



ON AIR
DIALOGUES

LISTENING TO RURAL PEOPLE 2021

The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit was designed to create a path towards transforming the global food system. Small-scale farmers and rural people must play an essential role in doing just that. They are the backbone of the global food system, experts in their fields, and experienced in finding creative solutions.

Over the course of three weeks in June 2021, Farm Radio International asked farmers in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda how food systems should be changed to meet their needs and the needs of their communities. Nearly 3,500 people responded to the call, sharing their perspectives, concerns, and solutions to develop a healthier, more sustainable and equitable future for food systems.

This research was conducted in collaboration with and with funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Vision Canada with support from Global Affairs Canada through the ENRICH program, and the Canadian Food Security Policy Group ahead of the 2021 United Nations Food System Summit.

AMPLIFYING RURAL VOICES

Small-scale farmers are the backbone of the global food system. From farm to table, these individuals feed their countries and communities, contribute to local and international economies, and preserve the local environment. From fishermen and pastoralists to marketers and processors, small-scale farmers and other rural people are central to the food system and dependent upon it. Each has the knowledge and experience to transform the food system in positive ways — if they have a seat at the table!

Small-scale farmers' experiences are diverse and varied. If we want to transform the food system to meet the needs of farmers, processors, marketers, and others, we must listen to all kinds of voices — especially those underrepresented in decision-making, such as women and youth. By engaging people throughout the food system, we can help create policy change and drive local solutions.

Small-scale farmers need to speak for themselves. Inclusive and accessible communication platforms that enable farmers to express themselves are much needed but too often missing. When farmers' voices and perspectives are amplified, we can base decisions, policies, and programs on what people really need and want. Learning from farmers' vast knowledge and experience can bring the world one step closer to food systems which support healthy diets, and are equitable, sustainable, and productive for all.

Farmers and rural people have a lot to say. As nations, organizations, and individuals, we all must commit to listening and taking action together.

WHAT WERE THE ON AIR DIALOGUES?

In partnership with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Vision Canada, and the Food Security Policy Group, Farm Radio International gathered thousands of small-scale farmers' and other rural peoples' perspectives on how to create equitable, sustainable, and productive food systems. The goal: to bring farmers' voices to the global conversation about food systems to speak for themselves.

We worked with six stations in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda to create 18 original episodes of radio programming, complete with mobile phone based listener polling. On air, broadcasters invited local experts, farmers, and guests to speak their mind and share their knowledge. Off air, we engaged listeners to join in the discussion with their own thoughts. We wanted to know: Which issues impact farmers most? How do barriers and opportunities play out differently for female and male farmers? What is the future of food systems? And what needs to happen to make life better for farming families?

THE 2021 UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT

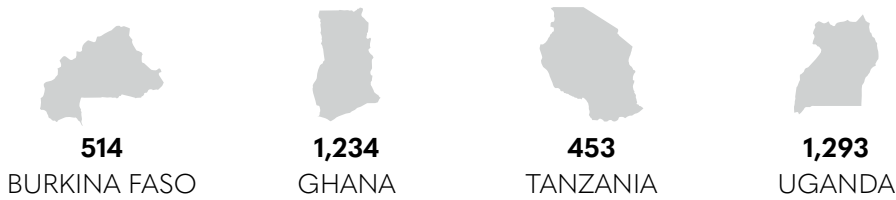
Convened in 2021 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the UN Food Systems Summit brings together global actors from across sectors to engage in dialogue on all aspects of food systems. The Summit aims to create tangible, positive food system transformation as a means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“ The Summit will only be effective at setting out the pathway to 2030 if we successfully leverage the collective knowledge and experience of the broadest possible cross-section of the population.

UN Special Envoy Dr. Agnes Kalibata

WE ASKED, WHO ANSWERED

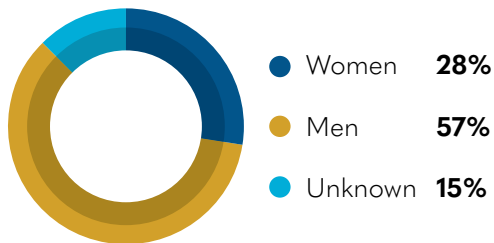
WHO ANSWERED?



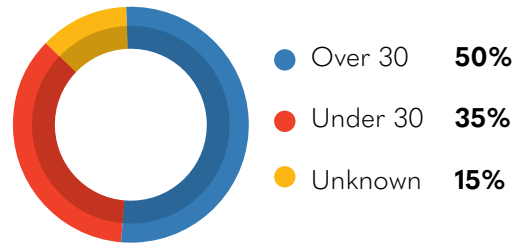
6 LANGUAGES:

Dioula, Ewe, Luganda, Nuni, Swahili, and Twi.

GENDER








AGE



* It is essential that the opinions of women are heard. The On Air Dialogues took steps to encourage and promote the participation of women, which resulted in a significantly higher rate of engagement for women than is typical for self-initiated surveys.

HOW IT WORKED: LISTENER POLLING

Each episode of the On Air Dialogues posed a series of questions to listeners.

-  As advertised on the radio program, listeners can use any mobile phone to leave a missed call (or “beep”) on a number advertised on the radio program. The call ends.
-  Uliza, Farm Radio’s polling tool, returns the call, free of charge.
-  Uliza presents the caller with a series of multiple-choice questions. Callers respond by pressing numbers on the keypad.
-  Uliza presents the caller with an open-ended question. Callers record a voice message in response.
-  Responses to multiple-choice questions are analyzed and disaggregated to shed light on key themes by country, age, and gender. Voice messages are similarly analyzed and documented.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4

COUNTRIES

6

RADIO STATIONS

3

EPISODES PER STATION

3,494

TOTAL CALLERS

11,854

TOTAL RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

2,648

AUDIO MESSAGES LEFT



WHY RADIO

Radio can reach the most remote, rural, and vulnerable communities in sub-Saharan Africa — places where literacy is low and the internet is too expensive to access. Broadcast in local languages, radio is an inexpensive and convenient way to reach communities that might not otherwise be reached.

Combined with mobile phones, radio becomes a powerful tool for dialogue and engagement.



ULIZA

Swahili for “ask,” Farm Radio International first developed Uliza as a tool for polling radio audiences. It has since evolved into a suite of digital services that combine radio, mobile phones and Interactive Voice Response systems to enable listeners to communicate and exchange information with a radio station quickly, easily and free of charge. When combined with interactive radio programming, Uliza is a powerful tool for farmers to join important conversations.



WHAT WE HEARD

Farmers have a lot to say. Over the course of three weeks in June 2021, respondents called in, telling us their concerns, their worries for the future, but also looking constructively to the future. What struck us was this: farmers and other rural people have so much to add, and so many solutions to offer. There was an incredible diversity of opinion in the responses we received.

THE FUTURE OF FARMING

When it comes to food systems, it all begins on the farm. Respondents predicted a future in farming for their children. Only one in nine felt today's youth should choose another occupation. However, over a third of respondents felt that changes would be necessary to enable the next generation of farmers to succeed. One in four people believed that young people will farm but will need to earn money from other sources as well.

CLIMATE

Climate change is increasingly affecting small-scale farmers. Still, communities told us they had hope and plans for the future. When we asked, over 90% of people felt there was something they could do in their community to cope with climate change. Most people said that protecting the natural environment would help them to best cope with climate change.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF FARMING FAMILIES

Farmers told us over and over again that access to loans and credit, inputs, better markets, and more information would make a difference in their lives. They requested better training on topics ranging from compost and irrigation to business management and soil fertility. When asked what would bring them the most success as a farmer, callers — women especially — emphasized the need for access to loans, credit, and financial support as most important.

FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION

It should come as no surprise that small-scale farmers and other rural people are concerned about the safety and quality of the food they grow and eat. Almost 75% of respondents said they worry about the safety and quality of the food their families eat either because of illness due to poor hygiene, or nutritionally inadequate diets. Many people noted specific concerns about the effects of chemical pesticides and fertilizers on the safety of food. Some emphasized the benefits of agroecological approaches to farming, and of the benefits of basing food production around local farming systems. Many spoke of the need for better access to farming inputs.

DIFFERENCES OF GENDER AND AGE

Both gender and age played an important role in callers' responses. As compared to men, women were more concerned about household nutritional intake, were more likely to consider loans and credit as key to farming success, and relied more strongly on informal networks such as friends and neighbours for information. And while young men were most pessimistic about the future of youth in farming, older women were most optimistic, with more than one in three confident that today's children will succeed in farming.

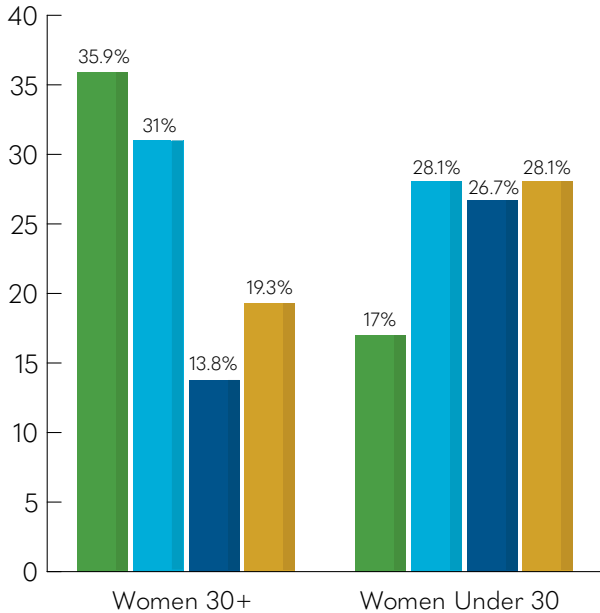
To learn more about our results, visit our webpage or download the full report at dialogues.farmradio.org.

WEEK 1

ENSURING ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR ALL

QUESTION 1:

IF YOU THINK ABOUT THE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF THE FOOD YOUR FAMILY EATS, ARE YOU MOST WORRIED THAT:



28.2% IT MIGHT CAUSE ILLNESS DUE TO POOR FOOD HYGIENE PRACTICES

Age made a difference

36% of women over 30 chose hygiene

17% of women under 30 did the same

- Illness due to poor hygiene practices
- Range of available foods doesn't have nutrients
- Might contain harmful chemicals
- My family already eats safe and nutritious food

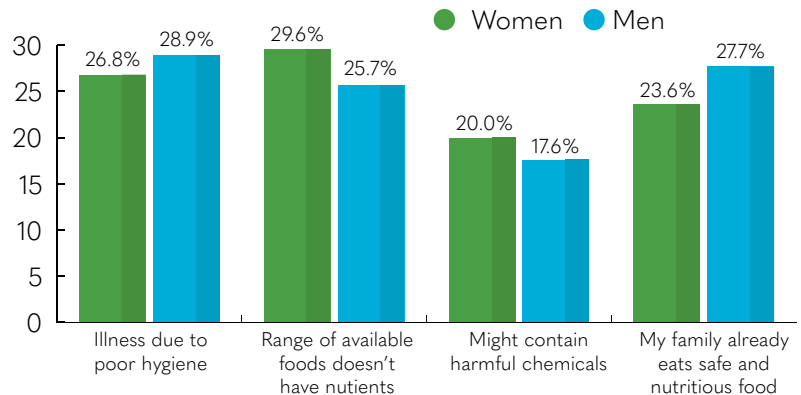
27%

THE RANGE OF AVAILABLE FOODS DOESN'T HAVE ALL THE NUTRIENTS NEEDED FOR GOOD HEALTH

Answers differed by gender

30% of women worried about nutrients

26% of men worried about nutrients



18.4%

IT MIGHT CONTAIN HARMFUL CHEMICALS

“ People should stop heavy use of chemical pesticides, especially on fruits and vegetables, and engage in organic farming for safe and healthy food.

Ali Maasa, Uganda. Man under 30.

26.6%

I DON'T WORRY — THE FOOD MY FAMILY EATS IS ALREADY SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS

Men were more likely to say the food their family eats is already safe and nutritious.

28% of men said this, compared to

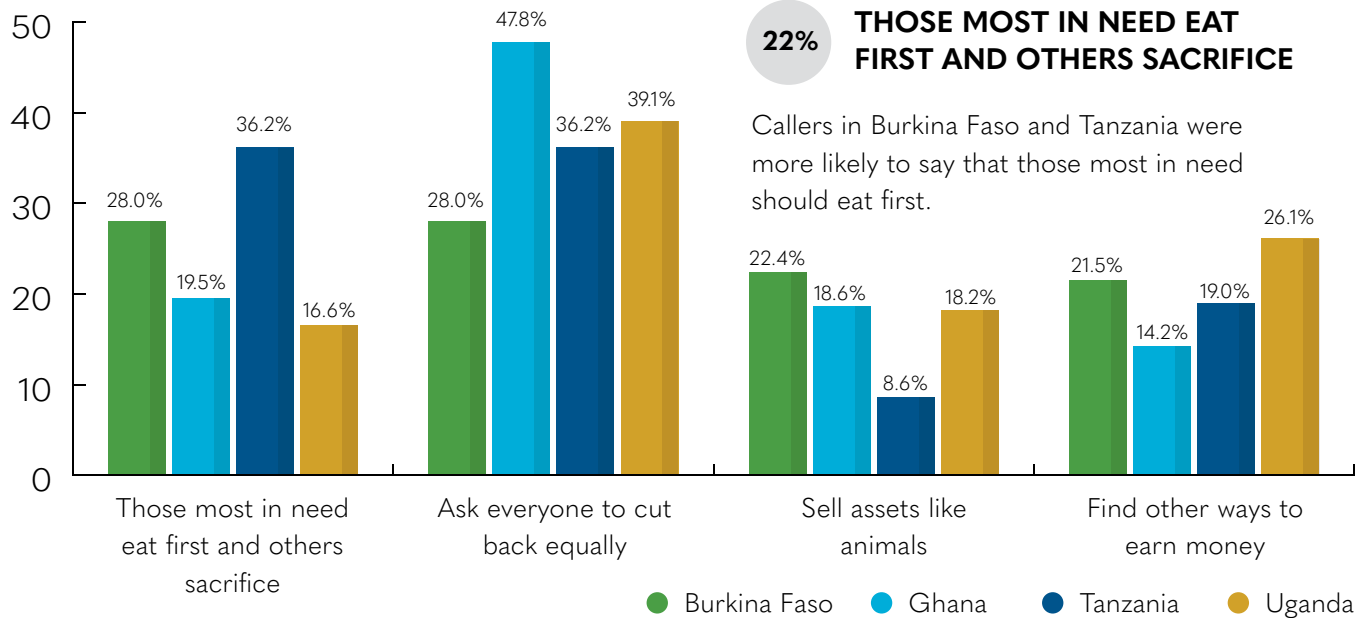
24% of women

WEEK 1

ENSURING
ACCESS TO SAFE
AND NUTRITIOUS
FOOD FOR ALL

QUESTION 2:

WHEN FOOD IS SCARCE, WHAT IS THE FIRST THING
YOUR FAMILY DOES TO COPE?



40.7% ASK EVERYONE TO CUT BACK EQUALLY

Nearly 50% of callers in Ghana chose this option, substantially higher than other countries.

17.6% SELL ASSETS LIKE ANIMALS

Callers in Tanzania were least likely to choose this option.

19.7% FIND OTHER WAYS TO EARN MONEY

“ People should produce enough food that can also be sold to earn some money which they can use to buy all other necessary items and other nutritious food for their families.

Kyombe, Uganda. Man under 30.



OPEN ENDED QUESTION:

IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE, WHAT WOULD NEED TO CHANGE SO THAT EVERYONE HAS EQUAL ACCESS TO SAFE, HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS FOOD ALL YEAR ROUND?

Four themes emerged most frequently:

MOVING AWAY FROM CHEMICAL PESTICIDES AND FERTILIZERS WAS TOP PRIORITY

“ The threat to having nutritious foods for consumption is the use of chemicals and fertilizers on our crops or farm produce. Let’s go back to organic farming as we used to years ago. Doing this will give us nutritious foods.

Portia, Ghana. Woman under 30.

FOOD HYGIENE AND SAFETY, INCLUDING PROPER HANDLING AND POST-HARVEST PRACTICES

“ The food we eat is the source of the majority of our diseases. Very often, it is not well done, the hygiene, here is what complicates things.

Unknown, Burkina Faso. Man over 30.

THE NEED FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW AND WHY TO EAT A HEALTHY DIET

“ I suggest we continue to give information to those who are involved in food activities, even to the whole community, so that we get healthy food to the entire society in Tanzania.

Bella, Tanzania. Woman over 30.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH COOPERATION, INTENSIFYING OR EXTENSIFYING EXISTING ACREAGE, AND IMPROVED PRACTICES

“ We as ladies need to work hard to produce food that our families will feed on.

Peace, Uganda. Woman under 30.

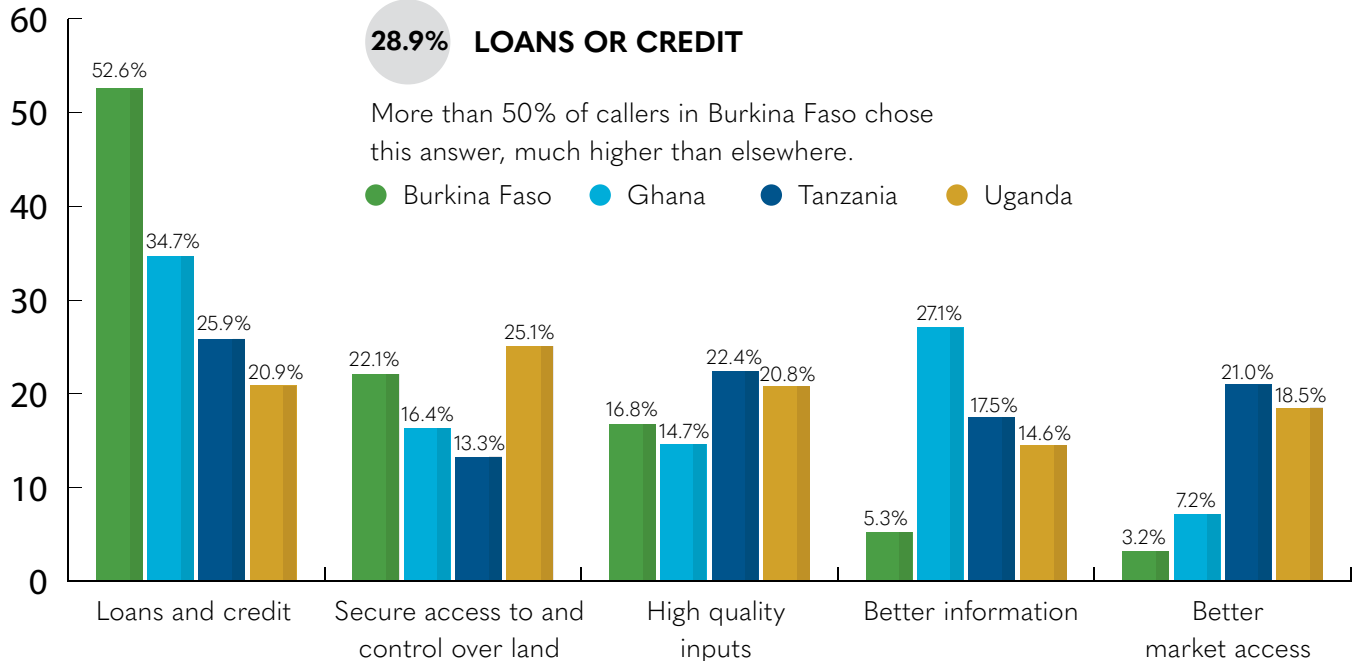


WEEK 2

ADVANCING
EQUITABLE
LIVELIHOODS

QUESTION 1:

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FIVE OPTIONS WOULD GIVE YOU THE MOST SUCCESS AS A FARMER:



20.3% SECURE ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER LAND

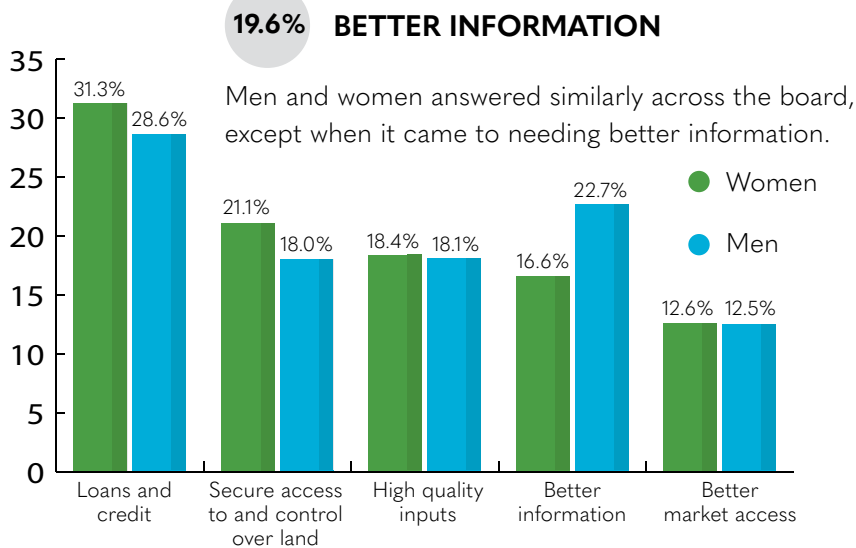


I would try to address issues of land to ensure everyone has access to land to cultivate the crops. This would help them get enough food to eat during these COVID-19 lockdowns.

Unknown, Uganda. Woman over 30.

18.1% HIGH QUALITY INPUTS

Men under 30 were more likely to think of this as most important — more so than women and older men.



13.1% BETTER MARKET ACCESS

Youth were more likely to chose this answer.

16% Youth

10% Adults

Only one in nine listeners predicted that there would be no future in farming for today's youth.



WEEK 2

ADVANCING
EQUITABLE
LIVELIHOODS

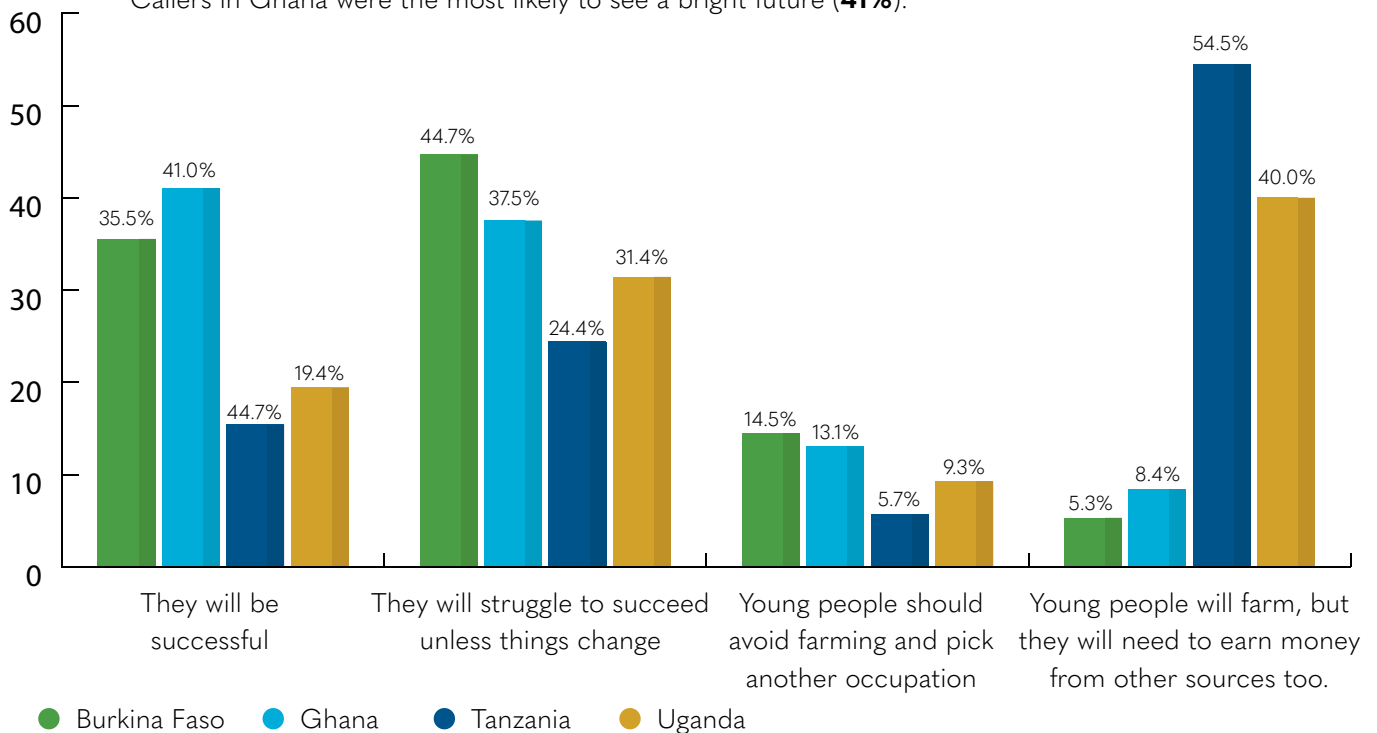
QUESTION 2:

WHAT WILL FARMING LOOK LIKE IN
THE FUTURE FOR TODAY'S CHILDREN?

29.4% THEY WILL BE SUCCESSFUL

Callers in West Africa were more likely to think their children would succeed in farming than callers in East Africa, where respondents said their children would need to earn money from other sources.

Callers in Ghana were the most likely to see a bright future (41%).



34.2% THEY WILL STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED UNLESS THINGS CHANGE

Rural people remain hopeful about the future of farming – but first things need to change.

10.9% YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD AVOID FARMING AND PICK ANOTHER OCCUPATION

Only one in nine chose this option.



25.5% YOUNG PEOPLE WILL FARM, BUT THEY WILL NEED TO EARN MONEY FROM OTHER SOURCES TOO

Youth, particularly men, were more likely to choose this response, indicating they see a more complicated future in farming.

31.6% Youth

21.1% Adults

“ If I had the means, I would train young people in farming so that they would have love for the farmers. This is what I had to say.

Drabo, Burkina Faso. Man over 30.

OPEN ENDED QUESTION:

IF YOU HAD MORE POWER TO CHANGE THINGS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR FARMING FAMILIES?

The responses varied, but had several similar themes:

ACCESS TO FARMING INPUTS SUCH AS FERTILIZERS, PESTICIDES, SEEDS, TRACTORS, AND EQUIPMENT WOULD IMPROVE THE LIVES OF FARMING FAMILIES

“ If I had the power to change things, I would make sure farmers don't find it difficult to get certified seeds and pesticides. I would also build a warehouse for farmers to keep their produce.

Atta, Ghana. Man over 30.

ACCESS TO LOANS, CREDIT AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

“ Even if you have a little money to maintain your field, farming is profitable. However, if you don't have the money, it's difficult.

Issa, Burkina Faso. Man over 30.

“ I would have loved to see women and youth forming village saving and loan associations where they can access funds for agriculture. They get loans and pay back after using.

Mugerwa, Uganda. Man under 30.

MAKING MARKETS WORK BETTER FOR FARMERS, INCLUDING IMPROVED ACCESS, HIGHER OR STANDARDIZED PRICES, AND REMOVING MIDDLEMEN

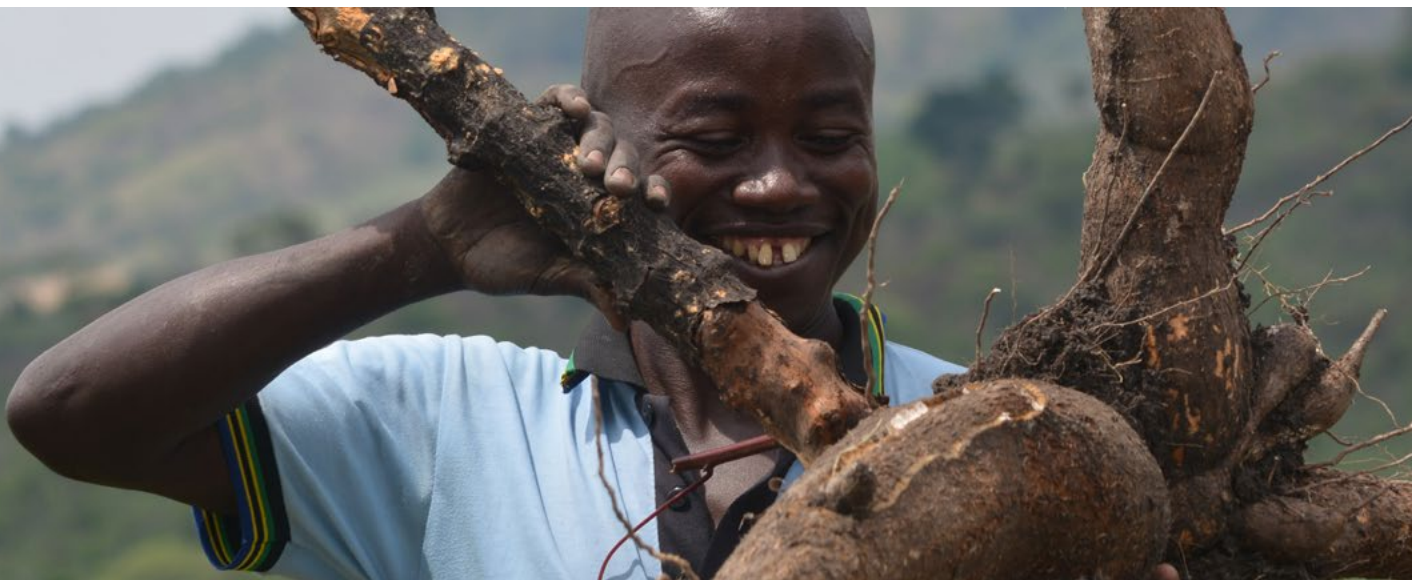
“ Our crops are bought at a very low price. The businessmen and middlemen buy our crops at their prices and not at farmers' prices.

Oscar, Tanzania. Man over 30.

THE NEED FOR MORE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

“ Farmers should be given a platform to share their views and problems so that together with the agriculture officers their issues will be resolved. Also, use that same platform to train the farmers.

Abraham, Ghana. Man over 30.

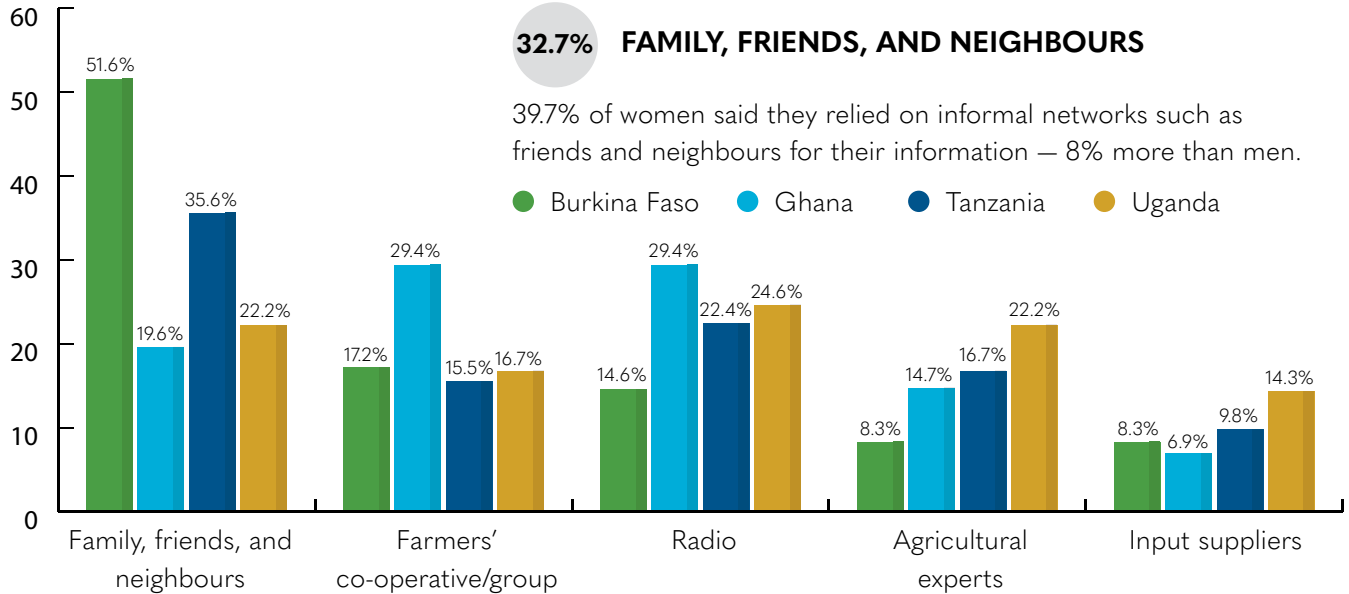


WEEK 3

BUILD RESILIENCE TO VULNERABILITIES, SHOCKS & STRESS

QUESTION 1:

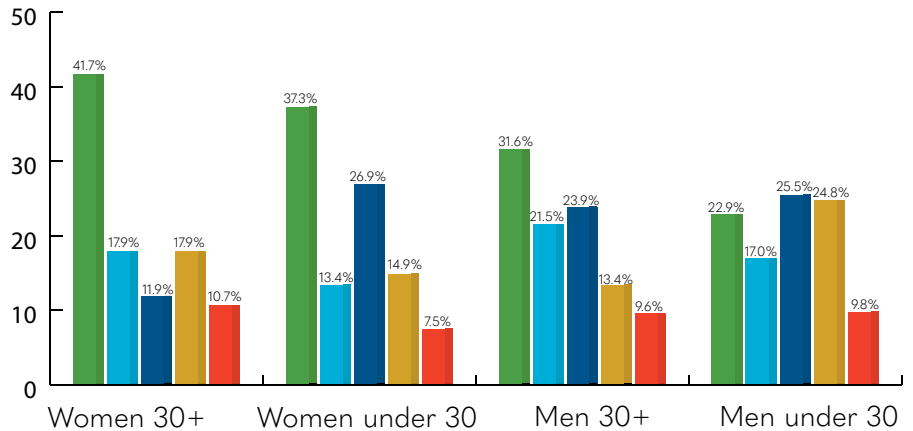
WHERE WOULD YOU TURN TO FOR INFORMATION TO HELP YOU COPE WITH FUTURE THREATS TO YOUR FAMILY AND LIVELIHOOD?



18.6% FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE/ GROUP

Younger respondents were less likely to turn to farmer groups than those aged 30+.

- Family, friends, and neighbours
- Farmers' co-operative/group
- Radio
- Agricultural experts
- Input suppliers



22.3% RADIO

Younger women were more likely to turn to radio while younger men were more likely to turn to agricultural experts.

16% AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS

Callers in Uganda said they would turn to agricultural experts more than any other country.

10.4% INPUT SUPPLIERS

Most people agreed – input suppliers were the last place they would turn to for information to cope with threats.



WEEK 3

BUILD RESILIENCE TO VULNERABILITIES, SHOCKS & STRESS

QUESTION 2:

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD HELP YOU AS A FARMER TO BEST DEAL WITH CHANGES IN THE WEATHER?

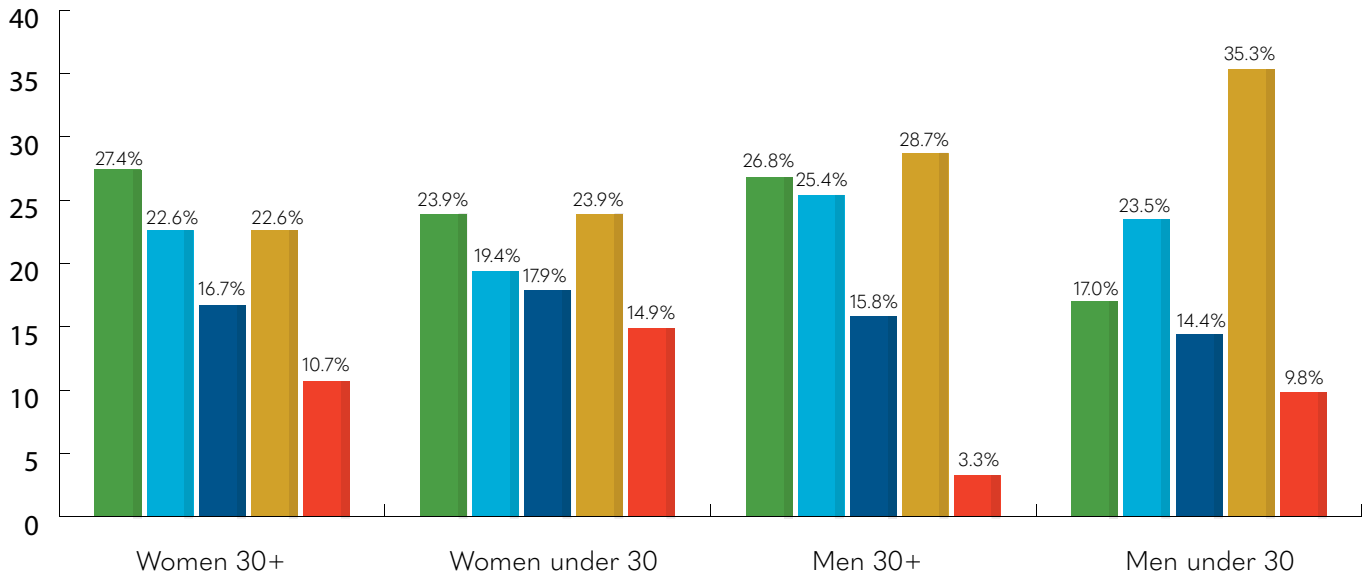
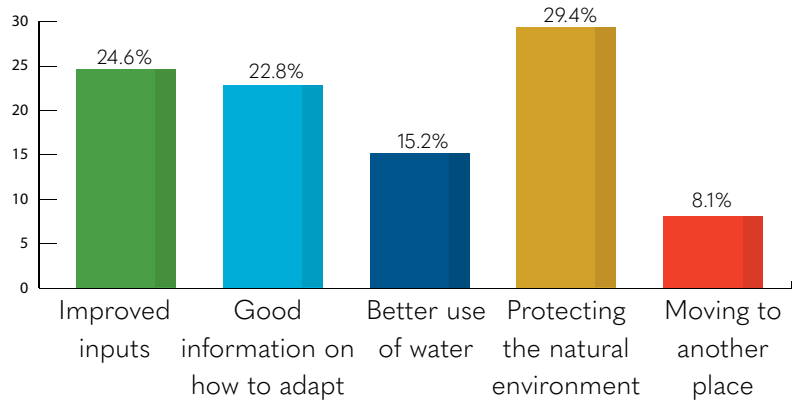
29.4% PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This was the most popular response. Farmers recognize the importance of protecting the natural environment in coping with climate change.

15.2% BETTER USE OF WATER

“ I need small scale irrigation technologies that would help get water to crops and fight drought.

Unknown Uganda. Woman over 30.



24.6% IMPROVED INPUTS

Older respondents were more likely to say that improved inputs were the best way to deal with the changing climate.

27% Women and men 30+

19% Women and men under 30

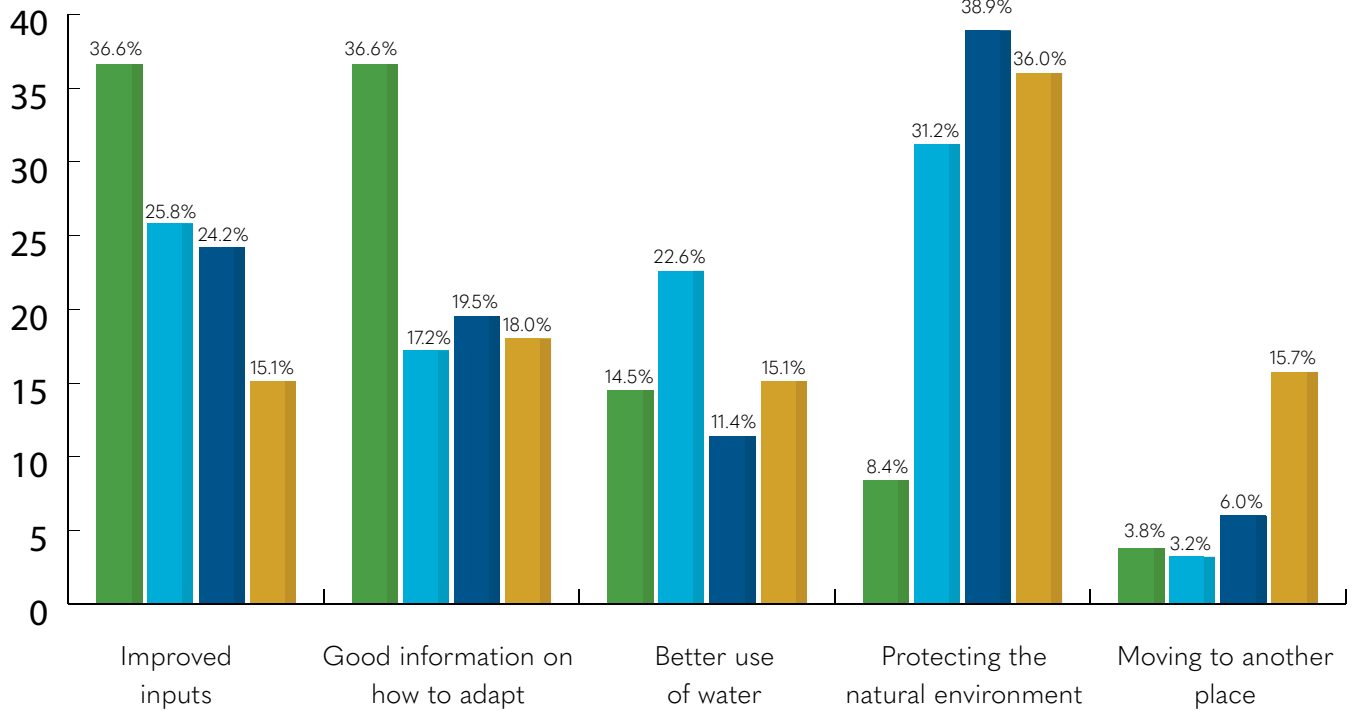
- Improved inputs
- Good information on how to adapt
- Better use of water
- Protecting the natural environment
- Moving to another place



22.8% GOOD INFORMATION ON HOW TO ADAPT

Callers in Burkina Faso were more likely than respondents in other countries to say that improved inputs or good information on how to adapt are the keys to coping with the changing climate.

● Burkina Faso ● Ghana ● Tanzania ● Uganda



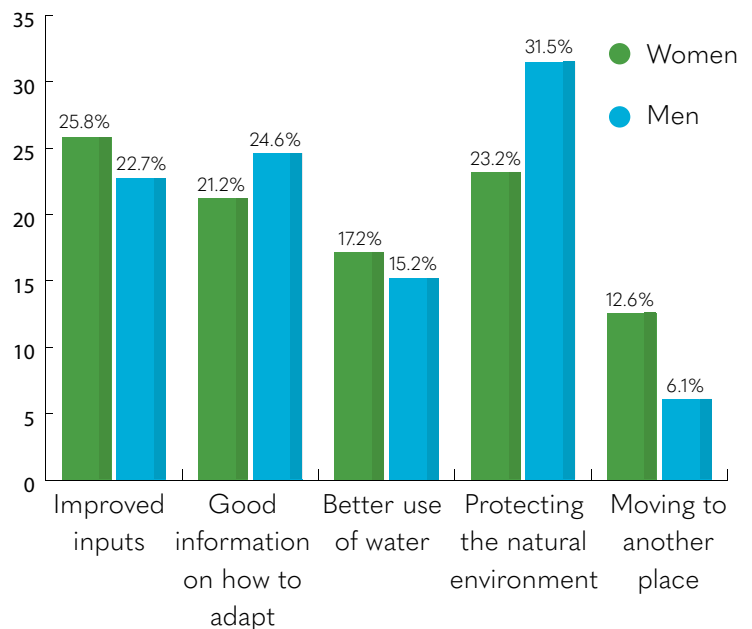
8.1% MOVING TO ANOTHER PLACE

Women were more likely than man to choose moving to another place.

Women **12.6%**

Men **6.1%**

90% of respondents felt there was something they could do in their community to cope with climate change — only 8% feared that they would have to move to another place.



OPEN ENDED QUESTION:

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST THREAT TO YOUR FAMILY EATING ENOUGH SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD?

Four themes emerged most frequently:

POOR HYGIENE AND SANITATION

“ I think, well, regarding safe food, for us what is important is dirty water. The house must be clean, the kitchen too. The person who does the cooking should also be clean. Hygiene itself is the problem here because during this rainy season the emphasis must be on hygiene.

Konaté, Burkina Faso. Male, 30+.

WEATHER-RELATED THREATS

“ To get proper nutrition I must get enough rain to plant and harvest enough food.

Paul, Tanzania. Male, 30+.

AGROCHEMICAL USE

“ The main threat I have in my family is the counterfeit or fake chemicals sold in the market. This has affected the foodstuff we buy in the market, especially vegetables and fruits. What I do now is to plant mine around the compound or backyard where I am sure I can harvest safe and healthy foodstuffs.

Naluma, Matuga-Wakiso district, Uganda. Female, 30+.

LACK OF INPUTS OR POOR-QUALITY INPUTS

“ We eat safe food. But the difficulties that exist, I will tell you. It is the scarcity of rains, and of manure. Some say fertilizers, some say manure. We miss it here. We have no help. If we can get any help, we would expand our fields. Even if you have a big field, you don't have any help, you don't have plow oxen, you don't know how to make manure, that's the difficulty.

André, Dédé, Burkina Faso. Male, 30+.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Farm Radio International would like to thank all those who made this report possible. We express deep gratitude to all the farmers and broadcasters who shared their time and information with us.

FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL

Farm Radio International is a Canadian international non-governmental organization uniquely focused on improving the lives of rural Africans through the world's most accessible communications tool, radio, in combination with ICTs. We produce radio resources that help thousands of broadcasters across sub-Saharan Africa improve their programs for farmers; run radio projects that help millions of people achieve better livelihoods and health outcomes; and craft digital innovations that feature the latest technologies to make rural radio even more powerful.

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is an international financial institution and a United Nations specialized agency based in Rome – the United Nations food and agriculture hub. IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. Since 1978, they have provided US\$23.2 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached an estimated 518 million people.

WORLD VISION CANADA

World Vision Canada is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization working to create lasting change in the lives of children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

CANADIAN FOOD SECURITY POLICY GROUP

The Canadian Food Security Policy Group is a network of Canadian development and humanitarian organizations with expertise in global food systems, and food security in the Global South. Since 1996, they have carried out joint advocacy, research and policy dialogue to ensure that Canada's international agricultural and development policies advance global food security in an inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and coherent way.





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We work in partnership with hundreds of radio stations across 37 sub-Saharan African countries and have offices in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. We also work closely with our strategic partner Farm Radio Trust in Malawi.

Together, we reach tens of millions of small-scale farmers and rural Africans with life-changing information and opportunities to have a stronger voice in their own development.

