HIV/AIDS issues have been converted into drama formats by the Gombe State Action Committee on HIV/AIDS to create awareness on the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on the farming population.

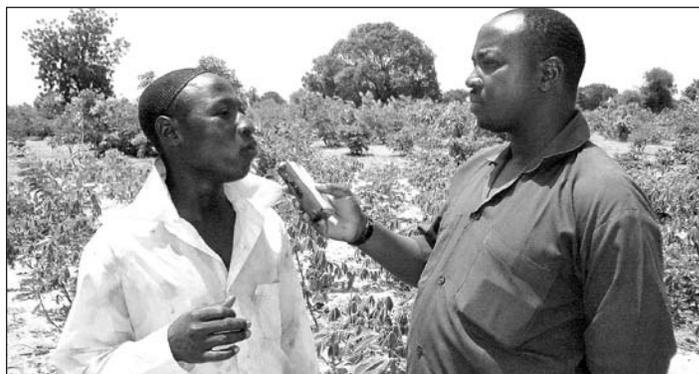


PHOTO: Adamu Musa Okonko of GMC-Radio interviewing a farmer.

Text messages from listeners indicate overwhelming support; many listeners request scripts on millet, maize and cassava production as well as information about micro-credit facilities which can empower them to actively participate in agriculture and livestock production. A script on food/grains storage using pepper was particularly helpful as an alternative to chemical forms of food preservation that can have dangerous health impacts when used improperly.

*We are happy to receive for the very first time, script package 81 and Voices 81, which arrived via our Cyangugu [Rwanda] address. We thank you so much for this.*

*We wish to inform you that 3 programs have already been broadcast on Radio UMOJA FM's airwaves. They are as follows:*

- 1. A Local Plant Prevents Pest Damage to Stored Seeds*
- 2. Deforestation and Global Warming: Who is Responsible?*
- 3. Gender and HIV/AIDS*

*Every Thursday at 19:30 we air one of the scripts. They are translated into local languages, French, Kiswahili, Mashi and Kifuleru.*

Radio UMOJA FM  
Alexis NALUNVA KAJABIKA, Director

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Package 81 has been received. I will get my team to start working on it. We are developing a drama group to reproduce the whole package in Dangme for broadcast. I have just glanced through some of the materials. The findings are very relevant and will be of great interest to our farmers.*

Kofi Larweh,  
Station Manager, Radio Ada

# EAST AFRICAN BROADCAST AND FARMING EXPERTS LEARN ABOUT DCFRN AND AFRRRI

On August 8<sup>th</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup>, groups of radio broadcasters and agricultural researchers met with DCFRN staff in Kampala, Uganda and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, respectively. These one-day workshops had the dual focus of publicizing DCFRN's African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRRI) project to stakeholders and familiarizing participants with DCFRN's core programme work.

Emily Arayo, AFRRRI's National Research Coordinator for Uganda, chaired the Kampala meeting. Participants were introduced to DCFRN's work and to the AFRRRI project. Participants discussed broadcasters' impact on their communities and expressed the need for a Ugandan forum of agricultural broadcasters. Proposed activities included: collaborating to build broadcaster capacity, disseminating timely information to listeners and acting as an advocacy group with policy makers. Proposed mechanisms for network building included e-discussion

groups, involving members in AFRRRI activities, and periodic meetings and reports. The meeting concluded with participants enthusiastic about further networking.

The Dar es Salaam meeting was organized by Margaret Kingamkono, AFRRRI's National Research Coordinator for Tanzania, and also featured presentations on DCFRN and AFRRRI. Both presentations stimulated discussion and information-sharing in group break-out sessions and in plenary.

The workshop produced three major outputs. (i) Stakeholder linkages as a stepping stone to forming a network of DCFRN/AFRRRI partners in Tanzania; (ii) Familiarity with DCFRN and the AFRRRI project, and (iii) Preliminary ideas on key AFRRRI research issues. At the end of the workshop, participants unanimously agreed to form a DCFRN Partner Network, and an implementation plan was agreed upon.

## WELCOME NEW PARTNERS!

- **Central Broadcasting Service Ltd.** – a radio station based in Kampala, Uganda
- **Chikuni Radio** – a community radio station in Monze, Zambia
- **Eden Community Radio** – a community radio station based in Limbe, South West Province, Cameroon
- **Opsett Media/Africa Radio Bureau** – a media house specializing in development radio program production, particularly farming programs, in Kampala, Uganda
- **Radio AFIA** – a community radio station based in Dakar, Senegal
- **Radio Aïda FM** – a community radio station in Linguère, Senegal
- **Radio Banjo FM** – a private radio station based in Kayes, Mali
- **Radio Communautaire de Noun** – a community radio station based in West Cameroon
- **Radio la Voix du Paysans FM** – a community radio station in Sud-Kivu, DRC
- **Radio Sud 7** – an NGO that produces radio programs and collaborates with community radio broadcasters
- **The Smallholders Foundation** – an NGO with a radio project in Imo State, Nigeria

# East Africa – PARTNER PROFILES

By Grace Githaiga, Econews Africa

## Mang'elele Community Radio

Mang'elele Community Radio is a project of Mang'elele Community Integrated Development Project (MCIDP) in Mtito Andei, Kenya. Radio Mang'elele serves the semi-arid Makueni District in Kenya.

The station is situated in Nthongoni Location, Mtito Andei Division of Makueni district. It is the pioneer in community broadcasting in Kenya. It broadcasts in *Kikamba*, with intersperses of *Kiswahili*. The radio's frequency is 89.1FM.

The Mangelete Community Integrated Development Project (MCIDP) brings together 33 poor rural women groups from Nthongoni, Ivingoni, and Masongaleni – all located in the same district. The women's groups originally started as radio listening groups and were exchanging information on reproductive health, agriculture and other developmental issues. Through this, it was realized that the establishment of a radio station would enhance their knowledge and they would be able to acquire more information as well as enhance their participation. Hence, Radio Mang'elele was born. However, it took a long time for it to get a broadcasting licence.

Mang'elele Radio went on air on February 22, 2004 at 10.46 am. The station broadcasts up to a radius of 100km (around Sultan Hamud and Caltex Petrol station, Voi). It covers the whole of Makueni district, Kitui district, and parts of Mwingi, Machakos, Kajiado and Taita Taveta.

Nthongoni and its surroundings are very hot and the lack of water makes the area very dry. The problem of drought and malnutrition therefore mobilized people, particularly the women who formed the 33 rural women's groups.

The Radio Station has increased its daily broadcasting hours from 8 to 16 (6am to 10pm). The radio has 22 staff that consists of 21 volunteers and a Station Manager. The volunteers produce and present the programmes. For effective management, the station is divided into departments – the News Department, Finance and Administration Department, Technical Department, and Sales and Marketing Department.

## Orkornerei Radio Services

Orkornerei Radio Services (ORS) is a project of the Institute of Orkornerei Pastoralists Advancement (IOPA) in Manyara Region, Tanzania. IOPA serves six administrative districts of rural Tanzania, and is inhabited by the nomadic Maasai community that largely occupies the Manyara region.

ORS is located in Simanjiro. This radio serves five districts in the Mara region namely Same, Mwangi, Lushoto, Simanjiro and Korogwe.

The radio went on air in June 2002 and its frequency is 94.4 FM. It broadcasts 7 hours daily (3pm – 10pm). The station has 7 volunteers and a Station Manager.

It broadcasts in the Maa language. The radio was established to improve the economic and social standards of the pastoral Maasai communities. It seeks to empower the pastoralist community through radio programming on issues such as livestock development, environmental conservation, gender equality, preservation of culture, and importance of education.



PHOTO: Khadija Abdallah, station manager, and Lukas Kariongi, director, Orkornerei FM, Terat, Tanzania.



PHOTO: Radio Mang'elele presenters in the studio.

# MEET THE AFRRRI TEAM!

The African Farm Radio Research Initiative is in full swing! Since its launch in April 2007, DCFRN has been busy setting up the project on the ground across Africa. The AFRRRI team is now in place and consists of a National Research Coordinator for each country (Mali, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi), a Senior Research Manager (based in Accra, Ghana), a Program Director (based in Kampala, Uganda) and a Program Officer based in Ottawa. National Advisory Committees (NAC), representing farmers' organizations, radio stations, extension and community leaders, are now established and ready to offer advice on action research within each country.

Two key events have taken place in the last few months: In September, the AFRRRI team met for the first time in Kampala to discuss overall strategy and design for the action research plan taking place for the first phase of the project. This included preparations for the radio station selection process, community selection, community needs assessments and baseline surveys. The meeting allowed the AFRRRI team to make implementation decisions together and to develop stronger linkages between participating countries.

On October 15th and 16th, the AFRRRI International Advisory Committee (IAC) convened in Ottawa. The Committee consists of key experts in the fields of ICTs, communication for development, radio broadcasting in Africa and food security. Representatives from the NACs in Mali, Tanzania and Ghana

attended the meeting and offered insight into overall project design. The meeting allowed AFRRRI staff to receive advice on overall research design and the training needs of African rural broadcasters, as well as establishing mentoring roles for IAC members according to their expertise.

## For more information on AFRRRI, please contact the National Research Coordinators:

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PHOTO: The AFRRRI Team.  
From Left to Right –  
Emily Arayo, Gizaw Shibru,  
Margaret Kingamkono, Ben Fiafor,  
Bottom row –  
Modibo Coulibaly, Rex Chapota,  
Martine Ngobo, Sheila Huggins-Rao.

## Adrian Tumwebaze Baryamujura

Kachwekano FM Community Multi-Media Centre, Uganda

We were deeply saddened to hear the news that Adrian died suddenly in July. His lively presence will be greatly missed. Since joining DCFRN in early 2005, Adrian played an active role in our activities – from writing a radio script on growing potatoes in rural Uganda to providing insightful ideas about the environment through an on-line discussion website called Agrigora. He was a very enthusiastic and energetic individual committed to creating agricultural radio programs for his rural audience. He was well-known, well-loved and much appreciated by everyone at Kachwekano and throughout the surrounding area. We extend our sympathies to his family, friends and colleagues.

# IN MEMORIAM

# THE **WINNER** OF THE 2007 GEORGE ATKINS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD IS... **KWABENA AGYEI OF CLASSIC FM!!**



This year's winner is Kwabena Agyei, producer at Ghana's Classic FM, a DCFRN partner since 2001. The station is located in Techiman, a large farming area in Brong Ahafo, Ghana. Kwabena Agyei participated in DCFRN's Farm Radio Weekly pilot study, the Linking Agricultural Research and Rural Radio in Africa (LARRRA) project, and has written scripts on community reforestation – which was a winner of the MDG scriptwriting competition – and on the production of snails as a niche product. He has been with Classic FM since it began broadcasting in 1999 and now trains new staff on developing programs to meet listeners' needs. Agyei has produced many innovative programs, including one which encouraged tomato farmers to stagger production in order to stabilize prices. He has also produced programs on health and sanitation which have inspired communities to clean up sewers and streets.



PHOTO:  
Kwabena Agyei (right),  
outside of Classic FM,  
in Techiman, Ghana.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!

### 2008 George Atkins Communications Award

The George Atkins Communications Award was established in 1991 to recognize rural radio broadcasters for their outstanding commitment and contribution to food security and poverty reduction in low-income countries. The award is named after Dr. George S. Atkins, the Founding Director of Developing Countries Farm Radio Network.

The Network will award a certificate and \$250 Canadian to the winner. The award is presented each year to an individual who demonstrates overall programming excellence in responding to small-scale farmers' needs as well as commitment to DCFRN.

To be eligible for the award, an individual must work at an organization that is directly involved in broadcasting activities and has been a partner with the Network for a minimum of one year.

Please submit a one-page statement on why you think you, or someone you know, should receive the award.

**Send submission by regular mail or Email  
by June 1st, 2008.**

# DCFRN TO LAUNCH BILINGUAL FARM RADIO WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE IN DECEMBER

Following the successful English Farm Radio Weekly (FRW) pilot study in spring 2007, DCFRN is launching the Farm Radio Weekly news service in English and French.

FRW is a new DCFRN service offered to African radio organizations with email access. FRW is a weekly electronic compilation of news and information about agriculture and other topics of interest to African rural radio listeners. FRW will provide a weekly synopsis of relevant agricultural and rural news, information about and links to archived DCFRN scripts that are relevant to current events and issues, information about training opportunities and forthcoming events of interest to broadcasters, links to relevant websites, and information on best practices from other stations.

For more information and to receive this weekly news service, send an email to Nelly Bassily at [nbassily@farmradio.org](mailto:nbassily@farmradio.org).



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for partners of  
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*Supporting broadcasters in developing countries to  
strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities.*

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