



CLIMATE CRISIS

FARMERS TURN TO RADIO

For farmers in Tanzania, the changing climate cannot be ignored. Many rely on consistent rains to water their crops, or find pasture for their animals. Flash rains arrive unexpectedly, when the fields aren't prepped, or don't come at all, leaving prepared fields without much-needed irrigation.

"Farmers do not have a lot of information on climate change, but they feel it on the ground," says Emerilinda Temba, our country head of programs in Tanzania. She visits farming communities regularly to ask residents about their needs.

She says she's noticed many farms are less lush than usual this year.

For that reason, Farm Radio is working with the Tanzanian Meteorological Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture and three local radio stations to broadcast timely and gender-sensitive weather information to 250,000 farmers as part of a project funded by the World Food Programme.

"Currently we are facing a challenge of dryness in the area," says Samson Kekishan Laizer, a pastoralist in the Longido community.

"If we have weather information it will be easier to know when to move and where to move to and where to return, where we can find pasture and water for our animals and agriculture practices."

- Samson Laizer

Information broadcast on the radio programs will also be followed up on by alerts sent to farmers' phones with the forecast and corresponding tips, reaching people who may not even live within reach of the radio stations.

"I feel when one thing isn't working there is another one," says Emerilinda. "If radio doesn't reach, then maybe there is an SMS. If SMS doesn't work there is 'boda boda' radio."

Through what we call boda boda radio, people on motorbikes take memory cards to remote places where groups can listen on wind-up playback devices.

Emerilinda, a dynamic staff member and advocate for farmers in her own right, says it's also key that the information is something farmers themselves have asked for.

"I love it because it is not what I have decided I want to tell them, but it is what they want to hear," she says.

She believes getting this information to farmers and rural people is necessary for them to make good decisions in their own lives.

"I wish to wake up and find that this information is at the fingertips of the farmers and pastoralists."

PROJECT QUICK FACTS

- 9** Month project
- 3** Radio stations
- 60** Community listening groups
- 250K** Listeners
- 3** Districts in northern Tanzania: Kiteto, Longido, Kondoa



LISTENING TOGETHER

RADIO HELPS EMPOWER A FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY

By: **Helen Claire Andrus**

America Asrassie is a woman determined to make the best of every situation. Perhaps it starts from her name: her parents, inspired by American volunteers in her hometown, named her America. Now, America lives with her five children and mother-in-law on two hectares of agricultural land near Bambasi, Benishangul-Gumuz, Ethiopia.

America is always on the lookout for the best methods of farming to improve her family's life.

Twice a week, on Thursday evening and Friday morning, Asosa FM broadcasts a Farm Radio-supported program on conservation agriculture.

America says that the program has taught her critical farming information.

Conservation agriculture is a farming approach that emphasizes protecting the soil — and the environment in general — for increased productivity. It's a climate resilient practice, designed to both help farmers increase their yields, protect soil from further degradation, and help farmers themselves deal with the changing climate.

Before listening to the program, America and her family produced less than 100 kg of product per year. They grew maize, sorghum, and green beans to sell, in addition to some crops reserved as food for her family.

America says she has learned techniques like intercropping, the mixture of certain crops in the same plot that serve to fertilize and support each other, from the radio program — though she was originally unsure about the overall impact these new methods would bring.

To test them, she picked some sample areas around her farm for a trial. Soon, she began to see a noticeable difference between those plots and the rest of her land. America's output soon increased to the point that she expects over 3000 kg of maize alone, with an additional 1200 kg of sorghum — more than 40 times her original harvest.

Prior to the radio program, America did not have enough food to adequately feed her own family. Her husband left her and the family more than five years ago, and at first she struggled to provide for her children, her mother-in-law, and herself. With the significant growth in output,

she not only has enough for her family, but she is able to sell her crops for a profit. Her two oldest children are now attending university thanks to her new income.

Still, America often thinks beyond her own family.

Knowing exactly the fear of being alone after her husband left, she is especially passionate about the role that unity plays in helping families thrive.

“Listening and working together helps to support, help and empower [each other] when someone is weak.”

- America Asrassie

She wants to help others to change their lives the same way she was able to. According to America, “love is the main thing.”

The programs are part of a collaborative project managed by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Ethiopia on conservation agriculture, working with Farm Radio International and Food for Hunger. The project is undertaken with funding from Global Affairs Canada.



JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW RADIO WORKS

Farm Radio supported programs on climate change and building climate resilience in Ghana.



From the 40 weeks of programming on climate resilience, **78 per cent** of listeners used at least one new adaptive technique on their farms.

Even more impressive, approximately **68 per cent** of those adults **used at least three new practices.**



BEEP4WEATHER

Weather information is vital for farmers. They need to know not only what temperatures and precipitation to expect, but also advice about what they should be doing and when. Farm Radio's Beep4Weather service provides critical weather forecasts on demand.



Radio broadcasters work with meteorologists to gather weather tips, record them, and promote them on radio shows.

Farmers leave a missed call, or "beep" the number, and an interactive voice response system returns the call, providing weather information and agricultural tips **specific to their region.**



DONOR PROFILE

GEORGINA BRUNETTE

At 106 years old, Georgina Brunette is Farm Radio International's oldest known donor.

She is, to say the least, inspiring.

Georgina lives in her home in Vancouver, retired from a long and fruitful career as an adult educator and librarian. She graduated from UBC in 1933, and has a long history of supporting causes she cares about.

Georgina started donating to us in 1991, when, as she puts it, she was in the "unexpected position" of having a little money to give back.

"I never was really discouraged if what I had to give was peanuts or something more adequate," she says. "Often my support was really small support, but if it lasts for years and years and years, it becomes more significant."

At the time, Farm Radio was known as the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, and was in the simple business of collecting agriculture innovations from farmers and knowledge institutions, and sending it to broadcasters around the world for their radio shows. Since then, Farm Radio has grown exponentially, leading radio projects and serving more than 2,500 individual broadcasters in sub-Saharan Africa.

"We were fortunate to be there at the time of the tiny steps, and then the recognition that they didn't need to be that tiny," she says.

Georgina says she looked to support organizations that were innovative and that it was always satisfying to look at organizations that tested different methods — even ones using older technologies like radio — and ones that reported back to her about what they had achieved.

"I was impressed by how much could be achieved when a little bit of co-operation was at work and [how] actually a re-examination of old methods could prove very fruitful."

As for advice she would give younger people looking to support organizations, perhaps for the first time, Georgina had this to say:

"Rejoice in the unexpected interactions. It broadens one's world so much."

Georgina passed away peacefully shortly after we wrote this article. She was an inspiring individual, and will be greatly missed by many, including us.



40 POTLUCKS FOR FARM RADIO

Our partner broadcasters are always hard at work getting information out about the latest information that can help the communities they serve — whether that's a helpful new farming technique, the latest weather report, or how they can improve the nutrition of their families. But did you know you can do your part to help spread the word?

We're looking for 40 Champions to help support broadcasters and rural communities across sub-Saharan Africa, all by doing something very local: hosting a potluck.

Join us in our mission to make radio a powerful force for good in rural Africa and host a potluck! Nothing unites us and sparks conversation like food and love of community. Whether your

potluck ends up being a casual conversation for two over a cup of coffee, an intimate dinner with a few friends, or a community dinner at your local town hall, anything helps.

We're hoping to raise \$40,000 for our 40th anniversary this year, but even the smallest gesture helps! And your impact is amplified through the power of radio, reaching underserved communities with timely information.

If you're interested, please contact:

Jeff Larocque
1-888-773-7717 x 3659
jlarocque@farmradio.org
farmradio.org/potluck/

SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT FARM RADIO

Edith and Ian of St. Catherines, Ontario hosted a potluck for Farm Radio International in June. Here's what they had to say:

"We decided just to host it ourselves, but a number of guests brought contributions anyway.

"Interest was surprising — we invited more people than our home would easily hold, assuming about half would be able to attend, but to our delight everyone replied with a yes.

"We served some Ghanaian dishes (notably banku), which everyone tried, and made a presentation after dinner,

explaining the origins and activities of Farm Radio. It seems that Farm Radio has a low profile, and all our guests were happy to learn of Farm Radio's programs.

"They were impressed with the impact on local communities, which we were able to document during our trip to Ghana with Farm Radio in February.

"It is interesting that a month later, we are still getting positive comments about what people learned. We were delighted to be able to generate a significant donation to support your ongoing work.

"Was it work? Yes! Was it worth it? Absolutely!"



We make radio a powerful force for good in rural Africa—one that shares knowledge, amplifies voices, and supports positive change.

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