Communications success stories:
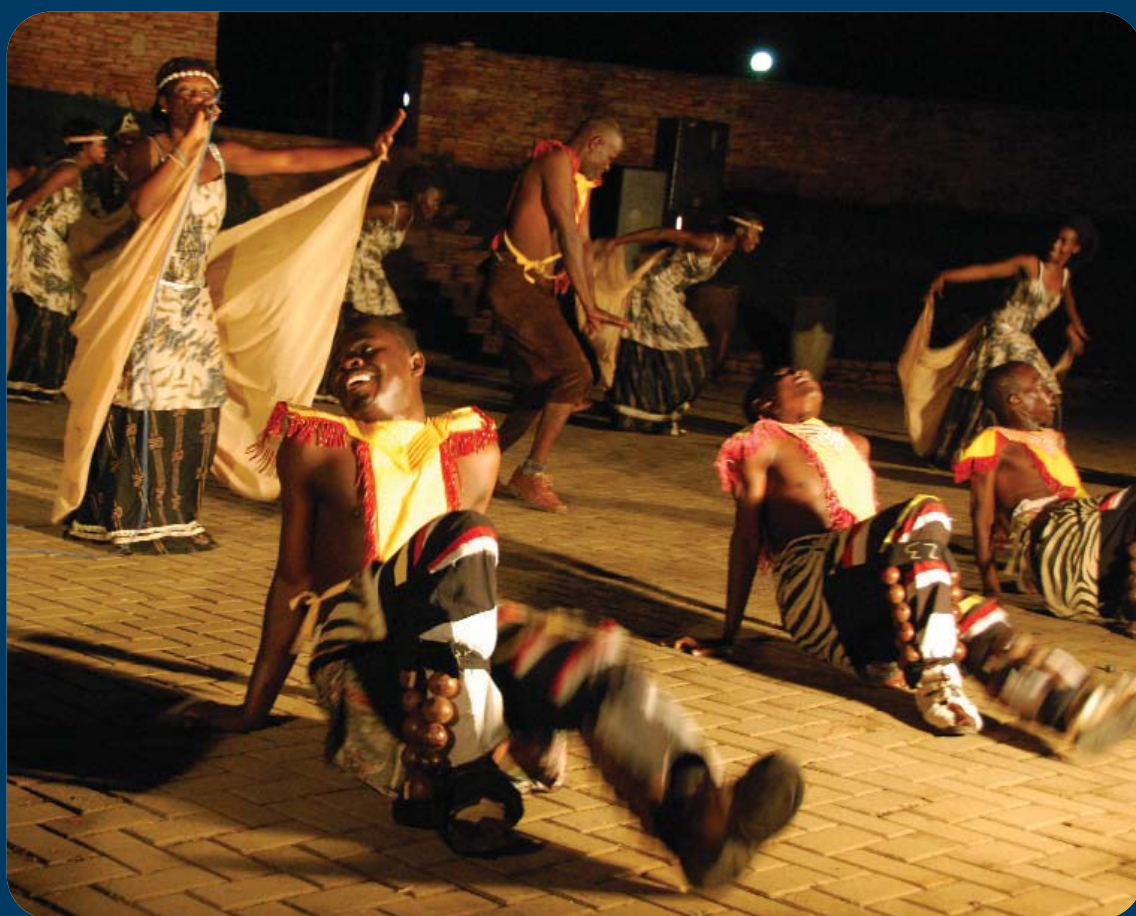
Mainstreaming research findings to lessen poverty

Contents

Forewords

This booklet is for communications officers, researchers, extension workers, project managers, policy makers and anyone else responsible for disseminating research findings in developing countries. The stories are about how communication plays a part in spreading new technologies and development options. They show how targeted communication, carried out well, can really make a difference to poor farmers and rural communities.

There is enormous potential for agricultural and natural resources research to reduce poverty, promote economic growth and lessen environmental problems. However, much of that potential remains unrealised, in part because research findings haven't been taken up as widely as they could.

Communications play a big part in this. But this booklet isn't a guide to communication. You can find plenty elsewhere about the general principles of good communication, how to define target audiences, develop messages, choose channels, run an effective campaign and so on.

What we wanted to do here was to inspire you to look for better ways to spread your messages by showing you that there are lots of success stories in communicating research findings. It's just that often we don't hear about them. We hope that the stories in this booklet will give you ideas for putting research into use more widely wherever you are working.

Finally, we would welcome your feedback on this book. Your answers to just three questions would help us make further publications more useful to you: What do you like about the book? What don't you like? What would you like more of? Please visit the RIU Discussion Forum at **www.researchintouse.com/riu_talk3/successstories** and let me know what you think. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr Wyn Richards
Director: Communications & Knowledge Management, RIU

Here at Scriptoria we want to inspire not-for-profits to produce more strategic and more effective communications. So I can't help but applaud the stress that RIU is placing on the need to better communicate development issues and research findings. And, we'd agree that by showcasing successful initiatives this book provides much-needed evidence to show that messages can be spread widely by being creative and innovative.

For us as specialists in development communications, however, it carries other messages that we'd like to stress. In particular, we'd like you to take away with you a deeper understanding of the need to study closely what form of communication will appeal to your audience and to test communications products to ensure that they work.

I'd also like to stress that when writing this booklet I was always aware that it fills an important gap in the communications materials currently available, by bringing together good ideas for communications into an easy-to-use resource. Communications offices can use it to fire up ideas in-house. And programme planners can use the case studies presented here as key evidence to back arguments for assigning more resources to properly run communications.

So, we very much hope that we'll see more studies like this being produced by different organisations around the world, which will build up a reference library of effective communication initiatives that we can all draw on.

Dr Sandra Child
Senior writer, Scriptoria Communications

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of DFID or the RIU Programme. Citing of trade names does not constitute endorsement.

Communication at work

In the stories that follow – about communicating information about new ways of doing things to rural populations in developing countries – it wasn't luck that led to success, it was strategy. The communication efforts range from those designed to reach millions to those designed to reach perhaps tens or hundreds of people.

But in each case, the people who had a message they wanted to communicate carefully thought through their objectives. They looked around and thought about whether the context was receptive to what they wanted people to do and think as a result of getting the messages. They painted a clear picture of their target audience and found out, often by doing research, who or what they listened to, looked at, read and trusted. They also looked for communication professionals who could help craft messages that would 'push the right buttons' with the audience – whether boosting their self esteem or helping them make money. They realised that they would need a variety of partners, and looked around to find and team up with them.

Plus, in many cases, they factored in some way of measuring whether what they did was worthwhile – and to what extent their communication strategy paid off.

Overcoming lack of infrastructure

Any effort at communication will need to take account of the context. Often, lack of communication infrastructure has been a major hurdle in reaching out to rural communities with information that could improve their lives. But this is changing rapidly. New technologies, such as mobile phones, are opening up communication at an astounding rate.

Comments

"The use of mobile telephony in development grows exponentially. Our HIV and AIDS campaign in India has been especially successful through a combination of competitions, ringtones and mobile phone focused activities."

BBC World Service Trust Annual Review 2007/2008
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/2008_annual review.pdf

Mobile phones, once the preserve of the very rich, are now seen everywhere in Africa and parts of Asia. Mobile phone infrastructure, such as satellite receivers and towers, is much easier and cheaper to install in developing countries than traditional fixed-line networks. Wireless technology is actually used far more widely in Africa than in Europe and the United States.

Mobile phones leapfrog older technologies in developing countries

Seventy percent of new mobile phone subscriptions in 2006-2008 were in poor countries. Lack of electricity has not stopped people using their mobile phones. Cottage industries charging mobile phones with car batteries have sprung up.

In **Ghana**, in 2008, there were 7 million mobile phone users, up from only 200,000 in 2000.

South Africa has the most subscribers in Africa, nearly 25 million, followed by **Nigeria, Egypt** and **Morocco**.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, in 2008, there were 10,000 fixed telephones but more than 1 million mobile phone subscribers.

Chad is the fifth-least developed country in Africa, but mobile phone use jumped from 10,000 to 200,000 in three years.

In **India** nearly 300 million people now use mobile phones, up from zero a little more than a decade ago. More than 1 million **Kenyans** now make simple financial transactions using a mobile phone banking service launched by Vodafone. The company has started a similar service in **Tanzania, Afghanistan** and **India**.
Source: *Africans get upwardly mobile in cell phone boom:* http://www.cnn.com/2008/TECH/08/07/mobile.phone.poverty/index.html

Plus, many developing countries are finding ways to overcome lack of communication infrastructure, not only with wireless and satellite links but also just by using what is already in place more effectively or in new ways.

Overcoming infrastructure

E-Choupal is putting internet points into villages in India, and is one of the very few information and communication technology (ICT) projects in India to have used e-commerce effectively to reduce poverty. Most of the e-Choupal computer kiosks connect to the internet by wireless VSAT, bypassing telephone exchanges – as even where it was possible to connect by telephone, links were often unreliable. But, even with VSAT, the bandwidth can still be limited. To compensate for this, e-Choupals now cache static content locally.

ITC Limited, the instigator of e-Choupals, couples a specially designed template with new imaging techniques to manage data. This speeds up downloads and makes the most of bandwidth. Sporadic electricity is another problem. To overcome this several kiosks have back-up batteries charged by solar panels.

Source: *What Works: ITC's E-Choupal and Profitable Rural Transformation. Web-Based Information and Procurement Tools for Indian Farmers.* 2003. University of Michigan.

What is especially exciting is that very simple cheap communication devices are being created especially for remote, unconnected rural areas.

Comment

"A demand for new media might seem unlikely in some of the developing and transitional countries in which the BBC World Service Trust works. In fact, this is where a high proportion of the next billion web users are likely to live, accessing the web via simple laptops, recycled PCs and mobile devices."

BBC World Service Trust Annual Review 2007/2008
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/2008_annual
review.pdf

But this doesn't mean that existing communication channels – radio, television, newspapers and person-to-person – are not important. The success stories show that radio and TV programmes reach millions in rural communities. What *is* new is that, instead of just being one-way communication channels, radio and TV programmes coupled with SMS and websites are interacting with viewers and listeners in two-way communication.

Choosing an appropriate approach

Another major hurdle in communicating research findings is finding the right approach. Mobile phone messages, SMS, the internet, radio and TV programmes or public awareness campaigns do work well for some kinds of information. But, for some information and with some audiences, there is still an important place for face-to-face communication and 'show and tell'. Communicating to vast numbers of people in rural areas with these approaches takes a lot of 'person power'. But the stories that follow show that teaming up with NGOs, tapping into their extensive networks and expertise in reaching vast numbers of rural communities, can be very successful.

Communicating with the upper echelons of institutions or governments to change the way business is done or influence policies is, admittedly, more of a challenge. This is not unique to putting agricultural research into use, but is also typical of efforts to influence policies in health, education and the environment, for example. Communication success here is often more about building relationships and anticipating and meeting information needs than about dissemination and promotion.

Being realistic

The stories we've chosen are mostly about countries where RIU is working: Tanzania and Uganda in East Africa, Malawi and Zambia in Southern Africa, Nigeria and Sierra Leone in West Africa, and India and Nepal in Asia. We've chosen stories from these or similar countries because they show what has actually been done in these countries. They also highlight the fact that there are already potential partners, existing channels and successful communications in place that you can tap into.

Partnering with the right people

Above all, communication is a partnership. The role of researchers and extension workers is mainly to provide information or 'content' in the first place and be there to reply to questions and requests for more information. Researchers and extension workers need partners who are journalists, broadcasters, science writers, communication experts, or even actors or singers, to craft messages from the content they provide. They need partners in the public and private sectors to construct and manage TV and radio infrastructure, telecentres, mobile phone networks, newspapers and other communication channels to get the messages out. Success comes from getting partners with different talents together around a common objective.

Pop radio harnesses donkey 'boy racers'

Where	Kenya, spillover into Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia
Scale	Pilot project
Objective	Make donkey transport more productive
Target audience	Teenage donkey owners and handlers in Meru, Kenya
Channel	FM pop radio programmes coupled with competitions
Timeframe	2003-2005

Donkeys in Kenya are often overloaded and caned repeatedly because there is very little awareness of animal welfare. Their handlers work them long hours without food or water. The traditional harness is a yoke around the neck that rubs on the windpipe and causes sores and scars. This means that donkeys tend to be underfed, unhealthy and injured, and not very productive as pack animals.

The people who handle the donkeys are often teenage boys. These teenagers (young men with little or no education) drive the donkeys as fast as possible up and down mountain slopes to carry goods to market and fetch water amongst other things. They drive the donkeys hard to show off to girls and boost their self esteem. But they often crash and injure the donkeys and themselves.

Radio programmes talking about how to care for, use and manage donkeys targeted teenage donkey owners and handlers in Meru, a city on the eastern side of Mount Kenya. FM pop radio stations are the main entertainment for the young men. The stations understand their audience and how to sway their behaviour. This means they have a lot of influence as authorities and trendsetters.

Photo: © Kim Seidl

So, to make donkey transport more productive, researchers got together with FM radio to broadcast a series of programmes aimed at the teenage donkey handlers. Each programme covered a topic about the welfare and management of donkeys. There was also a soap-style drama, each episode looking at a single aspect of donkey management. At the end of each programme, free T-shirts were offered as prizes for correct answers.

The series aimed to change how the boys saw themselves, for example by telling them that 'It's cool to treat your donkey well'. This, coupled with the prize T-shirts, reinforced the messages about proper care for donkeys. The 'cool dude' T-shirts were highly coveted.

Partners

The FM pop radio programmes were a pilot project involving the Kenyan Network for Draught Animal Technology (KENDAT), Brooke Hospital for Animals (BHA), the Society for Protection of Animals Abroad (SPANA) and DFID's Livestock Production Programme.

Success factors

Clearly defining the target audience and what 'pushed their buttons' were key factors in success. The teenage donkey drivers were particularly keen to compete to win a T-shirt because these were seen as 'cool' and highly prized.

The choice of FM stations was based on research on listener preferences, costs, and the reach of the station. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation FM stations have national reach. Earlier attempts at raising awareness of donkey welfare issues on national radio aroused little reaction – which shows that choosing the right station was key. Focusing on young donkey handlers through a pop music channel at a specific time of day had a far greater effect.

Impact

Changes in how the donkey handlers behaved led to greater self esteem. The teenagers found that treating their donkeys well made them much more attractive to the girls they sought to impress. This had a positive effect in transforming their mindset (they came to believe that it was cool to treat donkeys well), and in improving the way they managed, cared for and worked their donkeys.

Want to know more?

http://www.cphp.uk.com/uploads/documents/didyouknowfinal.pdf

http://www.developments.org.uk/articles/the-donkeys-tale/

Design of radio messages and programmes to improve donkey use, welfare and environment for transport and tillage in rural communities. Project Number: ZC0235/ R2572
http://www.kendat.org/downloads/radio%20research.pdf

'Story Story' radio drama tackles livelihood issues

Where	Nigeria, West Africa
Scale	3.8 million
Objective	Raise awareness among Nigerians of practical routes to better livelihoods
Target audience	Nigerians aged 18-54 years
Channel	Radio drama and discussion programmes on 52 Nigerian radio stations
Timeframe	2004-2007

The radio drama *Story Story*, through powerful human-interest storylines, tackles some of the complex social, economic and political issues facing Nigerians today. *Story Story*'s sister programme, *Talk Talk*, is a radio discussion programme that follows-up on the issues raised. The aim is to extend listeners' knowledge and make them aware of strategies they can use to improve their lives.

The half-hour programmes include 15 minutes of storyline and then 15 minutes' discussion of issues raised that week. There are interviews with key players representing all sides of the issues. Discussions hosted in different places reflect a range of viewpoints and regional differences.

Partners

The BBC World Service Trust and DFID Nigeria partnered in *Story Story* and *Talk Talk*. The BBC World Service Trust is an international development charity that works with people in developing countries on ways to improve the quality of their lives through imaginative and innovative use of the media. *Story Story* is part of the BBC World Service Trust Voices project. This project works with universities and other broadcasters helping to train Nigerian students and radio journalists to produce and broadcast educational radio programmes.

Success factors

The drama is 'character-led and research-based'. The creative team has a close relationship with Nigeria and each series has an overall theme agreed with DFID. So far programmes have tackled topics such as corruption, violence, empowerment of women, education, environmental sustainability, HIV and AIDS and citizenship.

The drama series is produced in Nigeria. This creates opportunities to train Nigerians in radio skills and develop links between national media organisations, development agencies and NGOs.

The content of the programmes is based on research by DFID and partners across Nigeria. DFID and the BBC World Service Trust decide what issues will be tackled. They research the issue, and then the team – four researchers and 12 writers, ranging in age from 18 to 70 from all over Nigeria – go on a two-week retreat to thrash out story lines. The team works with NGOs and other organisations to make sure that there is on-the-ground follow up.

Comment

"*Story Story* has become more popular than we ever dreamed of …"
Creative Director Akim Mogaji

"… wherever they go, [actors] are mobbed by people calling out their names. People really identify with the characters. … character goes beyond the stereotypes and delivers vital information and education."
Project Director Bilkisu Labaran

http://www.developments.org.uk/articles/radio-spreads-the-word/

Impact

Research shows that after three years, 3.8 million listeners aged 18-54 years, across four states (Enugu, Kaduna, Lagos and Abuja) recognised the Voices initiative.

Over a quarter of radio listeners had listened to *Story Story* and more than three quarters spoke to friends and family about issues raised in the drama.

Over half of *Story Story* listeners said they have thought differently about issues after having listened. The outcome was similar for *Talk Talk*.

Want to know more?

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/projectsindepth/story/2003/09/030908_voices.shtml

Radio spreads the word: Tell me a story. Family drama meets development education in Story, Story – an unexpected runaway BBC World Service Trust radio success in Nigeria. Kathy Watson. http://www.developments.org.uk/articles/radio-spreads-the-word/

Radio dramas in Afghanistan and Ethiopia

In **Afghanistan**, the BBC World Service Trust radio programme *Village Voice*, which is part of the *New Home, New Life* series, provides practical information to rural audiences on, for example, reconstruction and rebuilding homes, agriculture, livestock and clean water, and social issues such as dowries.

In **Ethiopia**, the BBC World Service Trust radio drama stimulates discussion and debate about the challenges facing rural communities, including: access to water and food, deforestation and soil erosion, poor sanitation and hygiene, gender relations, sexual and reproductive health, and early marriage.

BBC World Trust Annual Review 2008
http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/2008_annualreview.pdf

Photo: © BBC World Service

Ichi chalo radio soap opera prevents a food crisis in Zambia

The *Ichi chalo* (This World in Which We Live) radio soap opera was the centrepiece of a World Food Programme public awareness campaign to prevent a food crisis which threatened 2.9 million people in Zambia. It targeted 6 million people – everyone from farmers in remote rural areas to the top decision-makers in Lusaka – with the message 'There's a link between food security and your security'.

Comment

"Radio stations, and in particular community radio stations, have proven to be one of the best mediums for disseminating information in Zambia. … we wanted to find a medium that was approachable and fun for people to listen to."
Richard Ragan, World Food Programme Country Director

Depending on the topic being addressed, the soap opera was set in either a typical urban or rural community. The characters confronted a range of issues linked to hunger and food security – biotechnology, unfavourable government policies on agriculture, food relief, crop diversification and indigenous foods.

Shows were carefully scripted to appeal to a broad range of listeners. They were translated and adapted into Zambia's seven main indigenous languages (Nyanja, Bemba, Lozi, Tonga, Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda) to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.

Adopting a similar format to that used by other successful radio programmes on health and social change, the *Ichi chalo* radio shows had two segments – a 12-minute dramatised soap opera followed by 18 minutes of interviews and discussion. The two-way interactive segment involving listeners was a key feature.

http://one.wfp.org/Newsroom/in_depth/africa/011203_zambia_radio.asp?section=2&sub_section=2

'Barnaamijka Xoolaha' The Livestock Programme

Where	Somalia
Scale	250,000
Objective	Convey information to bring about positive changes in livelihoods
Target audience	Somalis in the livestock sector, traders
Channel	Radio programme on BBC Somali service coupled with 500 learning groups
Timeframe	July 2006–June 2008

Radio programmes broadcast on the BBC Somali service coupled with informal learning groups helped Somalis gain basic literacy skills and at the same time boost their knowledge and skills in livestock management. *Barnaamijka Xoolaha*, The Livestock Programme, a 30-minute weekly magazine-style programme, covered topics such as market prices, animal health, detecting fake drugs, marketing, business skills and new economic opportunities. Panel discussion programmes covered drought, markets, prices and marketing, animal health services, product diversification, international support and degradation of rangeland. Recorded feedback from listeners was broadcast to encourage discussion and debate.

Success factors

The programmes gave listeners relevant and up-to-date information. The producers sourced information from Somali livestock traders, brokers and transporters, Somali chambers of commerce, livestock boards, vet organisations, slaughterhouses and small business owners, such as milk and meat traders. Every week they also contacted all the main livestock markets in Somalia, as well as markets in Yemen and the United Arab Emirates.

Listeners were helped to understand what they had just heard through community learning groups facilitated by Somalis. The 'community learning groups' across Somaliland, Puntland, and Southern Somalia followed a radio-based curriculum. Group members listened to the programme, and the facilitators guided them through learning activities based on programme topics.

All the programmes were co-produced and broadcast by the BBC Somali Service. Local production staff received training and produced 130 programmes. Plus, 144 Somalis were trained to facilitate the learning groups.

Photo: © BBC World Service

Partners

The African Educational Trust worked on the radio-based curriculum. The Trust operates in regions of Africa where formal structures for education are absent, or have been broken down by conflict and civil war. It works closely with local communities to provide access to school materials and tuition.

A consultative committee reviewed the content of each programme and gave feedback. Committee members included Terra Nuova, the Somali Animal Health Services Project, Vetaid, the Food Security Analysis Unit Somalia, Penha, Candlelight, Havoyoco, Hargeisa Academy for Peace and Development and Somaliland's National Vet associations.

Barnaamijka Xoolaha was part of a broad European Union initiative – the European Union's Rehabilitation Programme for Somalia – to support the livestock sector.

Impact

Barnaamijka Xoolaha has helped more than 250,000 adult Somalis gain basic literacy skills and, at the same time, learn practical skills to improve their lives. Over 60% of the BBC's audience in Somalia listen regularly to *Barnaamijka Xoolaha*.

Comment

"The impact the livestock programme had on the target audience includes an increase in income and knowledge. This to me was satisfying bearing in mind that most of the target audiences are typically the most illiterate and poor members of the Somali population, those who have had no access to educative and informative programmes that will bring about positive changes in their lives. Seeing their lives transformed in terms of increase in knowledge and wealth makes you appreciate the huge effort the BBC World Service Trust and its employees put into this initiative."
Jamal Abdi, a Somali audience research executive at the BBC World Service Trust

The BBC World Service Trust Research and Learning Group and the African Educational Trust, interviewed 600 people involved in the livestock sector in Somalia to assess the impact of the radio programmes. Most (97%) were from rural areas:

- 91% of respondents said they listen to the radio;
- The BBC World Service was the most popular station, with 97% of those interviewed listening to the BBC; and
- 79% of those interviewed had heard about the livestock programme, and 63% of respondents had listened to the programme.

Want to know more?

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/whatwedo/where/africa/somalia/2008/03/080219_somalia_livestock_project_overview.shtml

NGO radio extension reaches rural Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda

Family Alliance for Development and Cooperation (FADECO), a local NGO in Karagwe district of Tanzania, specialises in agricultural extension and participatory technology development with rural farmers. A radio project launched in 2007 reaches over 1 million listeners across the whole of Kagera region in Tanzania and neighbouring Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. FADECO uses the radio to disseminate information and SMS text messaging to get feedback and receive questions.

http://www.hedon.info/FADECOTanzania

Breeze FM private radio broadcasts extension messages

Where	Rural Chipata, Zambia
Scale	700,000 listeners
Objective	Information on fish farming, bee keeping and other topics
Target audience	Smallholder farmers in eastern Zambia
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	Programme sponsorship 50%, consultancy 14%

In Zambia, the National Agricultural Information Services sponsors programmes on a private radio station to build the capacity of farmers.

Farming as a Business, broadcast in the local Chinyanja language, boosts farmers' commercial and business administration skills by systematically supplying information on markets. The programme provides up-to-date market news and information on market trends for agricultural products and services. *Our Village* features interviews with villagers on development themes, such as agriculture and food security, and environmental health.

Radio Breeze FM balances commercial needs with a public-community mission by selling airtime to NGOs and government agencies in programmes such as *Farming as a Business* and *Our Village*. Breeze FM resembles a community station, but is run on a business model. NGOs approach Breeze FM and purchase sponsorship and Breeze FM markets its services to NGOs. Some NGOs supply audio; some hire Breeze's studios; some want Breeze FM staff to make programmes. When Breeze FM staff make the programmes, NGOs pay consultancy fees and all production costs, including staff travel and subsistence, hire of equipment and materials.

Breeze FM reaches 700,000 listeners in eastern Zambia of whom 76% are small-scale farming households living in scattered villages and growing maize, tobacco, cotton, vegetables and fruit.

NGOs and government departments sponsor programmes to give listeners information about farming, such as beekeeping and fish farming. It's an efficient way of getting extension messages out.

Partners

The African Development Bank pays Breeze FM to make programmes or broadcast audios they provide. The National Agricultural Information Services also uses Breeze FM to give information to farmers.

The Educational Development Center, a US NGO, and the Zambian Government Education Broadcasting Service work with Breeze FM to produce *Our Village.*

Success factors

Programming is based on audience research. For example, Breeze FM commissioned a survey on market access and business information needs for cotton, tobacco and livestock farmers in eastern Zambia. The results were used to help the station start *Farming as a Business* to give farmers more market information.

Radio covers a wide area. Because the station has strong links to the community, NGOs use it to reach out. Most farmers can afford radios although they complain that sometimes they can't buy batteries.

Want to know more?

Case study of Breeze-FM and other effective stations on the Developing Radio Partners Web site: http://www.developingradiopartners.org. Click on 'Guidebook on sustainability or follow this link: http://www.developingradiopartners.org/downloads/Hi%20Res%20Guidebook.pdf.

Another useful document is UNDP's *Communication for Empowerment: developing media strategies in support of vulnerable groups.* http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs06/Communicationforempowermentfinal.pdf

Photo: S. Mann

Makutano Junction TV soap encourages small farmers to make silage

Where	Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Ghana
Scale	6 million
Objective	Spread the use of silage in dairy farming
Target audience	Smallholder dairy farmers in rural and peri-urban communities
Channels	Television soap opera, website, SMS
Timeframe	Since 2005. Currently broadcasting the seventh series in Kenya and Uganda.

The TV soap opera *Makutano Junction* aims to educate as well as entertain English-speaking African audiences. Set in a fictional Kenyan village, it follows the loves and lives of a colourful cast, offering information on a range of key issues. One episode, for example, dealt with how small dairy farmers can boost milk production by making silage. After the episode, viewers were able to phone, mail, SMS or go to the programme's webpage for further information about what they just saw.

The TV soap opera is an innovative way for many organisations to set up a two-way flow of information. And, on TV and radio, the soap opera has become an important forum for a wide variety of environmental, health and development issues.

Makutano Junction successfully interweaves many separate messages from different organisations on social, welfare, health commercial, agricultural and political issues. Producers work with organisations and researchers on content for episodes. A clear and well maintained website provides easy access to information and, for certain episodes, the internet and SMS generate an accurate record of responses.

Partners

The partners in *Makutano Junction* collaborate to provide content and campaigns expertise. They include the Central Research Department of DFID, UK, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Kenya, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Liverpool Voluntary Counselling and Testing, Marie Stopes, Ford Foundation, Media Focus on Africa, the Mediae Trust, Unilever and NGOs.

DFID have funded the production of eight, 13-episode series. Script editors, directors and cameramen who have worked on popular UK drama series such as *The Bill, Eastenders* and *Casualty* mentor the local production team.

Research organisations can contact the programme producers to identify which subjects are suitable for coverage.

Mediae Trust, the makers of Makutano Junction, really welcome input from the natural resource sector and research organisations, as they pride themselves on reaching a predominantly rural audience - and so 'research into use' issues are of immense relevance and interest to their viewers.

When contacting the Mediae Trust with ideas they would welcome your information in the following format:
1. Subject area/theme
2. Names of regional consortia partners in East Africa (plus contact details for people they can follow up with, if necessary)
3. A broad description of the information they should include in Makutano Junction. It is helpful if the notes contain background information on the constraint or problem being tackled and a clear description of the recommendations to be included in Makutano Junction. (The clearer the input at this stage, the better the script.)
4. Any other information the programme makers need to know, especially regarding the relevant time of year. For example, if a farming technique is covered, please state whether it should be used during a specific part of the agricultural cycle, or during a specific month, so the programme can be made and broadcast before that time.

Contact **mediae@africaonline.co.ke** or **mediae@aol.com** with your ideas.

Success factors

Makutano Junction does not just 'push out' information. Through audience research, the programme responds to viewers' 'demand' for information. The episode on making silage, for example, was made because viewers had identified that this was a topic of interest to them. This was confirmed when, after the episode was broadcast, the station was flooded by SMS messages asking for more information.

Another critical success factor is the strength of the partnership between content providers, communication experts and in-country broadcasters. A local team of producers and actors, backed up by a development communications consultancy the Mediae Trust, made the series. This meant relevant, context-specific high-quality 'edu-tainment' at a low cost.

Photo: © Mediae Trust

Impact

Makutano Junction was broadcast by Kenya Broadcast Corporation in Kenya and is now showing on Citizen TV. It is also showing on WBS in Uganda and ITV in Tanzania, as well as on the DSTV satellite channel. Half the regular audience of seven million Kenyans have a rural bias.

The messages in the episodes are supported by an SMS facility. In 2008, viewers sent 30,000 texts.

Comment

"… the soap's actors make a direct call to viewers after the credits roll, inviting individuals to get in touch. This means that people aren't left in limbo if they want more information, but have a means of finding out more."
Abigail Mulhall, Central Research Department

Although the number of SMS messages received after the episode on silage was broadcast indicates a lot of interest in the topic, there is no data on how many farming households actually started to make silage as a result. However, the website and SMS do offer the opportunity for surveys to find out the extent of behaviour change.

Want to know more?

http://www.research4development.info/SearchResearchDatabase.asp?ProjectID=60313

Media Development
http://www.comminit.com/en/node/133770/2754

http://www.developments.org.uk/articles/30-minute-makeover/

E-Choupal kiosks catalyse rural transformation

Where	India – Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal and Tamil Nadu
Scale	6,500 e-Choupals today reach 4 million farmers, by 2012 there will be 20,000 eChoupal kiosks, reaching 15 million farmers
Objective	Rationalise agricultural markets and make the system more efficient
Target audience	Smallholder farmers in India
Channel	Rural internet kiosks
Timeframe	Ongoing since 2000

In India, a *Choupal* is a meeting place where village elders and decision makers discuss community issues. The e-Choupal is an information exchange kiosk to which village decision makers and farmers come to find information on agricultural and other matters. Basically, the e-Choupal kiosks are computers placed in a villager's house and linked to the internet by phone lines or a VSAT connection. Each kiosk serves around 600 farmers in about ten villages within a five-kilometre radius.

In setting up the e-Choupal network, ITC Limited, an Indian industrial conglomerate, coupled a social mission with a commercial objective. In doing so it rationalised markets and boosted agricultural efficiency in India. Farmers, rural communities and shareholders alike benefitted.

E-Choupals tackle the challenges of Indian agriculture – fragmented farms, weak infrastructure and numerous intermediaries. Traditionally, middlemen in *mandis*, the major rural agricultural markets, used to set prices and make most of the profit. And because farmers didn't get much more for good quality produce than they did for poor quality produce they had little or no incentive to invest and produce better quality output. E-Choupal neutralises the power of the middleman by giving farmers a choice in where they sell outputs and buy inputs.

ITC Limited provides and maintains the technology for the e-Choupal kiosks, and the network is transforming how business is done in rural areas. Through e-Choupal, Indian farmers have become knowledge-seeking producers. And, buying and selling have become more transparent because farmers can get information on crop prices and market trends. In addition, collection and distribution have become more efficient and costs have gone down.

E-Choupal services today reach out to more than 4 million farmers growing a range of crops – soybean, coffee, wheat, rice, pulses, and shrimp in over 40,000 villages through 6,450 kiosks across eight states. E-Choupal is one of the very few ICT projects in India that has used e-commerce effectively to reduce poverty, as it has cut the number of middlemen between farmers and buyers, giving farmers better prices.

Partners

ITC Limited, with a turnover of US$4.75 billion, ranks third in pre-tax profits among India's private sector corporations. The company employs over 20,000 people at more than 60 locations across India.

Each e-Choupal kiosk is run by a *sanchalak* – a trained farmer. The *sanchalak* bears some operating costs but, in return, earns service fees for the e-transactions done through his e-Choupal.

Warehouses are managed by traditional middlemen, now called *samyojaks*. Middlemen make up for the lack of infrastructure and fulfil critical jobs like cash disbursement, aggregating and transporting produce from famers to markets.

The public sector makes the internet available.

Comment

"The e-Choupal system has had a measurable impact on what farmers choose to do: in areas covered by e-Choupals, the percentage of farmers planting soybean has increased dramatically (from 50 to 90% in some regions) while the volume of soy marketed through *mandis* has dropped by as much as half."

What Works: ITC's E-Choupal And Profitable Rural Transformation Web-Based Information And Procurement Tools For Indian Farmers. 2003. University of Michigan http://www.scribd.com/doc/6737564/Echoupal-Case

Success factors

ITC had the managerial skills to carry out a complex project and manage the costs. It took a flexible project management approach – roll out, fix it, and scale up – to deal with the lack of infrastructure. For example, in most of the e-Choupals, wireless VSAT links leapfrog the need for landlines. When even VSAT proved inadequate, e-Choupals started caching static content locally. Several kiosks use batteries recharged by solar panels.

Plus, ITC knows the Indian agriculture system and has tried to keep the best aspects – by retaining local partners, for example. The company is committed to transparency, and treats both farmers and local partners respectfully and fairly. The warehouses buy in bulk and deal directly with communities, and so are able to give farmers good deals on inputs. As a result, communities have built schools, community centres, health centres and 'supermarkets'.

Want to know more?

What Works: ITC's E-Choupal And Profitable Rural Transformation Web-Based Information And Procurement Tools For Indian Farmers. **2003. University of Michigan**
http://www.scribd.com/doc/6737564/Echoupal-Case

Strengthening Rural Information Infrastructure Through E-Choupals. **Anup Kumar Das and Chaitali Dutta**
http://openmed.nic.in/1220/01/Das_Dutta_XXI_IASLIC_Seminar_2004.pdf

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Echoupal 17 Feb 2009

See how technology has transformed lives of Indian farmers on YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fx4gukMYTGA

Photo: © Ami Vitale Panos Pictures

Songhai Community Telecentres nurture entrepreneurs

Where	West Africa
Scale	Benin, extending to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Togo
Objective	Build entrepreneurial skills
Target audience	Farmers (often illiterate), students, entrepreneurs, teachers, NGOs
Channel	Community telecentres
Timeframe	1999-ongoing

The Songhai Community Telecentres are places where people with common interests can get together and address such issues as marketing, distribution, inputs, production techniques and technology, financial services, capitalisation and communication. This helps overcome poor infrastructure and gives people the wherewithal to develop enterprises even in remote communities. Basically, they create a network of 'smart communities' in which the Songhai staff, Songhai graduates, agricultural entrepreneurs, non agricultural entrepreneurs and community leaders who make up these groups gather and share information amongst themselves.

Comment

"In Savalou, Benin, the "town crier" announced the opening of a new telecenter providing ICT tools for public use. The telecenter also spread the word through radio interviews, strategically placed posters, brochures, newspaper ads, and open houses for groups from different sectors and segments of society."

"To reach disadvantaged communities, advertising access to computers may not be the most compelling draw. Initially, what appeals may be much more basic – the photocopier, fax machine, even the telephone."

Community Telecenters: Enabling Lifelong Learning
Mary Fontaine
http://www.ictinedtoolkit.org/usere/library/tech_for_ed_chapters/12.pdf

Partners

Songhai is an NGO with a mission to end hunger in Africa.

Success factors

The telecentres are part of the communities. They are a social network, as well as a tool for development, and get hundreds of visitors every week. Visitors learn how to use information technology (IT), voice over internet protocol (VoIP) telephony, internet, email, and word processing software. They also learn how to organise and manage information.

The telecentres offer organisations, communities, schools and individuals training, help them choose appropriate technology, and source, install and test equipment. They also hold open houses many times a year to introduce people to the IT world.

The strong culture of information in the Songhai network vouches for the fact that information has become 'demand driven'. Songhai telecentres are one of the few telecentres in Africa where the services are sustainable because they aren't 'hand-outs'.

Comment

"In Benin, hundreds of people each week are using Internet services at the telecenters in Porto Novo, Savalou, and Parakou, including students and teachers from secondary schools and colleges, NGO staff members, business people, co-op members and village groups, farmers, and individuals from all walks of life."

Community Telecenters: Enabling Lifelong Learning
Mary Fontaine
http://www.ictinedtoolkit.org/usere/library/tech_for_ed_chapters /12.pdf

Impact

Songhai Telecentres are already flourishing in rural and semi-urban communities in Benin – in Parakou in the north, Savalou in the centre, Porto-Novo in the south and Lokossa in the west. In Nigeria, a telecentre in Amukpè, set up at the request of the Delta State government, is getting underway. Other telecentres will soon be launched in Cross River in the south, Imo in the south East, Ogun in the west and Niger in the north.

Want to know more?

http://www.telecentre.org/profile/SONGHAICENTER

Community Telecenters: Enabling Lifelong Learning. Mary Fontaine
http://www.ictinedtoolkit.org/usere/library/tech_for_ed_ chapters/12.pdf

The spoken web – audio 'internet' for rural populations

Where	Rural populations in Gujarat, western India
Scale	Pilot project
Objective	A voice-based 'internet'
Target audience	Rural populations
Channel	Low-end mobile phones

An exciting development in India is an entirely new kind of web, based on the spoken word. Unlike the internet, the spoken web is built around VoiceSites rather than text websites, and is accessed by mobile phone rather than computer.

People who call up VoiceSites on their mobile phones need only to speak and listen. They don't have to read or write. They can create their own VoiceSites or access those of other people. They can also surf the spoken web and jump from VoiceSite to VoiceSite using spoken commands. A caller's experience of an individual VoiceSite is rather like the interactive voice response systems that customers come across when calling a bank.

It's easy for a person to set up a VoiceSite. They dial a number, and software called VoiGen then guides them, in the local language, through the process. When prompted, they record their information, such as a welcome greeting and contact details, and VoiGen creates a VoiceSite. The person is then assigned a VoiceSite phone number, equivalent to a URL.

Anyone who calls the person's VoiceSite number is greeted with the welcome message, and then given help to navigate around the VoiceSite. For example, callers could say "address" and the VoiceSite would tell them the address. VoiceSites can be linked, just like websites on the internet. This means, for example that farmers could use a VoiceSite to sell their produce.

Comment

"An audio format would provide much more access and opportunity for local people to contribute," says Tapan Parikh of the University of California, Berkeley. "While a farmer may not be able to write a memo, or an email, or a summary of his work, he can easily talk about it."

Although people often use cellphones, they rarely use text messaging or even the address book. Guruduth Banavar, director of IBM India Research Laboratory, says "They would rather call a friend to find another person's phone number than actually save the number in their address book."

The local radio station archives its content on a VoiceSite, which villagers can access and leave comments on. Others can listen to these comments, and future broadcasts incorporate them into their discussion. "We are using the spoken web tool to make community radio more interactive," says Parikh.

Cellphones could be used to build 'audio internet' 24 October 2008 New Scientist 2679, pages 22-23
http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20026796.500-cellphones-could-be-used-to-build-audio-internet.html

Partners

The IBM India Research Laboratory in New Delhi developed the new protocol HSTP or hyperspeech transfer protocol. This speech protocol, similar to the hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP), takes people from one VoiceSite to another.

The University of California, Berkeley, is working with IBM India on this new technology.

Success factors

The 'spoken web' brings the power of the internet to rural communities. Even for those who can afford computers, attempting to access the internet is a challenge. They may not read or write or the information may simply not be relevant to them. The new voice technology adapts the internet concept for those who may struggle with text. What fuelled the internet was that it became easy for nearly anyone to create a website. What the developers of the new voice internet are doing is creating a similar easy way of creating voice sites.

The spoken web avoids complex voice recognition software and overcomes the problems of numerous languages, dialects and demographics by sticking to a very small vocabulary.

A decade ago there were hardly any mobile phones in India. Now, nearly 300 million people use them, not only in the cities but also in semi-urban and rural areas. About 8 million new subscribers sign up each month. With the boom in mobile phones, the spoken web could make a big difference to rural areas.

SecondVoice® connects the unconnected

A cheap, but advanced device means that isolated communities can get and share information simply and easily. SecondVoice® is a very low-cost, solar-charged, audio-only device that uses software called PasserBy®. It's been developed by Practical Action and Cranfield University for people in remote areas where there is no electricity for radios or charging mobile phones, no access to the internet or mobile phone networks, and where solar panels are too costly. The devices are simple to use and people quickly catch on to how they work.

The devices are smaller than a mobile phone, and weigh only 10 grams. Using Bluetooth® technology, they transmit voice recordings and podcasts. When two people with the devices are within range, recordings are transferred automatically. Audio content can be recorded, tagged to put it into a suitable category and sent out to specific people. PasserBy® routes messages to recipients. Recorded messages are automatically categorised into playlists by content and recipient. This means recipients can listen to playlists whenever convenient.

To give an example, a mother visits a medical clinic in a neighbouring town. Her SecondVoice® copies a medical advisory from the clinic's SecondVoice®. Whenever they next meet her, other villagers receive a copy of the medical advice and, in turn, pass it on to others. All kinds of information can be passed around, such as information on crop prices, and how to improve crop yields or treat livestock diseases.

The voice communication technology came from the knowledge that many rural people prefer to receive and exchange information orally. SecondVoice® allows them to do just this. Simple but relevant messages can be spread to a large number of villages and individuals by the spoken word.

Plus, the devices are very cheap to make. They have a built-in microphone, a jack for an earpiece and a simple joystick. Because they are solar powered they cost nothing to run. They have a battery so they can run even when the sun is not shining and are sealed against moisture and dust, so can be taken anywhere and still work. Plus, they are simple to use and easily customised to every language.

At high volume, each device would cost around US$10. While this is still a lot for those living close to, or below, the poverty line, investing in one of these devices would give rural people information that would help them improve their lives in many ways.

Source: http://practicalaction.org/?id=icts_secondvoice

Photo: S. Mann

First Mile creates links, builds market chains

Where ——————— Tanzania
Scale ——————— 1,000 producer groups
Objective ————— Link farmers and buyers
Target audience ——— Farmers and buyers
Channels ————— Market spies coupled with mobile phones, email and the internet
Timeframe ————— Launched in 2005

First Mile links small farmers, traders and processors using mobile phones, email and the internet. It's a way of building market chains so that farmers can get better prices for their crops and make sure they're not paying over the odds for agricultural inputs.

First Mile

The term "first mile" refers to bridging the connectivity gap that separates a village with no electricity and no telephone line from the nearest online computer. It emphasises rural communities as the starting point of connectivity, not the end point.

Through First Mile, farmers in Tanzania are getting real-time market information by mobile phone. Market 'spies', known locally as *shu shu shu*, check out prices and what is selling at local markets. *Shu shu shu* call and send text messages to farmers telling them which traders to sell to, what the market demand is that day and how much to ask for their produce. This helps farmers decide where to sell their produce and tells them how much they could get for it.

The combination of 'spies' and technology is helping farmers build better market chains. The *shu shu shu* chat with traders, wholesalers and transporters to find out the latest market news and selling prices of tomatoes, potatoes, maize, rice and other locally grown crops. When small farmers, processors and traders work together, rather than compete with each other, everyone benefits – there's less inefficiency and more profit.

Partners

Partners in First Mile include the Government of Switzerland, the Government of Tanzania, FAO and IFAD. The project is part of the seven-year, US$42.3 million Agricultural Marketing Systems Development Programme, funded in part by a US$16.3 million grant from IFAD.

Success factors

The success of First Mile depends not only on the technologies but on building trust and collaboration between people along the market chain – good communication is about people not ICTs.

Comment

"I make sure I go to the traders to investigate and negotiate the prices … It is important to make sure the information you are getting is really good. This work is not easy. Many traders do not want the farmers to know the actual prices they are selling at."
Stanley Mchome, a *shu shu shu* in Magugu, Babati district, northern Tanzania

"The project brings together the communication and marketing dimensions. Marketing has a tight connection to immediate income and is very dependent on information – not just price information but market intelligence such as information about product quality and what is coming into the market. It is very information-intense. We've coupled that with the potential to make an income, and that is what is driving this project."
Clive Lightfoot, First Mile Project leader
http://www.firstmiletanzania.net/

Success also came from building on previous work to strengthen producer groups. These groups were crucial in helping the First Mile team reach farmers. In some districts the core groups became the intermediaries, helping farmers negotiate with others in the market chain and helping them share and develop ideas over the internet.

Two other factors in success are savings and credit cooperatives and the warehouse receipt system established by the Agricultural Marketing Systems Development Programme. These mean that farmers can store their crops and sell in bulk when the price is right.

Impact

By March 2006, less than 10 months after the project was launched, project activities contributed to a gross increase in participants' income of more than US$1.8 million for an initial investment of US$200,000.

Getting twice the price

Five farmers' associations in the Songea and Namtumbo districts of Tanzania sold 70 tonnes of maize for US$143 per tonne between January and mid-February 2006. They used mobile phones, price updates broadcast by radio and dedicated *shu shu shus*. In the same period, other farmers' groups without access to the near-real-time market intelligence sold their maize for just US$65 per tonne, or less than half the price.

Linking Local Learners website
http://www.linkinglearners.net/

Want to know more?

http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/voice/tags/tanzania/stanley#

First Mile Project
http://www.firstmiletanzania.net/

Linking Local Learners
http://www.linkinglearners.net/
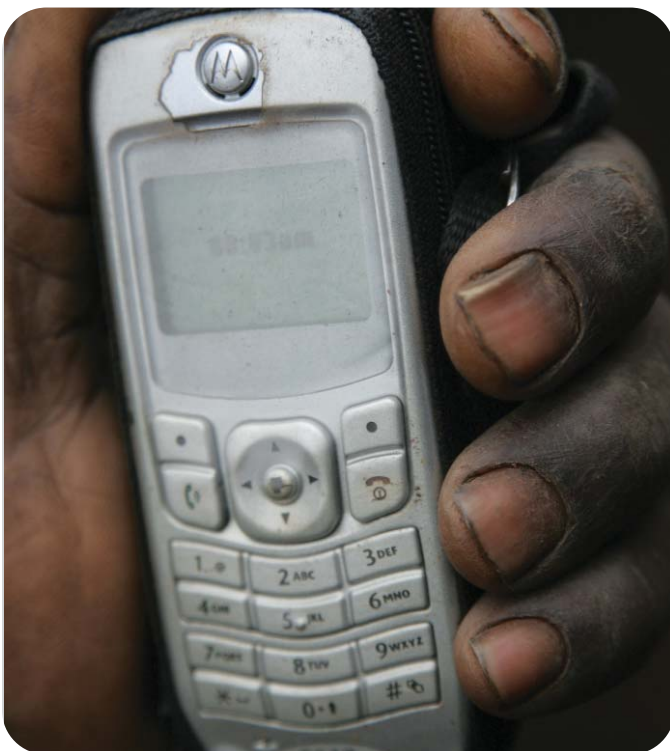
Photo: S. Mann

Esoko (TradeNet) expands and exploits new markets

Where	West Africa
Scale	300 agricultural markets
Objective	Put together buyers and sellers; strengthen supply chains
Target audience	Agricultural producers and traders
Channel	Private sector market intelligence system
Timeframe	Since 2007

Esoko (previously known as TradeNet) is an agricultural market software package developed by BusyLab, an Accra-based company that uses "the power of mobile networks to help businesses and individuals manage their distribution and supply networks". Esoko covers more and more markets and reaches more and more small farming communities each day with mobile text messages about market prices, offers to buy and sell, weather, transport and more.

Information is vital for farmers. It helps them make decisions on what crops to plant and when, and which fertilisers and new seeds to buy. They also need to find out about diseases and the weather.

Esoko – a simple sort of eBay for agricultural products

"The technology revolution may be coming to poor countries via the mobile phone, not the personal computer, as it did in rich ones. And just as the internet encouraged an entrepreneurial ethos … Africa's surge in mobile-phone use may unleash the same sort of business energy, but tailored to local needs.

… a simple sort of eBay for agricultural products across a dozen countries in west Africa … lets buyers and sellers indicate what they are after and their contact information, which is sent to all relevant subscribers as an SMS text message in one of four languages. Interested parties can then reach others directly to do a deal. … "

The spread of mobiles in Africa Jan 25 2007 *The Economist* print edition

Farmers get accurate and timely market information by SMS from Esoko. With this they are in a position to negotiate and decide where and when to sell their produce. They can text-in what they have for sale and these offers, together with their contact number, are disseminated to other Esoko subscribers via SMS alerts. Farmers use a set of codes to compose text messages asking for information on prices, send it to Esoko, and receive an SMS in reply.

Traders, buyers, transporters and exporters can all build private versions of the software to better manage their supply chains, communicate with their suppliers and reduce costs and improve efficiencies. Powerful applications that run on the open Esoko platform include SMSpush and Scout, with the latter offering buyers, donors and projects the ability to setup automated polling via SMS on field activities, inventory and more.

Partners

Esoko has partners with various institutions and projects throughout ten countries in Africa. Starting in the early days with FoodNet in Uganda, and USAID's Mistowa in West Africa, Esoko is currently partnered with FAO, IFAD, the Government of Northern Sudan, Technoserve, MercyCorps, Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN) Group, ZAIN telecommunication network, Chemonics, MultiChoice Africa (MCA) and Abt Associates.
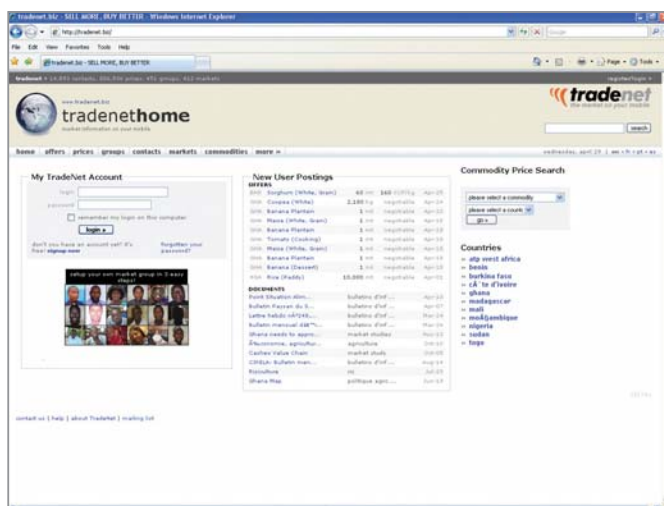
Comment

The mandate of a USAID-funded project, Mistowa, run by IFDC, was to boost regional trade within West Africa. When the project started, they saw the potential in what the BusyLab team in Accra was building and licensed it for their ten countries.

"TradeNet was a great partnership for us … they brought all the technology innovation that Internet entrepreneurs are famous for. … We've been reaching out to traders and producers and signing them up, building awareness."
Dr. Kofi Debrah, Mistowa Project

TradeNet launches market intel platform for buying and selling agricultural goods Issue No. 341 Balancing Act News Update

Partners in Foodnet Uganda

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) are partners in Foodnet Uganda which uses the TradeNet platform.

Foodnet collects data on agricultural commodities from markets across Uganda, which is processed and disseminated by FM radio, newspapers, e-mail and fax. Information on prices, traded volumes, market flows and growing conditions is broadcast in local languages on local FM radio stations, and now via SMS messages by mobile phone for small farmers and traders.

http://www.foodnet.cgiar.org/market/market.htm

Success factors

The Esoko development team in Accra spent two years studying market needs and building the software that enables traders and producers to find each other. They found that "farmers were desperate to get current prices so they could negotiate better deals for themselves when selling".

They also found that many businesses need to have good communication systems and connectivity to bring down costs and make their own 'private' market information systems more efficient. Plus, more transparent supply chains attract international buyers who are interested in stable supplies of quality products.

Comment

"We've had people in Japan and the USA find traders in Abidjan… Someone in Yemen found an organic fertilizer seller in Lagos… Onion producers in Burkina found buyers in Accra…"
Mark Davies, the investor behind Tradenet

Esoko also had a very clear three-year transition plan to full sustainability. Basic information about prices and offers will still be free, but custom, private-label sites that use the technology and tools of Esoko to deliver private content to their members will pay fees. In this way, everyone benefits.

Impact

An impact survey in Uganda on the Foodnet Market Information System found that 68% of farmers regularly access market information based on the Esoko market information platform. Up to 91% of farmers said that receiving marketing information had a positive to very positive impact on their business. Farmers who used market information by themselves made gains of 12-20% on prevailing market prices, whereas, groups of farmers made gains of 20-34% on prevailing prices. Nearly all farmers, 94%, have radios. Although only 25% of farmers owned mobile phones in 2006, nearly all had access to a mobile phone. In work with the SEND (Social Enterprise) Foundation of West Africa, farmers in Northern Ghana estimated a 68% positive impact on their revenues over two years.

Comment

Jenny Aker, an economist at the University of California at Berkeley, found that with the introduction of mobile phones in Niger, grain traders were able to learn of markets with the higher prices (which often tend to be the distant ones) and were willing to sell their goods there for a larger profit. Over time, however, the increased supply to distant markets lowers prices, and the consumer benefits.

Robert Jensen at Harvard University also found a similar result when mobile phones were introduced in the Indian state of Kerala, which has a large fishing industry. When fishermen and traders used mobile phones there was a huge reduction in the spread of prices, a complete elimination of waste, and an increase in both producer and consumer welfare.

Want to know more?

info@tradenet.biz

http://www.tradenet.biz/press/articles/daily-graphic_jan30_BusyLab.pdf

http://www.modernghana.com/news/181807/1/texting-tradenet-whats-the-price-of-soya-beans.html

http://www.balancingact-africa.com/news/back/balancing-act_341.html#head

EpiSurveyor transforms professional knowledge and service

Where	Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Zambia
Scale	Pilot
Objective	Keep professionals in remote places up-to-date, collect data
Target audience	Professionals
Channel	Mobile phone, free open source software
Timeframe	Ongoing

Health services in developing countries often lack reliable data to help them fight killer diseases. This is partly because health researchers in these countries still use a centuries-old method that is both time-consuming and error-prone – the pen and paper.

DataDyne is working with international bodies like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to help collect and share information to improve healthcare. The WHO recently adopted DataDyne's EpiSurveyor software as the standard for mobile data collection in sub-Saharan Africa. Research teams can now do more and go deeper into rural areas at less cost.

EpiSurveyor toolkit allows users to produce a data entry form on a handheld device, collect data, and transfer it to a laptop for analysis. After a couple of hours' training, a health worker can put the programme to a range of uses including household surveys, clinical surveillance, outbreak investigations and medical record keeping.

Recently, the Vodafone Group Foundation and the United Nations Foundation funded a trial survey using mobile technology in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia. The pilot "dramatically increased" the amount of public health information available in the three countries and prompted the WHO to adopt EpiSurveyor as the standard for mobile data collection in sub-Saharan Africa.

Comment

"It's time that we recognised that for the majority of the world's population, and for the foreseeable future, the cell phone is the computer, and it will be the portal to the internet, and the communications tool, and the schoolbook, and the vaccination record, and the family album, and many other things, just as soon as someone, somewhere, sits down and writes the software that allows these functions to be performed."
Dr Selanikio, one of DataDyne's two founders

"Our visit to the farmer groups in Salaga and Chamba also revealed the impact of mobile phones in general - that they are connecting these farmers both to each other and to their agricultural extension officers, and this connectivity is enhancing productivity. Farmers can easily reach an extension officer to discuss a crop-related problem, and those officers in turn rely on mobile phones to schedule visits to the farms, reducing time spent and energy exerted."
Texting TradeNet: What's the price of soya beans?
Edward Kutsoati and Sarah Bartlett
http://www.modernghana.com/news/181807/1/texting-tradenet-whats-the-price-of-soya-beans.html

Partners

DataDyne is a not-for-profit consultancy that develops mobile data products to serve public health and international development.

The World Health Organization, the UN Foundation and the Vodafone Foundation are helping DataDyne disseminate EpiSurveyor in 22 African countries by the end of 2008 and in Asia in 2009.

Success factors

In this case, success comes from global organisations working together to develop low-cost tools and standards that can be used for a variety of purposes in a variety of situations. The EpiSurveyor open-source software is free, simple to use and runs on palmtops and mobile phones.

Impact

Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's fastest growing market for mobiles – though most people still don't have one of their own. However, the groups of people most likely to own a mobile include extension workers, NGO staff, teachers and healthcare professionals.

EpiSurveyor in Kenya

A team equipped with EpiSurveyor equipment, powered by solar-powered bags from Voltaic Systems, makes enough excess power to barter and sell to villagers to finance the trip. This isn't something that EpiSurveyor (and its creator company DataDyne) intended to do – but it has already happened in Kenya.

Want to know more?

http://www.developments.org.uk/articles/health-information-goes-mobile/

DataDyne EpiSurveyor Project Brief
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVMARKETPLACE/Resources/205097-1099409088482/Brief-DataDyneEpiSurveyor.pdf

Photo: © Julien Harneis

Ndere Troupe fights banana wilt and other problems

Where	Uganda
Scale	3,000-5,000 farmers
Objective	Respond to demands from farmer groups for information
Target audience	Farmer groups in Uganda
Channel	Dramas
Timeframe	Started in 2003

When farmers have a problem they ask the Ndere Troupe to help them. This theatre and dance group from Kampala in Uganda translates solutions to farmers' problems into dance and drama. Farmer information centres, INFOPOPS feed the requests for help, for example what to do about banana wilt, to the Ndere Troupe. The Troupe then researches and develops a drama about the solutions, and distributes the scripts and videos electronically to the INFOPOPS on CDROM and DVD.

Farmer groups are then trained by the Troupe to act, sing and dance, after which they rehearse and perform the plays for their communities. The plays feature topics such as how to deal with banana wilt bacteria, cure livestock diseases, commercialise farming activities, and operate and maintain a borehole.

Success factors

Drama is a traditional way of communicating. Music, dance and drama are trusted and culturally acceptable. The use of local languages and characters that the audience relate to means that they take in the themes and topics.

In this case, drama, coupled with ICT, delivers relevant information in a form farmers can absorb – and enjoy. To get round problems with internet connectivity, the Troupe distributes the dramas on DVD by post.

Partners

The Agriculture Research and Rural Information Network (ARRIN) supported by the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) work with the Ndere Troupe and five farmer information centres – INFOPOPS – and their headquarters in Kampala.

Comments

"People love listening to stories, it's a traditional thing. … So they like watching a dramatic performance; you really can blow them away with it."
Justine Ayo, coordinator of ARRIN Tororo

"I saw a play on diseases and animals and how diseases affect them. … I learnt that an animal must sleep in a clean place and that you feed it in a place free of ticks. You must either grow enough grass yourself or bring them to a place where grass grows. And if there is any sign of disease you must act early on this. My animals are doing very well now. These are the things we learn from the plays."
Chairperson Paul Ochari of the Mudodo Orange Farmer Group

Want to know more?

IICD supported project Agriculture Research and Rural Information Network Uganda
http://www.iicd.org/projects/uganda-arrin

Ndere Troupe
http://www.ndere.com/projects.html.html

Using Dance, Drama and ICTs to Inform Rural Communities: The ARRIN Project - Drama and dance make people change. **Edith Tulp and Arjan de Jager** http://www.iicd.org/files/Arrin-Ndere%20Troupe.pdf

Photo: © Arie M. Rubenstein

Young Kenyans sing and dance to get their messages across to communities

The **Ulusi Theatre Group**, funded by ActionAid, is made up of 16-34 year olds in Usigu, western Kenya. The young people got together because they wanted to do something about the high levels of HIV and AIDS in their community which have affected everyone in some way. Many have lost parents, brothers, sisters and friends and some are HIV positive themselves. ActionAid trained them to be HIV AIDS advisors and counsellors and showed them how to care for people with AIDS related illnesses at home. Then the group decided to educate other young people about HIV AIDS, challenging the stigma which surrounds the virus and which prevents people learning how to protect themselves, get tested, or get treatment.

They go out to busy public places like the beach and market and start singing and dancing to get everyone's attention. Next they perform plays about HIV to get their messages across, and afterwards encourage people to come to the office for personal advice or to get free condoms. At first some of the elders in the village didn't like what they were doing; talking about sex openly is controversial there. But lots of people came to see their plays and then went to get advice. HIV infection rates have declined, along with STDs and teenage pregnancies, and now the community realises this is thanks to the youth group.

http://www.actionaid.org.uk/101588/about_the_ulusi_youth_group.html

Agricultural extension theatre reaches small farmers and Bedouin in the Middle East and North Africa

Extension theatre – using drama to explore agricultural extension themes – has deep roots in the history of ancient theatre, such as the Greek 'saga' and Italian 'Commedia dell' Arte'. Religious and traditional rhythmical performances are still seen in Asia and the Middle East.

The dramas transform extension messages into traditional rural songs that are performed in schools, village squares, cultural clubs and centres, and extension units in Syria, Jordan and Sudan. The dramas involve actors and audiences in two-way horizontal communication. Widely tested in different ways and with different audiences, extension messages adapted into dramas are delivered in a familiar cultural tradition.

IFAD's On-the-Road Theatre is now built into every IFAD-supported project in Syria, and has given 1,700 performances. IFAD has also duplicated the Syrian extension theatre in other countries in the Near East and Africa.

http://operations.ifad.org/web/guest/country/voice/tags/syria/theatre

Farmer Field Schools reinvented

Where	Nepal
Scale	8,500 girls
Objective	Provide secure livelihood
Target audience	Girls in Nepal
Channel	Farmer field schools
Timeframe	2002-2005

The NGO World Education arranged for older girls and out-of-school youth to take part in farmer field schools where they learned eco-friendly farming techniques. These young people are too old to attend formal school.

Nearly 85% of Nepal's population relies on agriculture and farming can provide a secure livelihood. Amongst other things, the young people learn to raise fish in rice paddies, which helps boost rice production. They find out that fish cut the amount of work by controlling weeds and insects, and fertilising the rice. By raising fish alongside rice they also find out how to manage water better and avoid pollution.

NGO trainers conduct the farmer field schools over 18 weeks, or a cropping season. The girls and youths gather in a village field each week. The classroom is the paddy field itself, where most learning takes place. At the end of the season, the students show off and share what they have learned with the community through a Farmer Field Day.

To date, nearly 8,500 girls in Nepal have completed Farmer Field Schools.

Farmer field schools

Farmer field schools emerged in the 1980s as a participatory way of introducing integrated pest management, quite a complex idea, to groups of rice farmers in Asia. Complex ideas do not travel easily from farmer to farmer and the benefits are not immediately obvious. Farmer Field Schools are a way of informally providing adults with an opportunity to observe, experiment and question new technologies and methods on their own ground and in their own circumstances. The schools draw on experiences in education and community development and are now widespread in around 80 developing countries.

The schools provide an opportunity to learn by doing. They give farmers and communities a chance to evaluate and adapt information and new ways of doing things that they hear about from the radio, NGOs or agricultural suppliers for example, to their specific needs. Such schools are now used widely. Rural communities, often helped by NGOs, use these kinds of groups to tackle issues in health, education and the environment, as well as agriculture.

Photo: © Akshay Mahajan

Partners

The World Education Girls' & Women's Education Initiative links literacy and basic education to economic, social, health and civic development initiatives.

Success factors

Face-to-face two-way, peer-to-peer exchanges help people understand and absorb how new ways of doing things work.

Although farming itself is mainly an individual or family activity, the rural community plays an important part in what people do. People like to get together to share information and give and get help from those whom they know and trust. Plus, rural people are used to seeing what others do and adapting this by trial and error. They learn tacitly – by doing – which is what the farmer field schools encourage them to do.

Want to know more?

http://www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/features/StoriesGlobal/Nepal_-_Building_a_Better_Life_through_Education_and_Agriculture.cfm

Background Paper For The World Development Report 2008: Agricultural Advisory Services. Jock R. Anderson
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2008/Resources/2795087-1191427986785/Anderson_AdvisoryServices.pdf

Investing in farmers: The impacts of farmer field schools in relation to integrated pest management. H. van den Berg and J. Jiggings, 2007. World Development 35 (4): 663-686.
http://www.infobridge.org/ffsnet/output_view.asp?outputID=3497

Voices from the Field help the media understand export horticulture

Where	Kenya
Scale	Country-wide
Objective	Influence policy and boost horticulture exports
Target audiences	Kenyan journalists, farmers, exporters, NGOs, policymakers, the media, advisors, government agencies
Channels	Workshops, field visits, articles in Kenyan media
Timeframe	2005-2007
Budget	£81,449

Good horticulture practices boost exports. For example, farmers should keep proper records so that products can be tracked back to the farm, use chemical and farm inputs safely so that produce meets export health and safety standards, and handle products properly.

But media reports about these issues often aren't accurate. The *Voices from the Field* case studies were part of a programme of *Bridging the Gap* workshops that brought together journalists, researchers, policy makers, farmers, advisors and exporters of fresh produce to remedy this.

The case studies, researched and written by journalists, were commissioned to stimulate accurate media coverage of good agricultural practices and, by doing this, boost smallholder export horticulture. *Voices from the Field* worked to improve the accuracy of media articles on the Kenyan horticulture industry, tell stories about good agricultural practices and encourage journalists to cover issues that would speed progress in the horticulture industry.

Voices from the Field arranged field visits for journalists to see, learn about and understand what farmers needed to do to meet international standards. The journalists were then commissioned to research and write case studies, features and programmes for the Kenyan media.

Partners

WREN*media* is a specialist communications company that brings journalists and other stakeholders together to improve media coverage of agriculture and development issues in order to influence policy and secure and enhance smallholder livelihoods.

Photo: © WRENmedia

DFID invited WREN*media* to design and manage *Voices from the Field* in Kenya.

Impact

Voices from the Field improved the quality and depth of reporting in the Kenyan media on smallholder horticulture. The horticulture industry welcomed the case studies as a useful tool for training, discussion and lobbying. Voices of farmers, their achievements and ongoing challenges were brought to the fore. Print, radio and television reports since the farm visits show that journalists have a better understanding of the issues.

Want to know more?

http://www.research4development.info/projectsAndProgrammes.asp?OutputID=173328

http://www.wrenmedia.co.uk/assets/pdf/WRENmedia-btg-case-studies.pdf

RELAY – linking the media to the research community in southern and eastern Africa

The Panos London's 'RELAY: Communicating research through the media' programme, funded by DFID, links the media in southern and eastern Africa and northeast India to the research and research communication communities. Radio and print features have sparked public debate on key development issues.

Panos Southern Africa works with Southern African journalists and researchers around land and food security issues as journalists and researchers identified these as key issues. Panos Eastern Africa is working to bring research into debates on three inter-related areas – conflict, agriculture and land – to forge links between research and policy processes.
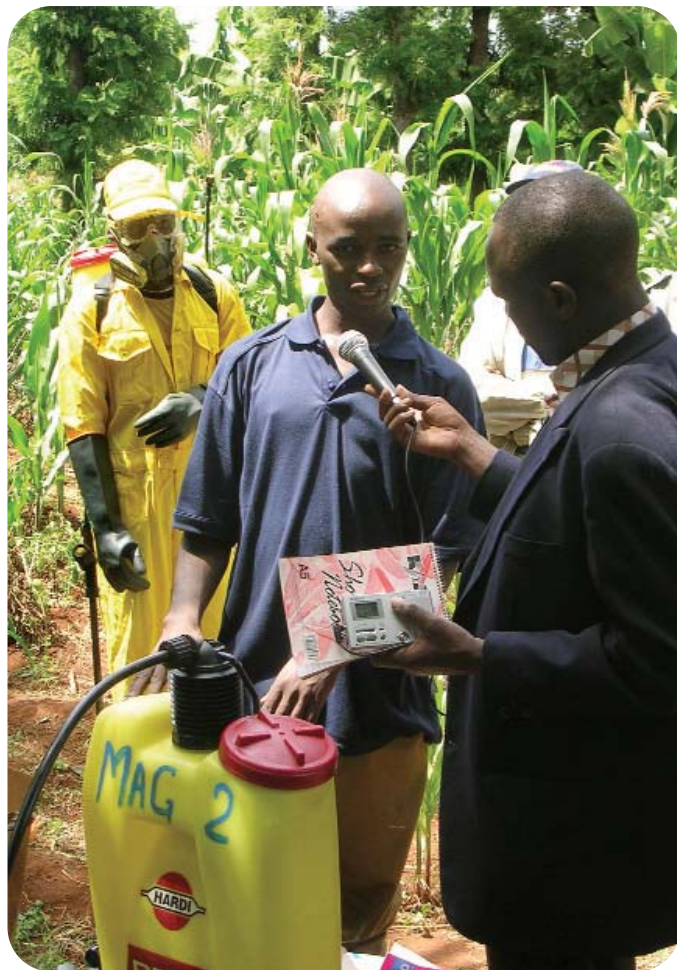http://www.panos.org.uk/relay

Photo: © WRENmedia

Wambui teaches parents through children

as an indirect way of educating their parents on improved farming practices. The 'Wambui finds out....' cartoon stories (a series of 10 in all) are an entertaining way to help children learn English and, at the same time, learn about their environment, how to look after farm animals, grow better crops and capture and utilise water – all part of the curriculum.

As children talked to childrens' parents about what they learned at school, parents learned too. With the children as intermediaries, households learned how to keep livestock healthy and productive even though they were beyond the reach of extension services.

Comment

Households could save 1,000 Kenya shillings a year if they de-wormed their cattle correctly. If only 2% of farmers did this the cost of the booklets would break even. At higher rates of uptake, the investment rapidly becomes extremely beneficial and, if a third of the farmers did so, the national saving could be £1 million a year.

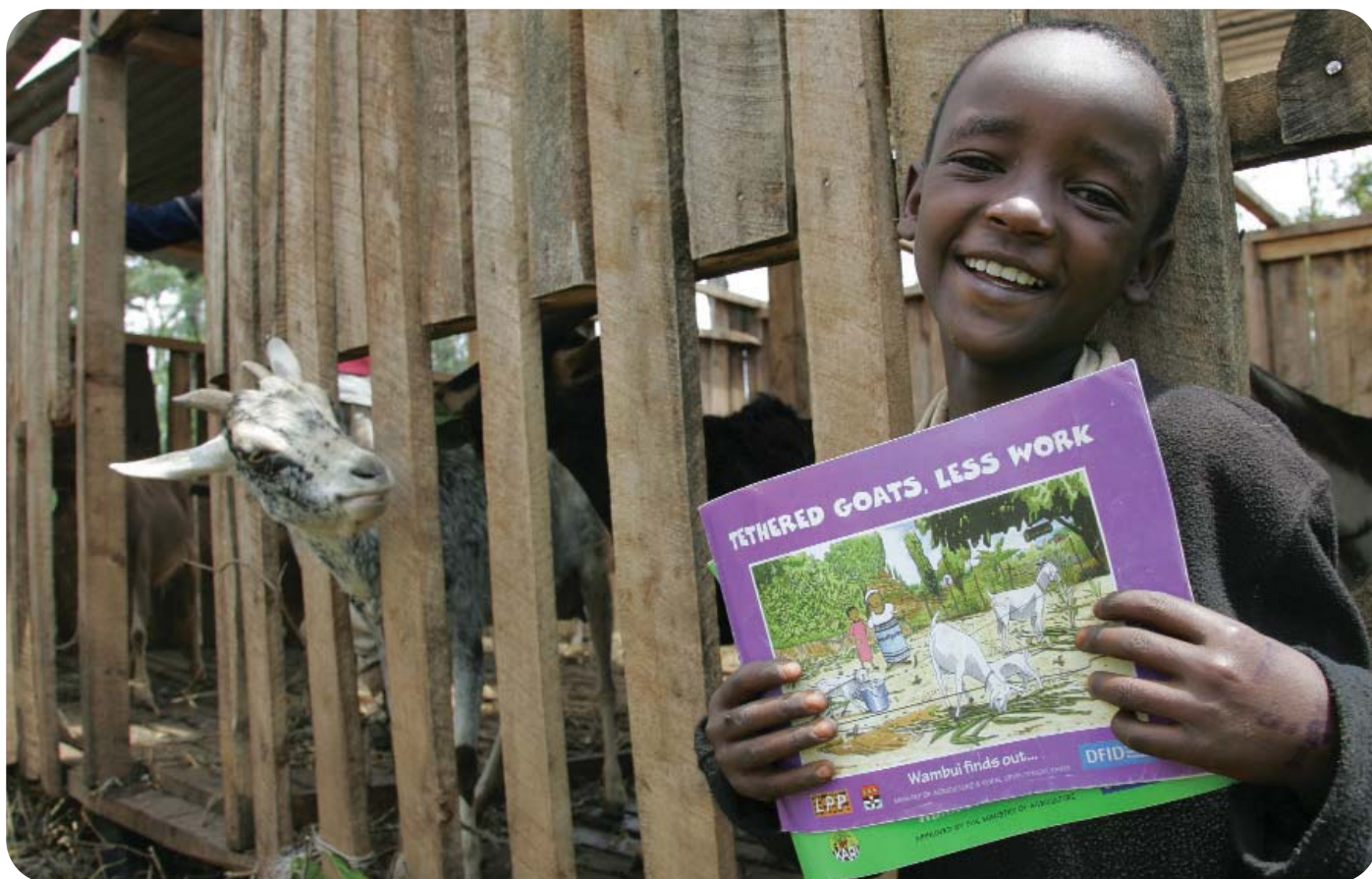*The 'Wambui' Project Final Technical Report* DFID Project R7425: Appropriate livestock extension March 2002 http://www.smallstock.info/research/reports/R7425/R7425-FTR.pdf

Where	Kenya
Scale	Kiambu District
Objective	Spread information on various aspects of livestock farming
Target audience	Livestock farmers not reached by extension services
Channel	Comic books for children
Timeframe	Project ended 2002

A series of pen and ink cartoon books featuring Wambui, a young primary school girl learning about various aspects of livestock keeping, were produced and delivered through schools and churches in Kenya

Photo: © S. Mann

Channels

Forty-eight thousand cartoon booklets (ten different titles) were delivered to rural communities through primary schools, churches, women's groups and government extension services.

The books delivered to schools took advantage of the fact that children are a captive audience for messages presented as part of the curriculum and often relay what they have learned to their parents. Children can be intermediaries for conveying information to their parents as well as learning useful skills for their own future.

Success factors

The books entertain as well as educate. Children relate to the cartoon character Wambui and, when they understand the information and see that it is relevant at home, often tell their parents. If the parents think the information may be useful then they may act on it.

The books were sent out through trusted channels of communication. Churches in particular were highly successful in rapidly reaching rural communities.

Impact

Surveys in school catchment areas determined how much parents and children knew about watering and de-worming livestock before and after the booklet was distributed.

The surveys showed that the percentage of parents who answered a question about watering correctly went from 0% before distribution of the booklet to 10% afterwards. But the survey found that parents didn't know any more about de-worming after the distribution as compared to before.

Around half the children answered the question about watering correctly but only 10% gave the right answer to the question about de-worming.

This shows that although the message about watering was getting through, the message about de-worming was not understood to the same extent. Perhaps the cartoon story did not present the information on de-worming as clearly as the information on watering.

Primary schools and churches are trusted sources of information but are not used as much as they could be. Churches are particularly effective in rapidly spreading messages but, unlike schools, they are not usually seen as channels for spreading technical knowledge.

Rainwater harvesting transfers from country to country

Where ——————— From Tanzania to Nigeria
Scale ——————— Country to country
Objective ——————— Out-scale rainwater harvesting from Tanzania to Nigeria
Target audience ——— Researchers in Nigeria
Channels ——————— Face-to-face advocacy coupled with demonstration
Timeframe ——————— 2004-2005
Budget ——————— £47,000

Because rainwater harvesting is not a simple neat package, just promoting it is not enough. This means the best way of getting it adopted is to let people see for themselves how it works. Then they can think about whether or not it would work for them and what they might need to do to adapt it to their own particular circumstances.

This short project sought to find out the best way to do this to out-scale rainwater harvesting from Tanzania, where it is widespread, to Nigeria where there's a lot of interest in it. To do this, it was arranged for a lead Nigerian researcher to visit Tanzania to get a feel for the context in which the rainwater research findings might be applied.

The Tanzanians explained and showed the Nigerian what they did to get rainwater harvesting adopted given the particular policies, attitudes, economic barriers and practices in Tanzania. They showed how they adapted rainwater harvesting research findings and helped extension workers understand how farmers would benefit so that they, in turn, could help farmers understand and put the findings into practice.

The Nigerian researcher then fed back what he had learned in these face-to-face 'show and tell' interactive sessions to partner organisations back home.

Partner

The School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, University of Newcastle, led this project.

Success factors

Recent work in Africa has shown the value of face-to-face interaction. When researchers visit researchers in other countries to familiarise themselves with the context and work there, this makes for a different kind of learning to that from attending conferences and reading journal articles.

By discussing rainwater harvesting practices with different groups, the Nigerian understood the political, social and economic context in which the research had taken place and the findings had been adopted. Plus, he learned about the constraints faced by farmers in Tanzania and how the potential for adopting rainwater harvesting research findings was evaluated.

Comment

"… advocacy alone will not bring about successful transfer of RWH messages from Tanzania to a new target country. There is a need for advocacy to be supported by demonstration and training activities."

R8390 *Needs assessment and uptake promotion of RWH research in Nigeria.* Project description
http://www.nrsp.org/database/documents/2847.pdf

Another important factor was that although the agricultural support services in Nigeria were willing to promote rainwater harvesting they knew that they did not have the skills and knowledge to do so effectively. So they wanted to learn from others. But, success in out-scaling a new technology in one country is not in itself enough for other places to adapt and take up the technology. It may make an excellent starting point for a second country but the political, social and economic context and the skills of those driving out-scaling are other factors that influence what actually happens.

Want to know more?

Needs assessment and uptake promotion of RWH research in Nigeria. Final Technical Report of project R8390. **2006. J. Gowing. Newcastle: School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, University of Newcastle.**
http://www.nrsp.org/database/documents/2847.pdf

Face-to-face communication helped spread rainwater harvesting techniques – which benefit small-scale farmers who grow maize
Photo: © Scriptoria Communications

Resources

Publications

A Field Guide to Designing a Health Communication Strategy - A Resource for Health Communication Professionals. 2003. Population Communication Services, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs, USA. http://www.jhuccp.org/pubs/fg/

Agriculture, Natural Resources and Livelihoods Policy - The Evidence Based Need for Good Communication. P Norrish (Gamos), S Batchelor (Gamos), C Garforth (University of Reading). http://www.dcern.org/portal/documents/AgricultureSummaryPaper.pdf

Communication for Development: A Medium for Innovation in Natural Resource Management. 2004. Ricardo Ramírez and Wendy Quarry. FAO and IDRC. ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/ad661E/ad661E00.pdf

Communication for Empowerment: Developing Media Strategies in Support of Vulnerable Groups. Practical Guidance Note. UNDP. http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs06/Communicationforempowermentfinal.pdf

Community Telecenters: Enabling Lifelong Learning. Mary Fontaine. http://www.ictinedtoolkit.org/usere/library/tech_for_ed_chapters/12.pdf

How to Design and Produce a Radio Serial Drama for Social Development: A Program Manager's Guide. 1998. Population Communication Services, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs, USA. http://www.jhuccp.org/pubs/fg/

Inventory of Innovative Farmer Advisory Services using ICTs. 2009. Prepared for the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa by Mucemi Gakuru, Kristen Winters and Francois Stepman. http://www.fara-africa.org/media/uploads/File/NSF2/RAILS/Innovative_Farmer_Advisory_Systems.pdf

Social Impact of Drama for Development: Understanding the Relationship between Audience Research, Dramatic Elements and Evidence of Impact. 2008. DVD. BBC World Service Trust.

The Field Guide to Photography. 2008. Produced for the Research Into Use programme by Scriptoria Communications. http://researchintouse.com/downloads/Photoguide_RIU.pdf.

What Works: ITC's E-Choupal and Profitable Rural Transformation Web-Based Information and Procurement Tools for Indian Farmers. 2003. University of Michigan. http://www.digitaldividend.org/pdf/echoupal_case.pdf

Internet resources

African Farm Radio Research Initiative (AFRRI) An initiative that gathers, implements, evaluates, and shares best practices for using radio-based communication strategies to enhance food security in rural Africa. http://www.farmradio.org/english/partners/afrri/

The Communication Initiative Network A partnership of development organisations supporting improvements in communications for positive international development. The website is comprehensive with resources, links, information, updates and much more on communication for development. http://www.comminit.com

DCERN Impact of Communication in Development A portal that considers five key sectors and suggests ways in which incorporating good communication practice can enhance development outcomes. http://www.dcern.org/

ICT4D ICT for Development ICT4D Collective at Royal Holloway, University of London focuses on appropriate and sustainable use of ICT for development. The website has resources and information about ICT4D topics and projects. http://www.ict4d.org.uk/

Mobiles in-a-box from the Tactical Technology Collective is a collection of tools, tactics, how-to guides and case studies designed to help advocacy and activist organisations use mobile technology in their work. Mobiles in-a-box is designed to inspire you, to present possibilities for the use of mobile telephony in your work and to introduce you to some tools which may help you. After reading the material in this toolkit you can expect to be able to design and implement a mobile advocacy strategy for your organisation. http://mobiles.tacticaltech.org/

Nokia Life Tools, to be launched in 2009, will have reliable and comprehensive agriculture information delivered regularly to mobiles. Information on weather, agricultural tips and techniques and market prices will be delivered according to cropping cycles. http://www.nokia.com/NOKIA_COM_1/Microsites/Entry_Event/phones/Nokia_Life_Tools_datasheet.pdf

Panos London works with journalists in developing countries to produce news, features and analysis about the most critical global issues of today. http://www.panos.org.uk/

R4D Research for Development (DFID)
http://www.research4development.info/ R4D is an on-line
database containing information about research programmes
supported by DFID – news, case studies and details of
current and past research in over 20,000 project and
document records.

RAIN A network of agricultural information organisations and
professionals in ten countries in Eastern and Central Africa
working to enhance use of information for regional agricultural
research and development. http://www.asareca.org/rain

Research Into Use http://www.researchintouse.com/ The
website of the DFID Research Into Use Programme. Includes a
database of ten years of Renewable Natural Resources
Research Strategy outputs: technologies, processes and
policies designed to enable poor people to better manage their
natural resources
http://www.researchintouse.com/index.php?section=16

scidev.net News, views and information about science,
technology and the developing world. http://www.scidev.net

Scriptoria Communications The website of the company
that researched and wrote this book for RIU regularly puts up
new resources on its blog http://www.scriptoria-blog.co.uk

The Acacia Initiative An international programme working
with sub-Saharan communities to apply information and
communication technologies to social and economic
development. http://www.idrc.ca/acacia/

The BBC World Service Trust
http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Online communications toolkit
http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/CTK/defaul
t.aspx