

NEW ALLIANCE ICT EXTENSION  
CHALLENGE FUND ACTIVITY

# Farm Radio International



TANZANIA



Dodoma

# Background

## New Alliance ICT Extension Challenge Fund

The New Alliance ICT Extension Challenge Fund (the Fund) was one of the enabling actions of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition which was created at a G8 meeting in 2012 to accelerate agricultural growth and productivity. The New Alliance ICT Extension Challenge Fund is a multi-donor fund managed by USAID, that receives financial support from USAID, DFID (the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development), and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation — with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) separately funding the Tanzania component — totaling to approximately \$12M over three years. The goal of this fund was to improve agricultural productivity among targeted food crops by smallholder farmers in six selected countries in Africa, through the use of information and communications technology (ICT) applied to agricultural extension services.

The six New Alliance countries were Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique and Senegal with IFAD funding a three-year grant for a sixth country, Tanzania. The implementation grantees selected were: Digital Green in Ethiopia (three-year grant); Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Malawi (three-year grant); the Grameen Foundation in Ghana (two-year grant); Concern Universal in Senegal (three-year grant); NCBA CLUSA in Mozambique (three-year grant); and Farm Radio International (FRI) in Tanzania (three-year grant). The Grameen Foundation in Ghana’s two-year grant was extended through January 2017. The Senegal Grant was also extended through March 2019 with a no cost extension. All grantees were working in conjunction with the Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership (SSTP) in Africa country activities. Established in 2013, the Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership in Africa (SSTP), is a \$47 million partnership between USAID and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). SSTP partners with governments, local seed companies, farmer and development organizations to overcome the challenges restricting farmer access to improved agricultural technologies.

International Business & Technical Consultants Inc. (IBTCI) served as the monitoring and learning (M&L) contractor for the fund and was responsible

for 1) contributing to the increase of the impact and cost effectiveness of the ICT Extension Challenge Fund country grantees by tracking their progress and facilitating learning and adaptation and; 2) enabling other stakeholders to learn from this work.

## Tanzania Activity

Farm Radio International’s (FRI) overall objective was to increase the adoption rates of the selected improved agricultural technologies by complementing and extending the reach and impact of agricultural extension services. FRI did this by using ICT-enabled approaches to facilitate the delivery and exchange of information with smallholder farmers, farmer organizations, and agribusinesses.

FRI’s overall goal was to contribute to increased agricultural output and productivity by scaling up the use of productivity-enhanced agricultural innovations, and marketing mechanisms by small-scale farmers (both male and female) in Tanzania, using a combination of ICT-enabled agriculture extension approaches (participatory radio, mobile services) to integrate into and engage with traditional extension services.

**Partners:** Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI)

**Country of Operation:** Tanzania

## Introducing ULIZA

While radio can reach many people simultaneously, one of its drawbacks is its one-way communication limitation. When farmers are listening to a radio program, typically their questions and concerns about the content cannot be directly expressed. To make radio content more relevant to farmers, there is a need for innovative mechanisms to gather feedback and insights about the real situation on the ground.

To combat this issue, Farm Radio uses mobile phones and ICT tools to make radio more interactive. ULIZA is a platform that was developed by The Hangar - Farm Radio’s Radio & ICT Innovation lab in Arusha, Tanzania. ULIZA uses IVR as the underlying

### ICT SERVICES IMPLEMENTED



The New Alliance ICT Extension Challenge Fund M&L Services Task Order is managed by International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI) for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The views expressed in this case study do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, other donors or their respective governments.



Mr. Yahya Hassan in a corn field.

technology for polling farmers to get their insights about a particular topic. Furthermore, farmers get a chance to record their voices to be used as content on the radio program.

Radio design includes weekly polls which help broadcasters get feedback on particular topics. The multiple choice questions helps experts gain insight into specific challenges that farmers are facing in a particular area (i.e. crop diseases, agricultural practises or crop management used). Knowing the current situation helps experts talk about relevant issues.

The ULIZA platform also allows farmers to record their questions. Broadcasters can then download questions that are relevant (most frequent or burning issues) to the topic of the week, and these questions are then answered in-depth by experts. Broadcasters create a Q&A segment which is then broadcasted on the program.

## The Power of Interactive Radio

Interactive radio is a powerful tool to reach rural smallholder farmers and provide them with relevant information in a timely manner. Farm Radio International is using ULIZA to gather feedback from listeners.

Mr. Yahya Hassan is one of many UHURU FM radio listeners and each Friday he tunes into “Kilimo Yakinifu” (Feasible Agriculture) program and participates in the weekly ULIZA polls. Mr. Hassan says, “I beeped (leave a missed call) into UHURU FM radio number, and shortly I got a call back. I answered all questions as well as listened to the agricultural tips.”

While Mr. Hassan is not a cassava farmer himself, most of his friends and family are. He shares with them the information from the radio program and ULIZA poll. “I saw my neighbors not clearing the cassava residues from the field after harvesting. I had learned from the phone poll that this is not a good practice, so I advised them to clean up their cassava fields. Those who followed my advice got more harvests because

“I had lots of challenges and questions about cassava farming. It is very difficult for us to get hold of experts here. After I started listening to the program, I found out that many farmers who asked questions had similar challenges as mine. Listening to experts answering these questions helped me to get solutions.”

— Mr. Yahya Hassan tunes into “Kilimo Yakinifu” (Feasible Agriculture) program on UHURU FM and participates in the weekly ULIZA polls.

**IMPACT OF THE INTERVENTION** ➤ Farmers were able to find better solutions to their problems when questions and concerns from ULIZA were addressed by experts through the radio. It has been observed that the more interactive the programs are, the more popular they become and thus more listeners gain knowledge on particular topics. Therefore, the promoted practice is more widely implemented.

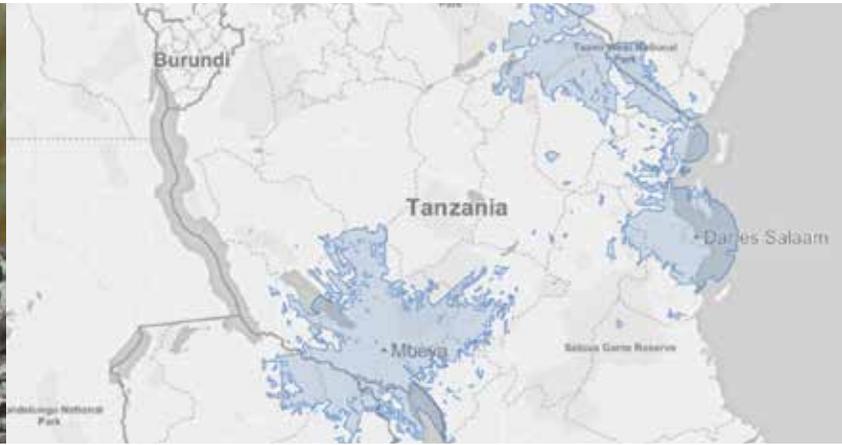
- The number of subscribers that have received SMS were estimated at **46,564** (33,962 males and 12,602 females).
- The number of listeners and SMS service users who have applied SSTP technologies were estimated at **406,000** (244,000 males and 162,000 females).

As of FY16 number of farmers who have listened to a radio program were estimated to be **406,638** (244,183 males and 162,455 females).

their fields were not affected by BATOBATO (cassava mosaic disease).”

A Q&A segment is featured in most of UHURU FM radio programs, so that when listeners can participate in ULIZA polls and ask questions. Broadcasters then choose questions which are most relevant to the topic of the week, and record answers from experts. Mr. Hassan’s voice and question was featured in one of the program. “I heard my question being answered by an expert, this has motivated me to participate more,” Yahya added.

Women were not left behind. Mrs. Mwacha, another farmer benefiting by tuning into the program, has this to say about the Q&A segment:



AT LEFT: Tanzanian farmers gathering together to listen to a farmer radio program. MAP: Coverage of radio programs across 8 stations: estimated to be 5,500,000 rural adults.

“I had lots of challenges and questions about cassava farming. It is very difficult for us to get hold of experts here. After I started listening to the program, I found out that many

farmers who asked questions had similar challenges as mine. Listening to experts answering these questions helped me to get solutions.”

## What You Need to Know About ICTs: Budgeting and Reach

Implementers and donors should take into consideration beneficiary’s and partner’s familiarity with the technologies and techniques they plan to use, as well as their preferences in communication channels, cost implications, accessibility and applications.

Secondly, the number of unique callers and messages are not indicative of radio audience size, therefore a more formal media measurement and mapping exercise is necessary to gather this information. It is also important to emphasize that radio, as an ICT, is a two-way dialogue and not a one-way dissemination. Consequently, interactive radio is very different than traditional

radio. Radio does not go in the communications budget line, rather it is a development tool and project in its own right that can achieve amazing results. Too often, communication for development work is wrapped into more promotional or public relations oriented budget lines.

Radio is still the best way to reach rural populations because it uses existing infrastructure, is easily transmitted in local languages, and can be aired at the most convenient time for the audience. Moreover, it is extremely cost effective, easily scalable, and creates demand for project partners.

## Lessons Learned on ICT Bundling

- From the users’ point of view, ICTs change very fast and thus can be frustrating for farmers. Furthermore the cost to the caller is also quite high for agricultural projects targeting smallholder farmers.
- Adopting new ICTs can be presented as the goal in itself, as opposed to being solely tied into a larger theory of change.
- Issues of network coverage for internet, mobile phone and electricity often create challenges.

## Addressing Gender

The project promoted women’s involvement in the use of ICT technologies and addresses gender issues by:

- Involving gender experts from social and welfare departments who speak to the community on the importance of women in agriculture and encourage female engagement.
- Featuring a female broadcaster on radio shows motivates women to participate in interviews, call into programs, and give feedback on ICT Tools (i.e. ULIZA platform).
- Having a separate call-in line for women at radio stations creates an equal opportunity for them to participate in the radio programs.