



# Addressing Information Gaps in Agricultural Value Chains



## The Role of Radio Programming

Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual

Farm Radio Symposium

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# Addressing Information Gaps in Agricultural Value Chains: The Role of Radio Programming

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Edited by

**Levi Zeleza Manda**

Polytechnic, University of Malawi

Reviewed by

**Rex Chapota**

Farm Radio Malawi

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Disclaimer

The symposium organizers, editor, reviewer, and publisher of this report are not responsible for the correctness of the facts and statistics cited in the papers, articles and speeches in this report.

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## Acronyms

AFRRI	African Farm Radio Research Initiative
AGRESS	Agricultural Gender Roles Support Services
ALDSAP	Agriculture and Livestock Development Strategy and Action Plan
ASWAp	Agriculture Sector Wide Approach
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
DAES	Department of Agricultural Extension Services
DBU	Development Broadcasting Unit
DAHLD	Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FVR	Farmer Voice Radio
FUM	Farmers Union of Malawi
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
ITEC	Information, Technological, Education and Communication
LARA	Local Agricultural Radio Agenda
LRAAC	Local Radio Agricultural Advisory Committee
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoAIWD	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development
MVTT	Model Villages for Total Transformation
NAFP	National Agricultural Policy Framework
NAMISA	National Media Institute of Southern Africa
NAP	National Agriculture Policy
NARA	National Agricultural Radio Agenda
NRAAC	National Radio Agricultural Advisory Committee
N.D.	Not Dated
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
RLC	Radio Listeners Club
TAMA	Tobacco Association of Malawi

VOICE

Value, Opportunity, Information, Consistence and  
Entertainment

ZBS

Zodiak Broadcasting Station

## Acknowledgements

The successful execution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> farm Radio Symposium was a result of the pooling together of several talents, skills and financial resources. It is impossible to acknowledge everyone severally but the following institutions deserve special mention. The Department of Agricultural Extension Services of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development for hosting the symposium and provision of financial support; The board and secretariat of Farm Radio Malawi for providing technical direction, secretariat services and financial support; Farm Radio International for their monetary contribution to the symposium; the University of Malawi, Bunda College for deploying Master of Science in Agricultural Extension students to report the proceedings of the symposium and providing some stationery; Zodiac Broadcasting Station for providing live broadcasting during the symposium; the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation for free symposium alerts; the Standard Bank of Malawi, the Farmers Union of Malawi, the Natural Resources College, Total Land Care and Sacramenta Limited for their monetary contributions. The list is endless. But thanks very much to all.

Finally, the organizers of the symposium would like to thank Mr Levi Zeleza Manda of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at the Polytechnic, University of Malawi, for coordinating the reporting of the symposium proceedings, editing the presentations and designing this report. Mr Manda has been associated with Farm Radio symposium reports since the first symposium in 2009.

Rex Chapota

Executive Director, Farm Radio Malawi

For the Symposium Organizers

## Preface

### **Addressing information gaps across agricultural value chains is a must**

**By Stella Kamkwamba<sup>1</sup>**

For the third consecutive year the Department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development with the financial and organizational support of a number of players in agricultural-related field joined hands to execute the 3<sup>rd</sup> farm radio symposium. The symposia were launched in 2009 as a means of affording space and platform for radio based extension and advisory services so that actors such as agriculture development theorists, the academia, field communication experts, extension workers, broadcasters and farmers themselves share ideas and lessons. While in 2009 Farm Radio International and the DAES were the major organizers and funders of the symposium, the number of members in the steering committee has increased and so has the number of in-kind and cash funders. Previously the number of presenters was limited to academics, representatives of farmer's organizations and ministry of agriculture officials whilst this time around the number has become more varied.

The 2011 farm radio symposium was even more unique in that it involved two core ministries: agriculture, irrigation and water development and trade and industry. The involvement of the ministry of agriculture might not be surprising because agricultural extension is one of the core functions of the ministry. The Ministry of Trade and Industry was involved because of the symposium's theme: addressing information gaps in the agricultural value chain which has implications on value addition, commercialization and marketing

The agricultural value chain approach is complex. It involves farmers, seed producers, fertilizer manufacturers, policy makers, soil analysts, weather scientists, business and marketing experts, waste recyclers, transporters, and retailers. At every stage from seed to table to markets etc, men and women of all social status are involved. There is thus the need to approach the agricultural value chain holistically and minutely examine what the keynote speaker at the symposium called the pentagon of assets that include human, economic, social, physical and natural.

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<sup>1</sup> Stella Kamkwamba is Director of Agricultural Extension Services. Email: [skankwamba@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:skankwamba@yahoo.co.uk)



Like in 2009 and 2010, the symposium delegates made a number of resolutions, which, without pointing a finger at anyone in particular, have not been fully implemented hence the need to ensure implementation of this years' resolutions. The 2011 symposium delegates agreed that

1. there are inadequate skills in producing highly creative and impactful farm radio programming that is both entertaining and farmer centred
2. there is limited understanding of the agricultural value chain approach among broadcasters and media houses to effectively address information gaps across value chains
3. livestock and aquaculture value chains are rarely covered in farm radio programming by most broadcasting stations in the country
4. airtime and commitment to farm radio programmes in most broadcasting houses are limited due to the commercial orientation of the broadcasting stations and probably lack of interest in agricultural programming
5. there are limited understanding and appreciation of radio among actors as a tool for catalyzing agricultural development through the agricultural value chain approach
6. there is lack of gender responsiveness in delivering information dealing with agricultural value chains
7. men dominate of in access to and utilisation of radio sets thereby denying women vital agricultural information on health, agriculture
8. timing of radio programme is insensitive to multiple roles of women
9. there are limited dissemination and awareness of new innovations in agricultural research and value chain information
10. there is lack of coherence in setting of radio agenda among various players and radio stations
11. there is limited collaboration amongst players in the farm radio industry to ensure sustainability and scalability of new approaches such as impact radio programming
12. there is limited coverage of Climate Change issues in broadcasting houses/stations
13. there is overuse of scientific jargon, particular terms or words by climate change experts, which makes understanding of climate change issues by smallholder farmers and the public problematic in farm radio programme

The above observations resonate with those that were made in 2009 and 2010. Since specific institutions and individuals were assigned to operationalize the resolutions. It is the expectation of the DAESS and the Farm Radio Symposium organizers that the resolutions passed (see Section 4 of this report) will be implemented and progress will be reported at the 2012 symposium.

The DAES and its partners thank all funders, presenters, note takers and the report writers for their contribution to assisting farmers and others along the value chain to get the best and timely information.

## Editorial Note

### Importance of Radio in Agricultural Value Chains

Levi Zeleza Manda<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction

The importance of radio in agricultural extension has been well documented. Many studies have concluded that because of its ubiquity in Africa and per capita cheapness (Neurath, 1962; Nakabugu, 2000, Chapman et al, 2003; Manyozo, 2008; FAO, n.d ), radio is the best medium of communication among farmers, policy makers, markets and food consumers in Africa where until the 21<sup>st</sup> century telephony and television were mostly owned and accessed by elites. The situation might have changed because of internet based social media and mobile telephones. However, these require a certain level of keyboarding skill, literacy in English and the ability to pay for accessing the internet. Therefore, for Malawi at least, radio remains the most important mass medium to create development dialogues and conversations amongst policy makers, farmers, radio producers and other stakeholders.

In Malawi radio provides timely market information for farmers (see Mahwayo, 2010) and complements agricultural extension services by sending out information on production practices that benefit farmers and Malawi's economy. Agriculture directly and indirectly employs 80% of Malawians, particularly in rural areas where most Malawians live, it contributes over 35% to the country's GDP (Ngwira, 2010)<sup>3</sup> and it is key to political success and survival (Chinsinga, 2011).

Malawi's current policy is to double if not triple agricultural production, commercialise and add value to farm produce for the local and international markets (Malawi Government, 2006). Further, the Agricultural Extension Policy (Malawi Government, 2000) promises to provide high quality demand driven extension services. Although at times radio is not explicitly mentioned in agriculture and national development policy documents, African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) project results have demonstrated clearly that when radio is involved in providing information and when farmers actively participate in programme production, farmers gain. The politicians, too, gain because they own up the farmers' success. Farmers who are well informed and believe in the need to change technologies or maintain good practices learn and succeed (Farm Radio, 2011). Once farmers

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<sup>2</sup> Levi Zeleza Manda is a Development Communications Specialist and Lecturer in Journalism and Media Studies at the Polytechnic, University of Malawi. Email: [lmanda@poly.ac.mw](mailto:lmanda@poly.ac.mw)

<sup>3</sup> Note that different experts in this report give different statistics on the value and contribution of agriculture to Malawi's economy, livelihoods and employment. However, there is no one disputes that agriculture is the mainstay of Malawi's economy.

produce more than what they can consume, they need markets and other services, a point one Frank Masiye, a farmer from Nankumba, Mangochi, emphasized during the closing ceremony of a Farmer voice Radio (FVR) workshop. He said: “We have been able to harvest so much [maize] that our problem now is [finding] market[s] for the surplus.”<sup>4</sup>

Khaila (2010) notes that farmers need information on ALL aspects of farming: from seed to markets to land, human and financial management. Thus the demands for relevant, timely, thorough and good quality information are high and many. If experts were engaged to travel across Malawi to directly assist farmers, the national budget for agriculture would collapse and the return on that huge investment would be dismal. This is where radio comes in.

### **Participatory value chain analysis**

The papers and presentations in this report dwell on several aspects of the agricultural value chain which, according to Hoffer and Maingi (2005), “describes productive processes around a product from the provision of inputs to production, transportation, processing, marketing, trading, and retailing to final consumption”. Thus, within the agricultural value chain there are produce or product based value chains. For instance, the tobacco value chain will be slightly different from the maize value chain or the soybean value chain. The chambo fish value chain differs from the livestock value chain. This is so because although some needs, such as transportation, may be common to all agricultural value chains, specific product value chains demand the participation of different players with specialized equipment and knowledge. Because there are a multiple players in agricultural value chains, Hoffer and Maingi (2005) suggest that the players must convene participatory value chain analysis workshops or sessions where producers, transporters and others map out the advantages and constraints at every stage of the chain. This, Hoffer and Maingi (2005), emphasise, will help all players to jointly “demystify [such] negative perceptions as “middlemen exploit us” or farmers are a problem. Participatory value chain analysis should also take into account; *inter alia*, ecosystem analysis, gender disparity analysis, HIV and Aids impacts, and climate change effects.

Arguably, most of the understandings between tobacco farmers and buyers in Malawi emanate from lack of information and price-fixing policy of the Malawi Government. Radio can help solve the stand-offs between buyers, government and farmers by giving the agricultural belligerents a two-way communication channel or public sphere. Information could also help farmers to understand why they need to take weather insurance, engage in contract farming, and indeed accept the cluster farming concept. For such suggestions to be implemented, there is need for a policy to regulate agricultural broadcasting. As previous symposia resolutions, policy analysis studies and Person-Jasi Soko’s paper (in this report) have persistently pointed out, such a policy does not exist and is needed immediately. While MACRA regulates broadcasting, it has nothing to with specific content. However,

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<sup>4</sup> Simeon Maganga. 2012(March 19). Community Radio [Stations] Boost Agriculture. Blantyre. *Daily Times*.

the good news is that the government is doing something about it. Soko (in this report) states that, in tandem with the sector wide policy paradigm, the government is harmonizing all sector policies into a single National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and that under the aegis of ASWAp, an Agricultural Information and Diffusion Strategy, where radio programming will feature, is being drafted. The drafters of the information and Distribution Strategy ought to liaise with the FVR project to adapt some of projects filtering mechanisms (see Mthinda in this report).

### **Pentagon of Assets & VOICE**

It is not possible to summarise all the papers and presentations. However, it is worth noting that the 2011 symposium was centred around Grace Malindi's keynote presentation, which is, a timely call for all stakeholders to minutely study and understand the processes, the resources and participants involved in each agriculture produce/product value chain. Malindi suggests that this minute study should identify the presence or absence of their human, natural, economic and physical assets across all social strata of participants in value chains at every stage (production, processing, marketing, consumption and even waste management<sup>5</sup>). This will permit service providers to better target available resources and services. Policy makers, too, will be empowered to devise policies and regulatory mechanisms that are in tandem with national development plans and aspirations.

Also worth summarizing is Doug Ward's oral presentation at the symposium. In his presentation, Ward explained the VOICE standards concept in radio programming. VOICE is an acronym for Value, Opportunity, Information, Consistency and Entertainment<sup>6</sup> (for details see <http://www.farmradio.org/pubs/farmradio-prcreport2011.pdf>). Thus radio producers need to think and plan out of the box, integrate ICTs and feedback mechanisms. Farmer Voice Radio's principles of impact radio programming are an important addition to the VOICE approach.

### **Structure of the Report**

The presentations have been divided into sections resonating with the subthemes of the symposium. Section 1 is about the role of radio; Section 2 is about the policy environment and how it affects agricultural values chains; Section 3 comprises papers on cross-cutting issues of gender, HIV and

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<sup>5</sup> Waste management is often left out of agricultural value chain analysis. However, as Cofie et al (2010) note, if properly managed and recycled food crumbs and other biodegradable wastes, including human excreta, can play a good role in rehabilitating urban and peri-urban soils for agriculture production and urban greening. In Malawi, Mkwambisi (2011) and Kafundu and Milanzi (2006) have noted that urban agriculture is a serious economic activity and coping mechanism for the majority of poor urbanites.

<sup>6</sup> During the AFRRI 1 project implementation process, in Malawi VOICE was expanded to VOICEE to mean Value, Opportunity, Information, Entertain and Ethics to emphasise the need for providing culturally correct information.

AIDS, and Climate Change and Weather. The Section 4 is a summary of the symposium resolutions while Section 5 presents edited speeches. Section 6 comprises Appendices.

It is important to note that the Proceedings Reports of the 2009 and 2010 farm radio symposia were divided into chapters written by several experts who condensed the presentations into thematic areas. The current report has taken a different approach in that although the articles and presentations have been edited for clarity, they have been left to “speak for the authors”. The presentation styles were varied and these have largely been left intact to demonstrate that the symposium participants came from different schools of thought, expertise and referencing styles. Some papers reported field experiences (requiring virtually no references) while others were quasi-academic in nature (demanding some references).

Also unique in this report has been collection onto a CD ROM of all PowerPoint presentations and other formats that could not be accommodated in this report. To access the CD ROM, interested parties are encouraged to contact Farm Radio Malawi ([www.farmradiomw.org](http://www.farmradiomw.org)) or DAES.

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## Section 1

### Key Note Address

#### **A Quest for Demand-Driven Package-Deals across Agricultural Value Chains**

**By Grace Margaret E. Malindi<sup>7</sup>**

##### **Introduction**

At this important third Radio Symposium I would like to start by reminding delegates that information is power. The way this information is packaged and communicated, is critical for radio to have a compelling drive for a novel agricultural advisory and extension service. When strategically packaged and targeted, information could make Malawi a shining example of progress in the agriculture – related businesses.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, my keynote speech is a reminder but also a wakeup call that Agricultural Advisory and Extension services which is currently gaining a market oriented perspective globally, regionally and nationally.

As articulated in the Malawi Growth Development Strategy II (MGDS II) agriculture is Malawi's development priority agenda. This is in line with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) is mandated to implement the country's agricultural development agenda of ensuring the country's food and nutrition security and economic growth. In compliance with the CAADP, the Ministry has developed a comprehensive sector wide agricultural investment programme (ASWAp) to guide the implementation of its mandate which aims at achieving at least six percent (6%) annual growth in the agricultural sector. The goal of ASWAp is to improve food and nutrition security, increase agricultural incomes and ensure sustainable use of natural resources. Promotion of commercial production and agro processing for market development is one of the main objectives of ASWAp.

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<sup>7</sup> Dr Grace Malindi is former Director of the Department of Agricultural Extension Services. She delivered the 2011 Keynote Address in her own capacity. Email: [gmalindi@gmail.com](mailto:gmalindi@gmail.com)

### **The Role of Radio Programming in the Agricultural Value chain**

The value chain is a systemic approach mainly used in Agri-business to describe a full range of activities required to bring a product from initial primary production, through different phases of production to the final consumer (Kaplinsky and Morris, 2000). It includes research and development, input supply and finance. The farmer combines these resources with land, labour and capital to produce commodities (Dzanja, 2011). Under the ASWAp framework, research and extension are recognized as key support services to enable smallholder farmers in Malawi contribute significantly to the food security needs and economic growth. The role of information and knowledge cannot be overemphasised in this process. In order to effectively reach out to farmers, there is need to deploy communication channels that are relevant and appropriate to concerned parties who include input and output marketers and farmers. Farm Radio Malawi (2011) noted that agricultural radio programming is very critical, popular, and favoured by farmers. The basis for this argument is that Malawian farmers are rural based with limited literacy skills such that the need for innovative ways to reach them with information should not be compromised. It is against such thinking that approaches in agricultural extension keep changing in a quest to improve effectiveness of extension service delivery.

### **Trends in agricultural extension and advisory services**

Agricultural policies and strategies enabling farmers to shift from subsistence to commercial farming have evolved from the *Master Farmer, Train and Visit*, and *Block Extension System* to the *District Agriculture Extension Services System*. The Agricultural Extension Policy of 2000 emphasizes provision of demand driven pluralistic services. In this mode of agriculture service provision, farmers need better access to services and related information from various stakeholders. Why? Thomas (2008) suggests that much as material poverty is highly reported in literature, rural people suffer from information poverty because they cannot access valuable information to improve their livelihoods. Several studies indicate radio as the most popular, economic, and accessible means of communication with rural populations. The role of radio is most valued in the places with high rates of illiteracy; where there is no electricity, telephone lines or access to internet (Farm Radio Malawi, 2010). The unfortunate part is that this information is given in a piecemeal manner. For example, farmers may be told about a buyer interested in soya-beans, without informing them of the required variety and amount. They may encounter problems at the market because they have a produce which buyers do not want. That is why the current thinking and discourse are into organized farmer groups supported by actors along agricultural value chains.

### **The Value Chain Approach. In Market Demand Driven Extension Services**

Advisory and Extension Service mission statements at national, regional and international levels reflect the commitment to the market oriented extension approach. The approach focuses on the systems value chain support with stake holders taking positions and responsibilities where they have



comparative advantage to promote a commodity from production to the market. No doubt that this year's symposium theme, **The Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural Value Chains**, should lead us to further reflection and deliberations. It is expected that practical and innovative recommendations for a radio market-oriented extension programme in Malawi will be made. This is why I have every reason to congratulate and be proud of the symposium organizers for a well thought out theme. It is timely and compliant to the agricultural development programmes and strategies at various levels of the CAADP drive. The theme should potentially drive us to a compelling desire for farmers to have better access to information at every step of the value chain by always aiming for an **efficient and appropriate package deal for a specific value chain**. This claim is based on the **multiple-nature** of farmer's needs and challenges that participatory demand driven services have to address. Responses to the challenges and needs should be informed by the key operating principle of Agricultural Advisory and Extension Services and the ASWAp framework that extension services should be pluralistic and harmonized. Additionally, the demand-driven type of interventions or technologies, need to be delivered and strategized into efficient and appropriate information, education and communication packages, which, I would abbreviate and advocate as **demand –driven Information, Technological, Educational and Communication (ITEC) package deals** across the value chains. In line with this symposium, we should be deliberating to strive, through responsive and integrated radio programming, to promote efficient and appropriate ITEC package deals across value chains. The package deal is characterized to be integrative by considering policy environments, emerging issues of climate change, gender, HIV and AIDS.

#### **Conceptual and Contextual Factors: Based on the Growth and Sustainable Livelihood Framework**

To explain the package- deal approach, let us consider the Farm Input Subsidy (FISP). The FISP is selected for illustration because of its (i) package deal design and as (ii) a baseline for growth and pro- poor interventions. Within the proposed Growth and Sustainable Livelihood conceptual framework, the pentagon of assets (Self-Help Development International, 2005) across the FISP related value chain is used to identify information gaps to be addressed by radio programming. The assets are human, economic, social, physical, and natural. The human assets are at the apex of the pentagon that is supported by the social and physical assets to enable generate economic gains from the natural assets such as land with soils and water.

Within the allocated time, I will only pick a few steps of the FISP value chain for identifying the information gaps and leave the rest for your application and contribution in order to improve it as a complete ITEC package deal for effective radio programming.

#### **Information Gaps Related to Human Assets in FISP**

Various factors, including farmers in their gender categories, across the agricultural value chains are considered human assets. The prerequisite human factors to the effective and well targeted agricultural programming critically matter. Such factors include literacy and education levels; sex as

a common denominator to more gender disaggregated factors such as: age, marital status, heads of households, occupation and other vulnerable gender categories.<sup>8</sup> For example, the ASWAp target of a minimum of 6% agriculture led economic growth, requires a vibrant reorganization of actors. For farmers to engage in serious agribusiness there is need for effective information flows to all actors. For example, farm radio programming targeting the optimum use of the FISP package is likely to be effective when most of these prerequisite factors and their related information gaps are known. In fact, some of these factors feature in FISP guidelines for assisting resource poor farming families. The prerequisite factors can be analyzed across the entire FISP value chain by centering on:

- preparation for distribution of inputs,
- actual distribution for production,
- production,
- post harvest (management)
- value-added processing activities for diversified dietary needs and
- marketing purposes.

Data on the negative impacts of gender and HIV and AIDS dimensions are missing. However, they should also be considered for innovative radio programming. Innovative programming such as the **“Radio Farm Doctor”** can address such issues as common farm accidents and deterring health issues at each point of the value chain while programmes that promote human capital could address such issues as health insurance, subscriptions to technical and business publications, training opportunities, better nutrition and wellness programmes.

I also sincerely hope you find more human related factors and scenarios to be considered as information which you would recommend strategically for a FISP focused radio programming that is meant for the more targeted poor to quickly emerge as market oriented farmers. I encourage you to reflect on more case scenarios to motivate you to engage in pro-growth innovative radio programming that should influence a quick shift for most of our subsistence based farmers from safety nets –related interventions to progressive farmers in agribusiness.

#### **Information Gaps related to Economic Assets**

Due to the traditional ways of promoting technical messages first, it has not been automatic for producers to start by focusing on information needed from an economic point. The FISP was credibly and efficiently packaged by scientists and supported by policy makers to have a baseline composite regime of hybrid maize varieties, legume and inorganic fertilizers in order to respond to the multiple interrelated issues of food, nutrition and income insecurity coupled with poor soils. However, before farmers hit the ground with their hoes, it is not usual that they are given concrete messages of the

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<sup>8</sup> Other vulnerable gender categories may include orphans, handicapped, the HIV and AIDS infected and affected.

economic benefits of the package deal. Messages do not emphasize that the FISP is meant to turn the poor farmers to progressive commercial farmers with no more dependence on the FISP package.

The FISP- related information gap is worsened by way the radio programming presents the value of the package. It is not always directly articulated in monetary terms for the farmer to fully appreciate the value of the package in pro- growth economic terms. It is no wonder the same farmers keep on being dependent on the package deal or sell the coupons. They do not fully appreciate the total value of the coupons. So let us help to market the FISP in more socio-economic-oriented ITEC package deal.

The radio programming also has the potential to influence core values of decent and dignified life that maximizes smallholder farmer ownership, transparency of their FISP package benefits and be committed to their gender-based responsibilities and roles that should seriously see farmers weaned off from the FISP package in order to progressively graduate to other profitable agro- based ventures that may be subsidizes in more profitable terms. This again would call upon our experts: agro-business specialists and economists, nutritionist and gender analysts to guide our farmers with more commodity choices backed by sound gross margins and with good nutritive and monetary values. I remember in one the maize irrigated field days in Machinga ADD, I was impressed to hear a farmer articulate the gross margins for his irrigated maize. The Principal Secretary for Agriculture then also kept on remarking on how convincing the gross margins given by a farmer right in his own field were. I am very confident our Radio producers assisted by subject matter specialists from the public, private and civil society can facilitate more farmers perform likewise.

#### **Information Gaps Related to Social Assets**

Primary to the social assets for the FISP, are the organized and developed farming families supported by structures such as stakeholder panels, agricultural development committees and lead farmers and service providers within the Sector under the District Agricultural Extension Service System (DAESS). These structures that are supported by various service providers such as: extension staff, trainers, agribusiness, extension methodology and gender experts in order to see functional farm families organized, developed and graduated to progressive commercial farming clusters. There is a gap in having success stories of how various actors across the value chain have worked towards a concerted effort to see various gender categories progress from FISP value chain to more commercial levels. Also to be considered, within the social capital and networks are: more organized groups for clubs, clusters or *m'ndandanda* for selected commodities to be produced to scale with likely surpluses for value addition for better nutrition and incomes. Similarly there are information gaps on how farmer based organizations such as associations and cooperatives are organized for their members to better access services across the value chains and for farmers that have graduated from FISP and operate sustainably and progressively to be linked to better markets at various levels.

At this point I would like to encourage the radio producers to think of innovative ways of capturing and promoting relevant potential best practices using, for example, the “Participatory Radio Campaign (PRC) model<sup>9</sup>” by Farm Radio Malawi, (2010). The Farm Business School (FBS) model initiated by FAO in collaboration with the Department of Agricultural Extension Services has the potential to support social mobilization of farming communities to use their FISP packages to create enterprising ventures and link them to more valuable markets locally, regionally and internationally. It is my sincere wish for me to see the FISP taken to heights by having it packaged with relevant information, educational and communication strategies that maximize on the use of the radio. There is inadequate capacity and effort for gender-based participatory appraisals across the value chains for innovative tailor made ITEC package deals for the various socio economic vulnerable groups and their social dynamics. Such documentation is a gap for innovative radio programming that should address various actors across the value chain and their comparative advantage to enable the vulnerable progress to market oriented farmers.

#### **Information Gaps Related to Physical Assets**

As for the physical assets that go beyond the “hoe culture” there are technology related information gaps for gender-based labor-saving devices across most of the agricultural value chains. These include user-friendly implements. Also missing are messages specifically on garden preparation for those who cannot afford conservation farming and for post harvest activities such as shelling, winnowing, drying, sanitary packaging and storage. Farmers need more maize-based ITEC packages and processes leading to initiatives for making flour blends for breakfast cereals, bakeries and beverages such as “thobwa” “maheu” (sweet beer) that should be promoted through cottage industries.

On the physical assets there is also need to consider issues to do with access to the ITEC package deals in case of the agro-ecological zones that are topographically challenging. This is where we get the “hard to reach farming communities”.

#### **Information Gaps Related to Natural Assets**

Let us all be vigilant and provide information to mitigate climate change related damages, such as floods sweeping away homes, crops and livestock.

#### **Summary of Challenges**

There are several challenges in addressing information gaps across the agricultural value chains. These include.

- Inadequate capacity to collect gender disaggregated information for innovative programming of market-oriented ITEC package deals for various agricultural value chains.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://bit.ly/farmradioprc>

- Inadequate and uneven capacities to understand and apply analytical tools for human resource prerequisite factors for radio programmes to effectively and innovatively reach most farm families in their gender categories across the agricultural value chains.
- Limited facilities, particularly appropriate ICTs, developed for the “hard to reach farmers” such as IEC materials for suitable for the illiterate and solar powered radios for wider coverage.

### Opportunities

- The Farm Radio International–Malawi office in collaboration with DAES initiated an annual farm radio symposium in 2009 in order to provide strategic direction in the farm radio industry and institute a knowledge management repository for supporting various players to share and have common understanding on how best radio programme can innovatively help smallholder farmers meet their food and income security. Amazingly it has now become an annual event due to consecutive successes.
- Currently, there is also cumulative commitment and interest from more institutions within the Agricultural Sector to organize annual radio symposium for understanding the policy environment, innovations and their applications. The understanding is enhanced by sharing and learning from both mistakes and best practices within the radio industry. Some proposed opportunities include the following.
  - The current rolling out of the ASWAp implementation with potential to accommodate various actors across the agriculture value chain. These include: policy makers, researchers, various subject matter and production specialists from civil society including farmer based organizations, the private and public sectors.
  - Increasing interest to support community radio within the sector to excel in the emerging market–oriented Agricultural Advisory and Extension Services.
  - Committed partners such as: Farm Radio Malawi, Farm Radio International, DAES, WUSC, FICA, FVR, Bunda college and within the Sector, to improve capacity building efforts for innovative radio programming with focus on value–chain approach.
  - Potential technical and financial support through global, regional, national and local networks.
  - The last Symposium’s pledging to collaborate in advocacy and lobbying towards having increased role of radio and ICT in agricultural development in Malawi through the following efforts.
  - Promoting recognition of farm radio programming as a key component in the national media awards e.g. NAMISA Annual Awards.
  - Increasing airtime allocated to farm radio programming among radio stations.
  - Increasing funding for agricultural radio broadcasts within government funding mechanism and projects including private sector.

- Improving the visibility and prominence of farm radio programming in the related policies such as the ASWAp and Agricultural Extension Strategic policies (2010 Symposium Proceedings).

It is encouraging that more innovations are being featured by radio such as successful lead farmers supporting farming clusters to evenly practise recommended technologies as if there are on one farm called “m’ndandandas(producing to the green belt effect). Based on peer-support and influence principles, producers of a similar commodity, commonly maize, are encouraged to adopt all recommended technologies and related practices resulting in increased production and ability to organise communal transport and market arrangements that are likely to be profitable to the farming clusters.

### **Recommendations.**

I agree with Khaila’s (2010) recommendation for holistic radio programming that articulates issues of production that are integrated with gender considerations and improved relations, weather forecasting, guide to food consumption and marketing. These are indeed of critical importance. It is my sincere hope that our deliberations will lead us to more constructive recommendations. However, the following recommendations are to stimulate further innovative thinking and action on radio programming across value chains.

- First and foremost this symposium should equip and enable the participants with engendered appraisal and planning tools that are guided by the ASWAp goal improving food security and nutrition, increasing agricultural incomes and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. Promotion of commercial production and agro processing for market development is one of the important main ASWAp objectives.
- Malawi needs to aspire for improved means of reaching out to the “hard to reach farmers”. Let us find out how radio can do this.
- Producers should strive to design innovative and extensive radio programmes that should be enabled with mobile multi-media in the form of bicycles, mopeds, motorcycles and mobile vans to target market places, TV/radio listener – groups with combo or the ITIEC package deals that consider the discussed human, social, physical and economic assets that should maximally harness the available natural resources as in conserving and managing the land for the best soil and water utility for increased production and productivity within all the eight agro-ecological zones of Malawi, commonly named Agricultural Development Divisions (ADDs).
- To intensify development and use of gender and capacity assessment that should yield yet another level of gaps through the experiential reflection and documentation of lessons that can be programmed for dissemination in form of radio drama, as ever illustrated in the Chindime and Samalani drama group that had its humble beginnings from interacting with

the Department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES). Additional radio programming can be done in form of panel discussions coupled with phone-ins and radio listenership groups for interactive learning, sharing and internalization of issues and gaps for the communities to start reflecting on, planning for change within the model villages for total transformation. The programming can be advanced to Training for Transformation for community development that should go beyond “Model Villages for Total Transformation (MVT)” to Rural Growth Centres characterized by emerging agro-dealers, cottage industries in order to prepare landscapes for agri businesses.

- All the best practices should be featured by radio to expose role models to respective actors across value chains.

#### **The expected Outcome**

It is anticipated that this third Radio Symposium is going to set all participants recharged, in order to strive for holistic and innovative radio programming for all actors of both genders across the agricultural value chains.

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# Agriculture in Changing Times: Fostering Knowledge Sharing Amongst Various Stakeholders

By Catherine Bridgette Mloza Banda<sup>10</sup>

## Introduction

Malawian agriculture today faces new and complex changes. Agricultural development in Malawi is gradually being driven and motivated more by globalization, urbanization, and markets than by mere production. In addition, issues of poverty, climate change, HIV and AIDS, malnutrition and food insecurity are increasingly dominating the national agenda as they are some of the major challenges facing the population, 90% of whom are engaged in agriculture. 81% of the active rural population is classified as smallholder subsistence farmers. Agriculture in practice has slowly evolved into a dynamic multi-sectoral system comprising diverse yet interactive components and processes that are agronomic, environmental, social, economic, institutional, and cultural in nature. Therefore, the central development question facing Malawian agriculture practitioners is how to catalyze a more responsive, competitive, equitable and sustainable growth within the context of smallholder production systems, inefficient agricultural marketing and investments, and amidst a degradation-prone natural resources base.

Parallel to these efforts of reforming and improving the existing production and farming systems, is the rapid evolution of the context and knowledge intensiveness of agriculture. The current situation in the sector has created a unique demand for intensive, extensive, and context-specific knowledge and information that provide an all-round response to farming and agriculture in general. Given the current context and intensity of agricultural information on demand, it would be indisputable to state that the generation of relevant information within the sector cannot rely on a single source, in this case, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) through its extension and advisory services unit but requires a wide variety of stakeholders.

From the viewpoint of Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), the current agricultural paradigm shift requires all relevant stakeholders within and outside the agricultural sector to envision the success of agriculture through the lens of an *innovation system* where the generation, diffusion, adaptation and use of new and existing knowledge are a function of the operation and interaction of a wide range of

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<sup>10</sup> Catherine Mloza Banda is Farmers Union of Malawi Development Communications Specialist. Email: catherinemloza@gmail.com

relevant organizations and individuals within various agricultural value chains. Communication within this realm becomes more than mere knowledge transfer, but information is disseminated for learning and sharing experiences with a development-conscious mindset. Radio has the potential to create these types of forums where all stakeholders are seen as equal and relevant players whose interaction, sharing and feedback can either have negative or positive impacts on the farming community.

This paper has been developed to emphasize the vital role that radio broadcasters play in facilitating the generation, diffusion, adaptation and dissemination of information across the agricultural value chain, and the potential they have to coordinate the interaction of the various stakeholders involved in those agricultural knowledge systems.

If various organisations, institutions, individuals and, of course, broadcasters understand the vital role that radio plays in facilitating agricultural communication across the agricultural value chain, they will begin to work in an interactive manner where each and every stakeholder in agriculture will be perceived as equally important and relevant, and therefore, worth to be included and/or consulted in agricultural radio programming. This understanding can further partnerships and networking of various stakeholders when developing and broadcasting agricultural radio messages and programmes.

#### **Experience on the role of radio programming in addressing value chains**

A brief literature was carried out by Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) to understand the current dynamics of agricultural radio programming including the nature and profiles of agricultural radio programmes that go on air, the content of the programmes, the individuals involved in developing the content and the thematic issues that are highlighted therein. Due to limited time, two national radio stations, Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) and Malawi Broadcasting Station (MBC) were visited and interviewed, and literature on Malawian agricultural broadcasting was reviewed.

From the review, FUM found that both national radio stations have between 5–10 weekly agricultural radio programmes most of which highlight issues to do with *food security* and *farming systems*. About 60% of the agricultural broadcasts are actually sponsored by various institutions and companies that are aimed at marketing their services and products or communicating specific information.

Amongst the literature studied for the review was a discussion paper developed in 2009 by Wood titled *Engaging Communities with Farm Radio in Malawi*. Wood indicated a sampled list of farming radio programmes that are broadcast on a number of radio stations in the country. These include Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS), and other community radio stations.

Irrespective of the nature of the broadcast (that is, participatory or non-participatory, sponsored or not, pre-recorded or live), about 50% of the programmes were basically mostly to do with food security and farming systems with the remaining percentage spread among issues of agribusiness, climate change and agricultural development.

Firstly, Malawi continually has been hailed for the participatory approaches in farm radio and the lengths to which producers have gone to assist smallholder farmers to improve their food security situation through provision of technical information on various crops and farming systems. However, with the current technological, economic, and institutional investments in driving the country towards agribusiness and value addition, broadcasting needs to go beyond mere crop production. Farmers and farmer organisations need to know and understand how they can make practical strides in value addition, market access, price negotiation, contract farming, and at the same time feed their families a balanced diet, care for the HIV infected in their home and still have labour enough to cultivate their fields. In addition, with the current change of climate, farmers need to know how they can employ workable water conservation methods using machinery which they cannot afford on their own but can access through their farmer associations. FUM has found that farmers today are also interested in accessing loans to finance their agricultural endeavours. Perhaps, in the same vein, we could also reflect on how many farmers know, let alone understand the new agricultural insurance schemes.

Radio is a forum that can address these issues. However, there is need to first change the perception of broadcasters in Malawi. Are they fully equipped to collect and interpret relevant agricultural information that is intensive enough to provide the solutions and direction that farmers are looking for? Are they knowledgeable about the context in which they are working?

**What is their current perception and understanding of the current agricultural industry?**

Zodiak Broadcasting Station currently has 10 agricultural programmes about 9 out of which are sponsored by various organisations. Total Land Care (TLC) sponsors ‘*Chilimunthaka*’ which normally covers areas to do with land resources such as soil conservation, afforestation and conservation agriculture, just to mention a few. FUM in collaboration with Swedish Cooperative Centre (SCC) sponsor ‘*Masomphenya pa Ulimi*’ which talks about agricultural development in various contexts for instance, agricultural diversification, policy issues, etc. Seed Companies like Monsanto, Seedco and Pannar Seed also have their own musical shows which primarily promote their seed varieties, and sometimes include their company officials who explain or introduce new concepts on their varieties on air during the shows. ZBS also broadcasts ‘*Ulimi wa Leru*’ from the Department of Agricultural

Extension Services (DAES), ‘*Mayi wa alimi a fodya*’ sponsored by TAMA. ‘*Tilime bwanji*’ is the only programme produced in-house by ZBS using their own resources<sup>11</sup>.

This could be a good example of a holistic approach to broadcasting where various issues are broadcast in various ways to further agricultural development. However, the major challenge that we must not be blind to if we are to use radio to address information gaps within the agricultural value chain is the extent to which the various radio messages overlap or complement each other. Most stakeholders develop and broadcast their agricultural messages, products and services parallel to each other *sometimes* with or without the broadcaster. In most cases, it is up to the broadcasters to vet the messages and ensure they do not conflict with each other, and that they comply with government standards. However, the question is, are our broadcasters well equipped to understand, synthesize and interpret the diverse agricultural information they get from various stakeholders, in a manner that is innovative yet unique according to the nature of the broadcast or stakeholder?

Thirdly, the initiatives that are born out of farm radio programmes provide platforms for smallholder farmers to be formally recognized in the agricultural value chain, and for them to interact with other stakeholders. For instance, according to Wood (2009), the baseline survey for MBC’s first AFRRI campaign that was held between November 2008 and May 2009 revealed that within the villages (called “impact communities”) in which MBC was working, many smallholder farmers were growing vegetables with a very short shelf life and were often forced to sell their vegetables at a loss because they preferred to sell the vegetables rather than let them rot. The campaign encouraged communities to create farmers’ co-operatives that could negotiate prices as a group, find new markets and manage supply and demand. At the end of the campaign, each of the impact communities had established farming groups.

For sustainability, these could easily be linked to NASFAM and FUM for farmer organisation development and linkage to markets. They could also be linked to input suppliers and processors who supply them with inputs and purchase their produce respectively. However, do we have mechanisms in place that would assist broadcasters as they initiate change in the lives of their audiences? Are the various organisations supportive of these smallholder farmers once they get organised? Can broadcasters be equipped with the knowledge of how to facilitate innovation through initiating partnerships between their audience and relevant stakeholders?

### **Key Lessons and Recommendations**

Proceedings from a seminar on the role of media in the agricultural and rural development of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries reveal a general low level of expertise in agriculture and

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<sup>11</sup> Owen Lupeska. Personal communication, Zodiak Broadcasting Station (October 31, 2011)

development issues in as far as most journalists are concerned. This is attributed to the absence of specialised journalistic programmes in the regions, including Malawi. This limits the inquiring mind of journalists required to develop interesting and consistent stories and radio programme that could not only report on agriculture, but also foster learning within the sector.

There is therefore need to develop the capacity of broadcasters through both formal and informal trainings. Various stakeholders should strive to involve journalists not only during field days, press conferences and events, but also at planning stage and inception of agricultural programmes and projects. A number of organizations, including Farm Radio Malawi, UNICEF and World Vision International, just to mention a few, should be applauded for their efforts to build the capacity of journalists in various fields through their activities and workshops. It is hoped that other organisations will follow suit in order to further the capacity of agricultural radio broadcasters to report on agricultural issues and develop radio programmes that are continually relevant to the development of smallholder population in the country. This would also assist the journalists with the technical capacity to scrutinize the agricultural messages that they broadcast and ensure they are not in conflict with one another.

In the case of ZBS and the MBC, the FUM review revealed that producers ensure that every agricultural material complies with the agricultural standards and/or is technically correct. Sometimes, they even invite agricultural experts or government officials to explain particular concepts or issues. More forums should be created, within the current radio programmes, where there is increased interaction and input of various stakeholders including private sector and research institutions, instead of limiting them to advertisements and promotional material.

Various players within the agricultural industry are called upon to recognize the vital role that radio broadcasters have in agricultural development and to provide support mechanisms for the innovations that are born out of farm radio initiatives.

## **Conclusion**

Lastly, Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) is committed to ensuring that farmers effectively and meaningfully participate in the design, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, programmes and plans related to the agricultural sector in the country. In addition, FUM itself is committed to supporting the formation and capacity building of farmer organisations through its Institutional Development section, and to see to it that farmer interests are recognized and represented at all levels including grassroots, community, and national forums. Further, the union is committed to being an influential player in the Malawian agricultural sector with the ability to exert positive policy influence resulting in an enabling environment supportive of farmer development, private sector-led growth and development of Malawi's agriculture industry.

A call to action is therefore made to all stakeholders within the agricultural industry to begin to comprehend the current context and demand for renewed agricultural knowledge and information systems, and the opportunity that radio presents to facilitate the generation, diffusion, adaptation and use of agricultural information that is technically sound, innovative, and relevant for farmers and players across the value chain. Further, it should be recognized that the success of agricultural communication across the value chain in the country is dependent on the joint efforts of each of these stakeholders, with the broadcasters, who are the collectors and interpreters of that information, as entry points. Therefore, the broadcasters need to be supported to facilitate this type of communication.

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# Communicating agricultural value chains through stories

By Marvin Hanke<sup>12</sup>

## Introduction

This paper is inspired by the lack of audience appeal in the way most agricultural radio programmes on Malawian radio stations are made. Farmers must not listen to these programmes as a duty but they must enjoy and have fun as they get agricultural messages from the programmes. As Cskszentmihlyi (1991) has argued, “Education should not be a boring or painful process. Human beings can best perform when they are totally immersed in joyful activities.”

In this paper, I propose that programme makers can produce educational radio programmes that are attractive and appealing through story telling. Currently, the most favoured educational radio programme format is the radio magazine where farmers and specialists are interviewed. I believe the success of radio programming on the agricultural value chain depends on how attractive and appealing the programmes are to the target audience. Story telling is a very old but effective way of communicating important information. In the recent past, innovations in the use of story-telling for development communications has shown that it is one of the most effective ways of communicating messages for positive social change.

My focus will be on the use of the serial radio drama for the communication of messages on the agricultural value chain (Bandura,1977). This is what is called entertainment-education. Entertainment-education is defined as “The process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms, and change overt behavior.”

## The Serial Drama

A serial radio drama is a continuing drama with continuing characters. New characters may come in and go as the story is unfolding. The drama is usually set in an imaginary location. The location could be rural or urban depending on the intervention that the drama is addressing. A serial radio drama is one of the most effective entertainment-education radio program formats that have been used world-

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<sup>12</sup> Marvin Hanke is the Director of Audio Clinic Productions and Vice Chairman of Farm Radio Malawi. Email. [marvinhanke54@yahoo.com](mailto:marvinhanke54@yahoo.com)

wide for interventions on health, agriculture, the environment, gender, human rights and good governance etc.

It is vital for anyone who is involved in behavior change communication to know that the most central element of entertainment-education is entertainment. Without it, the program will have little or no audience; nor will it have the emotional connection by audience members with the characters of the serial drama that leads to meaningful behavior change. According to Sabido (1981) “the entertainment element should account for about 70 percent of the story. The other 30 percent should be devoted to the social content and the role models for the behavior we are trying to teach/reinforce”.

One would reluctantly call Sabido’s 30% the message because entertainment-education programmes are not supposed to be devoted to sending messages; they are supposed to role model good or bad behavior through characterization in order to demonstrate the desired behaviors. This is a critical element in the success of the programme.

For this to be possible, a persuasively well written drama, with the use of a range of human emotions, cliff-hangers (suspense), strong acting and realistic production that captivates the audience through a very intensive and emotional tone, is a must.

While a radio magazine programme would read the following message on food diversification. “The Ministry of Agriculture is advising all Malawians to diversify their food intake by eating other foods other than maize” (**dry and boring**) a serial radio drama would cast a short scene like this.

CHITHOPE:                   Amai (Mum), where is my food?  
CHITHOPE’S MUM:       It’s where you usually find it, on the fire place.  
CHITHOPE:                   Do you call dried cassava and pigeon peas food? I can’t eat this rubbish.  
CHITHOPE’S MUM:       Everyone here has eaten what you call rubbish and if you can’t eat it, then you are not hungry<sup>4</sup>. (*Entertaining and appealing*)

A serial radio drama is effective because it can mirror any community through characterization. It is easy to portray someone as a farmer, a husband, drunk, wife, woman, patient, business man, chief, health assistant, teacher, traditional birth attendant, traditional medicine man, agricultural extension worker, nutritionist, transporter, etc, thus making it easier to accommodate all issues in the agricultural value chain holistically. A serial radio drama can have four stories running at the same time. A female subsistence farmer is not only a farmer. She is a wife, a mother, a sister to someone who is suffering from aids, etc. Only a serial radio drama can expose all these aspects without confusing the audience. A serial drama treats the farmer holistically.



These serial dramas are not written based on the imagination of the writers and producers; they are well researched so that they realistically portray the situation on the ground. They start with a systematic examination and analysis of its audience and the cultural and societal forces that form and affect it. This helps to capture the interest or attention of the audience, giving it pleasure, amusement, or gratification while at the same time helping the individual to develop a skill or to achieve a particular end by boosting his/her mental, moral or physical powers through role modeling.

Behaviour change is a process and not an event. A minimum of 50 serial radio dramas are needed before the audience starts building confidence and trust in the characters that reflect their lifestyle. After 50 dramas, the characters can start showing positive deviants who break cultural values for the good of the society without a lot of criticism from the audience. For example, a wife whose husband is an alcoholic and does not help her in the garden can do something unheard of: hide the radio from the husband so that she can listen to an agricultural programme. A wife can divorce a lazy husband who sells all the farm produce and uses the money for beer and prostitutes.

Just like all development communications radio programmes, a formative research is done for serial radio dramas and radio listener clubs are formed to be used as a monitoring tool during the production and broadcasting of the series and the final evaluation of the impact of the series at the end of the broadcasts. It is recommended that 120 – 180 programmes be broadcast in order to have significant impact in terms of behavior change.

### **Examples of Impact of Serial Radio Dramas**

In late 2004, Population Media Centre (PMC)<sup>5</sup> conducted an end of project evaluation of a serial radio drama on gender violence called Yeken Kignit in Ethiopia using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Males and females were asked if they thought a husband is justified when to beat his wife under certain circumstances. PMC found that the proportion of women and men who believed that a husband is justified in beating his wife if she argues with him decreased by **nearly half** among women, and by **nearly one-third** among men.

Here at home, a popular radio soap on rural development and food security called Zimachitika produced by Story Workshop with funding from European Union and broadcast on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation was ranked by 93% of its listeners as the most popular radio program. 81% of listeners listened to the program every week. 71% of the listeners said they had changed agricultural practices.<sup>6</sup>

## Key lessons

Serial radio drama can be used successfully in addressing the agricultural value chain because of its audience appeal and if the programmes are produced following the farming calendar which should end with the marketing and value adding of the produce.

While radio programming is effective in addressing the agricultural value chain, radio alone is not enough. A combination of posters, radio and Agricultural Extension staff on the ground would go a long way in addressing the agricultural value chain.

## Challenges

Production of entertaining and educational serial radio dramas require special skills which most radio stations in Malawi do not have. Production of such programmes is expensive since there is need to pay the writers and actors. It takes a long time to start having behaviour change impact.

## Opportunities

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MDGS II) identifies Agriculture and Food Security as one of the six key priorities; therefore development partners can consider funding the training of radio stations in the production of edutainment programme.

- Good radio programming is expensive yet cheap because of the large number of people it reaches. You can reach 6 million people at K1 per person on a budget of MK6,000,000.
- Training in the writing, production and acting of serial radio dramas can be done locally by Story Workshop, a Blantyre-based NGO, Audio Clinic Productions and Center for Development Communications also based in Blantyre.

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<sup>1</sup> Mihly Cskszentmihlyi. 1991. **Flow Theory** . [http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Flow\\_theory](http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Flow_theory)

2. Bandura, A.1977 **Social Learning Theory**. New York. General Learning Press. <http://www.learning-theories.com/social-learning-theory-bandura.html>

<sup>3</sup> Miguel Sabido. 1981. **Toward the social use of soap operas** (utminers.utep.edu/asinghal/articles and chapters/wang\_singhal.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Scott Burton. 2008. *The Effect of Listening to Entertainment Education Radio Serial Drama on Reported Beliefs Surrounding Spousal Abuse in the Amhara and Oromiya Districts of Ethiopia*  
[http://www.populationmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/burton\\_thesis\\_pmc.doc](http://www.populationmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/burton_thesis_pmc.doc)

<sup>5</sup> [www.storyworkshop.org/our\\_archive](http://www.storyworkshop.org/our_archive)

<sup>6</sup> Rex Chapota. 2011. Concept Paper, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium. Lilongwe, Farm Radio Malawi

# Malawi College of Fisheries Community Outreach Unit and the Fish Value Chain

By Steve Wemba<sup>13</sup>

## Introduction

The fisheries sector is one of the most important agricultural subsectors Malawi. It is managed by the Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. Fish contributes to household food security especially among the fishing communities as it provides the cheapest source of animal protein. The sector directly employs about 43,000 people and approximately 100,000–150,000 indirectly, who are employed in fisheries related activities such as fishing, processing and marketing, (Malawi Government, 1994). However, fish is a highly perishable food commodity that requires proper handling, processing and packaging without compromising quality to reduce post harvest losses. This can only be possible if fishermen, fish processors and traders access appropriate information and skills. In view of this, the Department of Fisheries established the Community Outreach Unit in 2005 to be responsible for producing and disseminating fisheries information to the fishing communities through a 15 minute radio program called **Usodzi wa Lero**, which is broadcast on Thursday from 3:30 pm on the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC).

## Objectives of the paper

This paper discusses the role and capacity building of broadcasters to address the information gap in the fisheries value chain through radio programming. It seeks to share the experiences of the Fisheries Community Outreach Unit in promoting best practices through **Usodzi wa Lero** radio program, particularly in the areas of fish handling, processing, packaging and transporting in order to reduce fish post harvest losses. Lastly, it highlights challenges, opportunities and recommendations for using radio to address information gap in fish value chain.

## Experiences of using Usodzi wa Lero radio program in addressing information gap in fisheries value chain

Generally, there are recommended activities which are supposed to be carried out by fishermen, fish processors and traders immediately fish is caught, when it is being processed, transported and how it is handled at the point of sale.

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<sup>13</sup> Steve Wemba is radio producer and community facilitator at the Malawi College of Fisheries, Mangochi, Malawi. Email: [wembasteve@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wembasteve@yahoo.co.uk).

Experience has shown that artisanal fishermen properly handle fish by washing it in clean water, sorting and grading it according to its species and size. Fish is now iced and put in hygiene crates or baskets and stored in a cool place. This has helped fishermen to maintain fish freshness and reduce contamination and effect of spoilage which lead to post harvest fish losses.

Fish is also processed immediately it is at the disposal of fish processors whereby it is either sun dried, smoked and parboiled. Through fish processors fish shelf life is increased, consumer preference is met and its nutritional value is added. As such, the final product fetches high prices at the market.

### **Usodzi wa Lero radio programming**

The high quality programme that the unit produces are attributed to the formal and informal trainings in radio programming which the producers attended at Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ) and Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC). It is important to note that the content of the program is not compromised as the program is produced by the fisheries technical personnel.

The radio program concepts are developed based on the fisheries extension calendar and demands from the target groups identified by fisheries extension workers. Other radio programmes are produced based on emerging issues such as gender, climate change, HIV and Aids.

To highlight best practices in fish handling, processing and packaging **Usodzi wa Lero** producers identify and interview best fish handlers and processors for others to emulate. However, there has been a setback as the prospective interviewees demand payment after granting the interview.

### **Monitoring and feedback**

The unit has a responsibility of monitoring the radio station to find out whether the program has been broadcast or not. The radio station is asked to explain why it has failed to broadcast a program and to propose the way forward.

The unit is mandated to get feedback from the target group which helps the producers to monitor progress registered. However, it has been difficult to get feedback since the radio program is pre-recorded.

### **The impact of Usodzi wa Lero radio program**

The radio program has managed to register some achievements over and above the fact that it has promoted proper fish handling, processing and packaging. The achievements are summarised below.

- Fish is being washed in clean water, sorted and graded by artisanal fishermen on board fishing vessels.

- High quality fish products are produced by fish processors after adopting the recommended fish processing methods.
- Processed fish is properly packaged and transported to fish markets by fish traders without compromising its quality.
- The radio program created a platform for sharing best practices experienced in the fisheries value chain, that is, fish processors in Mangochi are able to know how their counterparts in Salima parboil Usipa and vice versa.

#### **Best practices of Usodzi wa Lero radio based communication to address information gap in the fisheries value chain.**

Some best practices of using the radio in address information gap in the fisheries value chain as observed by the Community Outreach Unit include the following;

- The flexibility of producing radio programme based on demands from the target group, promotes ownership of the program amongst fishermen and others.
- Monitoring of the radio program is essential as it helps to find out if programme are broadcast or not.
- The radio program provides solutions aimed at addressing emerging and cross cutting issues such as gender, climate change, HIV and AIDS.

#### **Key lessons**

The following lessons have been learnt by the Community Outreach Unit.

- Most of the problems encountered by fishermen, fish processors and fish traders in the fisheries value chain can be addressed if relevant information is provided to the target group.
- In situations where extension workers cannot reach the target group due to impassable roads e.g. Zambo fishing beach in Monkey bay, Mangochi), radio is the only tool to use as it breaks that barrier.
- A large number of fishermen, fish processors and fish traders access fisheries information quickly and act as messengers to other members of the community.
- Sustainability plans should be put in place if the radio program is funded by a project, to ensure continuity of the program when the project phase out.
- Capacity building in radio programming for radio producers plays a major role as far as producing high quality programme is concerned.

#### **Challenges**

Some of the challenges faced during **Usodzi wa Lero** radio programming are as follows;

High cost of airtime on radio stations affects continuity of radio programming.

- Limited or lack of funding to sponsor and support radio programming (**Usodzi wa Lero**) affecting the sustainability of the program.

- Lack of knowledge of the power of radio on communication from stakeholders results in little support to radio programming.
- Poor coordination between service providers (Departments with the Ministry of agriculture) who are engaged in radio programming.
- Difficulties in getting feedback from the target group on pre-recorded radio programme.

### **Opportunities**

Despite these challenges, there are some opportunities available for the use of radio in the fisheries sector, which include the following;

- The availability of community radio stations is an opportunity as its air time tariffs are reasonable as compared to other radio stations.
- Community Outreach Unit has well trained radio producers and state of the art radio programming equipment (recorders and editing suite)

### **Recommendation**

- The Ministry of Agriculture should lobby for more support and sponsorship for radio programming from stakeholders who are involved in the fisheries industry.
- The Outreach Unit should engage community radio stations (Dzimwe, Nkhotakota and Usisya) since they are cheap and also target the fishing communities.
- Radio programming should be properly design to include evaluation methods so that there is no problem in getting feedback from the target group on pre-recorded programme.
- The Ministry of Agriculture should strengthen relations between radio producers within the Ministry so that they share experiences of best practices.
- The departments of the Ministry should encourage capacity building for radio producers on effective programming.

### **Conclusion**

Radio is an important tool for communication and development in Malawi. It remains a cheap means of reaching out to the fishing communities with important fisheries messages and techniques. It provides a platform for informed debate, sharing of experiences, successes and technologies that work. This paper has shown that radio continues to be relevant to community needs and as a result, fishermen, fish processors and fish traders have demonstrated that they can achieve their goals based on the information accessed through the radio.

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# Enhancing Dissemination of Information across Agricultural Value Chain: The Case of Farmer Voice Radio's 'Impact' Radio Programming

By Clement Shema<sup>14</sup>

## Introduction

Agriculture continues to be the nucleus of livelihood in Malawi and sub Saharan Africa. In Malawi, agriculture contributes over 45% to the GDP and 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings. Smallholder farmers' dominated by women, constitutes about 85% of the workforce in Malawi's agriculture sector.

The major challenge faced in the agriculture industry in Malawi is the use of agricultural information to effectively promote both production and value addition on the agricultural value chain. For a long time such information has concentrated on agricultural production. Most of the agriculture programmes and projects focus on helping smallholder farmers to improve their agricultural productivity to achieve food security. On the other hand, little is made to provide value chain oriented information let alone marketing information to smallholder farmers. As a result, smallholder farmers sell their agricultural produce at very cheap prices and later on buy or import finished products from their produce at high prices.

Currently, the Malawi government has realised the importance of value chain approach to agriculture and has since begun to put emphasis on agricultural produce value addition. However, value addition actualisation calls for proactive and effective provision of relevant information to smallholder farmers.

This paper discusses the principles of the Farmer Voice Radio (FVR) project's impact radio programming and how its adoption could help enhance the dissemination of value chain information to smallholder farmers in Malawi.

## Impact Radio Programming Principles

Radio plays a pivotal role in disseminating information to smallholder farmers, as majority of smallholder farmers rely on radio to access information. A snapshot survey conducted by FVR indicates that about 97% of smallholder farmers use radio to access agricultural information.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Clement Shema is Radio Impact Programming Specialist for Farm Radio Malawi, Lilongwe, Malawi. Email. [cshema@farmradiomw.org](mailto:cshema@farmradiomw.org)

<sup>15</sup> FVR Snapshot Survey January 2011 (Pp. 2)

Therefore, radio holds the key to unlocking value chain information for smallholder farmers. Currently, agricultural programmes enjoy some 13% of airtime in Malawi.<sup>16</sup>

However, lack of capacity in agricultural programming among broadcasters is a great impediment to provision of credible, reliable and user friendly information on agricultural value chains. As a result, most of the smallholder farmers do not get information that would help them understand the value chain and adjust their farming activities in line with principles of value chain analysis for profitability at local and international levels. In an endeavour to address these challenges, Farmer Voice Radio (FVR) project, of which Farm Radio Malawi is an implementing partner, came up with a new model of radio-based agricultural extension that is aimed at using the radio medium to disseminate agricultural extension services to farmers across the whole value chain. Subsequently, FVR laid down some principles that would guide its agricultural programming. The principles include:

**Systematic Programming.** This ensures systematic development of programme using methods and formats that are appealing to smallholder farmers.



FVR programmes are developed from and guided by quarterly National Agricultural Radio Agenda (NARA) and Local Agricultural Radio Agenda (LARA). These agenda guide FVR programming in terms of content and context.

**Star programming.** This is a type of programming centred around:

- **Radio Farmers.** These are ordinary farmers who agree to have their detailed farming activities shared widely by radio.
- **Star Practices.** These are exemplary practices reported on FVR programme
- **Star Initiatives** – Groups of farmers working together on innovative practices which are reported in FVR programme
- **Star Innovations** – New practices from NARA and LARA. Some come from farmers.

#### Formats

- Magazine programme
- Anchor programming
- Audio AgTips (30 – 60 seconds agricultural tips)
- SMS AgTips



<sup>16</sup> Farm Radio Malawi (2010) Farm Radio Services Report 2011 (Pp. 44). Lilongwe. Malawi



- Mini dramas (1– 3 minutes dramas)
- Feature programme
- Automated Weather reports

**Focused information (Better Information – Better Decisions):** This ensures that farmers are provided with sequentially detailed step by step, user friendly and implementable information. Messages are developed quarterly by NARA and LARA following the process below:

Prioritizing themes, topics to be covered and breaking down the topics into individual messages. The messages must be:

- Logically sequenced
- Timely
- In line with the agricultural calendar (relevant)
- Relevant to the target audience

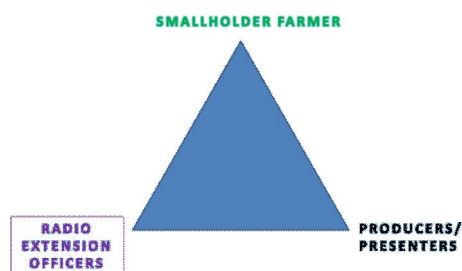
Developing systematic content questions to ensure collection of as complete, accurate and detailed information as possible. Systematic content development includes questions that cover the following programming areas:

- **Introduction.** This ensures that listeners are aware of the topic and engaged in the programme. Usually the strategy used in the introduction is farmer interview.
- **Discussion.** Farmers learn about, explore, debate, and evaluate the practice or initiative being presented. The strategy used here is group discussions.
- **Implementation.** Farmers are supported in implementing the practice/initiative. An interview with an expert is used here to provide step by step, implementable information about the topic or initiative being discussed.
- **Redundancy.** This is about focused repetitions of agricultural information many times, in many forms, and in many contexts to give all farmers a chance to hear, review, learn, adapt, adopt and assimilate the message. FVR uses the following strategies of redundancy:
  - Repetition of key points within the same program
  - Repetition of broadcasts at different times
  - Extracts of key points from broadcasts for rebroadcast as AgTips (agriculture tips)
  - Inclusion of key points from FVR programming in other station broadcasts
  - Repetition of key points with different examples and in multiple contexts

- Repetition of key points through Anchor Programming
- **Systematic feedback.** Feedback from farmer-listeners to add, revise, and repeat messages and programme to meet their individual and collective needs. FVR uses frontline SMS Feedback System to get feedback from farmers. Farmers give feedback through SMS to enquire, ask questions, make comments regarding FVR programme. Through the same system FVR is able to send SMS AgTips, and automated weather reports to farmers.

### Outcome/Results of the FVR Impact Programming Principles

- Effective Team Work in agriculture radio programming: Production teams comprised of Radio Extension Officers, Producers and Presenters have been established in all the districts we are working in and have been capacitated with impact programming skills for agricultural programming. The production teams work together to plan their activities for radio programming.
- Farmers have assumed ownership of the FVR programme. They decide programme' content, how it should be done, and the timing of the programme. They also give feedback each time a program has been aired on various aspects e.g. clarity of the message in the programme, what needs to be repeated, or improved on or any other relevant issues.
- So far, the results of the FVR Impact Programming have been phenomenal from the field observations. A triangle of benefit has emerged from FVR impact driven programme.



- Smallholder farmers have seen their productivity improve as they are able to access ideal extension services systematically, with focused information, while being given a chance to listen to key messages more than once and at the same time being given a chance to express themselves through continuous interaction with the production teams. The snapshot survey which was conducted by FVR in January 2011 showed that 70% of the smallholder farmers who listen to FVR programme implement what they listen to.<sup>17</sup>
- Radio Stations including MBC, Mudzi Wathu, Dzimwe, Nkhotakota, Mzimba and Radio Tigabane have seen their agricultural programming transformed as producers and presenters have been equipped with impact driven programming skills, which they apply to other programmes so as to enhance quality. So far, a total of 26 producers and presenters have been trained in impact programming.

<sup>17</sup> FVR Snapshot Survey January 2011, Pp 5

- Radio Extension Officers (REOs), who have had no formal training in broadcasting, have been equipped with skills to collect materials for programming. 98% of the materials used in FVR programmes are collected by REOs.

## **Lessons, Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations**

### **Lessons**

- Farmers like to learn from their fellow farmers and experts. They want to learn technical and practical aspects of agricultural value chain information.
- The collaboration between radio stations and agricultural experts in working with and for farmers ensures production of programmes with balanced information in terms of quality and agricultural value chain content.
- Production of programmes that are relevant to farmers' needs with focused information propels them action.

### **Challenges**

- Logistical problems. Production team members live far away from each other. As result, they usually face transportation problems when they want to hold meetings to plan activities or when they want to go to the field to collect materials for programming.
- At times experts are too busy with other official duties to provide information at the time it is needed most.
- Limited human resource at stations (especially community radio stations) leads to producers or presenters being heaped with too much work; thus, they have no time to think through agricultural programmes and employ creativity to ensure edutainment. Consequently, agricultural programmes have ended up being monotonous and boring.

### **Opportunities**

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (at district level) can partner with radio stations (especially community radio stations) to provide extension services geared towards farmers' understanding and participation in agricultural value chain within its existing programmes.
- There are windows of opportunities for sponsorship with impact programming. MBC has agricultural programmes sponsored by Airtel, IndeBank and many other companies have shown interest to sponsor programmes. As such radio stations should approach such companies to get funding so as to recruit more producers and presenters and pay for transportation.

### **Recommendations**

- Radio stations and officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development must collaborate with radio stations when producing agricultural value chain

programmes to ensure quality programming with information that is accurate, complete, user friendly and implementable for farmers to make the most of it.

- Farmer Voice Radio principles must be predominant in determining agenda, programme content and programme layout as this lures farmers to assume ownership of the programme.
- Radio stations must be proactive in producing agricultural programme and selling them to potential sponsors.
- The line ministry needs to come up with a policy that would guide agricultural broadcasting.
- Impact radio programming principles should be adopted in the production of farm radio programmes so as to address value chain challenges that Malawian smallholder farmers face.

## Section 2

### The Policy Environment

# The Policy Environment in Supporting Agricultural Value Chains

By Pearson Jasi-Soko<sup>18</sup>

## Introduction

A conducive policy environment is very crucial in attainment of any goals. Agriculture, a key sector in Malawi is associated with a number of policy instruments which facilitate implementation of various programmes and projects. Currently a number of development initiatives are taking a sector wide approach and value chain perspective, with radio as a key means of communication. Value chains should also be associated with legal and operational framework. The paper brings out a number of policy questions and issues for discussions during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Radio Symposium on **The role of Radio Programming in addressing Information Gaps Across Agricultural Value Chains**.

## Objectives

- To outline policy instruments and framework in agriculture sector
- To describe value chain as applied in agricultural sector
- To give reasons for the need for policy environment issues at the Radio symposium
- Present some key questions/ policy issues
- Make recommendations and conclusions

## Agriculture Policy Background

### Evolution of agricultural policies

Malawi's post independence agriculture strategy has been characterized by a dual policy framework; notably

- attainment of national food self sufficiency through enhancement of the smallholder agriculture, and
- rapid economic growth through estate production and marketing

From the mid 1980s, the Malawi Government reviewed its role from that of being both a policy formulator and implementer to that of policy regulator under the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), but still controls the whole process in development of various policies and strategies. In 1995, the government developed the Agriculture and Livestock Development Strategy and Action Plan

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<sup>18</sup> Perason Jasi-Soko is Assistant Chief Agriculture Officer–Farm Business Management and Head of Agribusiness Development, Department of Agricultural Extension Services, Lilongwe, Malawi. Email.

[pearsonsoko@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pearsonsoko@yahoo.co.uk)

(ALDSAP) to provide a framework for coordinating the implementation of the various policy initiatives. Much as the ALDSAP sought to outline the aspirations and for the attainment of the sector's objectives, its implementation was affected by overlapping nature of the sector's policies and strategies and were regarded to too numerous to prioritise

In 1999, the government undertook a comprehensive review of all agricultural sector policies known as the Review of Malawi Agricultural sector Policies under the Malawi Agricultural sector Investment Programme (MASIP). Unfortunately, the review never translated into a coherent policy. Meanwhile, the Agricultural sector has several sub-sector policy documents including the Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services Policy of 2000.

The Agriculture Development Programme (ADP) sought to enhance the coordination in implementation of sector priority programmes by all stakeholders. This was renamed to Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp).

#### **Specific Radio Broadcasting Policy or Strategy**

There is no special policy/strategy for radio in the Ministry but rather all radio programmes are operated within comprehensive Agricultural Communication Strategies/Actions, which is not a strategy document under DAES. These are Radio programmes, Publications, Videography and Mobile Unit operations. Any policy or working from private-run radio? Probably MACRA will be able to provide information in Communications Act

#### **ASWAp as an investment framework**

In 2007–2009, the Malawi Government formulated a sector-wide programme, the Agricultural Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) to harmonise investment and support programmes in agriculture. ASWAp thus sought to enhance the coordination in implementation of sector priority programmes by all stakeholders.

#### **National Agricultural Policy**

From 2009 the Ministry has been consolidating all policies into a National Agricultural Policy (NAP) to raise the profile of the agricultural sector so that it effectively contributes to the national development aspirations of turning the country from a predominantly consuming to a manufacturing and exporting nation. This comes against the background of the fact that the sector has been operating without a coherent national agricultural policy.

The NAP thematic areas are Inputs use and markets; Agricultural research and development; Agricultural extension services; Livestock development; Irrigation; Land resource management; Fisheries and aquaculture development; Gender, HIV and AIDs and climate change. The NAP is

important due to dynamics in the policy environment at the national and international levels; the strong linkages between the agriculture and other sectors and forms a premise for the development of sub-sector or industry specific policies and legal frameworks.

**Specifically the NAP is aiming at achieving the following objectives**

- Facilitating the creation of a conducive and supportive policy environment for effective development of the agricultural sector throughout all stages of the value chain;
- Strengthening the capacity of the stakeholders in the sector in provision of agricultural services;
- Enhancing coordination and collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders operating in different sub-sectors of the sector; and
- Providing clear strategic policy direction to all stakeholders involved in sector issues along the value chain stages.

**Policy direction**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development is consolidating all sector policies into a National Agricultural Policy Framework and aligning all programmes and projects to ASWAp the current direction is now more focused. Thematic Implementation Strategy Documents, sector specific policy documents and strategies such as the Value Chain Development/ Approach now feature as way of coordination amongst players.

**Description of value chains**

A value chain describes the full range of activities required to bring a product from initial primary production including, through different phases of production to the final consumer. A number of key players are seriously considered along the value chain. These can be actors, regulators or supporters. The figure below illustrates this interrelationship.



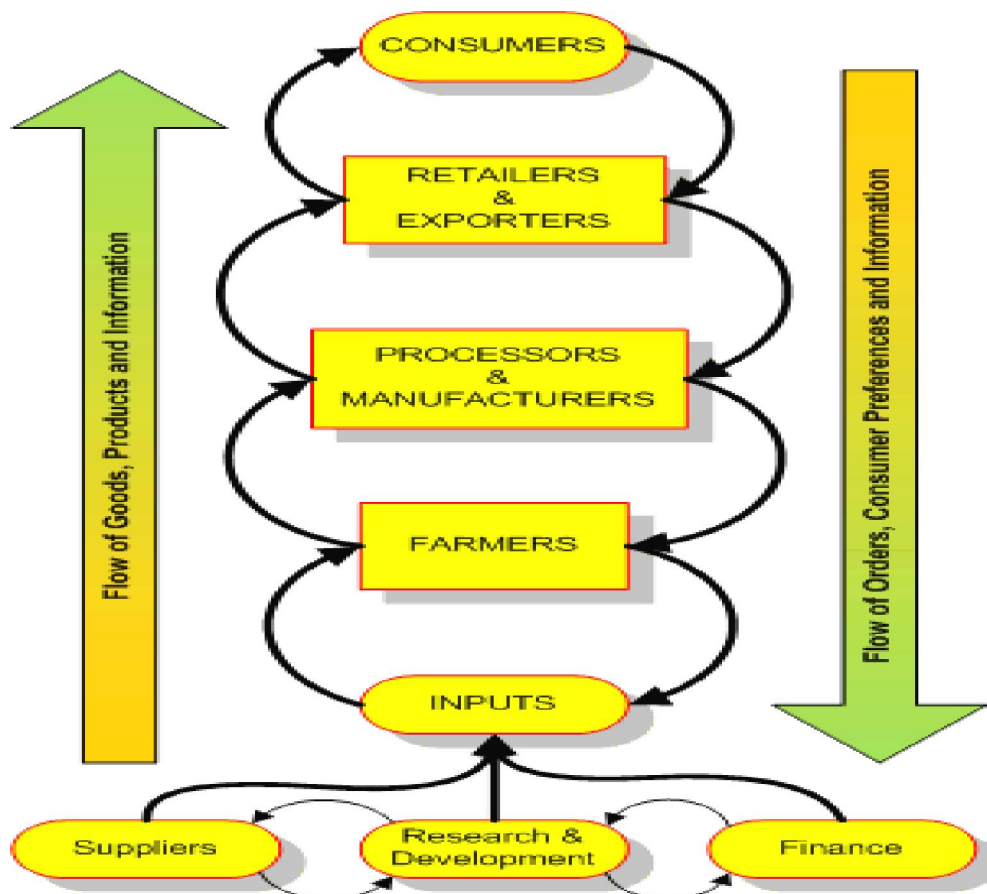


Fig 1. Pictorial presentation of Commodity Value Chain Framework

### Why value Chains

- To develop strong linkages to adoption of new technologies
- To increase competitiveness of products
- To focus on power distribution within the chain (chain governance)
- To be private sector driven, usually built on private interests and initiatives and guidance by public policies
- To bring together public and private domain and multi-stakeholder process in radio programming
- To provide profitability (not equity) to chain actors
- To encourage specialised functions along the chain
- To assist chain actors to cooperate and achieve shared interest.
- The chain players undertake joint activities (innovation, policy dialogue) and maintain a chain governance system
- Networks of people- practice oriented goals, not academic

### **Initiatives supporting agricultural value chains**

ASWAp. The objectives are to

- create accelerated and broad-based growth in the agricultural sector by combining traditional farmer knowledge, private sector expertise, development partners and government investments and programmes into a coherent and productive programme
- Promote dialogue and cooperation between value chain Stakeholders
- Strengthen capacity of value chain players Promote agricultural exports through market research studies, export trade fairs and buyer and seller meetings.
- Promote producers organizations for specific commodity value chain
- Set-up and expand market information systems in key markets and for key commodities
- National Agriculture Fairs and other events
- All other events organized by the Ministry consider value chain approach perspective.
  - i. World Food Day commemoration Days
  - ii. African Food and Nutrition Security Day
  - iii. Agriculture Shows
  - iv. Agricultural Field Days
  - v. National/Area Stakeholder Forums

### **The need for radio focus in value chains**

Radio is the most convenient way of communication in both rural and urban areas. How people many listen to radio and what programmes/interests? There is an indication that over two million people listen to agricultural programmes on the radio. At local, national, regional and international levels all sectors are talking about teaming up all collaborating (see Malindi in this report). In response to the need the Ministry of Agriculture through ASWAP is developing Agricultural Information and Diffusion Strategy where radio programming should feature.

### **Challenges**

- There are no clear studies on effectiveness of radio as means of information especially in agricultural programmes<sup>19</sup>.
- The attitude towards radio listening by all value chain players.
- Inadequate information on radio schedules
- Timing of agricultural programmes on the radios
- There are no clear radio round table discussions involving all key players along the value chains.

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<sup>19</sup> See Farm Radio International. 2008. Communicating with radio: what do we know? [www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org)

**Opportunities**

- Value Chain players, supporters and regulators have to communicate-how?
- The value chain is about flow of goods, services and information-how?
- All projects target visibility and publicity
- Availability of radio stations including community ones

**Key symposium questions issues**

- Are value chain players aware that they form part of value chain?
- Do we need a separate policy or strategy for Radio Programme or do we have it?
- How do we finance specific radio policies and strategies?
- Do value chain players recognize radio as means of addressing information gaps among other players?
- Are radio producers affiliated to any communication/radio body or are they represented in general communication bodies?
- Do we have the capacity in various radio institutions to effectively participate in policy related issues?
- Do we need specific conditions for radio programmes for Agricultural Sector?
- Among the various Value Chain players where do we fit radio programming or is it cross-cutting issue?
- Do we need special Radio Fairs?

**Recommendations and conclusions**

- The policy environment is broadly conducive but specific radio policies and strategies are not available.
- There is clear need to define areas of priority in radio programming and address a number challenges association with information flow
- The value chain players depend on information and the role of radio need special attention.

# Mainstreaming Value Chains into National and Local Agricultural Radio Agendas: The Case of Farmer Voice Radio Project

By Catherine Mthinda<sup>20</sup>

## Introduction

The Farmer Voice Radio (FVR) Malawi has been implementing a radio based agricultural extension model in one Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) in each of the following districts across the country: Mzimba, Nkhatabay, Mchinji, Nkhatakota, Lilongwe, Mangochi and Blantyre. FVR is an impact-driven radio agricultural project targeting the smallholder farmers of the Sub-Saharan Region of Africa in order to increase their productivity and improve their general well-being. The first three years beginning July 17, 2009 constitute the pilot phase of which Malawi and Kenya are the flag-carriers<sup>21</sup>. The pilot phase is implemented by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in partnership with, in the case of Malawi, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD), Bunda College of Agriculture, Centre for alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC), Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), Farm Radio Malawi, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), Mudzi Wathu, Mzimba, Dzimwe, Nkhatakota and Radio Tigabane Community Radio Stations with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation of the USA.

The main objective of this paper is to share experiences of the FVR project in mainstreaming agricultural value chain and policy issues in its agricultural extension model and to explore issues of sustainability and opportunities for scaling up. Specifically, the paper:

- shares experiences in the development and utilisation of the agricultural radio agendas;
- shows how the FVR project mainstreams the agricultural value chain and policy issues into the agricultural radio agendas;
- explores issues of sustainability and opportunities for scaling up.

## Experiences in the Development and Utilisation of the Agricultural Radio Agendas

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<sup>20</sup> Dr Catherine Mthinda is a an agricultural extension and gender specialist, Bunda College, University of Malawi. Email: [cmthinda@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cmthinda@yahoo.co.uk)

<sup>21</sup> For latest project details see <http://www.farmervoice.org/Introducing%20Farmer%20Voice%20Radio>

This section provides experiences in the development and utilisation of agricultural radio agendas. In doing so, it briefly provides background to the FVR project and describes the two types of the agricultural radio agendas.

**The FVR Project.** The FVR project was initiated in view of the fact that most community radio stations are so weak that most of their efforts are focused on survival rather than impact. On the other hand, most public and private radio stations have limited agricultural programmes despite the important role that agriculture plays in our countries. As a result, these programmes have limited impact on behaviour change among the targeted smallholder farmers. FVR therefore developed a number of strategic elements designed to revolutionise agricultural radio. One of these elements is to develop a vibrant, interactive programming aimed at behaviour change among smallholder farmers by substantially increasing the quantity and quality of agricultural radio programming that involves the farmer in a participatory manner in both content development and delivery. In this regard, FVR is using Agricultural Radio Agendas to guide all radio programming, of which agricultural value chains are taken into consideration. There are two types of agendas, namely the National Agricultural Radio Agenda (NARA) and Local Agricultural Radio Agenda (LARA).

**The LARA.** LARA is a quarterly prioritised list of desired agricultural topics for farmers of a particular impact area. It is based on the agricultural calendar focusing on a few selected priority themes (such as food security and land resource management) and commodities (such as maize and cotton). For example, there were a list of topics that farmers wanted more information on for the October to December 2011 quarter. The activities represent the whole agricultural value chain as they occur in every quarter. For example, the October–November quarter is dominated by preparations and actual beginning of a new agricultural season; hence, topics include input purchasing, garden preparation, planting, marketing of *dimba* (wetland) crops, fish ponds, etc. Thus, farmers have to project activities for that period because ideally, the LARA is developed about two months from the quarter in question. The topics are then organised around themes of national importance that reflect government policies. Examples of the themes include the following.

- Increasing food security among smallholder farmers,
- Improving land resource management. Replenishing natural resources for improved livelihood of smallholder farmers,
- Improving livestock production among smallholder farmers, and
- Engaging farmers in fish farming as a source of income and protein food

The LARA is important because it.

- Represents farmers' local interests in terms of what areas they want more information on.
- Provides an overview of the agricultural problems that farmers face in their farming business.

- Serves as a guide to extension workers in terms of the type of desired practices that will help farmers improve their livelihoods.
- Provides guidance to both the National and Community Radio Stations when producing radio programme that will show positive impact on the targeted group.

The LARA is produced by the Local Radio Agricultural Advisory Committee (LRAAC) whose members are representatives from three established Radio Listening Clubs (RLC) in the impact area. The LRAAC acts as an advisory body that works on behalf of Radio Listening Clubs (RLC). Its major role is to develop the LARA in consultation with other key community stakeholders such as the extension worker and other farmers in that area.

**The NARA.** The NARA is a national list of desired and prioritised agricultural topics compiled by Bunda College from all the available LARAs in a particular quarter. In addition, Bunda consults stakeholders such as other Gates Foundation grantees for their input and the Guide to Agricultural and Natural Resources Production for policy issues. The NARA contains agricultural value chain topics that are of both National and local importance. It provides guidance to community radio stations when producing radio programme that will show positive impact on the targeted group. In addition, the NARA becomes the focus of all programming and other FVR activities.

Once Bunda produces a draft NARA, it is then submitted to the National Radio Agricultural Advisory Committee (NRAAC) for approval. The NRAAC is composed of stakeholders such as the FVR partners, interested Bill and Melinda Gates grantees, and agricultural experts on voluntary basis. The committee reviews the draft, ensuring that it is technically sound, responds to the needs of the farmers as expressed in the LARAs, and responds to government priorities as expressed in its policy documents before approving it. Bunda then circulates the approved NARA to MBC, community radio stations and extension workers who are involved with the FVR project.

LARA items that were not included in the NARA may be utilised in the community radio stations since they focus on local interests. Bunda College supports this radio programming with technical notes in areas where there are knowledge gaps by the production teams. A wide variety of technical notes have been produced in areas such as the production of specific crops and livestock, fish ponds, beekeeping, vegetable production, and nutrition. These are available in soft copies upon request. The utilisation of the LARA/NARA in radio programming by the radio stations and the utilisation of the messages therein by farmers to influence behaviour change then become the indicators by which success of FVR is measured.

### **Mainstreaming Agricultural Value Chains and Policy Issues in the NARA**

The approach in the development of the NARA is broad based, meaning that topics cover a wide range of activities that happen in a particular quota. The focus is on the agricultural value chain. Great efforts are made to ensure that all angles of agricultural production are considered from farm planning, production, processing, marketing and utilisation, including nutrition, gender and HIV&AIDS issues. However, this is limited to the expertise of the stakeholders involved and involvement of more stakeholders would enhance this mainstreaming.

In addition, the NARA ensures that government agenda is promoted. For example, national and agricultural sector policy as expressed in the MGDS and Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) respectively promotes food security, commercialisation, diversification, and gender mainstreaming among others. The NRAAC therefore ensures that the NARA themes and specific topics reflect these government priorities. Also, the MoAIWD acts as a watchdog to ensure that the NARA adheres to government policy as well as includes only those technologies approved by government. For example, recently the government has prioritised cotton as an important cash crop for smallholder farmers. Subsequent NARAs would then reflect this change in priorities. As the radio is a powerful mass media tool, this process protects the farmer by ensuring that only trustworthy information is aired. It eliminates from the NARA messages/technologies that are confusing or half baked.

### **Key Lessons in the Use of the Agricultural Radio Agendas**

- The LARA and NARA have proved useful in providing guidance to radio production teams
- They have facilitated the production of impact radio programmes at both community and national radio stations, in particular, deciding the type of agricultural messages and tips to be included in their programmes. This facilitates provision of the right information to farmers according to the agricultural calendar.
- They have facilitated the development of a 13 week programming schedule. Thus, radio programmes are produced ahead of time which facilitates timely broadcasting and collection of materials in a systematic way thus saving resources.
- They have helped cement team work among radio station staff, extension workers and farmers. In the process, members appreciate each other's roles and how these roles can be enhanced for effective and efficient radio programming.
- The LARA has also provided guidance to farmers in the RLCs to have more focused radio listening. It also helps them to monitor the radio stations to ensure that they respond to their demands as expressed in the LARA. In addition, farmers report that radio listening has become more interesting as they participate in programming – they contribute to the agenda (LARA) and are part of the voices on the radio.
- The LARA and NARA also help to increase awareness among farmers, extension workers, and radio station staff on government policies – what is important on the government agenda, the

appropriate information pertaining to those policies, and what farmers should be encouraged to do.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

The major challenges in the development and utilisation of the agricultural radio agendas include the following:

- Development of LARAs is costly as Bunda has to visit the impact areas to facilitate the collection of the LARA which is done in a participatory manner. Late development of the LARA affects timely development of the NARA which has to be ready at least one and a half months before the start of the new quarter so as to fit into impact radio programming cycle. But there is an opportunity to integrate this activity with the District Agricultural Extension Service System (DAESS) structure so that it becomes part and parcel of the extension worker's job. LRAACs and other RLCs in the area could be part of the Area Stakeholder Panel to produce LARAs and submit them to the District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) to a District agenda which can then be approved by the District Stakeholder Panel and then sent to DAES to produce a NARA. The district agenda is good for community radio stations. However, national radio stations such as MBC and ZBS would require a NARA which could continue to be produced by the NRAAC but with an expanded membership to make it broad.
- The LRAAC and NRAAC currently limited to FVR stakeholders. This means that some actors in the agricultural value chain are not represented. One advantage of the DAESS structure is that the panels are broad based, representing different actors in the agricultural value chain.
- The agendas for both the LARA and NARA are usually too long to be covered in a given quota. It is therefore difficult for the radio stations to cover most of the material. Efforts are being made to train the LRAACs on how they can priorities their information needs to just a few. However, producing a short NARA is a challenge as Malawi has a diverse agricultural base which means that priorities differ from one agro-ecological area to another. In addition, the NARA has to pay attention to policy issues or government priorities such as climate change, sustainable natural resource management, gender and HIV&AIDS mainstreaming, food security and others. The opportunity is to allow radio stations to focus on their local interests that are in the NARA.

### **Recommendations**

As the NARA represents a schedule of key activities for different agricultural value chains on a quarterly basis, there is a need to scale up its utilisation. To do this, it is recommended that:

- Bunda College should strengthen linkages with research and other stakeholders to enhance the value chain concept in the NARA.
- Bunda College and MoAIWD should create awareness of the NARA to more farm radio stakeholders to enhance its utilisation for impact radio programming.
- MoAIWD should consider



- integrating the LRAAC and NRAAC in its DAESS structures
- expanding membership of LRAAC and NRAAC to include more stakeholders, and
- utilising the NARA in producing its print and electronic media programme materials.
- Stakeholder organisations should consider investing in computers and solar power to build capacity of the EPAs and facilitate radio programming especially the collection of materials.
- There is need to scale up the access and use of the LARA and NARA to other broadcasting stations and media based NGOs.
- There is need to ensure thematic representation of other key value chain actors such as livestock experts and fisheries experts so that the NARA is all encompassing for diversified value chains.

### **Conclusion**

The radio programming approach as implemented by FVR is the first of its kind in this country and the experiences show that it has great potential for revolutionalising agricultural radio programming in Malawi. The key lessons from production teams and farmers indicate that radio programming in agricultural value chains has been enhanced and that radio listening has become more interesting. This represents the beginning of a transformation in farm radio in Malawi that should be nurtured.

# The Livestock Policy in the Promotion of Livestock Value Chains: The Context of Radio Programming

By Timothy Thokozani Jonathan Pasani<sup>22</sup>

## Introduction

Livestock in Malawi is managed at three levels: subsistence level where livestock (especially local chickens and in some cases goats, sheep and local Malawi Zebu cattle) is kept with little or no major economic or business objective; small-scale commercial level comprising mainly the broiler and or layer chicken in backyard production in urban and peri-urban communities; large-scale livestock farming done by a few elite farms in broiler chickens, layer chickens, beef and dairy cattle. The livestock sector mainly comprises ruminant livestock species (cattle, goats and sheep) and non-ruminant species (pigs, chickens). The populations are estimated as follows:

- cattle 1,069,854
- goats 3,893,922
- sheep 214,230
- pigs 2,011,106 and
- chicken 40,053,778 (DAHLD, 2010).

In terms of products and by products, the following estimates obtain: cattle would produce 32,225 tons of beef; 46,672 tons of milk and 294,215 hides. The goats would produce 23,632 tons of meat and 2,498,032 hides while sheep would produce 986 tons of mutton and 92,895 hides. The pigs are estimated to produce 55,832 tons of meat while chickens would produce 50,749 tons of meat and 3,453 tons of eggs (DAHLD, 2010). These estimates are based on products that had gone through the official livestock value chain in Malawi in 2010 and were presented as raw meat, milk, eggs and hides.

## Livestock sector policy environment.

The overall goal of the Malawi livestock sector policy is to contribute towards improved household, national food security and poverty reduction through sustainable farmer demand driven livestock services (DAHLD, 2005). This policy goal sets the kind of environment under which livestock farming should develop. A number of guiding principles as stipulated in the sector policy. One of the

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<sup>22</sup> Timothy Pasani is Principal Consultant and founder of Lonepalm Livestock Consultants, Lilongwe, Malawi.

Email: [lonepalmconsult@gmail.com](mailto:lonepalmconsult@gmail.com)

principles is stimulating livestock extension agents to facilitate the evolution of demand driven extension system in line with a liberalized Malawi economy. The policy also notes that with shrinking resources, livestock extension should no longer depend on the public service; hence, the need to seek to promote various actors in the provision of extension service delivery. The livestock sector policy also takes cognisance of the need for farming communities to have an opportunity to prioritise and commit themselves to their activities. Thus, the policy tries to provide for a sense of ownership, accountability, transparency and sustainability of livestock extension services. In terms of livestock marketing, the policy aims at providing or promoting adequate marketing infrastructure in order to promote rural, peri-urban and urban agro-processing and marketing of livestock products.

On such valuable animal by-products as hides and skins the policy aims at improving conservation and collection of quality hides and skins. The objective is to commercialise hides and skins through registration of all buyers and traders in hides and skins; and promotion of quality processing and recovery of hides and skins. It has to be noted, however, that the livestock sector policy in Malawi is virtually silent on livestock product value addition and does not provide guidelines on livestock products and the livestock value chain as a whole.

#### **Livestock value chain**

Currently there has been need to promote value addition in agricultural products and that does not leave out livestock products. Value chains seem to be the key word in recent agricultural development debate. Often value chain discourse involves rural economic development and agribusiness promotion. The livestock value chain is defined by IDRC (2000), as the full range of activities required to bring a product (e.g. live animals, meat, milk, eggs, leather, fibre, manure) to final consumers passing through the different phases of production, processing and delivery. IDRC (2000) also defines the livestock value chain as a market-focused collaboration among different stakeholders who produce and market value-added products.

The Malawian experience has been the use of traditional marketing channels with ad hoc sales. If the livestock value chain is to be fully achieved, there is need to gradually replace the traditional markets by coordinated links among farmers, processors, retailers and others. In this context, the question is not whether, but how to include the different (male and female) actors in the value chains, how to apply a balanced approach that takes into account both competitiveness and equity issues with full support of an enabling livestock policy environment. The current situation in Malawi is that livestock produced by smallholder farmers is marketed by private middlemen who regroup and distribute the livestock and their products to terminal consumer markets. ILRI (2003) notes that, although the marketing chain is well known, the economic and institutional barriers to livestock marketing (transportation, costs, quality standards, inadequate and uncoordinated livestock market information systems) limit livestock sector development, with a consequent negative impact on the welfare of the

large population of smallholder producers/farmers and others who depend on the sector for their livelihoods.

#### **Experiences/potential of using radio programming.**

As indicated by FRM, radio is by far the best and most popular mass communication tool for reaching the rural poor (some of whom are keeping livestock). In Malawi there has been an increase in the number of radio stations – particularly community and commercial FM stations since 1998 (FRM, 2011). Radio in Malawi has found some use in livestock promotion especially in management and marketing. There has been very little in coverage of government livestock policy and how it affects farmers' welfare. There has been virtually no radio mediated awareness raising of livestock value chains. With proper training, radio could be used in presenting to the livestock farmers the key players in the livestock value chain such as middlemen, processors, transporters and others.

Radio could also be used as an extension. Through radio programming better livestock production techniques could be promoted. The livestock value chain may also be explained to farmers through such communication platforms as radio listeners club, the story workshop and **Ulimi wa Lero** programmes. Radio in Malawi is a powerful tool as seen from the evidence of the growing number of radios and such initiatives as Farmer Voice Radio; community radios and community targeted programming from such radio stations as ZBS and MBC Radio1. New and existing radio programmes could explain the livestock policy to livestock keepers, marketers and processors, who, together, form the livestock value chain.

#### **Challenges**

- **Empowerment.** the livestock sector policy lacks empowerment of small-scale farmers, so that they can provide high-quality, sustainable livestock production with an identified market destination.
- **An enabling environment.** the livestock sector policy in Malawi mentions that it aims at facilitating community participation but lacks properly designed policy implementation guidelines that to facilitate small-scale farmers' and livestock keepers' access to markets as a catalyst for reaching out to the terminal markets as a way of rural poverty reduction.
- **Equity.** currently the livestock sector policy is weak in ensuring that the economic gains in livestock value chains are fairly distributed among the various factors, including poor small-scale farmers and livestock keepers.

#### **Opportunities**

- **Empowerment.** This could be achieved by assuring adequate access to basic production inputs, credit, capacity-building, market-related information on prices, value chains, competitors and consumer preferences. For Malawi this can be achieved by efficient and coordinated radio

programming whereby the producers and presenters are fully equipped with relevant skills and information on the livestock value chains.

- **An enabling environment.** This can be achieved through the use of such radio initiatives/programming as radio listening clubs, farmer voice programmes, **Ulimi wa Lero** on MBC Radio 1; **Ulimi wa Makono**, **Titukule Ulimi** and **Tilime Bwanji?** Programmes on Zodiak Broadcasting Station, to mention but a few, to improve farmer livestock business management skills and marketing strategies and ensure that they have the knowledge, information and technologies required to meet quality and sanitary standards required by the terminal consumer market.
- **Equity.** The current livestock value chain status quo can be changed through use of effective radio programming and information packaging. This will reduce the deliberate marketing distortions created by the middlemen and build better relationships among various chain actors, strengthen farmers' organizations and livestock traders' associations for equitable share of the benefits accruing from livestock value economic activities.

#### **Recommendations.**

- Through radio programming, broadcasters should ensure efficient dissemination of livestock market information to livestock producers and create strong relationships among various chain actors (including commitments from these actors to cooperate on mutually beneficial actions/investments) and strengthened farmers' organizations.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development should establish policies and strategies to enhance the ability of smallholders and small-scale market agents to compete in livestock product markets; promote standards and branding mechanisms to identify high-quality livestock products through radio programming and awareness.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development should create an enabling policy environment that will effectively embrace a sustainable livestock value chain that has efficient information flow among actors through the use of radio programming.

#### **Conclusion**

Efficient livestock value chains are a great possibility and can be achieved through radio programming as most of the livestock produced in Malawi is done by the smallholder rural farmers who have also embraced radio as their farming companion. Radio is thus an opportunity to create public awareness on the importance of creating value chains in the livestock sector. This requires the participation of many players and farmers need to know this.

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# Facilitating Public Participation in Agricultural Policy Implementation for Improved Agricultural Value Chains: The Contribution of Impact-Driven Radio Programming

By Joshua T. Chirwa & Sebastian M. Mthatiwa<sup>23</sup>

## Introduction

Malawi's economy is highly dependent on agriculture which contributes about 30% to the GDP (National Statistical Office, 2011). A large proportion of agricultural production is done by smallholder farmers and agriculture is the most important source of livelihoods for the majority of the rural poor (Jenkins and Tsoka, 2003; Malawi Government and World Bank, 2006). The Malawi Government has put in place policies aimed at increasing agricultural contribution to the country's economic growth. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MGDS II) is the overarching policy that identifies Agriculture and Food Security as one of the six key priority areas aimed at increasing the sector's contribution to economic growth. This priority area emphasizes enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting food security and agro-processing key crops. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development also developed an agricultural extension policy in 2000 with the goal of providing demand driven pluralistic services. The number of Agricultural Extension Development Officers to oversee service delivery in extension planning areas (EPA) is limited. The extension policy recognizes the importance of providing appropriate information to farmers through a number of extension methodologies, one of which is through radio programming.

Studies indicate that radio when engaged through radio, stallholders farmers contribute positive to policy changes. A study conducted by Hooton (2010) in Uganda and Kenya to find out the role of 'user voice' in stimulating policy changes process. The study found that through different communication channels, which included radio, smallholder farmers made their views publicly known and managed to influence policy changes which became essential for improving their productivity. In their study on MASAF development communication products, Dzimbiri and Chinsinga (2004) found that radio was the most effective channel for sensitizing communities on MASAF activities. But this study only focused on listenership and not the impact of radio programming on

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<sup>23</sup> Joshua Chirwa is a Master Arts (Media for Development) candidate at Chancellor College, University of Malawi (Email: [joshuachirwa@gmail.com](mailto:joshuachirwa@gmail.com)) while Sebastian M. Mthatiwa is Projects Coordinator, Farmer Voice Radio, Zomba, Malawi (Email: [sebamthatiwa@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sebamthatiwa@yahoo.co.uk))

development issues. This paper therefore aims at exploring the role of programming in promoting dialogue for policy change, implementation and agricultural value chain.

### How Radio Programming Facilitates Participation

The importance of popular participation in communication processes features highly in the MGDS II. The policy recognizes radio as key to communicating development messages. In Malawi radio is by far the cheapest mass communication tool for reaching the rural poor and enabling them to participate in policy processes. The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) plays an important role in informing and educating the public on policy issues. The station also provides a platform through which the audience participates in dialogue on various development issues that include agriculture. This is achieved through its programming. MBC partnered with other stakeholders in the implementation of the Farmer Voice Radio initiative through which the **Liu la Mlimi** programme is produced. **Liu la Mlimi** programming is based on listeners' points of view. The information for programme production comes from National Agricultural Radio Agenda (NARA) and the Local Agricultural Radio Agenda (LARA). NARA is based on agricultural policy framework while LARA comprises farmers' demands, their innovative and exemplary farming practices.

Apart from policy and farming practices, the programming also focuses on the agricultural value chain. The value chain is a series of operations from production of inputs to cultivation, processing, transportation, marketing, trading, and retailing to final consumption (Dararah, 2011; Hoffler and Maingi, 2005). The agricultural value chain can be represented as follows.



(Source: Hoffler, 2008)

At each stage of the value chain, value is added and at different stages activities can be undertaken by different operators in one or several geographical locations using various technologies (Fromm, 2007).

In its radio programming schedules, MBC produces and broadcasts programmes following processes in agricultural value chains. Themes include purchase of inputs, production, storage, transportation, processing, marketing, retail and consumption. The programming follows the agricultural calendar. Below are examples of the themes covered in the programme schedules following the agricultural value chain.

**Table 1: Programming Themes.**



No.	Maize	Legumes	Livestock (beef) production
	<b>Theme</b>		
1	Harvesting	Weeding	Feeding
2	Transportation	Pest and disease identification and control	Khola construction
3	Drying	Post-harvest handling	Breeding
4	Storage preparation	Harvesting	De-worming & dipping
5		Drying, storage & pest control	Marketing
6		Processing & marketing	

It should be noted that Malawi has low staffing levels for extension workers at district level (Chinsinga, 2008). Therefore, production and broadcasting of programmes featuring agricultural themes address the extension gaps in the country. It has been argued that low profitability of smallholder farmers is influenced by such factors as lack of market information, high transport costs, few farmer organizations and poor quality control (Malawi Government, 2006). For example a study conducted by Mabo, Magreta and Zingore (2009) on rice farmers at Nkhate Rice Scheme found that farmers sell their rice at low prices because of lack of or poor linkages to profitable rice markets and lack of management skills particularly vis-à-vis timing their rice sales. Since MBC radio programming promotes the agricultural value chain, these factors are covered in its programming. It is also expected that as such issues are discussed through radio programmes, issues of policy are raised and passed on to responsible authorities. Such programmes also unlock smallholder farmers' potential to realize enough income from their farm produce.

In the Farmer Voice Radio initiative, MBC follows a demand or impact driven programming where success is measured by farmers' ability to act on specific information. The impact driven programming is a systematic radio programming approach based on policy, farmer practices and demands. The approach includes systematic programming (format), focused information, multiple repetitions, systematic feedback, farmer voices and gender sensitivity. Farmer Voice Radio Malawi (2011), for example, has documented testimonies including those of Mrs. Kefa Ligomeka of Lunzu who learned mushroom production from FVR programmes on MBC Radio 1 featuring fellow farmers. The programming has also been focusing on farmers' best practices in agricultural production. This type of programming has registered remarkable contribution in facilitating dialogue among local communities, national authorities, policy-makers and service providers. Farmers have been empowered to express their demands to and share their farming skills with relevant authorities and

fellow farmers. Apart from encouraging implementation of government plans and policies, the impact programming approach has enabled farmers to air their views on policy issues.

### **Lessons**

- Through impact radio programming, it has been observed that farmers have the potential to increase their agricultural production but they lack information. Radio therefore provides the channel for passing information from agricultural experts to farmers.
- It has also been noted that information on best practices and new innovations by farmers or group of farmers can be passed on to other farmers through radio. As farmers are empowered to express their demands and share their farming skills among themselves and with relevant authorities, they provide appropriate information on policy changes in order to improve their agricultural production and access to markets.

Through impact radio programming it has also been noted that farmers generally lack capacity for value addition to their farm produce. **Challenges and Opportunities**

### **Challenges**

- The unreliable and low market prices demotivate farmers and contribute to the low agricultural production among smallholder farmers in the Farmer Voice Radio catchment area. Chirwa et al (2008) also noted that the low profitability of smallholder agriculture has been influenced among others by weak links to markets, high transport costs, poor quality control and lack of market information.
- Lack of motivation among smallholder farmers also affects their participation in radio programming.
- The smallholder farmers also lack modern equipment for processing their products; hence they can hardly utilize the information accessed through radio programming regarding processing of agricultural products. Other challenges involve actual production of radio programme. For instance lack of resources such transport and communication facilities is a big challenge for Farm Radio programming. There is need for adequate skills on farm radio impact programming.
- There is little training and refresher course opportunities for radio producers, against the backdrop of emerging technologies. This is compromising quality of programming.

### **Opportunities**

MBC radio channels reach almost 90% of Malawi. Most smallholder farmers in the country therefore can have access to valid information on agriculture through radio. The radio therefore can provide the link between farmers themselves and extension workers through which new innovation in agriculture and farming practices can be disseminated. The fact that the current programming encourages farmers to work in groups will provide an opportunity for them to easily find markets for their products and share farming knowledge. According to Stewart (2005) groups play important

roles in increasing the economic status of poor communities by, among others, solving market failures.

### **Recommendations**

Information dissemination through radio programming on best agricultural practices is important for economic development and improving the livelihood of smallholder farmers. Therefore in order to improve the delivery of agricultural messages among smallholder farmers it is recommended that:

- Government should put in place policies that enable local farmers easily access product markets, credit markets and inputs as well as policies that encourage farmers to add value to their products
- Researchers, Agricultural Extension Service providers and broadcasters should work hand in hand and share information on policy related issues relating to agriculture including other emerging issues on new farming practices. One way of disseminating such information to target audience would be through radio programmes
- Collection of programme materials should be done in collaboration with extension workers, farmers and broadcasters
- Radio programming be done in local languages to properly target the farming communities
- There is also need to improve the capacity of radio programme makers and extension officers in programme production and presentation skills

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### Section 3

## **Integrating Gender, HIV and Aids, Climate Change Knowledge in Agricultural Value Chain**

# Tailoring Gender in Agricultural Value Chains and Farm Radio Programming

By Chikondi Precious Chabvuta<sup>24</sup>

## Introduction

Agriculture in Malawi has been recognized as the most important sector in the economy, with more than 85% of the population relying on agriculture for their livelihood. More than 80% of the Malawian population owns a radio and hence listen to different programmes to improve their skills in different disciplines, which include agriculture. Gender in Malawi has become increasingly important in shaping the agricultural totality of production, processing, marketing, distribution, and consumption within the economy though this has often been overlooked in value chain development. In Malawi, 52 of the population is women of which over 60% own radio.

## Rationale for mainstreaming gender in radio programmes

Radio has proved to be a powerful means of disseminating information. Hence, there is need to have radio programmes that will ensure that both male and females listen without any hindrance. Extension workers are few in the country. There is little participation by female farmers due to household chores.

## Perceived outcome

Radio should reach both men and women. If radio programming were tailored in such a way as to get the women at the time they need the information more, then the disparities that are seen in accessing information would be reduced. To have maximum impact in the value chain, the women will have to be involved and the only way for them is through their radios whilst they are doing other chores. The involvement of women in the entire value chain would improve if radio programmes are tailor-made to benefit women. If women and men were both involved in the agricultural value chain, there would be an improvement in the whole agricultural value chain.

## Experience on the role of radio programming in addressing information gaps across agricultural value chains

Empowering both male and female farmers through radio programmes ensures that there is value addition in all processes of the agricultural value chain. Radio programming does not discriminate male from female and is therefore an effective means of mainstreaming gender. Value chain strategies

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<sup>24</sup> Chikondi Chabvuta is a gender specialist at FUM. Email: [chikondichabvuta@farmersunion.mw](mailto:chikondichabvuta@farmersunion.mw)

are adopted for the betterment of the economy and until recently, crosscutting issues such as gender have been overlooked in agricultural value chains.

Radio programming not only increases the opportunities for every farmer at each level of the value chain but it also helps to increase the participation of both women and men. However, experience has shown that women still have limited access to resources or assets compared to men as a result of limited access to education and information/knowledge in Malawi. By acknowledging the importance of mainstreaming gender in the agricultural value chain, radio programmes try to reach out to every farmer regardless of their differences in accessing information from extension workers.

Men and women radio programmes in different ways and hence the need to strategize on radio programme to be aired when women are home or are doing household chores so that they too can benefit from the radio programmes.

The Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) is an umbrella body of farmer organizations in Malawi. FUM works as a visible platform for interaction as well as a vehicle for collective action and lobbying for all farmers in Malawi. The vision of FUM is to have a vibrant collective voice, working for improved income and livelihoods security for Malawians. The mission is to safeguard and promote the interest of farmers and their organizations. The overall objectives of FUM are to

- promote the development of strong farmers' representation in Malawi
- support the strengthening of member organizations capacity to deliver adequate service to their members and
- advance and protect the common interest of affiliated farmers' organizations locally, regionally and internationally.

All these are linked to the governments' key goals which are to boost agricultural productivity, thereby raising farm income and reducing poverty.

One of the goals of the government is to strengthen Malawi's institutional capacity for long-term agricultural development. Through farm radio, farmers adopt new technologies to enhance various stages and processes involved in the agricultural value chain. Thus radio plays a huge role in improving the performance of farmers

Radio plays a role in easing access to extension messages which the communities, and especially association members that belong to FUM, use to increase production production, processing, and marketing.

Mainstreaming gender in farm radio programming will help ensure that radio as an extension service is directed to both men and women. It would be recommended that

- radio stations broadcast programmes discuss the benefits of being in a group.
- programme schedules should take no account of women's chores such as looking after children, cooking, cutting wood and fetching water. If the radio programme were tailored to reach women when they are doing household chores or in the garden to ensure their involvement and also their listenership, the agricultural sector would boom.

### **Key lessons**

- Empowering women through extension messages has proved to have a huge impact but needs further improvement for agriculture to improve.
- It has also been observed through our interactions with women that adoption of technologies communicated through the radio is high when it is a fellow woman communicating the new information about innovations.
- Participatory radio communication involving women only whets women's interest to learn from their colleagues; which explains the booming of women's associations.
- The use of extension agents has not proved to be very effective because most the project training tends to be oriented towards crops traditionally grown by men. Timetables take no account of women's chores such as looking after children, cooking, cutting wood and fetching water. Trainers and agricultural extension agents are usually male and thus may not speak to, or get close to women; hence this proves to be ineffective.
- If radio programme invest in the sharing of knowledge and learning for rural women through radio extension and training; this could be an effective means of reducing poverty and promoting food security and sustainable development. However, studies on agricultural extension have highlighted a number of weaknesses in current efforts to reach rural women. There are very few female extension officers. This is why the radio has proved to be very critical in diffusing information in the agricultural value chain.
- Extension services have often ignored the specific information needs of women as well as the fact that they may require different agricultural technologies from those suited to men. They have underestimated women's indigenous knowledge and experiences. They have not taken the time to listen to and learn from women themselves. Radio should be afford women an opportunity to speak out and contribute what they know best about agriculture.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

- Generally many women in Malawi have limited access to land ownership or control of the land which is a basic need to participate in an association. A practical example would be for Lufira Rice Scheme in Karonga where the men are involved in tilling the waterlogged gardens, and sometimes do the weeding; whilst the women are involved in transplanting the seedlings, applying fertilizer, harvesting the crop, winnowing and marketing the rice. Sometimes the women also find themselves doing the weeding. Despite the women's involvement, the rice profits are taken by their husbands. Most importantly, the women do not own a single plot of



land. This gap forces them to pair with their husbands to fulfil the associations' criteria of at least owning land.

- Radio as a household asset is controlled by men who come home late in the day. This hinders women from accessing messages transferred through radio at times when their husbands are not around. Since there are women who are not actively participating in association membership or during training sessions; the agricultural radio programmes would provide them a chance to learn new technologies if they had control of radio.

### **Recommendations**

The Farmers Union of Malawi has worked in disseminating improved agricultural information to female farmers through study circle booklets and group dynamics training. Radio programming can be used to scale up the message to a large group of farmers found in all areas of Malawi. This will lead to the exchange of information on price, commodity type and new varieties at a wider level for both men and women. As a result, farmers' bargaining power will increase and therefore contribute and benefit from the value chain. Therefore, it is necessary for radio programming to be gender sensitive.

Radio programming should be highly participatory so that some farmers learn from the experience of the others. The use of mass media, such as rural radio, can reinforce and multiply the impact of extension messages and allow extension officers to reach rural people in isolated areas.

FUM encourages the formation of women's associations that are registered with it to take a leading role in the development of participatory messages so that there is more interaction and experience sharing member female farmers with women who do not have the time to participate in extension services. One association that would be leading is the Coalition of Women Farmers (COWFA), which is a registered with FUM and would play the role modeling part to other women farmers for women empowerment and experience sharing.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, FUM is taking a leading role in ensuring the recognition of both male and female farmers as agents of change in the improvement of the agricultural sector. There is need to abandon top-down approaches in favour of participatory radio programming. The farm radio programming needs to learn how to promote dialogue among women farmers help them identify their needs and strengthen their self-confidence right in their homesteads. Participatory communication through radio programming can improve the linkages among female farmers, extension officers, researchers, policy-makers and planners; thereby fostering the exchange of information and knowledge and ensuring that development activities correspond to the real needs of rural communities.

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# **Winds of Change: HIV and AIDS & Climate Change Programming on MBC Radio One**

By Hamilton Chimala<sup>25</sup>

## **Introduction**

This paper is a celebration of one marginalized community's discovery that it has a problem threatening its livelihood.<sup>26</sup> It looks at that community's acquisition of information through radio programming and use of that information to demand duty bearers' responsiveness in addressing its challenges through a participatory and rights based approach.

While focusing on an isolated rural community in Blantyre, the paper also demonstrates how a single step transformed several other communities through the sharing of information and processing of such information to benefit the communities. It shows how radio practices can also be adapted for effective programming to promote agricultural value. The paper calls upon government and the civil society to refocus their efforts to respond to the negative cascading effect of climate change on the agricultural value chain. It also calls upon these players to seriously look at the combined effect of Climate Change and HIV and AIDS on farming practices, nutrition and food security, food supply and such agro processes.

The paper presents evidence that collective stakeholder approaches placed on the agenda by the principal duty bearer<sup>27</sup>, at community level<sup>28</sup> and effective radio programming are critical tools for a developing country like Malawi for enhancing adaptation and the progressive well being of marginalized and vulnerable communities in the face of HIV and Climate Change.

## **Climate change, agriculture, HIV and AIDS and radio programming**

Climate change has negatively impacted on the livelihood of rural communities. While some communities can cope and adapt to the effect of climate change on their own, most communities need

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<sup>25</sup> Hamilton Chimala is Station Manager for MBC Radio 1. Email: [hchimala@gmail.com](mailto:hchimala@gmail.com)

<sup>26</sup> Nanjiri Radio Community, GVH Mkumba, T/A Lundu in Blantyre district

<sup>27</sup> Government and in this case civil society organizations as well

<sup>28</sup> For ownership and sustainability as the communities understand climatic changes in winds, temperatures, and rainfall have led to low yields, unpredictability in terms of rains, destructive storms, increase in bacterial diseases, etc... They are looking for guidance, for alternatives, Oxfam report 2009, winds of change

support in order to adapt to the effects climate change<sup>29</sup>. In **Winds of Change** (2009) Oxfam International says ‘poor communities are the worst affected by, and least able to cope with, climate change impacts. Therefore, the foundation of any initiative to address climate change hinges on communities being aware of the issues, owning the process of adaptation and having the capacity to undertake and maintain adaptation’. The report seems to point to the critical magnifying aspect of the media when it says, ‘local knowledge based on firsthand experience of climate change and adaptation is going to be critical to the successful design of community adaptation and this must be tapped’.

The same report adds to this equation the impact of HIV when it says

the spread of HIV in turn leads to further poverty and greater need to resort to desperate measures: many women are left looking after large numbers of AIDS orphans; HIV-positive people are not strong enough to cultivate their land effectively, still less construct contour ridges and such like to improve it, so that their land becomes increasingly infertile. Yet the nutritional requirements of people living with HIV and AIDS are higher: up to 15% greater for protein and 50% greater for energy according to a study by Pablo Suarez<sup>30</sup>.

At a national level HIV weakens the ability to implement progressive programmes intended to improve human wellbeing – including combating HIV and AIDS. It is a vicious cycle. For example, another Oxfam report<sup>31</sup> points out that 25–30% of health professionals will die of AIDS by 2018. Suarez also points out<sup>32</sup> how HIV poses a major challenge to institutions that must deal with climate change adaptation.

In this vein this paper argues that one effective way of supporting these communities is the use of the radio platform. It also argues that radio, in collaboration with climate change and weather experts, may complement local skills in providing information to smallholder farmers on new farming practices that would withstand and entrench resilience and adaptation methodologies against the effects of climate change.

The paper further observes that climate change impacts HIV and AIDS and agricultural value chains. It agrees that, ‘the global perspective on extension is no longer that of a unified public sector service,

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<sup>29</sup> Coping with climate change, the use of agro biodiversity by indigenous rural communities. December, 2009. (Hannah Cohen, Dar Es Salaam, December 2009).

<sup>30</sup> HIV/AIDS, Climate Change and Disaster Management: Challenges for Institutions in Malawi. Suarez, Givah, Storey and Lotsch. World Bank Development Research Group Sustainable Rural and Urban Development Team, May 2008, Policy Research Working Paper 4634.

<sup>31</sup> Malawi Essential Health Services Campaign For All Campaign. Country Case Study, November 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

but of a multi-institutional network of knowledge and information support for rural people<sup>33</sup>. This is the current scenario in Malawi in terms of agriculture support services across the value chain from farm inputs to harvest and sales or storage. The paper puts across an argument that radio is an important platform in the fight for mobilization, awareness and advocacy interventions. A case in point is that, of the current 27 agro programmes per month running on MBC Radio one, 70% are produced and supported by the Malawi government's onw agriculture projects, with the rest supported by civil society linked projects<sup>34</sup>.

Since 1964 MBC has broadcast at least thirty agro radio programmes, mostly produced by Ministry of Agriculture and other agriculture based organizations. Such programmes include programmes like **Bwalo la Alimi**, **Mphala ya Balimi**, and **Ulimi wa Makono**. MBC Radio One has 35 programmes per week on HIV and AIDS accounting for up to 70% of all messages and programming on HIV and AIDS<sup>35</sup> in Malawi probably due to its public service mandate and 27 programmes on Agriculture – (from agro inputs, garden preparation, and harvest to sales)<sup>36</sup>. The paper addresses these facts from the perspective of the broadcaster as an active crusader, taking sides<sup>37</sup>, to achieve community resilience and facilitate duty bearer responsiveness.

### **The case of Nanjiri community**

The Nanjiri community in Village of Group Headman Mkumba, T/A Lundu in Blantyre listened to HIV and AIDS and climate change dialogues and their effect on agricultural production on Radio One. They looked at their own community and matched the challenges. Community members organized themselves and conducted a community mapping exercise. The results indicated that the community's resilience against these cross cutting issues was challenged and compromised by rising deaths, declining food production and dwindling natural resources used as sources for energy. All the trees in the mountains around had long been cut down. The community therefore was faced with three issues; rising death rates, declining agricultural productivity and a depleted natural resource base. The community also experienced high school dropout rates as animals and humans fought for the little food available after the destruction of the natural animal ecosystem.

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<sup>33</sup> Volume 3. Demand- Driven Approaches to Agriculture Extension *Case Studies of International Initiatives* William Rivera by Gary Alex (2004).

<sup>34</sup> Ulimi ndi Bizinesi, Mlimi walero, Mai wa Alimi A fodya, Liu la Mlimi, Bwalo la Alimi, Dziwani za Irlad, Ulimi wa Phindu, Nthanzi mu mbatata, Msika wa pawailesi, Mudzi wobiliwira.

<sup>35</sup> Footprints media as commissioned by the National Aids Commission, March 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Ulimi ndi Bizinesi, Mlimi walero, Mai wa Alimi A fodya, Liu la Mlimi, Bwalo la Alimi, Dziwani za Irlad, Ulimi wa Phindu, Nthanzi mu mbatata, Msika wa pawailesi, Mudzi wobiliwira.

<sup>37</sup> Boyd. A, 2003, New York, Modern Journalism, (Crusading Journalism).

The right to education was increasingly being compromised with children, women and men all guarding crops in the fields night and day due to the conflict between monkeys and humans as both fought to have food. The livelihoods for this community had nearly collapsed and any argument for the implementation of best practices to improve agricultural production could not make more sense for the community.

The community first dialogued with the forestry and parks officers to clear the monkey menace. They then dialogued with the District Health Officer from Blantyre Dr Chunda who authorized the immediate construction of an HIV Testing Counseling Centre after she witnessed the death of Lekeleni<sup>38</sup> at the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital a few months before members of her very community came to seek assistance from the District Health Office. She went ahead to authorize an Anti Retroviral Therapy dispensing centre. Through radio programming on MBC radio, the community also dialogued with ADMARC to introduce a depot and selling point in the area. The introduction of the depot enabled farmers in the area to have access to the market for agricultural inputs and farm produce within walking distance. The Malawi Environmental and Endowment Trust also came to the rescue of the community by introducing a biomass intervention project in the area.

Today, villages around Nanjiri also benefit from this simple community action a direct change that resulted from a simple community dialogue through radio programming. Today the National Aids Commission and the Malawi Environmental and Endowment Trust oversee different projects in the community to solve the challenges the community faces.

This case was recorded and broadcast on MBC radio. The information from radio programming especially in the case of Nanjiri community has resulted in replication of similar modes of intervention in other communities. The MBC has broadcast over 142 dialogues on similar issues from across communities in Malawi. Development partners at local and national levels have used the radio to address problems of food security at household, community and national levels through the dialogues. Today the actions of the Nanjiri community are considered by the MBC as a model Development Through Radio (DTR) intervention and a demonstration of what effective collaboration and responsiveness to community generated demands to fight the threats HIV and Climate Change can achieve.

### **Key Lessons**

There have been both direct and indirect benefits on both people and relevant sectors. The results from the Nanjiri Community have shown that radio programming has positive benefit for community members. Below are some of the lessons that one can learn.

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<sup>38</sup> A 16 year old school dropout, pregnant and died a needless death. (Interview with Dr Chunda June, 2008).

- Firstly, those results generated by interactive community-made radio programmes such as – a functional HTC centre, operational ART regime, a farm inputs selling outpost, an afforestation project etc indicate that such approaches are viable and sustainable due to the problem generated process which ensured community ownership from the beginning.
- Secondly, there have been noticeable results related to the work of community efforts through visible replication of efforts by other communities around the community, and in other districts.
- Thirdly, there have been closer coordination and collaboration between rights holders and duty bearers towards the well being of communities. This is a strong case for close collaboration among stakeholders as opposed to disjointed interventions for better and sustainable projects at community level.
- Fourthly ownership is assured at such levels if the community is fully involved (from mapping to broadcasting). Where there is ownership there is sustainability. An example is the clear benefit from free health services within walking distance. Individuals from Nanjiri and others from villages around this community had to part with MK1, 000.00 to travel to Chiradzulu District Hospital to access ARTs. Today they pay nothing and the project is still operational two years after the last funding from the National AIDS Commission.
- The use of DTR in radio programming by the MBC has also shown that it is a tool which increases pressure on duty bearers to be responsive to right holders and the use of follow up techniques in such programming is an accountability measurement tool against both public officers and the community itself.
- There is a perceived accrued benefit of the Nanjiri intervention with similar initiatives undertaken within a community in TA Nkalo in Chiradzulu, Boni Kumwenda in Kasungu, and Marka in Nsanje.
- Kanyongolo and Kamchedzera (2007) report that ‘the indirect benefits for people who have related to radio ... programmes that provide relevant information, training and awareness campaigns, the creation of animators in communities, re-distribution of power at the community level, redefinition of roles and accountability of public functionaries....In all these three cases, community members asserted that their lives had become better’. The same evaluation noted that power has been redistributed at the community level with traditional leaders accepting new forms of authority as represented by radio listening clubs and the increasing acceptance of the role of the community-based educator’.
- In *Case study in lesson learning*, Kanyongolo and Kamchedzera<sup>39</sup> found that radio programming along processes of community progressive well being had made a difference at Ekari Orama in Phalombe. ‘The biggest public clinic in Phalombe, at Mpasa, for example, is a direct result of a recording followed by dialogue with the Malawi Social Action Fund. In the area around the clinic, there is evidence of increased ownership of livestock, fish ponds, a

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<sup>39</sup>Kanyongolo and Kamchedzera, 2007, Evaluation of Malawi’s Democracy Consolidation Programme phase 2..

maize mill and water pumps. Such facilities can be traced to recordings and dialogues made by members of the Ekari Orama Radio Listening Club. Similarly, in Balaka, the Kachere Radio Listening club has had a bridge constructed and manages a paraffin pump, among many achievements resulting from its MBC supported project activities'

- The positive effect on agriculture production, mitigation against HIV and AIDS, resilience and adaptation to the effects of climate change and value addition in the agricultural value chain in the case of Nanjiri community is there for all to see. This type of user generated programming has shown that where HIV and AIDS programming has been tackled, food security and climate change issues have also been tackled and interventions have resulted from meticulous community mapping and dialogues with duty bearers.

### **Challenges**

- The global financial crisis has forced regular funders to reduce financing interventions. As such, duty bearers are unable to hold community dialogues as frequently as has been.
- Disjointed and often competing actors at community level with others using radio platforms as a quick way to achieve legitimacy and acceptability
- Lack of appreciation by players of the role of radio in a developing country such as Malawi and unwillingness by partners to support more effective agricultural radio programming.

### **Opportunity**

However these challenges can be mitigated if partners view them in reverse and begin turning them into opportunities for synergy and collaborative efforts.

### **Recommendations**

- There is need for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development to champion the creation of a media based network to create an ongoing systematic information sharing platform for positive use and change.
- There is need for a universities and colleges to be empowered to train media personnel in development journalism. In addition, the provision of short courses on development communication with a focus on HIV and AIDS and climate change and agriculture is a requirement for effective participative radio programming.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Farm Radio to identify with the efforts of the communities by supporting locally generated initiatives;
- Farm Radio should work with the Ministry of Agriculture to increase participation of women in HIV and AIDS, agriculture and climate change radio programming. Women are more affected in this regard than men. For example, a UNDP report (2001), says throughout the sub-Saharan Africa region<sup>40</sup> women and children tend to have lower access to

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<sup>40</sup> South of the Sahara



communications technologies than men. It says the dynamics of this trend can result in serious inequalities in access to climate change preparedness and adaptation.

- Stakeholders such as government, civil society and international NGOs should facilitate awareness and capacity building for the mainstream media so that issues of climate change and agro value chain impacts are passed on to local people most in need of the information from a point of knowledge.

## **Conclusion**

The above radio programming shows that HIV and AIDS and Climate Change messages need to fit the social context of a community and that when that happens, information which unfolds through the authentic conflicts and resolutions of societies and personal experiences is more likely to be absorbed into the thoughts and actions of daily life. Through the struggles of other individuals and communities and how they overcame the barriers, listeners experiencing familiar issues and challenges learn new ways of coping with threats to community survival.

Many grant providing organizations shun media interventions because, in their thinking, these interventions are expensive. However, the National Census of 2008 indicates that over 80 percent of Malawi's population is rural based. They use radio which is cheap, an accompaniment medium and relate to other communities doing similar interventions. An example is the establishment of over 70 informal Radio Listening Clubs on top of the 88 run by the MBC's Development Broadcasting Unit (DBU) across the country. In *Demystifying the Media*, Anderson Fumulani and James Ntupanyama (2005) laud the participative spirit of rural communities in radio programmes saying: 'It is clear, that the capacity building and skills transfer undertaken by DBU to the formal RLCs has been very effective. This is evidenced by the formation of such a large number of RLCs, which have also produced programmes and broadcast on MBC 1 national radio network'.

This paper suggests that the 'Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural Value Chains' is a good approach, but goes further and suggests that there may not be any other mode of intervening quickly and reaching the masses decisively in these lean times that compares with radio in a context of Malawi. With instant reach, availability of free play radios, highly organized communities, radio reaches targeted communities instantly. Collaboration among players is a major proposal of this paper.

# Instilling a sense of Equity in the Provision , Access and Utilization of information across agricultural value chains: Another Success Story from “The Nimizimu Strip”.

By Dickens P. Mahwayo<sup>41</sup>

## Introduction



Though women and girls play a big role in family management and agriculture in particular in Malawi and elsewhere in Africa, their access and utilization of information across the Agricultural value chains is relatively minimal vis-à-vis their male counterparts. This makes most of them prone to poverty and economic marginalization. In this paper the words “Gender or Engendering” do not necessarily mean favouring women or girls but rather refers to equity in access, resource mobilization and allocation. So, as per the Malawi National Gender Policy of 2000, mainstreaming gender in the national development process aims at enhancing the participation of women and men, boys and girls for sustainable and equitable access to and utilization of the six development initiatives<sup>42</sup>.

Women and girls are always marginalized, sidelined mainly because of lack of information, strong cultural, religious and societal perceptions against them.

## Objective of the Paper

This paper discusses how farm radio programming led to a success story emerging from an area where women are marginalized and sidelined in a lot of activities because of cultural/traditional and religious beliefs a thing that act as a big barrier in the access and utilization of information across the agricultural value chains through farm radio programming.

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<sup>41</sup> Dickens Mahwayo is a private *Business and Development Consultant*. Email: [dickensmahwayo@gmail.com](mailto:dickensmahwayo@gmail.com)

<sup>42</sup> As per the National Gender Policy the six are: Education and Training, Reproductive health, Food and Nutrition Security, Natural Resources and Environmental management, Governance and human rights, Poverty eradication and human empowerment.

### **True Life Experience**

Mangochi is one of the districts dominated by the Yao, most of whom are Muslims. To the northeastern part of the district, there is a strip of land between the eastern arm of Lake Malawi and an escarpment that is designated Forest Reserve called Namizimu. The northern part of this escarpment delineates the border between Mozambique and Malawi. Just like elsewhere in the country, the agricultural sector in this area requires relatively huge labour force. However despite the fact that women are always sidelined or marginalized in other activities due to cultural/traditional and religious beliefs, women comprise almost 70% of the labour force engaged in fulltime farming. Men are usually busy at the lake in the name of looking for ready cash to process a passport so that they can trek down to South Africa or sourcing the days relish. Women and girls always make great contributions towards agriculture from land clearing, ridging, planting, weeding, harvesting, transporting and treating produce ready for storage. As Baseline Survey<sup>43</sup> carried out by an Italian NGO MOVIMONDO in 1998, indicated that though more women than men are engaged in agricultural activities, the women do not have great access to agricultural radio (extension) programmes mainly because culturally/traditionally women are regarded as inferior and that a radio is a valuable asset in a family. As such the husband should possess it and always take it with him. Secondly due to demands placed on women in terms of farming and other household chores, they always have very limited access to radio, unlike men who can move out of their homes with radio hanging around their necks or shoulders. It is against this backdrop that MOVIMONDO introduced a **Wailezi Ja Mama** (A Radio For Mum ) Project as part of its Radio based extension activities in the EU funded Food security and Land care Project. Under this Project established smallholder farmers were linked to Story Workshop education Trust producers of Mwana Alirenji. Under **Wailezi Ja Mama** Project, wind up radios were distributed to successful female farmers as individuals and as Women's Radio Listening Clubs. **Bwalo la Alimi.Ulimi wa Phindu, Dziwani za IRLARD** and Panel discussions on Agricultural issues coordinated by the EU Food security Program on MBC Radio 1 were some of the programme that female farmers in radio the clubs were encouraged to listen to.

Though the Radio based Extension messages used to address the value chain gaps, the Project noted other unfilled gaps when an agricultural value chain analysis was conducted. As such, the Project used its Extension personnel to fill the gaps by linking farmers to actors and processes in the value chains. Some of the gaps noted were that farmers were not growing drought resistant, early maturing and high yielding crop varieties and marketing of their farm produce was a problem. Hence, the Project engaged a Business and Marketing Manager to assist the farmers.

### **Success, Results and Potential**

- The provision of radios directly to women, greatly empowered and encouraged women as they felt greatly honoured . As a way of forcing men to work in the garden, the organization

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<sup>43</sup> Women contribute over 70% labour to agricultural activities and their value chains.

pledged to give a radio to every man who will be assisting the wife in the garden. Several men responded positively.

- In cases where female farmers did not understand extension messages, radio provided revision or back up information.
- Radios in the hands of women, lasted longer than those placed in the hands of men.

### Challenges

- Poor radio reception in some areas located at the extreme north of the strip makes radio listening difficult.
- Much as the radio set in the **Wailezi Ja Mama** Project played a big role in the provision of agricultural advisory and extension messages to female farmers, there has been a strong feeling that, the radio stations have not been covering the whole agricultural value chain.
- Lack of continuity of some radio programmes. When Mwana Alirenji was off air, farmers were negatively affected, because they could not access the all important messages. Using radio as the most accessible and affordable medium of communication in the delivery of agricultural value chain messages empowers female farmers with information and accords them their inalienable right to participate in matters that affect them in their farming.

### Recommendations

- Access and utilization of information across the agricultural value chains should be engendered.
- The **Wailezi Ja Mama** concept should be scaled out to other three EPAs covering lakeshore villages where cultural/traditional and religious beliefs inhibit women from fully realising their potential in farming because of lack of timely message concerning the agricultural value chain.
- Agricultural radio programming should target and cover the whole value chain and all the stages/issues should be interconnected instead of providing bits and pieces/fragments.
- Since in most areas women contribute over 50% of the agricultural labour force, formation of women's radio listening clubs should be encouraged.
- Women must be engaged as sources of information rather than as listeners only.

### Conclusion

Evidence from the field indicates that providing information through radio helps female farmers to achieve self-sufficiency in food. As such it must be encouraged.

## Section 4

### Conference Resolutions

## Synthesis of Issues, Resolutions and Planned Actions

By Rex Chapota<sup>44</sup>

### Background

Agriculture is the mainstay of Malawi's economy, accounting for 39% of the Gross Domestic Product and providing employment for 80% of the total workforce as well as 80% of foreign exchange earnings (Malawi Government, 2010).

Given the importance of the agricultural sector in the Malawi economy and the role that the smallholder farmers play, it is important to provide adequate support to it through effective extension and advisory services for the Malawi economy to grow. According to a NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) document (2003), sustained agricultural growth at a level of not less than 6% requires appropriate scientific and technological development with an associated technological dissemination and adoption. Technology generation alone is not enough. New innovations and technologies need to reach and be utilized by the ultimate users who are mostly smallholder farmers based in rural and remote areas.

The Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoIWD) promotes the dissemination of innovative agricultural technologies to enable farmers improve agricultural productivity and attain food security. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MDGS II) identifies Agriculture and Food Security as one of the six key priorities. Its principal goal is to increase the sector's contribution to economic growth by emphasising the enhancement of agricultural productivity, promoting food security and agro processing of key crops.

The current agricultural extension policy aims at providing demand driven pluralistic services that empower farmers to express their demands. In addition to the above, the extension policy also promotes decentralized coordination that allows for decisions to be made at lower levels so as to harmonize plans or activities of various service providers. The policy urges actors to provide relevant and appropriate information to farmers in Malawi through a number of advisory and extension methodologies; one of which is radio.

Radio is by far the best and most popular mass communication tool for reaching the rural poor<sup>45</sup>. In Malawi there has been an increase in the number of radio stations – particularly community and

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<sup>44</sup> Rex Chapota is Executive Director, Farm Radio Malawi. Email: [rchapota@farmradiomw.org](mailto:rchapota@farmradiomw.org)

commercial FM stations since 1998. New techniques such as phone-in programmes, live community fora, radio diaries and interviews are making radio a more interactive medium, providing farmers with a real voice. Consequently, the outreach and popularity of radio combined with anecdotal evidence of impact make it a compelling tool for development communication.

As much as radio has a great role to play in agricultural extension and advisory systems, there have been some challenges especially in the area of coordination and networking. As such, some stakeholders in the industry work in isolation, having limited access to documentation of the great results that radio has played in agricultural development and indeed there has been virtually *no space and platform* for sharing and learning from the good practices of the past which are critical to improving the quality and financing of agricultural radio programmes. There has also been no evidence of close linkages among players that need to make agricultural radio programming effective such as researchers, communication experts, extension officers, academia and farmers themselves including farmers organizations.

As part of solving the above challenges, the idea of the symposium was hatched as a forum that would bring together key stakeholders in both agricultural development and information dissemination such as farmers, farmer organizations, agricultural research institutes, the academia, radio broadcasters (producers and announcers), radio station owners, government policy makers, donor agencies, private sector players such as agro input supplies and agricultural traders among others.

Therefore, various stakeholders led by the Department of Agricultural Extension Services and Farm Radio International under the African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) came together in 2009 to start the Farm Radio Symposia that have now become an annual event due to their successes in the first two years. Stakeholders provided strategic direction to the farm radio industry and instituted a knowledge management repository that is helping all players to understand and share how best radio programmes can help smallholder farmers meet their food and income security (detailed reports of the 2009 and 2010 farm radio symposia are available for free download at [www.farmradiomw.org](http://www.farmradiomw.org)).

This report is a synthesis of issues, resolutions and actions that emanated from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Farm Radio Symposium.

### **The Objective of the Farm Radio Symposium**

The 2011 Farm Radio Symposium aimed at providing a platform and an opportunity for sharing lessons and experiences of best practices in using radio-based communication strategies to enhance food and income security in Malawi as part of the wider extension system.

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<sup>45</sup> Farm Radio International (2007) The African Farm Radio Research Initiative proposal document. Ottawa, Canada

The four major objectives of the symposium were to

- provide a platform for sharing and learning about the role of radio in agricultural development
- establish a forum for knowledge management in farm radio programming and research
- strengthen collaboration and partnership among players in the farm radio industry and
- increase visibility and celebrate the role of radio in agricultural development

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Farm Radio Symposium Theme**

The theme of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Farm Radio Symposium was **The Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural Value Chains**. The Value Chain Approach has emerged recently as a key tool to ensuring equitable and sustainable economic benefits for rural smallholder and urban agriculture producers especially as Government is promoting a business approach to farming.

The value chain approach basically describes the productive processes around a product from the provision of inputs to production, transportation, transformation, processing, marketing, trading, and retailing to final consumption<sup>46</sup>

However, much as the value chain analysis is key to understanding the dynamics of the different agricultural enterprises in order to promote agricultural development, access to information about the value chain approach and tailor-made messages across the value chain are hardly available. Over the years, most of the information in agricultural advisory and extension services, including radio programming, have tended to emphasize production processes and not the whole value chain. It has also been observed that most radio programming address value chain issues in a thematically fragmented and incomplete manner.

Often one hears one institution emphasizing one stage in the value chain process with no or little linkage to other stages or a funding institution only supporting radio programming that addresses one stage of the value chain. To make matters worse, there are also gender-based constraints that limit women's role in value chains. The challenges include access and utilisation of information. Emerging issues such as Climate Change and HIV and AIDS among others have also changed the dynamics of the value chain approach and indeed the way information about the same has to be designed in order to meet the information needs of farming families.

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<sup>46</sup> Kaplinsky, R and Morris, M. 2000. *Agricultural Value Chain Analysis*. [www.srp-guinee.org/download/valuechain-handbook.pdf](http://www.srp-guinee.org/download/valuechain-handbook.pdf).



Therefore 2011 symposium had a number of thematic areas aiming at understanding the value chain concept and indeed on how radio can play a role at all the stages of the value chain. The major sub themes included:

- Role and Capacity Building of broadcasters to address Agricultural Value Chain Programming
- Gender dimension to access and utilization of information across the Agricultural Value Chain
- The policy environment in supporting Agricultural Value Chains
- The Agricultural Value Chain approach in the context of emerging issues such as HIV and AIDS, Climate Change ,etc

It was hoped that the major outcome of this symposium would be an improved coherent and harmonized approach to radio programming and increased participation of various stakeholders in technically and financially supporting radio programming that addresses the value chain approach as one of the major extension and advisory methodologies to enhance technology dissemination and adoption.

### **Organization of the symposium**

The organization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> symposium was led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoIWD) through the Department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES) in collaboration with other stakeholders in the task force such as Farm Radio Malawi, Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM), Natural Resources College (NRC), Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS), Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Mudziwathu Community Radio Station, Ministry of Information and Civic Education, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Civil Society Network in Agriculture (CISANET) and Bunda College.

Beyond various players taking part in the organization of the symposium, a number of stakeholders also financially supported the symposium. This was the first time that public, civil society and private sector players in agriculture formed a broad based collaboration in supporting the role of radio in agriculture development that affirmed the importance of the event.

### **Deliberations of the symposium**

This years' symposium attracted over 120 delegates. These included farmers, experts and stakeholders that play a role in the agricultural value chains that included input suppliers, farmer groups and organizations, agricultural produce traders, agricultural produce processors, policy makers, agricultural researchers, the academia, radio stations, broadcasters, independent media houses, donor agencies and private financing firms who are providing support in agricultural development.

The symposium was officially opened by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Hon Kingsley Namakhwa, MP whilst the official closing ceremony was done by the Minister of Industry and Trade, Hon John Bande, MP.

During the first day of the symposium, a key note address was delivered by a renowned practitioner in the area of agricultural extension and advisory services, Dr Grace Malindi who underlined the need for *‘A harmonized effort in alleviation of information poverty among smallholder farmers through integrated value chain packages if agricultural productivity is to be improved to meet food, nutrition and income security’*. Afterwards there was a panel discussion that was followed up by breakout sessions under different themes. (See Annex 2 for list of presenters and papers under the program schedule).

### **Resolutions and Recommendations**

The delegates to the symposium observed a number of issues and agreed on a number of resolutions, recommendations and action points that were based on the speeches, the keynote address, plenary presentations, thematic session presentations and technical remarks.

The issues and resolutions have been presented in the table below under each thematic area to ensure clarity and logical flow of issues, resolutions and actions thereof.

*Table 2: Table showing issues, resolutions and actions for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium*

Thematic Area	Issues observed by Delegates	Recommendations and Resolutions	Responsible Organizations	Time Frame
<i>1.0 Role and capacity building of broadcasters</i>	<i>1.1</i> Noted that there are inadequate skills in producing highly creative and impactful farm radio programming that is both entertaining and farmer centered.	<p>1.1.1 Develop and deliver curriculum and modules for building the capacity for broadcasters in both radio stations and media houses through training in farm radio programming</p> <p>1.1.2 Develop and disseminate standards for farm radio programming to ensure improved quality of agricultural based programming</p> <p>1.1.3 Develop and implement monitoring mechanisms and quality assurance of agricultural based broadcasts</p>	<p>1.1.1.1 Media Training Institutions such as University of Malawi–Polytechnic and Chancellor College and Malawi Institute of Journalism and other media NGOs such Farm Radio Malawi and Audio Clinic</p> <p>1.1.2.1 DAES through the Agricultural Communications Branch and Farm Radio International specifically rolling out the VOICE standards</p> <p>1.1.3.1 DAES, MACRA, Farm Radio Malawi, Story Workshop and Media Houses</p>	
	<i>1.2</i> Bemoaned that livestock and	1.2.1 Sensitize policy makers in the livestock	1.2.1.1 DAES, Farm Radio	

	<p>aquaculture value chains are rarely covered in farm radio programming by most broadcasting stations in the country.</p>	<p>subsector and fisheries subsector on the importance of using radio</p> <p>1.2.2 Players in the livestock and fisheries industry should be proactive in using farm radio for livestock development and set aside resources for radio programming and broadcasting to improve coverage of the two value chains.</p>	<p>Malawi</p> <p>1.2.2.1 Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development (DAHLD) and Department of Fisheries and other institutions such as NEPAD Fish Node at Bunda College, the World Fish Centre and the National Aquaculture Centre in Domasi, Zomba</p>	
	<p><i>1.3 Observed</i> limited understanding of the agricultural value chain approach among broadcasters and media houses to effectively address information gaps across value chains</p>	<p>1.3.1 Develop guidelines for broadcasters to use in producing farm radio programming based on the agricultural value chain approach</p> <p>1.3.2 Orient and sensitize broadcasters on farm radio programming based on the agricultural value chain approach</p>	<p>1.3.1.1 DAES, Farmers Union of Malawi, NASFAM and Bunda College</p> <p>1.3.2.1 DAES, Bunda College and Farm Radio Malawi</p>	

	<p><i>1.4 Noted</i> limited airtime and commitment for farm radio programmes in most broadcasting houses due to commercial orientation of the broadcasting stations and lack of interest for agricultural programming.<sup>47</sup></p>	<p>1.4.1 Sensitize policy makers in broadcasting houses/stations on the importance of increasing the amount of airtime allocated to farm radio programmes since agriculture is the backbone of the economy and their clientele as part of corporate social responsibility and revenue generation.</p>	<p>1.4.1.1 DAES, Farm Radio Malawi and other NGOs with interest in radio programming, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC).</p>	
	<p><i>1.5 Observed</i> limited understanding and appreciation of radio among actors as a tool for catalyzing agricultural development through the agricultural value chain approach</p>	<p>1.5.1 Sensitize policy makers and actors across agricultural value chains on the importance of the radio as a tool for development</p> <p>1.5.2 Lobby policy makers on the importance of mainstreaming development communication issues including promotion of farm radio programming in agriculture development policy documents and national development strategies.</p> <p>1.5.3 Stakeholders should widely share with policy makers evidence based</p>	<p>1.5.1.1 DAES, Farm Radio Malawi</p> <p>1.5.2.1 DAES, Farm Radio Malawi</p> <p>1.5.3.1 DAES, Farm Radio Malawi,</p>	

<sup>47</sup> During question and answer Mr Hamilton Chimala of the MBC confirmed that MBC has limited free airtime for development oriented programming from government departments.

		<p>success stories of using radio for development at all levels in the country.</p> <p>1.5.4 Lobby and engage private sector to invest in agricultural radio broadcasts across the agricultural value chain</p>	<p>University of Malawi</p> <p>1.5.4.1 DAES, Farm Radio Malawi, Radio Stations, Private Sector players such as Standard Bank, microfinance institutions, Input Suppliers</p>	
<p><i>2.0 Gender dimension to access and utilization of agricultural broadcasts by farmers</i></p>	<p><i>2.1 Noted</i> that there is lack of gender responsiveness in delivering information dealing with agricultural value chains</p>	<p>2.1.1 Conduct a comprehensive action research study to explore gender dimension to access, utilization and benefits of agricultural radio programmes in order to inform design and implementation of agricultural value chain based programming.</p> <p>2.1.2 Conduct a gender audit and analysis of agricultural programmes.</p> <p>2.1.3 Develop a gender specific strategy for farm radio programming</p> <p>2.1.4 Build capacity of broadcasters in gender mainstreaming and responsiveness of</p>	<p>2.1.1.1 University of Malawi-Bunda College, DAES specifically the AGRESS Section</p> <p>2.1.2.1 University of Malawi-Bunda College, DAES specifically the AGRESS Section</p> <p>2.1.3.1 University of Malawi-Bunda College, DAES specifically the AGRESS Section, Farm Radio Malawi</p>	

		agricultural radio broadcasts  2.1.5 Introduce specific tailor made programmes for women to address specific issues for women in popular women's programmes such as <b>Zokonda Amayi</b> on MBC Radio One	2.1.4.1 University of Malawi-Bunda College, DAES specifically the AGRESS Section, Farm Radio Malawi  2.1.5.1 University of Malawi-Bunda College, DAES specifically the AGRESS Section, Radio Stations	
	2.2 <i>Noted</i> dominance of men in access & utilization of radio sets.	2.2.1 Conduct a deliberate gender awareness campaign at community level targeting both men and women to promote access, utilization and benefits of radio sets to women and youth. E.g. <b><i>Give a woman a radio campaign.</i></b>	2.2.2.1 Ministry of Gender, Gender based NGOs such as CAVWOC, Radio Stations, DAES specifically AGRESS section	
	2.3 <i>Noted</i> that timing of agriculture radio programmes is insensitive to multiple roles of women	Timing of radio programmes targeting female farmers should be demand driven And research results shared	2.3.1.1 Radio Stations, NGOs, DAES	
3.1 <i>The Policy Environment</i>	3.1 <i>Noted</i> limited dissemination and awareness of new innovations in agricultural research and value chain information	Disseminate widely information to broadcasters and media houses on new innovations in agricultural research and value chain	3.1.1.1 Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development- Department of	

		information	Agricultural Research, DAES, Bunda College of Agriculture, Natural Resources College	
	<i>3.2 Bemoaned</i> lack of coherence in setting of radio agenda among various players and radio stations	Coordinate the setting up and dissemination of a broad based agricultural radio agenda based on the Farmer Voice Radio National Radio Agricultural Agenda (NARA)	3.2.1.1 DAES, Farmer Voice Radio Country Office, Farm Radio Malawi	
	<i>3.3 Observed</i> that there is limited collaboration amongst players in the farm radio industry to ensure sustainability and scalability of new approaches such as impact radio programming	Enhance collaboration and networking beyond the symposium among stakeholders	3.3.1.1 DAES and Farm Radio Malawi	
<i>4.0 Emerging Issues affecting agricultural value chains such as Climate Change</i>	<i>4.1 Noted</i> overuse of scientific jargon/particular terms or words by climate change experts, which make understanding of climate change issues by smallholder farmers and the public problematic in farm radio programmes.	Media should be innovative to create appropriate words and avoid overuse of scientific jargon in climate change issues in order to ensure that the message is understood by the farmers (Prepare a glossary of frequently used agricultural, gender related, scientific terms)	4.1.1.1 Radio Stations in collaboration with Department of Climate Change, Bunda College  4.1.2.1 Community Radio Stations and Department of Climate Change, Farm Radio	



		Engage community radios that use different vernacular languages and can address specific climate change adaptation and mitigation issues with their specific audience.  4.1.3 Conduct thorough training needs assessment aimed at developing appropriate content & capacity of journalists to report on environment and climate change issues.	Malawi  4.1.3 Department of Climate Change, DAES, Farm Radio Malawi	
	4.2 <i>Noted</i> limited coverage of Climate Change issues in broadcasting houses/stations.	4.2.1 Media needs to come up with specific, targeted and appropriate programmes on climate change and have appropriate policies to cover such issues.	Radio Stations	

## **Conclusion**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium was a great success in that it was able to meet all the key objectives. The repository and depth of the knowledge gained was outstanding, the networks and collaboration among public, private and civil society actors across agricultural value chains was unparalleled, sharing of experiences and best practices opened new ways of up scaling the role of radio in agricultural development. The global and national appeal that was developed through the live streaming on Zodiak Broadcasting Station ensured the full visibility and celebration of the role of radio and how smallholder farmers are indeed at the centre of farm radio programming.

The delegates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium commended and rated very well the organization of the event both technically and logistically though they bemoaned the limited time given to the deliberations. A major recommendation from the delegates was that there is need to ensure that a minimum of two full days is set aside for the symposium rather than the previous one and half days.

In line with the evaluation of the symposium which highlighted the need for follow up on the actions to ensure progress and impact of the resolutions, a post mortem meeting of the task force agreed the need for reflective learning in March 2012 where an evaluation and follow up on the key resolutions would be done.

In conclusion, the delegates agreed that the resolutions document should be widely disseminated to all stakeholders involved in various agricultural value chains as soon as possible to ensure that farm radio programming indeed catalyses the process of addressing information gaps across agricultural value chains in Malawi.

## **Section 5**

### **Speeches**

## **SPEECH BY DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES**

It is with great pleasure to welcome you to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium which has been organized under the theme: **The Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural value chains**. My humble duty this morning is to introduce you to the secretary of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, but before I do so let me give you a brief background to the farm radio symposium.

The Farm Radio symposium was jointly initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development through the Department of Agricultural Extension Services, Farm Radio International and various stakeholders in 2009. The concept was developed in recognition of the fact that radio plays a crucial role in agricultural advisory and extension services.

The contribution of radio to agricultural development was constrained with many challenges especially in the area of coordination and networking among stakeholders in the farm radio industry. There was limited access to documentation on the results of the role radio in agricultural development, and no space and platform to share the best practices in farm radio programming which is critical in improving the quality and financing of programmes. There have been no close linkages among players that need to make agricultural programming effective such as researchers, communication experts, extension officers, academia and farmers themselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, It was in view of these challenges, that the symposium was hatched as a forum that brings together key stakeholders in both agricultural development and information dissemination such as farmers, farmers organizations, agricultural research institutes, academia, radio broadcasters, government policy makers, donor agencies, private sector players such as agro input suppliers and agricultural traders among others.

The main objectives of the symposium, Ladies and Gentlemen, is to provide a platform for sharing and learning about the role of radio in agricultural development; to establish a forum for knowledge management in farm radio programming and research; to strengthen collaboration and partnership among players in the farm radio industry and to increase visibility of radio contribution to agricultural sector and celebrate the role of radio in Agricultural development.

The first farm radio symposium was held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009 under the theme: **Farm Radio. An effective tool for increasing access to agricultural extension messages by smallholder farmers in Malawi**. The second symposium was held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and the theme was: **Farm Radio symposium. A catalyst in addressing emerging issues in agricultural development**.

This year's theme: **The Role of Radio programming in addressing Information gaps across Agricultural Value Chains**, has come at the right time when Government is promoting the business approach as a key tool to ensuring equitable and sustainable economic benefits for rural producers.

The value chain approach describes the productive processes around a product from the provision of inputs to production, transportation, transformation, processing, marketing, trading and retailing to final consumption.

Ladies and gentlemen, the importance of the symposium to the Ministry and the whole agriculture sector cannot be overemphasized. Information is power and innovative radio based strategies are required to ensure equitable access to the required knowledge and information because radio is the best and most popular tool for reaching the rural poor even in the hard to reach areas.

There has been much talk about the value chain approach in production of crops and livestock, but the question that comes to mind, Ladies and gentlemen, is how can we ensure that the messages on agricultural value chain are of good quality of relevant and benefit to the farmers? It is my hope that you will find time to discuss this important question.

The symposium organizers have identified four thematic areas for the symposium to focus on namely, gender, role of capacity building, policy and emerging issues such as climate change and HIV and AIDS. As papers will be presented on these areas, let us comment and discuss with objectivity and a vision for the future gathering.

The other issue that I request stakeholders to seriously consider is the support towards farm radio programming because agriculture is the backbone of our country's economy. Why then should sponsorship for farm radio programmes be hard to come by?

Ladies and Gentlemen let me remind you that radio and agriculture have brought us together today. How can we then exploit the opportunities that radio can offer to ensure that those that need the information across agricultural value chains have it? It is my hope that we will map the way forward on this issue.

Let me conclude my remarks by recognizing the partners that worked with the Ministry's Department of Agriculture Extension Service to organize the symposium. These are Farm Radio Malawi, Total Land Care, Bunda College of Agriculture and Zodiak Broadcasting Station, Natural Resource College, Standard Bank, Farmers Union of Malawi. This is a commendable effort and government is encouraging such kind of partnerships in service delivery.

At this juncture, let me invite the Principal Secretary for Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Mrs Erica Maganga to give us a few remarks.

Thank you

**SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION AND WATER DEVELOPMENT, MRS ERICA MAGANGA**

My humble duty this morning is to request the Guest of Honour, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Hon Kingsley Namakhwa, M.P, to address us and officially open the symposium. But before I do so, allow me to say a few words.

We are gathered here to discuss the **role of radio in addressing information gaps across agricultural value chains**. The theme comes at the right time when government is promoting holistic programming that include enhancing the whole production systems, reducing post harvest handling losses, agro-processing for value addition and import substitution, developing the domestic market for import substitution under the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Information indeed plays a crucial role in addressing information gaps that exists among small holder farmers. Farmers know how to manage their crops and animals, but how can they add value to their produce, where do they sell their products at a good price. These are some of the questions that this conference hopes to address in view of how radio programming can play a role.

The current ratio of government extension worker to farmer is about 1:3000 against the recommended ratio of 1:500. Due to the shortage of extension staff, the mass media plays a significant role in technology dissemination. According to action research done by Farm Radio International from 2007 to 2010, radio has proved to be the most effective tool in agricultural communication complimenting efforts provided through traditional extension and advisory services.

The agriculture sector also recognizes the gender disparities in access and utilization of information across the agricultural value chains. ASWAp is already ensuring that women and the youth have access to financial markets, participate in decision making processes, are not overburdened with labour and have access to agricultural resources, benefits, and opportunities and that gender focal points are established to address gender issues in all departments of the ministry. What strategies can we employ to reduce the gender imbalance more specifically as it relates to access and utilization of information through radio programmes?

The Ministry is also aware of the inadequate resources, lack of skills among broadcasters which may compromise the quality of the agricultural programming and knows that building the capacity of the broadcasters can result in quality and greater impact of programmes. The forum will share some of the best practices in capacity building of broadcasters to ensure quality radio programming. The farmer is also not spared from emerging issues such as climate change, HIV and AIDS and this calls

for a holistic approach in farm radio programming in order to address all issues affecting the farmer so that is equipped with knowledge and skills.

Ladies and Gentlemen, several agricultural policies are in place to facilitate the growth of the sector. These include; National Agricultural Policy Framework (NAPF), Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAP), Agriculture Extension Policy, National Nutrition Policy, Livestock policy, Gender, HIV and AIDS policy, the regional Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The radio has a role to play so that the policies benefit farmers through proper radio programming.

The success of the radio in addressing information gaps across Agricultural value chain will largely depend on strong partnerships involving producers, buyers, input dealers, service providers, and policy makers in the value chain.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is critical to strengthen the knowledge base of the broadcasters to disseminate quality and relevant agricultural messages to farmers in order for them to improve their productivity and income.

Our Guest of Honour, the participants have a lot to discuss and share at this forum. At this point allow me to invite the Guest of Honour to speak to us and officially open the symposium.

Thank you very much for your attention.

## **SPEECH BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION AND WATER DEVELOPMENT**

I have been honoured to be part of this important forum and grace the opening ceremony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium which is being held here at Malawi Institute of Management (MIM). But before I do this humble duty, let me emphatically say one or two things.

The Government of Malawi is implementing most programmes using a sector wide approach and this stakeholder gathering is a manifestation of the government's commitment to implement and support development programmes in the country. I am therefore very happy to be told that this year's symposium has been organised under theme: **The Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural Value Chains.**

Ladies and gentlemen, the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development promotes the dissemination of innovative technologies to enable farmers improve agricultural productivity and attain food, nutrition and income security at household and national levels. The Malawi Growth and Development strategy, an overarching Malawi Government medium term policy document, identifies Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development as one of the key priorities with a goal of increasing the sector's contribution to economic growth and development through increased agricultural productivity. This is why the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development formulated and is now implementing an Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) programme as a means to respond and implement issues enshrined in the MGDS document. One of the key pillars of ASWAp is Technology Generation and Dissemination. It is therefore very clear that radio programmes has a very crucial role in technology dissemination.

It is very important to remember that every programme is successful if it is being implemented by taking on board all actors from production to consumption popularly known as value chain approach.

This is why the State President His Excellency Ngwazi Prof. Bingu wa Mutharika always emphasises the need to work together in all development programmes. One good example of this is Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) whose success stories are documented at both national and international media due to surplus food production registered over the four consecutive years. His visionary and dynamic leadership has turned Malawi from food beggar to net exporter by using value chain approach.

Ladies & gentlemen, Let me remind you that farmers need to be reached with agricultural messages timely for effective utilization. The Department of Agricultural Extension Services is the key to the development and dissemination of agricultural messages. One medium used for message dissemination is radio broadcasting. It is very encouraging to note that the Ministry works with a number of partners including Farm Radio Malawi in the dissemination of agricultural messages through the radio.



Ladies and gentlemen, there is clear evidence that the radio has the widest reach and audience. It is also reported that radio is convenient to farmers, compared other media means. Hence radio is becoming more and more reliable in disseminating extension messages to farming community.

In Malawi there has been an increase in the number of radio stations – particularly community and commercial FM stations since the multi party dispensation from early 1990s. New techniques such as phone-in programme, live community fora, radio diaries and interviews are making radio a more interactive medium, providing farmers with agricultural messages.

Distinguished participants, although radio has a greater role to play in agricultural advisory and extension services, some few challenges have been noted especially in the area of coordination and networking. It has been observed that stakeholders in the industry are working in isolation, having limited access to documentation of the great results among others. In addition, there has been no space and platform for sharing and learning from the good practices which are critical in improving the quality and financing of agricultural radio programmes in Malawi. There have been inadequate linkages among players to make agricultural radio programming effective. These players include researchers, communication experts, extension officers, business community; academia and farmers themselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, as part of solving the above challenges, the idea of the symposium was born as a forum of bringing together all key stakeholders in both agricultural development and information dissemination. These are but not exhaustive; farmers, farmer organizations, agricultural research institutions, academia, radio broadcasters both producers and announcers, radio station owners, government policy makers, donor agencies, private sector players such as agro input supplies and agricultural traders among others. Let me congratulate organizers for achieving three symposiums in three years consecutively.

Distinguished participants, the issue of value chain is crucial amongst players in the radio sub-sector because if well collaborated and coordinated, it can contribute significantly to the economic growth of our country. The country is known to be very rich with information but most of it is not shared. Efforts to unlock such information gaps have a long term effect on implementation of good agricultural practices and adoption of improved technologies.

It is my sincere hope that the objectives of this symposium will be met through our interactions and discussions during the two day period. In order for the radio to become a more effective tool for message dissemination there is need for scalability and sustainability of radio activities.

Ladies and gentlemen as partners in the agriculture sector for message dissemination through radios, and other means, we need to provide quality radio services which are going to facilitate changes in knowledge and practices as well as facilitating adoption of technologies by our farmers.

This clearly indicates that this gathering is not by coincidence because we have a vital role to play in Malawi.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me also take this opportunity to commend Farm Radio Malawi for the work it is doing in provision of Radio services to farmers. I am told that Farm Radio Malawi and Department of Agricultural Extension Services are joint secretariat of this important function and they deserve special thanks.

Ladies and gentlemen, many organizations have contributed towards the preparation of this symposium. But in a special way, let me recognize the following organizations for their remarkable contributions in cash or in kind that have made this symposium a success.

The following organizations contributed in cash as follows:

- Ministry of Agriculture–DAES: **MK 818, 760.00**
- Farm Radio Malawi (AFRRI 2 and FVR Projects)  
**US\$ 3000 (approx MK500,000)**
- Farm Radio International: **CAD\$ 2000 (Approx MK320,000)**
- Standard Bank of Malawi: **MK 425,000**
- Farmers Union of Malawi: **MK 50,000**
- Natural Resources College: **MK 50,000**

The following organizations have made also in kind contribution as follows;

- Zodiak Broadcasting Station: **Live Recording of Opening Ceremony valued at MK250,000**
- Total Land Care: **MK200,000**
- Malawi Broadcasting Corporation: **Awareness of symposium through morning basket and news reporting**
- Bunda College–Extension Department **Some of the stationery Items**
- Agricultural Communication Branch, Radio Section: **Awareness raising through Ulimi Walero Programme both on MBC and Zodiak Broadcasting Stations.**

These are remarkable contributions to the symposium and the Ministry is very grateful. I urge other organisations to emulate this example as a way to enhance our partnership in radio sector. Above all I am glad to learn that participants have been drawn from various sectors that are in one way or another involved in message dissemination using radio.

I hope we will be listening attentively to all presentations that have been arranged in order for us to tap knowledge they have prepared to share with us. Let me thank all of you for accepting the invitation despite your busy schedules. Before I conclude, let me repeat by appealing to all of you to participate fully in this symposium. I wish you fruitful deliberations at Malawi Institute of Management as you will be attending this important symposium.

With these remarks, I have the pleasure, honour and duty to declare the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium officially open.

May God Bless You  
Thank you.

## **SPEECH BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE AT THE OFFICIAL CLOSING 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL FARM RADIO SYMPOSIUM**

My humble duty this afternoon is to invite the Minister of Industry and Trade, Hon. John Bande to officially close this 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Farm Radio Symposium which was organized under the theme: **The Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural Value Chains.**

Allow me to make a few remarks before I invite the Minister. The Ministry of Industry and Trade's goal is to create a conducive environment in which the performance of the private sector will be efficient and market oriented, improving its competitiveness domestically and internationally with a view to ensuring the sector's maximum contribution to the achievement of overall social-economic objectives.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as Ministry of Industry and Trade, we are already embarking on various programs in line with the theme. One example is the One Village One Product which is doing a lot in supporting small scale farmers in the production of cooking oil from soya bean, ground nuts and sun flower.

We also know that farmers face many challenges in accessing the market, so we are encouraging the farmers to form cooperatives. As you are aware cooperatives have become a major tool used to achieve development by paving way for people to address economic needs. These cooperatives help reduce exploitation by traders who mainly sell goods of low quality at very high price without considering the welfare of their consumers. The Ministry is also promoting value addition for farmers. For example, Mwera Mkaka in Ntchisi is producing yoghurt and cheese from milk.

We cannot overemphasize the role of radio in all this, because for the farmer to be able to form a cooperative, for example, they need to know where to access a market for their value added products. The sub theme on Role and Capacity Building for Broadcasters was very relevant and from the discussion one thing that has come out very clear is that broadcasters lack support from stakeholders to effectively and efficiently produce quality programs.

If programs are well packaged it is the farmer who benefits so I urge you to start investing in broadcasters, there is also value at the end of it all which many people do not realize. It is my hope that through strengthened partnerships which have started today, we are going to support the agricultural broadcasters, so that next year we are going to tell a different story.

Some of the major challenges that farmers face is the lack of markets and access to loans from finance and lending institutions. On the other hand, there is an issue of failure of loan repayment. The radio has a vital role of informing farmers on the importance timely payment of loans.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy that the change has started today; there is willingness from the stakeholders present here to work together to develop the farm radio industry. Let me urge you to continue networking and sharing experiences. It is very clear from the discussions that the opportunities are there. The enabling environment, the willingness from broadcaster to disseminate information to farmers on value chain, the farmer's willingness to gain knowledge in value addition in order to fetch good prices on the market and the availability of products in our country that we can add value to.

Our Government is committed to supporting the agro industries and we envisage smallholder farmers who are able to sell their produce on the international market. But for all that to be attained, farmers need information on how to manage their crops well, as a requirement by international standards. Let me not bore you with a lot of words. I know you have had a long day of intense discussions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now invite the Minister of Industry and Trade, Hon John Bande MP, to officially close the symposium

Thank you.

## **SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE AT THE OFFICIAL CLOSING OF 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL FARM RADIO SYMPOSIUM**

It gives me pleasure and great honour to grace the closing ceremony of this important symposium which was jointly organized by Department of Agricultural Extension Services in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development and Farm Radio Malawi.

My modest duty this afternoon is to officially close this 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Radio Symposium which was organized under the theme: **The Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural Value Chains.**

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been informed that the objectives of this radio symposium were.

- To provide a platform for sharing and learning about the role of radio in agricultural development.
- To establish a forum for knowledge management in farm radio programming and research.
- To strengthen collaboration and partnership among players in the farm radio industry.
- To increase visibility and celebrate the role of radio in agricultural development

It is my sincere hope that these objectives have been met through your interactions and discussions during the period you have been here.

Ladies and gentlemen, the importance of this symposium cannot be overemphasized as far as agricultural message dissemination through radios is concerned. I therefore urge all participants to utilize information by putting into practice whatever you have discussed and agreed. It is pleasing to learn that the Department of Agricultural Extension Services has the important mandate of disseminating messages in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. One medium which the Department uses for message dissemination is through radios.

As the Ministry's focal point for extension message dissemination through radios, you need to produce high quality radio programme which can facilitate changes in knowledge and practices as well as facilitating adoption of technologies by farmers. To achieve this, the Department of Agricultural Extension services need to continue interacting with other actors through these symposiums. This tells me that this gathering is very important because of quality of sharing and discussions among stakeholders.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am impressed with the theme: **The Role of Radio Programming in Addressing Information Gaps across Agricultural Value Chains.** The Value Chain Approach has emerged in recent times as a key tool to ensuring equitable and sustainable economic benefits for rural producers especially as Government is promoting business approach to farming.

Ladies and gentle, as Ministry of Industry and Trade, we appreciate the importance of the symposium which among other things acts as a platform where various stakeholders in the Agricultural sector discuss and share key issues with a goal of increasing the sector's contribution to economic growth stipulated in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II.

I am pleased to note that participants for this symposium had been drawn from different organizations and companies in Malawi. This assures me that the issue of information gaps across agriculture sector has been discussed at length through presentation and group discussions and I hope that it will continue beyond the symposium.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me also take this opportunity to commend the Farm Radio Malawi and other partners on radio broadcasting for the work you are doing in disseminating agricultural message through radios. This has provided our farmers an opportunity to access agricultural messages through radios to facilitate increased agricultural productivity.

In order for us to continue narrowing information gaps amongst stakeholders in the agriculture sector, we need to continue organizing symposiums so that we can discuss issues of promoting agricultural technology adoption.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am aware that there are a number of areas that need improvement in the agricultural extension message dissemination through radios. The most notable ones include collaboration, coordination and financial mobilization in radio sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, I expect an improvement in areas of collaboration, coordination and information sharing amongst players in the agriculture sector especially in the areas of radio programming and broadcasting. Finally but not least, I would like to thank the organizers, all organizations and companies who have supported this symposium in one way or the other. You have made this symposium a success.

With these few remarks, I declare this symposium officially closed.

May God Bless you

Thank you.

## Section 6

### List of participants

ID	NAME	Institution	Phone number	E-Mail Address
1	Hon Kingsley Namakhwa	Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development		
2.	Mr Wilfred Lipita	Controller for Agricultural and Technical Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development		
3	Mrs Stella Kamkwamba	Director: Agriculture DAES	0999 220 088	skankwamba@yahoo.co.uk
4	Clodina Chowa	Deputy Director: Agriculture DAES	0888 952 224	chowaclod@yahoo.co.uk
5	Ms F L Kayuni	DDAES-AGRESS	0995127177	flkayuni22@yahoo.com
6	Mr Henry Msatilomu	CAEO-DAES	0888333462	henrymsatilomo@yahoo.co.uk
7	Edward Katunga	Chief Agricultural Communications Officer-DAES	01881812437	edwardkatunga@ymail.com
8	Dickens Mahwayo	MCV	0888398544	mahwayodicken@yahoo.co.uk dickensmahwayo@gmail.com
9	Hamilton Chimala	Station Manager- Radio One, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)	0999951441	hchimala@gmail.com



10	Eunice Chipangula	Principal Secretary II. Ministry of Youth Development Welfare	0993882799	echipangula@yahoo.com
11	L.Z. Manda	Lecturer: University of Malawi-The Polytechnic	0999661156	lmanda@poly.ac.mw
12	G.H. Kaperemela	Programme Manager. Lilongwe ADD	0999576818	geokapelemera@yahoo.co.uk
13	Mathias Manyeka	General Manager. Zodiak Broadcasting Station	0999961733	mmanyeka@yahoo.com
14	Andrew Mahiyu	Communications Officer: NASFAM	0999312515	andmahiyu@yahoo.co.uk
15	Clement Boyce	Dept of Climate Change and Metrological services	0999867490	clbmw@yahoo.co.uk
16	Roy Kwelepeta	Blantyre ADD	0888873883	
17	Marvin Hanke	Managing Director. Audio Clinic Production	0888834787	marvinhanke54@yahoo.com
18	U.S. Mbandanda	Blantyre ADD	0888120786	usmbandex@gmail.com usmbandex@yahoo.com
19	F.L. Kayuni	Deputy Director (AGRESS –DAES)	0995127177	flkayuni22@yahoo.com
20	Fally Masambuka	DAES	0991156351	fallymasambuka@yahoo.co.uk
21	Frank Tchuwa	MSc Student: Bunda College	0995584212	fftchuwa@yahoo.com
22	Hector Malaidza	MSc Student: Bunda College Lilongwe	0888678747/09993 30061	hectormalaidza@yahoo.co.uk
23	Wisdom Gausi	MSc Student: Bunda College Lilongwe	0888575136	kuhlasewisdom@yahoo.com
24	Chikondi Chabvuta	Farmers Union Of Malawi	0999434298	chikondi@gmail.com/ chikondichabvuta@farmers union.mw
25	Rylea Johnson	Farmers Union of Malawi		ryleajhsn@gmail.com
26	Ted Nyekanyeka	ADRA Malawi	0999407499	tednyeka@yahoo.com
27	Steve Wemba	Malawi College of	0999341218	wembasteve@yahoo.c

		Fisheries		o.uk
28	Sebastian Mthatiwa	MBC-FVR team member	0995140183/0888711660	sebamthatiwa@yahoo.co.uk
29	Joshua T. Chirwa	MBC	0888899447	joshuachirwa@gmail.com
30	Lineess Shaibu	Twest Organization-Blantyre. Farmer	0884130678	
31	Alexander Kampheta	TWESTI Organization-Blantyre. Farmer	0884442738	alexanderkampheta@gmail.com
32	Shamlesa Mandalah	Twest Orgnisation. Farmer	0991541587	
33	Comweu Nawena	CAN Radio Station	0999868402	coyonazoo@yahoo.co.uk
34	Maclead Munthali	Radio ABC	0888836506	mzikenget@yahoo.com
35	Macdonard Thom	Daily Times	01905439	macdthom@yahoo.com
36	Maggie Mzungu	Programme Manager. Africare Malawi	0999898973	maggie@africaremw.org
37	Edna Chamgwera	Agriculture Community Exchange (ACE)	09996253395	echamgwera@aceafrica.org
38	Joe Mfunne	Department of Fisheries	0999125000	kazgeba@gmail.com
39	Villa Ezala	AICC	0995603432	vilaezala@gmail.com
40	Kondwani Kamanga	Daily solutions	0995203440	kondwani@kwikelec.co.com
41	Pilirani Mazizi	Mudziwathu Community Radio Station	0999 105 768	inmyvillageradio@yahoo.co/piliranichimutu@yahoo.com
42	Aone Kumwenda	DED (Mini of Agriculture)	0884277996	aonekumwenda@yahoo.co.uk
43	Misheck Nyirenda	MONSANTO	0999510496	mishecknyirenda@monsanto.com
44	Leota	Chipoka FVR	0999047751	
45	Pearson Jasi-Soko	MOAIWD	0888321417	pearsonsoko@yahoo.co.uk
46	Precious Chizonda	Farmer Voice Radio	0888204700	pchizonda@gmail.com
47	Timothy Pasani	Lonepalm Consultants Limited	0999627419 / 0884241652	lonepalmconsult@gmail.com

48	Jerome Chimgonda Nkhoma	Agriculture Communication Branch	0992938936 / 0888450929	<a href="mailto:jeronkhoma@yahoo.co.uk">jeronkhoma@yahoo.co.uk</a>
49	Angella Chitsime	CAVWOC / FVR	0995499038	<a href="mailto:a_chitsime@yahoo.com">a_chitsime@yahoo.com</a>
50	Liness Sanga	CRECCOM / FVR	0888711366	<a href="mailto:sangalyness@yahoo.com">sangalyness@yahoo.com</a>
51	H.D.C Msiska	Lecturer: Bunda College	0888724376	<a href="mailto:Cropscience.bunda@bunda">Cropscience.bunda@bunda</a>
51	Daniel Chiumia	Bunda College	0992819260	<a href="mailto:Danchiums2@yahoo.com">Danchiums2@yahoo.com</a>
52	Jacqueline Munthali	Bunda / FVR	0999610255	<a href="mailto:jacmunthali@yahoo.com">jacmunthali@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:jacmunthali@hotmail.com">jacmunthali@hotmail.com</a>
53	Steven PembaMoyo	National Publications Limited	01209351	<a href="mailto:sypbanda@gmail.com">sypbanda@gmail.com</a>
54	Owen Lupeska	Zodiak Broadcasting Station	0888729684	<a href="mailto:lupeskaoj@yahoo.co.uk">lupeskaoj@yahoo.co.uk</a>
55	Joseph Mwanoka	Zodiak Broadcasting Station	0999556608	<a href="mailto:mwanoka@yahoo.com">mwanoka@yahoo.com</a>
56	Mabvuto Kambugwe	The Guardian Newspaper	0991366809 / 0884616048	<a href="mailto:Km2005ki@yahoo.com">Km2005ki@yahoo.com</a>
57	Victor Kaonga	Executive Director TransWorld Radio	0999338902	<a href="mailto:vkaonga@twrmw.org">vkaonga@twrmw.org</a>
58	Enock Balakasi	Joy Radio	0999460914	<a href="mailto:ebalakasi@yahoo.com">ebalakasi@yahoo.com</a>
59	Brian	Star Radio	0888663967 / 0993760173	<a href="mailto:brianchamo@yahoo.com">brianchamo@yahoo.com</a>
60	Anderson Chikomola	DEPP of Agriculture Extension Services	0881729862	<a href="mailto:anchikomola@yahoo.com">anchikomola@yahoo.com</a>
61	Kenneth Chaula	DAES	0888465180	<a href="mailto:kennethchaula@yahoo.co.uk">kennethchaula@yahoo.co.uk</a>
62	Moyna Mungoni	MBC – TV	0999639047	<a href="mailto:momungoni@yahoo.com">momungoni@yahoo.com</a>
63	Robert Chipeni	Standard Bank	0999254399	<a href="mailto:robertchipeni@standardbank.co.mw">robertchipeni@standardbank.co.mw</a>
64	Linda Kachale	CICOD	0999955822	<a href="mailto:lindakachale@yahoo.co.uk">lindakachale@yahoo.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:gicodngo@gmail.com">gicodngo@gmail.com</a>
65	Kondwani	FISD / FIAWE (Bunda	0888373448	<a href="mailto:fisd@mail.org">fisd@mail.org</a>

	Nanchukwa	Student)		
66	Gladson Makowa	Bunda MSc Student	0888208130	<a href="mailto:gladsonmakowa@yahoo.com">gladsonmakowa@yahoo.com</a>
67	Rose Bowe	Chikapa FVR	0884071008	
68	Roy Chapalapata	Chikapa FVR	0995189358	
69	Gilbert Malota	DAES	0999301368	<a href="mailto:malotagilbert@gmail.com">malotagilbert@gmail.com</a>
70	Mirriam Chikoma	DAES	0999398880	<a href="mailto:chikomirrie@yahoo.co.uk">chikomirrie@yahoo.co.uk</a>
71	Chitima Munthali	Zodiak Broadcasting Station	0991479989	<a href="mailto:chitimamacmillan@yahoo.com">chitimamacmillan@yahoo.com</a>
72	E. Haziell	DAES	0999765411	<a href="mailto:ehaziell@yahoo.com">ehaziell@yahoo.com</a>
73	Y.M.J Kango	DAES	0999301038	
74	W.R Kapindu	DAES	0999215869	<a href="mailto:wikapindula@yahoo.com">wikapindula@yahoo.com</a>
75	A.Banda	Radio Islam	0999465652	<a href="mailto:Angell.banda70@gmail.com">Angell.banda70@gmail.com</a>
76	L. Sululu	Chipoka FVR	0995230131	
768	B.Kalomba	TNM	0888846368	<a href="mailto:bernardkalomba@tnm.co.org">bernardkalomba@tnm.co.org</a>
779	Billy Molosoni	CARE Malawi	0999851903	<a href="mailto:billymolosoni@care.co.org">billymolosoni@care.co.org</a>
78	Dr G.Kananji	Department of Agricultural Research Services	0995446443	<a href="mailto:gkananji@yahoo.com">gkananji@yahoo.com</a>
798 1	K.Mantchichi	Radio Listener member	0881984184	
802	S.Sindi	Ministry of Industry and Trade	0999860996	<a href="mailto:sisindi@yahoo.com">sisindi@yahoo.com</a>
81	Temwa Musahi	Star Radio	0999414150	<a href="mailto:tmysoli@yahoo.com">tmysoli@yahoo.com</a>
82	Jennipher Mmodzi	Station Manager C.A.N Radio	0888328695	<a href="mailto:jenniphermmodzi@yahoo.co.uk">jenniphermmodzi@yahoo.co.uk</a>
83	Monica Matumbi	Radio Officer	0888875769	<a href="mailto:cmmatumibi@yahoo.com">cmmatumibi@yahoo.com</a>
84	Ireen Linje	Secretary DAES	0995849924	<a href="mailto:Ireen_linje@yahoo.com">Ireen_linje@yahoo.com</a>
85	Hilda Phiri	Station Manager-Dzimwe Community Radio Station	0888523042	<a href="mailto:hiliphiri@gmail.com">hiliphiri@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://Dzimwe.communityradiostation@gmail.com">Dzimwe.communityradiostation@gmail.com</a>
86	Jean Mtethira	Acting Principal.	0888870436	<a href="mailto:jmtethiraa@nrc.mw">jmtethiraa@nrc.mw</a>

		Natural Resources College		
87	Joseph Jiya	MADD	0999286382	
88	Dr Judith Kamoto	Lecturer: Social Forestry-Bunda College	0995367000	<a href="mailto:jkamoto@hotmail.co.uk">jkamoto@hotmail.co.uk</a>
89	Kamtambo Longwe	Agricultural Communication Branch	0999833333	<a href="mailto:kantambo@mail.com">kantambo@mail.com</a>
90	McLean Mafubza	Agricultural Communication Branch	0999354507	<a href="mailto:mclean@broadbandmw.com">mclean@broadbandmw.com</a>
91	Malion Sanuka	Lecturer-Natural Resources College	0888002077	<a href="mailto:msanuka@nrc.mw">msanuka@nrc.mw</a>
92	Raymond Kataika	Reporter-MBC	0888856227	<a href="mailto:raykataika@yahoo.com">raykataika@yahoo.com</a>
93	Samson Kalumo	FVR	0999930670	
94	Kufa Chawanje	FVR		
95	Shelix Munthali	RLEEP	0888204437	<a href="mailto:smunthali@rleep.org">smunthali@rleep.org</a>
96	Richard Chakhame	Min.of Gender and Children and Community Development	0999800280	<a href="mailto:richardchakhame@gmail.com">richardchakhame@gmail.com</a>
97	Dyson Chitanda	Nsabwe FVR Club	0991622860	
98	Tiyamike Alexander	Kasema Club		
99	Biziwick Mkaka	Kasema Club		
100	Patrick Ndasauka	Min.of Information and Civic Education	0888711487	<a href="mailto:patndasauka@gmail.com">patndasauka@gmail.com</a>
101	Jolamu Nkhokwe	Dept of Climate Change	0999911314	<a href="mailto:jnkhokwe@metmalawi.com">jnkhokwe@metmalawi.com</a>
102	Joyce Sakasa	FVR	0999447801	
103	Morut Martin Isyagi	Agricultural Manager-Standard Bank	0999954806	<a href="mailto:Martin.isyagi@satndardbank.co.mw">Martin.isyagi@satndardbank.co.mw</a>
104	Caroline Thulu	KRADD	0999096197	<a href="mailto:thulucaroline@yahoo.com">thulucaroline@yahoo.com</a>
105	Ben B Chingwalu	Kasungu ADD	0888895375	<a href="mailto:benchingwalu@yahoo.com">benchingwalu@yahoo.com</a>
106	D.W Chauluka	Mitundu EPA	099341210	

107	E.G Gwede	No details provided		
108	P.W Ching'ombe	No details provided		
109	D.H Mulotha	No details provided		
110	F Banda	No details provided		
111	W. Zimba	No details provided		
112	T. Chiundila	No details provided		
113	C Wina	No details provided		
114	F.S. Gama	No details provided		
115	H Mbewe	No details provided		
116	M. Nkangala	No details provided		
117	Masamba	No details provided		
118	S Chisaka	No details provided		
119	Clement Shema	Farm Radio Malawi	0999 169 371	cshema@farmradiomw.org,clementshema@yahoo.com
120	Pauline Kalumikiza Mbukwa	Farm Radio Malawi	0888 566 441	pkalumikiza@farmradiomw.org
121	Mr Rex Chapota	Farm Radio Malawi	0999 899 489	<a href="mailto:rchapota@farmradio.mw.org">rchapota@farmradio.mw.org</a>
122	Martin Mlelemba	Sakaramento	0888 372 668	
123	Dr Stanley Khaila	Dean, Faculty of Development Studies, Bunda College	0999 930 235	<a href="mailto:sckhaila@gmail.com">sckhaila@gmail.com</a>
124	Dr Grace Malindi	Formerly Director-DAES	0888 506 440	<a href="mailto:gmalindi@gmail.com">gmalindi@gmail.com</a>
125	Dr Catherine Mthinda	FVR Coordinator Bunda College	0999 949 388	<a href="mailto:cmthinda@bunda.unima.mw">cmthinda@bunda.unima.mw</a>
126	Catherine Mloza Banda	Bunda College	0999 472 790	<a href="mailto:catherinemloza@gmail.com">catherinemloza@gmail.com</a>
127	Edward Kabaghe	Nepad Regional Fish Node-SANBio-Bunda College	265 1209357 0995643205	<a href="mailto:eddiekabaghe@gmail.com">eddiekabaghe@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:edwardkabaghe@yahoo.co.uk">edwardkabaghe@yahoo.co.uk</a>
128	Brenda Nkata	WUSC	0999 307 237	<a href="mailto:brenda@wuscmw.org">brenda@wuscmw.org</a>
129	Salim Mohamed	Kenya	+254 (0) 723 691 695	<a href="mailto:smohamed@ashoka.org">smohamed@ashoka.org</a>

# Addressing Information Gaps in Agricultural Value Chains

## The Role of Radio Programming



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