



# EQUALITY ON AIR

## PUTTING A SPOTLIGHT ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

"We don't dare introduce our boyfriends to our parents without them getting angry at us," says Faatou to her friend, about her parents Mahadou and Botogma.

"They're forcing someone on you that you've never met. And you have to accept it! If you say no, you run the risk of being banished from the family," she continues.

Faatou isn't real. And the conversation is happening on air, as part of a radio drama aired in western Burkina Faso. The fate of Faatou and her family is the subject of the weekly radio drama series that also includes community-based discussions at the end of every episode.

The dramas are promoting the rights of women and girls in rural communities and aim to empower women to become active leaders and decision makers. Broadcast in local languages, over 12 weeks in the Hauts Bassins and Boucle du Mouhoun regions of Burkina Faso, the episodes vary from seven to 10 minutes. They expose common

challenges within the community: secure access to land for women, to gender-based violence, women's economic independence and forced marriage.

Easy and entertaining to listen to, the scenes are modeled on local realities and are intended to open discussions among community members. They are aired as part of Farm Radio International's Scaling Her Voice on Air project, supported by Global Affairs Canada.

Catherine Ouedraogo, a farmer from Koho Gnabiro village, said that the drama format helps women to express themselves openly and safely.

"We experience a lot of violence in our homes and through these broadcasts our husbands hear and understand that they are really harming us," she said.

In another episode, local men and women gather in the village square to speak with the community leader and discuss the need to involve women in decision making on the farm.

Oumou Sangaré, 29, from Yèrèssoro village is a married mother of two. She said that previously, her husband never consulted her on the planning of agricultural activities and she was not involved in decision-making.

"But today, thanks to the programs we listen to together, these practices have changed and this has helped us a lot to succeed in our agricultural activities," she said.

The radio series is increasingly popular and reaches men and women of all ages. Pierre Tankuy from Tiomboni said he listens every Friday to what has become his favourite show.

"We [look forward] to see what Mahadou (the main character in the series) will do again to Batogma (his wife) and his children. We have fun and learn at the same time without getting bored. The show ends without us realising it."

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2020-2021



It should be no surprise that 2020 and 2021 were interesting years — for Farm Radio International and for all of us. The fiscal year, which began in April 2020, coincided almost exactly with the emergence and mounting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It changed all of our lives — and the way Farm Radio does our work. But one thing that did not change was the need for our work. The 2020-21 fiscal year was our busiest year to date. As such, we are pleased to present our 2020-21 Annual Report.

Farm Radio organizes its work into several categories:



### Radio projects

The first is our radio projects, where we partner with existing radio stations to run programs about farming and food security, nutrition and health, gender equality, climate change, and education — and this year we infused them all with vital information about COVID-19 prevention and care.

This year, our radio projects reached a potential audience of **49 million rural people**, of whom 20 million were regular listeners. We worked with **146 radio partners** on **48 projects** in **14 countries**. Because of our work, **3.9 million people made a change to improve their lives**, through better health, farming or nutrition practices.



### Radio network

The second area we work in is with our **radio network**. We work with existing radio stations across Africa to provide training or resources that mean that they can improve the programs they run on their stations every day!

This year, we sent more than **131 resources** to **3,578 broadcasters** at **1,083 stations** in **36 countries**. We also trained **446 broadcasters** — 152 women — on better broadcasting practices in their studios.



### Radio innovations

The third area our work falls into is radio innovations. Our team finds ways to use the newest and latest technology to make the vital communications services we provide reach the people who need them most. Interaction, often through mobile phones, and connection makes radio better, and amplifies the voices of rural people.

This year, we saw **434,255 interactions** between listeners and **85 radio stations**. Across the countries we work in, **60,689 unique listeners** interacted with radio shows using our digital interaction tool: Uliza.



### Communication is a lifeline

The events of the year affirmed and reminded us that communication is a basic human right — especially in times of crisis. Our supporters across Canada understood perfectly the value of radio during COVID-19, and responded generously. Your donations meant we could provide a more timely and robust response to the pandemic and other priorities. If you are among them: thank you!

Read the full Annual Report on our website at [farmradio.org/annual-report-2021/](https://farmradio.org/annual-report-2021/)



## 15 MILLION LISTENERS TUNE IN TO WEEKLY PROGRAMS ON GENDER EQUALITY

Thanks to 73 radio stations across West Africa, Farm Radio's Scaling Her Voice on Air project is making a difference for 15 million listeners in terms of gender equality and agriculture.

We're now three years into the five-year project, which is funded by Global Affairs Canada. We have some exciting results to share.

In Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal, women listen to the programs in groups, taking the time to discuss the contents of programs — across Mali 95 per cent of group members listened to the programs regularly.

**"We know the broadcasts are on Tuesday evenings, so as a community we prepare ahead of time, and finish our work early,"** says Siranding Sabalé, a farmer from Sare Samba Netty in Senegal.

They also use Farm Radio's Uliza service to call the radio stations regularly, participating in polls and leaving questions and suggestions for the stations — who in turn consult the listening groups for their stories and experiences. We counted a total of 124,331 interactions over the phone by program listeners in the three countries, with 73 per cent of women respondents already saying they felt more confident in using technology.

In Ghana, Farm Radio's work takes a hands-off approach. There we help radio stations to develop their own self-lead, self-directed radio programs — supported by tools and resources that Farm Radio provides. The hope is that these programs, called "Green Leaf Magazines" will continue long after the program has ended.

Adwoa Nyibi is a small-scale farmer in the Bono East Region of Ghana who has learned some of her farming techniques from the programs. She says that her yield has been improving every year. "Some men become jealous when they realize that the produce of women farmers on small pieces of land yield better than theirs on large pieces of land."

In Ghana, 95 per cent of surveyed listeners reported an increased knowledge of agriculture and nutrition practices thanks to the programs, while 72

per cent are trying out good practices like Adwoa.

Aside from agriculture, radio plays a leading role in challenging and transforming social norms that maintain gender inequality. Using techniques like radio dramas to address sensitive topics, and ensuring that women direct the focus of the programming, means that radio can challenge societal norms as well as prove directly relevant to the lives of local women.

In the community listening groups we surveyed:

- **93.5%** said the radio programs helped improve women's access to land
- **96%** said the radio programs helped reduce gender based violence
- **95%** said the radio programs helped increase joint decision-making
- **96%** said the radio programs meant an improvement in the sharing of chores

It means that men can be part of the solution. The use of interactive and entertaining — and on occasion fictional — scenarios to showcase new ways of thinking ensure that men are also changing their opinions.

Daouda Traoré is a facilitator of a listening group in Sikasso, Mali. He says traditional customs often block women's access to and ownership of land, but that the radio programs are helping to address this inequity.

**"With us, it is difficult for women to own land,"** he said. **"Rather, she works part of her husband's field. This is why many men fail to understand that women [can] own land. But with the support of the sensitizations, the customary chiefs are beginning to understand."**

With men and women on board, we hope this project continues to bring change and equality long into the future.



# FARM RADIO NAMED TOP 10 INTERNATIONAL IMPACT CHARITY

Farm Radio International is thrilled to announce that we have been included on Charity Intelligence's list of Top 10 International Impact Charities for the first time.

The list, according to Canada's charity watchdog, uses rigorous analysis to measure the difference, or impact, made by charities to "see how each dollar we give can create the most positive change."

The list is based on demonstrated impact per dollar donated.

"Our staff, volunteers, and partners work so hard to achieve impact through powerful interactive radio — it is an honour to have this work recognized by Charity Intelligence," says Kevin Perkins, executive director of Farm Radio International. "And of course, it speaks to the trust and confidence placed in us by our Canadian supporters. Maintaining that trust is incredibly important to us."

In addition to the Top 10 International Impact Charities list, Farm Radio is happy to have once again been named to Charity Intelligence's Top 100 Charities list and continues to receive a 5-star rating from the organization.

Charity Intelligence is an Canadian oversight organization that looks into each charity and their

audited financial statements to compare and grade the charitable sector.

To our donors, supporters and partners, thank you for your continued support, and for ensuring we are able to continue the work that we do — improving the lives of rural Africans through dialogue, information and communication over the airwaves — week after week and year after year.

CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2021

## TOP 10 INTERNATIONAL IMPACT CHARITIES



### Learn more:

*"Since we have been listening to the radio programme, we are learning a lot."*

**Irene Lipenga**, Farmer, Malawi

Find more stories from Farm Radio International's work at [farmradio.org](http://farmradio.org).



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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