

Radio that works for women smallholders

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Context

Farm Radio International is bringing results from two ongoing research projects – *Insect feed for poultry and fish production (INSFEED)* and *Precooked bean products for food and nutrition security, and incomes in Kenya and Uganda* – directly to fish, poultry and bean farmers through radio broadcasts. The Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAF) project is working with community listener groups (CLGs) to improve interactivity and provide a regular, reliable and almost real-time feedback mechanism, and increase women's involvement in radio broadcasts. The project's approaches and methods differ from conventional radio in that Farm Radio International involves target audience members in program design and development from the start.

Exploratory studies carried out by the team in 2015 before project design and implementation, identified key aspects of bean production and using insects for feed where farmers would benefit from increased access to information. In bean production, such areas included soil fertility, timing of planting, seed selection, adverse weather, post-harvest handling, processing tools and facilities, pest and disease management, poor markets, lack of mechanization and capital needs, e.g. for renting or buying more land. In regards to using insects as feed, areas included rearing techniques, the types of insects that should be used and the costs of rearing facilities.

Concerning resource access and product marketing, women face more constraints than men. For example, in the case of marketing, men are better placed because they have more networks outside of the home and they are more mobile. In relation to land, women do not own land so their decisions are limited to the interests of their husbands, although farmers indicated during the study's

Key messages

- 40 radio community listener groups (CLGs) have been formed with over 460 individual members, of which 50% are women.
- 240 female CLG members have been trained in Farm Radio International's *Her Voice on Air* strategy that engages women's groups as developers of radio content, encouraging greater participation and making programs more relevant to the needs of women.
- Farm Radio International has provided 40 solar powered radios to CLGs, enabling them to listen to radio programs together and discuss the information received.

early monitoring focus group discussions (FGDs) that in many homes, husbands and wives make decisions together regarding land use.

Exploratory studies also demonstrated the difference in access to radio between men and women, with women having less access than men in both countries. In Kenya, there was a 7% gender gap in access to radio, whilst in Uganda the gap was higher at 12% (Figure 1).

Farm Radio International is working with four radio stations – Radio Simba, Mega FM, Radio Akaboozi and Ramogi Radio – to promote the use of precooked bean products and rearing of insects for fish and poultry feed in the project's targeted geographical areas.

Emerging outcomes

Increased access and engagement in radio programs

Between 2015 when the radio programs started and 2017, the number of people accessing the programs as active listeners (in listening groups) and passive listeners, as well as the number of calls, has increased. Radio program participation also increased, with the number of men's interactions rising from 74 at the beginning of 2015 to 1,494 in 2017, and women's interactions from 60 to 582 (Table 1).

By 2017, there were 40,582 calls to the radio from 11,561 people to radio stations Mega FM, Radio Simba, Akaboozi and Ramogi FM. The number of women registered as listeners has gone up 400 times.

To increase listenership and improve engagement with the radio programs, a solar powered recording radio set was given to each of the 40 CLGs in the targeted areas.

"The radio is unique. We had not come across radios that record live programs and charge phones. I must say this group is privileged to have this radio."

— Jane Nalukenge, Kito Village Savings and Loan Association

In addition, 'women's call-in lines' were set up to encourage interviews with women and youths, and ensured at least one of the program presenters or reporters was female. Farmers' voices have been a big part of the radio programs, and this has increased women's confidence in participating.

"It was the first time in my whole life that I have been in the studio in Akaboozi Radio Station in Kampala."

— Jenifer Nakaye, Kiboga district

Jenifer contributed to discussions on good harvesting practices, storage material preparing, and bean transportation methods.

Women are learning new skills through radio

Listeners are taking up the INSFEED insect rearing and harvesting techniques. During visits to the CLGs in early 2017, 54 men and 79 women fish and/or poultry farmers indicated they would be testing the innovations after listening to programs on the projects.

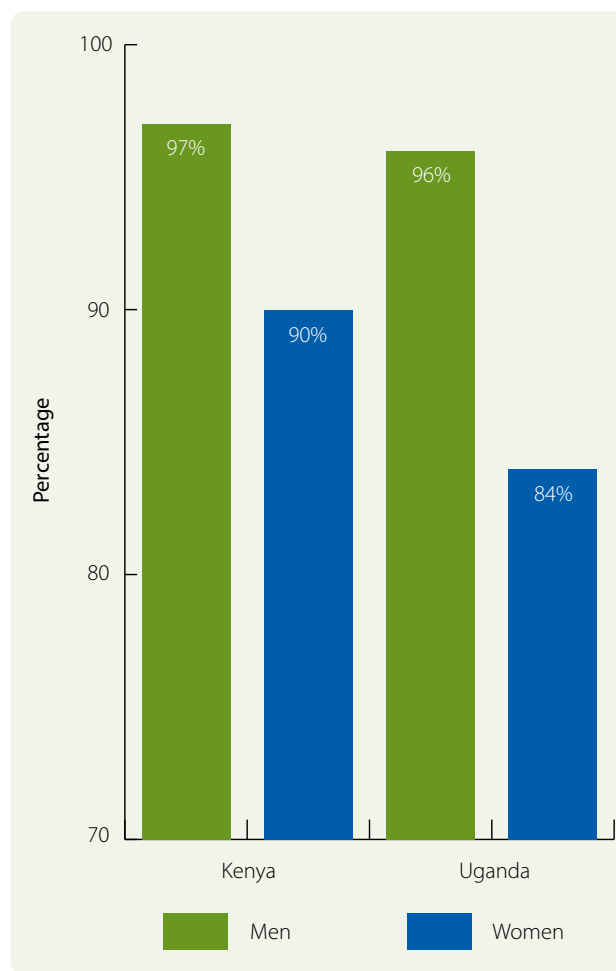


Figure 1: Access to radio in Kenya and Uganda

Jenifer Ladwong from Omoro in northern Uganda put her new knowledge to the test and tried out insect rearing using cow dung as a substrate. Using the instructions provided during the program, Jennifer was successfully able to produce insects to feed her chickens:

"I left cow dung for 3-4 days until maggots appeared. I then put the maggots down for the chickens to eat and I realized they liked them."

— Jenifer Ladwong, Omoro, northern Uganda

She now makes her own feed using readily available materials from her own farm like chicken and cow dung to create the right environment to produce maggots and insects, instead of buying expensive commercial feeds.

	Mega FM	Radio Simba	Akaboozi	Ramogi FM	Total
Total number of calls	16,177	9,211	10,100	5,094	40,582
Men (registered)	90	955	397	52	1,494
Women (registered)	116	184	146	136	582
Did not specify (registered)	410	1,301	12	99	1,822
Unregistered listeners	3,535	2,537	1,233	368	6,072
Unique responses	4,151	4,967	1,788	655	11,561

Table 1: Radio interactions in 2017



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The project has increased women's access to information on insect rearing for fish and poultry feed, and precooked bean cultivation

In March 2017, Jenifer received training at Makerere University on how to rear Black Soldier flies. She intends to rear and harvest the insects in big quantities to feed her chickens and fish. She encourages women not to fear insects as they provide a good source of protein, and their use can save on the high costs of commercial feeds. She has constructed a fish pond and intends to start farming catfish and tilapia. Jenifer mentioned that this kind of business is typically viewed as a man's enterprise, and therefore owning a fish pond is challenging for women. She attributes her business progression to the skills she learnt through the radio programs, specifically the training on insect rearing.

Changing perceptions of women's role in agriculture

Episodes geared towards changing gender and social norms are influencing how household decisions are being made. In two precooked bean episodes, Mr and Mrs Mathias Kabuuka from the Kamukamu farmers group in Mubende district, told their story together, acting as role models for other families. Their story addressed issues of joint decision-making in families and encouraged more people to call in during the radio show.

Listeners were very keen on the episodes geared towards changing gender and social norms and agreed that farming/entrepreneurial work is completed more quickly when decisions are made jointly. During monitoring visits in November 2016 and March 2017, 313 members (180 women and 133 men) of the targeted fish and poultry farmer groups stated that through the radio programs,

men had learned that insect rearing activities can be carried out by all family members. There were also changes in perceptions on how roles and responsibilities related to agriculture are shared.

"The beauty of working together is that we always decide on what to plant as a family. When making decisions, we also ask ourselves what we shall be doing with the money we get from the produce like paying school fees for our children, or building a house. There are activities that women can't do and there are those that men cannot do also. A woman cannot involve herself in slashing the garden during preparation and also spraying the crops, but she can plant and weed the crops."

— Nabulyanga Bestina Ddegeya, Integrated Association, Kiboga district

Conclusion

The project has increased women's access to research information on insect rearing techniques for fish and poultry feed, and on precooked bean cultivation. Over the course of the radio programs, listener engagement has increased and more female than male farmers have shown an interest in testing the research recommendations. The design and delivery of the programs with a focus on gender issues, and the hosting of both male and female farmers to engage with other farmers, is leading to increased women's confidence, changes in household decision-making and the division of labor.



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Farm Radio International staff training a group of female poultry farmers in Gulu, northern Uganda, on how to record their voices to be played on air

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