

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

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# ACRONYMS

ADVM	Adologoont Doug on d Voung Man
ABYM	Adolescent Boys and Young Men
ACOS AGYW	Agriculture Communications Officers
	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
AVCP C4S-GAPP	Aquaculture Value Chain Project
CABI	Communication for Scaling Good Agricultural Practices
CSA	Centre for Agriculture Bioscience International
CSANET	Climate Smart Agriculture
DAECC	Civil Society Agriculture Network District Agriculture Extension Coordinating Committee
DALCC	Department of Agriculture Research Services
DAES	Department of Agriculture Extension on Services
DCCMS	Department of Agriculture Extension on Services
DCD	Department of Crops Development
DEC	District Executive Committee
DNCC	District Nutrition Coordinating Committee
EPA	Extension Planning Area
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAW	Fall Army Worm
FHL	Farm Radio Holdings
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
FRI	Farm Radio International
FRT	Farm Radio Trust
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GAP	Good Agriculture Practices
GIC	Global Program Green Innovation Centers
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFH	Integrated Homestead Farming
IHEARD	Innovation in Health Rights Development
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
IWCARP	Interactive Weather and Climate Change Adaptation Radio Programming
KAP	Knowledge Attitude and Practices
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MACOP	Malawi Agriculture Content Portal
MAFAAS	Malawi Forum for Agriculture and Advisory Services
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MONREM	Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUST NACDC	MUST Malawi University of Science and Technology
NGO	National Agricultural Content Development Committee Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
OFSP	Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes
OSISA	Open Society Institute of Southern Africa
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
RLGS	Radio Listening Groups
SBCC	Social and Behavior Change
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
SRIEED II	Scaling up Radio and ICT Enhanced Extension Delivery II
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOL	Voice of Livingstonia

# **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

#### INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTS)

These include any communication device or application, encompassing radio, television, phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems, as well as various services and applications associated with the transmission of information. The term is interchangeably used for digital platforms and gadgets.

#### AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

Consists of all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in rural settings to assist them in developing their own technical, organizational and management skills and practices to improve their livelihoods and well-being

#### ADVISORY SERVICES

Commonly used as an alternative term for extension services. These involve a broad spectrum of market and non-market entities, and agents that are expected to provide useful technical information about new technologies that can improve the income and welfare of clients in different sectors including farmers.

Besides their conventional function of providing knowledge and health export services economic techniques, are markets, challenges, and endeavours also coping and expected and promote with on effects to the the of effects country environmentally linksmallholder climate of at COVID large. change 19, farmers sustainable on HIV/AIDS to high- and ruralpeople's production value other technology to improve agricultural productivity, agricultural advisory.

#### **EDITORIAL TEAM**

#### **EXECUTIVE EDITORS**

George Vilili Chief Executive Officer

CHIEF EDITOR Clement Shema Communications Specialist Flora Khomani Director of Programs & Policy

#### **GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Prince Kachiwanda Communication & Knowledge Management Associate



Farm Radio Trust (FRT) is a registered non-profit, non-governmental organization that exists to foster agricultural and rural development in Malawi through the use of radio and other Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

## **OUR VISION**

Information for sustainable livelihoods of farming communities.

### **OUR MISSION**

To be a centre of excellence for promoting innovative radio and ICT-based farmer advisory and extension services through capacity building, impact programming and promotion of the greater use of radio and ICTs in rural development founded on research and knowledge management.

## **OUR VALUES**

- Household Centred
- Innovations
- Multi-media approach
- Productive partnerships
- Accountability
- Responsiveness
- Loyalty and Excellence
- Efficient

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

- SD1: Increase inclusive rural development-oriented extension and advisory themes and services through innovative digital platforms.
- SD2: Upscale development and use of ICT in the delivery of rural development-oriented extension and advisory services.
- SD3: Improve ICT based research, monitoring and evaluation including knowledge management for the transformation of rural development programming
- SD4: Upscale effective communication and advocacy for policy change which promotes the development of digital programming
- SD5: Sustain efficient organisational growth and resource mobilisation.
- SD6: Develop effective and efficient organisational capacity and systems

## **MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON**



"We reiterate our commitment to providing policy direction and the necessary support to ensure that FRT delivers on its quest for creating multi digital communication pathways for sustainable social-economic development in Malawi and beyond."

2022-2023 was another exciting year, where FRT continued to reaffirm its pivotal role in contributing towards the development of the country. It was a year in which FRT upscaled the provision of rural development-oriented information through its combo of digital platforms. While agricultural information has been the niche of FRT's content, the organization also diversified content in health, climate change and gender.

As Board of Trustees, we are delighted to see that the first year of the implementation of the 2022-2027 strategic plan has commenced well. FRT has maintained leadership in the digital advisory service provision as evidenced by an increase in partnerships with development partners and the private sector. It was exciting to officially launch the first pro-agriculture radio in Malawi, a mark of the serious intention of ensuring that the farming communities have a ready platform to access information in line with Malawi 20263.

As an organization, we have maintained high standards of accountability to our donors and the communities we serve. We have expanded our partnership with the private sector in the delivery of ICT-based extension and advisory services.

As the Board of Trustees, we reiterate our commitment to providing policy direction, oversight and the necessary support to ensure that FRT delivers on its quest of creating multi-digital communication pathways for sustainable social-economic development in Malawi and beyond. We are optimistic that the efficiencies and utilization of capacities within FRT will enable optimal delivery of operational excellence in digital solutions, extension and advisory services, which will result in even better performance and value for money.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to express our deep gratitude to our key stakeholders. Our work in 2022-2023 could have been fruitless if it were not for the support that we enjoyed from the Government of Malawi, the private sector and the citizenry themselves. We remain committed to creating long-term value for all our key stakeholders every day.

We are excited about the upcoming year 2023/24 in which we shall test and upscale new platforms and solutions for digital extension to serve the farming community in accessing information and services for improved livelihoods.

Albert Changaya, PhD Board of Trustees Chairperson

### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

"Our eyes are on the lookout for more opportunities to enhance accelerated development beyond agriculture, health and crosscutting thematic areas in Malawi and beyond, as we endeavor to contribute towards achievement of local, regional and global development goals."

The year 2022-2023 has been a year that showed FRT's resilience in providing evidence-based information at the time the country experienced economic hardships exacerbated by the detrimental effects of Cyclone Freddy on lives, property and crops; prolonged dry spells and the global economic downturn.

In the just ended year, FRT Board of Trustees and Committee Members, Management and staff collaborated with Farm Radio International staff to respond to survivors of Cyclone Freddy in Phalombe district with food and other relief items. This was a timely gesture, and we will endeavour to continue to respond to such calls in future.

We have continued our commitment to serve the farming community to ensure they have relevant and accurate information to improve their livelihoods. We remained on course with our drive of increasing innovative rural development-oriented extension and advisory services in Malawi, through the first-ever pro-agriculture radio station, Mlimi Radio and 17 other partner radio stations. Additionally, we have upscaled the use of other ICT platforms such as the Mlimi hotline call centre, Mlimi Interactive Voice Response, Mlimi App, Mlimi SMS pull and push, Mlimi Video for Extension and social media. Our content has focused on good agriculture practices with an emphasis on agriculture commercialization in line with Malawi 2063. We also focused on cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, sexual reproductive health and rights in our programming.

The just-ended year marked another big milestone for FRT as the Mlimi Radio was launched on 24th March 2023 by His Excellency Mr Matthias Diependaele, who represented the Minister-President of the Government of Flanders His Excellency Mr. Jan Jambon. The function received support from the presence of the Minister of Agriculture, Hon Sam Kawale; Minister of Information and Digitalization, Hon Moses Kunkuyu; the Director General of the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, Mr. Saud Suleman; and Heads of Institutions in the public and private sectors, and development partners.

As we continue with the implementation of the 2022-2027 strategic plan, our eyes are on the lookout for more opportunities to enhance development beyond agriculture and health sectors in Malawi and Southern Africa. We endeavor to contribute towards of local, achievement regional and global development goals. FRT envisions more productive partnerships government departments, with development partners, institutions of higher learning, research institutions, CGIARs and the private sector. As FRT Management and Staff, we express gratitude to the Board of Trustees, Committee Members for their unwavering support that has continued to place this organization on its course as a leader in the provision of digital rural development extension and advisory services.

We are grateful to the line Government Ministries and Departments, development partners, NGOs and the media for working with us in our efforts to actualize information for sustainable livelihoods and development of communities. This dream could not be achieved without the strong collaboration with the farming communities in Malawi.

George Vilili Chief Executive Officer



# PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

FRT recognizes the significant contribution of information in improving the livelihoods of communities.

To achieve specific strategic objectives as outlined in its Strategic Plan (2022-26), the organization implemented various activities as outlined in its approved work plan for the period 2022/2023.

# SD1: INCLUSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED EXTENSION AND ADVISORY THEMES AND SERVICES THROUGH INNOVATIVE DIGITAL PLATFORMS



In the year under review, 2022-23, FRT continued to work on increasing availability of diversified rural development-oriented programs/broadcasts on the airwaves.

FRT worked with 17 radio stations across the country through various projects to design and broadcast various radio programs:

Name of radio program(s)	Thematic area fearured	Name of radio stations	Donor
Mbeu zovomelezeka	Seed system	ZBS, Mzati	CISANET
Tipindule ndi Ulimi	Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) & livelihoods	Lilanguka, Kasungu, Umunthu & Voice of Livingstonia (VOL) & ZBS	Government of Flanders
Tipindule ndi Ulimi wa mtedza ndi soya	Good Agriculture Practices (GAP)	Mlimi Radio & Mudziwathu radio station	IFAD
Tipindule ndi Ulimi wa Nsomba	Promoting fish farming	ZBS, Mzimba, Mudziwathu, Mzati and Chanco	GIZ
Ulimi ndi Nyengo	Ulimi ndi Nyengo	ZBS, Nyathepa, Mzati, Chivomerezi & Angaliba	WFP
Kadyedwe koyenera	Nutrition SBCC Project	ZBS, Neno FM, Yetu FM & Chivomerezi	WFP
Kalikonse Tikadziwe – spot on	Education	Dowa FM, Umunthu, MBC Radio 2	GAC

- Routinely engaged NACDC for quality assurance and improvement of content aired under different programs
- Integrated key emergency issues into radio programming. This includes cholera, framework on farmer groups and the newly approved seed Act.
- Integrated key emergency issues into radio programming. This includes cholera, the framework for farmer groups and the newly approved Seed Act.
- Mainstreamed gender and youth empowerment in all radio programs as a way of promoting inclusivity and diversity in programming.

#### **COMMUNITY & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**



In the year under review, FRT continued to ensure increased community participation in the design and implementation of ICT-based rural development-oriented programming.

FRT maintained existing ICT hubs, as well as mapped 1,330 new groups with the potential to become ICT hubs for engagement on various thematic areas as follows: 54 on SRHR, 70 on Nutrition, 217 on GAP, 100 on fish farming, 889 on GAP.

Furthermore, FRT worked to increase the involvement of youth in ICT hubs activities, and engaged youth as digital champions - Six (6) interns (3 male; 3 female) in Kasungu to support the use of ICTs in extension delivery.



## **MLIMI RADIO LAUNCH**



• The guest of honour was the Minister of the Government of Flanders, His Excellency Mr. Matthias Diependaele, and the Minister of Information and Digitalization, Hon Moses Kunkuyu cut the ribbon marking the official launch of Mlimi Radio

On 25th March 2023, FRT conducted the official launch of Mlimi Radio, Malawi's first-ever pro-agriculture and rural development radio station.

The guest of honour was the Minister of the Government of Flanders, His Excellency Mr. Matthias Diependaele, who represented the Minister-President of the Government of Flanders, His Excellency Mr. Jan Jambon, to officially inaugurate Mlimi Radio. The Minister was accompanied by the Diplomatic Representative of the Government of Flanders in Southern Africa Dr Geraldine Reymenants, the Deputy Diplomatic Representative of Flanders in Malawi Dr Sofie Geerts and the Malawian delegation also attended the function.

The function received support from the presence of two cabinet Ministers: the Minister of Agriculture, Hon Sam Kawale; and the Minister of Information and Digitalization, Hon Moses Kunkuyu. The two cabinet Ministers and officials of the Malawi Government attendance, who include including the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Dickxie Verson Kampani; and the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture responsible for Technical Services Ms Medrina Mloza Banda, demonstrated the Government's unwavering commitment to harnessing the power of communication for the dissemination of critical information to farmers, effectively bridging the knowledge gap and fostering innovation within the agricultural sector:

Other notable dignitaries who graced the occasion were the Board Chairperson of the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, Dr Stanley Khaila; the Director General, of Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, Mr Daud Suleiman; and the Board Chairperson of Farm Radio Trust, Dr. Albert Changaya and other Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors of Farm Radio Holdings, and Heads of Institutions in the public and private sectors, and development partners.



The guest of honour is accompanied to the podium by the Board Chairperson and the CEO of Farm Radio Trust



The guest of honour listened attentively with the two cabinet Ministers, the Minister of Agriculture, Hon Sam Kawale; and the Minister of Information and Digitalization, Hon Moses Kunkuyu.



The Diplomatic Representative of the Government of Flanders in Southern Africa Dr. Geraldine Reymenants, the Deputy Diplomatic Representative of Flanders in Malawi Dr Sofie Geerts and the Malawian delegation arriving at the function



Across-section of the distinguished guests to the Mlimi Radio launch

#### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: UPSCALE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF ICT IN THE Delivery of Rural Development-oriented extension and advisory services



In the year under review, FRT undertook various activities to upscale development and use of ICT in the delivery of rural development-oriented extension and advisory services.

This entailed increasing access to ICT equipment among communities to access information on sustainable livelihoods. 56 radio sets were procured and distributed to AGYW and ABYM in Ntchisi district to facilitate listening of the "Atsikana Ovaya", a Radio PLA program.

FRT also supported farmer groups/ ICT hubs with training on digital literacy. These trainings build the capacity of the farmers to use ICTs and digital platforms to access extension and other information that is key for improving their livelihoods. 74 ICT hubs in Nkhotakota, Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Mangochi and Kasungu were trained to use the radio, the call centre, the IVR platform, the SMS platform and the Mlimi app.

FRT also recruited and deployed six (6) interns as digital champions to support the delivery of extension services through digital platforms. The digital champions were equipped/ supported with tablets and deployed in six (6) EPAs in Kasungu to support digital literacy amongst the farmers/ ICT hubs. The digital champions supported the farmers from 36 ICT hubs on how they can use ICTs/ digital platforms including to access agricultural extension and information.



Informed by lessons from Kasungu, FRT plans to upscale this approach to support more farmers with digital literacy.

FRT continues to strive for enhanced user experience in accessing extension messages through its digital platforms. In the year under review, FRT worked on maintaining and upgrading its existing ICT platforms - the Mlimi Call Centre, the IVR, the SMS platform, and the Mlimi App - for improved user experience in extension delivery.

Furthermore, FRT through its highly skilled ICT team and its partnership (through an MoU) with MUST, continued to develop and manage its digital platforms to ensure their functionality and relevance in the delivery of extension.

#### SD3: IMPROVE ICT - BASED RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION INCLUDING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING



FRT Communications Specialist showcasing FRT digital platforms during the MaFAAS conference at crossroads

In the year under review, FRT continued to increase its visibility in the agriculture sector during annual and other events. FRT exhibited its digital platforms and approaches during the National Agriculture Fair held in Blantyre from the 6th to 8th October 2022, where among other things the Minister of Agriculture Hon. Robin Lowe appreciated the work that FRT is doing towards the agriculture sector development.

FRT showcased its radio programming and its digital platforms including: MACOP, Mlimi app, SMS, and Call centre. FRT also facilitated the participation of farmers who showcased the ICT hub approach and how they have benefitted from it. FRT participated in strategic meetings and events on M&E through the Malawi Association of Monitoring and Association (MAME). FRT's CEO is the president of the association and played a key role in preparations for the M&E week which took place from 15 to 16th March 2023. The theme for the M&E week was "Enhancing evaluation capacity and use of evaluation results in Malawi"

FRT, through meetings with district stakeholders, shared/ disseminated the plans and shared progress updates for the various projects as relevant, with the respective district coordination structures i.e., the DAECC, DEC in Mchinji, Ntchisi, Dowa, Lilongwe, Balaka, Mangochi, Neno, Machinga, Zomba, Blantyre, Phalombe, Chikwawa and Nsanje districts under TRADE, Nutrition SBCC IWCARP and SRIEED II projects.

an institution. FRT endeavors to As continuously learn from project implementation; and in the year facilitated review meetings, including with h digital extension champions to understand good practices and challenges faced in the delivery of extension through the use of digital platforms, as well as to inform the development of new solutions for delivery of extension and advisory.

During the year under review FRT documented best practices and lessons learnt from the implementation of the SRIEED, iHEARD SBCC Nutrition, IWCARP, AVCP, and TRADE projects. The best practices are promoted using FRT platforms and lessons learnt have been used to inform implementation of its projects.

#### SD4: EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE WHICH PROMOTES THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL PROGRAMMING



FRT and the National Planning Commission signing the memorandum of understanding

In the spirit of contributing towards a conducive policy environment, FRT through Mlimi radio established an agriculture policy program where policy issues are discussed. During the year under review, FRT through the Mlimi Radio policy program, broadcast radio programs and jingles on various government policies such as having extension workers working with only farmers that are in farmer groups; and the minimum farmgate prices. FRT through listening posts has been gathering evidence for policy engagement on sexual reproductive health among the youth through the iHEARD Project.

FRT customized policy messages for SMS, radio programs and the call centre where 376 interactions with farmers on policy issues were registered during the past year. FRT signed an MoU with the National Planning Commission to popularize the Malawi 2063. FRT through FHL has introduced a program specifically designed to raise and increase awareness about Malawi 2063 among the general populace. The program among other things unpacks what Malawi 2063 is all about.

As part of the communication strategy being finalized, FRT produced materials for the promotion of the FRT's digital platforms. Materials produced included online fliers posted on social media to promote FRT weekly radio programs under different projects on Mlimi radio and other radio stations under SRIEED II, C4S-GAPP, Nutrition SBCC, IWCARP, CISANET, IHEARD - Flagship Radio PLA programming.



FRT Program Officer with FRT Branded Materials during 18th National Agriculture Fair

FRT also produced online fliers promoting national and global events-days such as National Agriculture Fair, World Food Day, World Radio Day, Mother's Day, 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, Martyrs Day, Labor Day, Freedom Day, Father's Day, World AIDS Day, Mlimi radio launching among others.

FRT also produced branded jackets, T-shirts, Caps, banners and posters that promoted the Mlimi hotline call centre, IVR services, Mlimi mobile phone App, MACoP Fliers, Mlimi Radio, radio programming and produced annual reports.

# **OUR PROJECTS**

In 2022-2023 year, in partnership with development partners and the private sector, FRT implemented various projects in Agriculture, health and crosscutting themes.

### SCALING UP RADIO AND ICTS IN ENHANCING Extension delivery (srieed) II project



To contribute towards improved food security, nutrition, income and resilience by smallholder farmers, FRT in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture through the Department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES), is implementing the Scaling up Radio and ICTs in Enhancing Extension Delivery (SRIEED) II Project.

The project aims at increasing awareness, knowledge and skills of adult and youth male and female SHFs in agriculture extension through the provision of comprehensive information on Agriculture extension and advisory services; increasing application and adoption of disseminated technologies among men, women, male and female youths; and establishing an enabling and conducive policy environment for ICT enhanced extension and advisory services; as well as achieving a higher use of market linkages platforms by adult and youth male and female SHFs. The project targets smallholder farmers households in Mzimba, Kasungu, Nkhotakota, Lilongwe and Mangochi districts.

One of the key highlights in the year 2022/23, through the project, was the official launch of the first-ever pro-agricultural radio station, Mlimi Radio on 25th March 2023. Furthermore, the project continued disseminating agricultural extension and advisories as follows:

- F Tipindule ndi Ulimi Radio program through the following radio stations: Kasungu, Voice of Livingstonia, Mlimi Radio and ZBS;
- 2. Supporting various farmer queries through the Mlimi Hotline Call Centre;
- 3. Provision of extension 24/7 via Interactive Voice Response platform;
- 4. Provision of advisory and weather alerts through SMS Platform;
- Provision of advisory services, market and resilience information through the Mlimi App; Sharing agricultural technologies with farmers using video extension;
- 6. Maintained the provision of agriculture information/extension for use by various agricultural extension actors through the Malawi Agriculture Content Portal (MACoP).

Through the ICT hubs, the project continued to support farmers in the use of digital platforms to access extension and advisory to enhance technology adoption. The project further upscaled youth involvement in digital extension through digital champions in Kasungu.



Donor: Government of Flanders, Period: 1st August 2020 to 31st July 2025.

## INTERACTIVE WEATHER AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION RADIO PROGRAMMING (IWCARP) III PROJECT



Radio programme recording session with members of Mkundula-Nyatwa ICT hub in Magoti EPA, T/A Mbenje's area in Nsanje district

In the year under review, FRT partnered with the World Food Programme (WFP) to implement the 'Interactive Weather and Climate Adaptation Radio Programming' (IWCARP) Phase III targeting smallholder farmers' households in Balaka, Mangochi, Machinga, Zomba, Blantyre, Phalombe, Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. The project aims to reduce the vulnerability of communities affected by weather and climate-related hazards through better provision of climate services or tailored weather and climate information designed to inform the decision-making of smallholder farmers - in the context of increasing climatic risks and climate variability.

The project delivered climate services or tailored weather and climate information using digital platforms as follows:

- 1. A total of 7, 173, 000 farmers were reached through the Ulimi ndi Nyengo radio program
- 2. The call centre supported approximately 9,224 farmer queries (7,264 male, 1,960 female), based on their ecological zones/districts;
- **3**. Disseminated localised weather information to 316,244 farmers using the SMS platform;
- 4. Through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) 12,199 farmers had the opportunity to listen to pre-recorded materials on climatic information and other agricultural advisories; including on post-harvest management, radio program schedules for FRT facilitated radio programs and land preparation;
- 5. A total of 188 ICT hubs were followed up through field visits (50) and virtually through the call centre (138). Farmers in ICT hubs were supported on radio listening and use of the digital platforms to access advisories, including on climate resilience and agricultural-related issues and are encouraged to



Members of Mwayiwafika club in T/A Lundu's area in Blantyre rural, posing for a group photo at a member's household, with some of the farmer's farm produce, including PICS bags



Period: December 2021 to November 2022 Donor: World Food Programme (WFP)

## DIGITAL NUTRITION SOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AND Communication (SBCC) Project



Nutrition market and roadshow at Phalone ground, TA Chiwalo, Phalombe district

# Specifically, the project aims to raise awareness of the target group on nutrition, especially on breastfeeding, dietary diversification, adolescent nutrition, early stimulation, comprehensive feeding and Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

The project targets breastfeeding mothers, adolescent girls and women, men and youth in Zomba, Nsanje, Balaka, Chikwawa, Phalombe, Neno and refugees in the Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Dowa district.

Key highlights in the year:

- 1. Produced 28 episodes of the Kadyedwe Koyenera radio programme which were aired 28 times on Zodiak Broadcasting Station; and 56 times on Dzaleka (Yetu) FM, Chivomelezi FM and Neno FM
- 2. Aired 225 jingles on Zodiak Broadcasting Station, Dzaleka (Yetu) FM Chivomelezi FM and Neno FM that promoted messages on Breastfeeding, Six Food Groups, Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH)
- 3. 6712 households were reached with messages on Exclusive Breastfeeding, complementary feeding, maternal nutrition and health, growth monitoring promotion, Water Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH), cholera, Integrated Homestead Farming (IHF) through ICT care groups
- 4. Conducted one nutrition poll through the call centre. This poll assessed the knowledge uptake on the recommended nutrition practices that were promoted in programs that were aired on Zodiak Broadcasting Station, Chivomelezi FM, Neno FM and Dzaleka (Yetu) FM. The poll showed that communities are well knowledgeable about child care and nutrition and WASH issues. However, knowledge gaps were observed in dietary diversity
- 5. Pushed 69 292 customized nutrition SMS to targeted beneficiaries
- Conducted 7 nutrition roadshows in Dowa, Balaka, Nsanje, Neno, Chikwawa, Phalombe and Zomba districts and a total of 6, 973 people received nutrition messages on breastfeeding, dietary diversification, adolescent nutrition, early stimulation, comprehensive feeding and Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).
- 7. Registered 7284 IVR interactions on Micronutrients, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Integrated Homestead Farming (IHF) and Breastfeeding
- 8. Trained 140 ICT hubs in Dowa, Balaka, Nsanje, Neno, Chikwawa, Phalombe and Zomba districts on ICT, the Integration of ICT in nutrition response and usage of FRT's digital platforms.
- 9. Supported Dowa and Neno DNCC meetings. DNCC members were updated on the progress made by the project.



Period: April, 2022 and ended in December, 2022 Donor: World Food Programme (WFP)

## REMOTE DISSEMINATION OF AGRICULTURAL KEY MESSAGES & TRAINING THROUGH IVR, SMS AND AUDIO RECORDINGS

In the year under review, FRT partnered with VIAMO and the GIZ, to facilitate the remote dissemination of agricultural key messages and training through Interactive Voice Response (IVR), SMS and audio recordings, in ten (10) districts: Chitipa, Karonga, Mzimba, Nkhatabay, Salima, Nkhotakota, Kasungu, Chiradzulu, Thyolo, and Mulanje.

The project aimed to enhance the adoption of promoted innovations by farmers who already received face-to-face training provided by the Global Program Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector (GIAE), targeting 10,000 smallholder farmers (SHF).

FRT delivered agricultural messages promoting the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and increased income and productivity in rural areas, remotely through the use of radio. FRT designed, produced, recorded, and uploaded radio audibles/ programs on solar-powered radio sets. FRT facilitated the distribution of the solar-powered radio sets among selected Farmer organizations.



FRT team using Kobo to collect data during the radio distribution exercise



FRT in collaboration with VIAMO conducting spot-check monitoring exercises

The project successfully delivered the following:

- 1. A total of 20 radio programs/audibles were produced and uploaded into radio sets; To support the remote use/ listening of the radio program by the farmers, a radio user guide and listening schedule were developed, printed and distributed to the radio listening groups together with the radio sets.
- 2. A total of 892 Radio Listener Clubs were set up across the ten (10) districts, identified from 97 Farmer Organisations (FOs);
- 3. A total of 1, 784 farmer representatives were trained, two (2) from each Radio Listening Group, (RLG) on group dynamics and how to operate the radio sets, and use the radio schedules for listening to the radio audibles;
- 4. A total of 892 radio sets were distributed to the RLGs,
- 5. A total of 1,277 farmer contacts were mobilized (672 female and 605 male) for mobile interactions;
- Through the period, a total of 258 radio listening groups were monitored through the call centre (163), and spot check monitoring visits (95). The groups were supported on functionality of radio sets, listenership to the Audibles and radio programs, record keeping and frequency of meetings to listen to the programs;

Period: October 2021 to July 2023 Donor: VIAMO/GIZ





### COMMUNICATION 4 SCALE: GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES PROJECT (C4S-GAPP)



Farm Radio Trust (FRT) was engaged by TRADE to implement the Communication 4 Scale: Good Agricultural Practices project (C4S-GAP). Through the project, FRT upscaled the promotion of Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) in groundnuts and soya in Mchinji, Lilongwe and Ntchisi, to contribute towards improved sustainable livelihoods of rural people in Malawi.

Through the use of ICTs, FRT upscaled the promotion of GAP and Climate Smart Awareness among adult and youth male and female smallholder farmers in soyabeans and groundnuts to enhance productivity; as well as supported technology uptake, knowledge management, and learning in good agricultural practices.

The project successfully delivered the following:

- Produced 16 episodes of the 30-minute 'Tipindule ndi Soya komanso Mtedza' radio program, which were aired on ZBS, Mlimi Radio and Mudziwathu Community Radio Station; FRT also produced and aired related promos (3) and jingles (3); the promos were aired 225 times, while the jingles were aired 110 times.
- Provided real-time extension on demand through the call centre, supported a total of 1,469 farmer interactions across the country on the two value chains.
- Pushed weekly 63,635 messages/ tips through the SMS platform to farmer contacts across the three (3) targeted districts.
- 4. Enrolled farmers from Lilongwe into Mlimi App where they can access customized advisory services on the two value chains.
- 5. FRT developed, recorded and uploaded three (3) scripts on the IVR platform promoting GAP on the two value chains. Farmers accessed the messages on the IVR, which registered 1046 interactions on groundnuts and 1,212 on soybeans.



FRT's Programme Officer sensitizing members of Kanyada ICT hub about digital platforms in the project



Period: December 2022 to March 2023 Donor: TRADE Project

# **AQUACULTURE VALUE CHAIN PROJECT (AVCP)**



Farm Radio Trust used its digital extension and advisory services platforms to increase awareness among the general public in Malawi about the importance of aquaculture and good aquaculture practices in Malawi. Specifically, FRT implemented and managed the Phindu mu Ulimi wa Nsomba radio programming enhanced by call centre, IVR, SMS platforms and ICT hubs approach.

The project coverage was countrywide with specific engagement districts of Mzimba, Nkhata Bay, Rumphi, Kasungu, Mchinji, Dowa, Ntchisi, Lilongwe, Salima, Dedza, Zomba, Phalombe, Mulanje, Thyolo, Chiradzulu, Blantyre and Mwanza.

Key highlights for the period in the year:

- 1. Content design and development workshop conducted;
- 2. A promotional strategy developed;
- 3. Continued to engage five (5) radio stations Zodiak Broadcasting Cooperation (ZBS), Mzimba Community Radio, Mudzi Wathu Community Radio, Mzati Community Radio and Chanco Community Radio;
- 4. 33 radio episodes produced
- 5. 420 episodes of the radio program aired across the five (5) radio stations
- 6. 282 and 653 airings of radio promos and jingles respectively across the engaged radio stations
- 7. SMS push to 3,901 farmer contacts
- 8. 693 farmer interactions through the call centre on aquaculture systems;
- 9. Five (5) IVR scripts uploaded;
- 10. Two (2) quarterly review sessions facilitated;
- 11. Monitoring of ICT hubs conducted;
- 12. Radio program monitors identified and engaged;
- 13. Formative research conducted;
- 14. An endline evaluation was conducted.

Donor: Deutsche Gesellschaft fur International (GIZ) Period: January 2022 to December 2022.



## **INNOVATION IN HEALTH, RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT (IHEARD)**



To contribute to dismantling barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) and Adolescent Boys and Young Men (ABYM) in Malawi, FRT is implementing the iHEARD project through a consortium being led by CODE and Farm Radio International (FRI).

Specifically, the project aims at improving the SRHR of AGYW and ABYM (10-25 years) and will contribute directly to poverty reduction by improving the ability of AGYW and ABYM to make informed SRHR decisions about their lives and bodies. FRT, through the use of digital platforms, is targeting AGYW and ABYM (10-25 years) in Dowa, Lilongwe and Ntchisi districts. with accurate, age-appropriate and inclusive information on SRHR and gender-transformation.

In the period under review, the project registered some achievements, including the following:

- Produced 42 episodes of the Spot-On flagship radio program for the iHEARD project which were aired 42times on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) radio II and Mlimi radio
- 2. Rolled out the Atsikana Ovaya radio program under the PLA radio programming on Umunthu FM and Mlimi radio. Radio PLA is a radio program that has a Participatory Learning and Action approach, targeting Adolescent Girls and Young Women being piloted in Traditional Authority Nthondo in Ntchisi.
- **3**. Distributed 51 solar-powered radio sets to 51 PLA groups at Traditional Authority Nthondo, Ntchisi district.
- 4. Established and supports the Youth Advisory Committees (YAC) in Dowa, Lilongwe and Ntchisi, a governance and accountability structure that ensures active participation of AGYW and ABYM in SRHR policy debates and youth platform to voice out their concerns and priorities within SRHR policy issues and debates
- 5. Conducted the listening post, a feedback mechanism aimed at engaging radio program listeners with the ultimate aim of assessing knowledge uptake and practices on a series of SRHR topics that were aired. The post found higher SRHR knowledge uptake and observed increased demand for SRHR services by AGYW and ABYM as evidenced by increased inquiries at the call centre.

Flagship radio recording session with Chisomo youth club, Dowa



Chamsembe FLA group after receiving a solar powered radio set

Period: September 2021 to November, 2025 Donor: The Global Affairs Canada





### **OUR IMPACT**

#### **COMMUNITY ICT HUBS**



#### UP TO 1,500 COMMUNITY ICT HUBS MOBILISED AND TRAINED TO ACCESS EXTENSION MESSAGES **USING DIGITAL PLATFORMS**

#### APPROXIMATELY 45,000 FARMERS RECEIVING EXTENSION AND ADVISORY THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORMS

'Ine ndi membala wagulu lomvera wayilesi la Tigwirizane ndipo timapanga za banki mkhonde. Gulu lathu timamvera ma pulogalamu a pa wayilesi, komanso timalandira ulangizi kuchokera ku Mlimi Hotline, ndipo pano tikupanga ulimi wa mtedza komanso chimanga." (Mr. Mustapher from Tigwirizane ICT hub, Binali Village in Traditional Authority Makanjira's area, in Mangochi district.)

#### [Translation:

"I belong to Tigwirizane ICT hub, and we are involved in Village Savings and Loans. Through listening to radio programs as a group, and accessing the Mlimi Hotlines (8111 and 7111), we were motivated to venture into agricultural activities, and we identified pieces of land where we cultivated groundnuts and maize."]

From the proceeds of their farm produce, the group bought 13 does and two 2 bucks The number of goats has increased and now the group has 41 goats. The group plans to sell the goats once the numbers increase and to share the money among the group members so that each one of them can build a good house.

FRT engages farmers through the ICT Hub concept. ICT Hubs are already existing farmer groups empowered to use ICTs/ digital platforms to access extension and advisory services. Farmers in ICT hubs are trained to access, demand, practice, adopt and share information that is shared through digital platforms. FRT uses a mix of digital tools such as radio combined with other ICTs, such as mobile phones to enhance the provision and reach of extension services. Community ICT hubs act as centres of technology transfer among farming communities.

### **RADIO PROGRAMMING**

17 RADIO STATIONS ENGAGED FOR THE DELIVERY OF RURAL-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION

4 MILLION FARMERS REACHED THROUGH THE RADIO Programming



"Ndinakwanitsa kugula TV ya plasm pogwiritsa ntchito ndalama zimene ndinapedza kuchokera ku mbeu zimene ndinalima ndi kugulitsa. Ndikuthokodza Farm Radio Trust chifukwa cha ulangizi umene amatipatsa kudzera pa ma pulogalamu a ulimi pa wayilesi, amene andithandiza ine kukhala osinthika pa umoyo wanga komanso pakhomo panga," Patuma Samson, Kachere ICT hub in Mthiramanja Extension Planning Area (EPA).

Patuma Samson is a farmer from Mkuchila Village, in Group Village Head Mkuchila's area in Mangochi district. Patuma shares that through listening to FRT-facilitated radio programs, she learnt agricultural advisories on mixed farming methods. She planted groundnuts, soybeans and pigeon peas, using the Sasakawa technology, and the double row planting for the soybeans. When she sold her farm produce, she bought a TV plasma screen. She attributes this to Farm Radio Trust digital media for extension service delivery, specifically the radio programs.



FRT uses radio for mass awareness and increased reach even in hard-to-reach areas, reaching women, men and youth farmers. Production of agric. content radio programming is in three (3) languages: Chichewa, Yao and Tumbuka. Radio programming is also done through the FRT-owned Mlimi Radio, the first-ever pro-agric content radio station, which went on air in October 2022, and was launched in March 2023



### MLIMI HOTLINE - CALL CENTRE

16,855 QUERIES SUPPORTED THROUGH THE CALL CENTRE

Ndinayimba foni ku Mlimi Hotline kuti andiphunzitse kapangidwe ka feteleza wa mtundu wa Mbeya. Mbeu zanga zitangomera m'munda, ndinathira feteleza wa Mbeya kuti zikule, ndipo patadutsa sabata zitatu, ndinathiranso feteleza wa Mbeya kuti mbeu zanga zibereke. Masiku ano sindimavutikanso ndi kukwera mtengo kwa feteleza, chifukwa ndimapanga ndekha feteleza wa Mbeya." Andrew Chirwa, a farmer from Nthuluzi Village, in Traditional Authority Kapelura's area in Kasungu district,

#### [Translation:

"I learnt how to make Mbeya fertilizer through the Mimi Hotline, and since then I don't about the escalating costs of fertilizer. When maize germinated in my field, I applied the first round of Mbeya fertilizer, and then after 3 weeks I applied a second round of Mbeya fertilizer."]

Andrew learnt how to make Mbeya fertilizer through the Mimi Hotline, he has been using Mbeya fertilizer for his maize garden. He testifies that since then he has never been worried about the escalating costs of fertilizer.

Andrew learnt how to make Mbeya fertilizer through the Mimi Hotline, he has been using Mbeya fertilizer for his maize garden. He testifies that since then he has never been worried about the escalating costs of fertilizer.

The Mlimi Hotline - call centre supports various farmer queries across the country. The call centre is accessible through the Airtel toll-free line on 8111 or the TNM toll-free line on 7111 from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 5 pm; Saturdays, from 8 pm to 1:30 pm. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are amplified in radio programs to reach more farmers. The Mlimi hotline is also used for conducting polls and surveys remotely, using an outbound call facility to engage with the audience to administer a questionnaire.

#### **SMS PLATFORM**

A DATABASE OF 56,480 FARMER CONTACTS

86,846 SMS PUSHED ON AGRI-TIPS, PROMOS, WEATHER ALERTS ETC.



"Tsiku lina ndinalandira uthenga wa SMS pa foni panga, ondilangiza za ulimi wa mbeu ya mtedza. Uthengawo unandilangizanso kuti ngati ndikufuna kumva zambiri ndiyimbe foni mwaulere ku Mlimi Hotline. Ulangiziwu unandithandiza pa ulimi wa mtedza." (Chingaipe Chigalu, a farmer from Zimbawadi Village, in Traditional Authority Namkumba's area in Mangochi district)

#### [Translation:

#### "I received an SMS from Farm Radio about the benefits of the groundnut value chain. The SMS also linked me to the Mlimi Hotline. The advisories I received on how to handle the groundnut value chain helped me increase my groundnut yield."]

Mr Chigalu received an SMS from Farm Radio about the benefits of the groundnut value chain, The SMS also linked him to the Mlimi Hotline through which he also received further advisories on how to handle the groundnut value chain. He was able to harvest 140 bags of unshelled groundnuts, weighing 25kgs each, and sold them at MWK820 per kg from a three (3) acre piece of land.

FRT has a database of farmer contacts - per geographical location, gender, and value chains - used to push and pull SMS agricultural messages. FRT, through the SMS platform, pushes scheduled agricultural messages to the targeted farmers - alerts, tips and advisories.

## **CYCLONE FREDDY RESPONSE IN PHALOMBE DISTRICT**



The CEO FRT leading in the distribution of the relief items.

On 22nd May 2023, the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Programs and the Program Officer for FRT, accompanied by the Blantyre ADD Programme Manager and Communications Officer, and two (2) officials from Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA), officially handed over relief items to Cyclone Freddy survivors in Nkomera village, Sub-Traditional Authority Tamani's area in Tamani Extension Planning Area (EPA) in Phalombe district

In early March 2023, Malawi experienced one of the worst tropical cyclones on record. The devastating heavy rains and floods caused substantive damage and losses to social services, followed by the productive and infrastructure sectors. Phalombe was one of the worst hit districts by the cyclone disaster. The Malawi President, Dr. Lazarus Chakwera declared the situation a state of disaster, and the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) called for material and financial support towards the Cyclone Freddy survivors.

"When our house fell, we went to seek shelter at the camp site, but my husband and I together with the children later came back and built this temporary shelter", Ivy Rodrick, survivor of Cyclone Freddy.



Mr. George Vilili, with Ivy and her baby in front of her shelter



BLADD PM, FRT DoP and DoDMA official handing over some relief items

Members of staff from FRT and its strategic partner, Farm Radio International, mobilised resources to the tune of over MWK2 million (over US\$1,300) and purchased the following relief items: 100 blankets, 100 treated mosquito nets, and 100 packs of 15kgs maize flour bags. The relief items were distributed to a total of 100 beneficiaries (52 women and 48 men) at the camp site.

Sub TA Tamani acknowledged the support as timely, especially with the decommissioning of the designated camps, as the communities have been left to a greater part to fend for themselves.

He did point out that the communities still require this kind of support as they set out to rebuild their lives post-cyclone, after the camps had been decommissioned. Mr. Alex Mulewa, a DoDMA official, appreciated the support from FRT and FRI, adding that the donation will go a long way in assisting the cyclone survivor.

Further to this, FRT collaborated with the BLADD office to identify key messages for radio programming for building resilience of the communities/ farmers to disasters such as the one that hit the southern region districts in Malawi.



# **OUR FUNDING**



In 2022-2023, FRT continued to strengthen and diversify its resource mobilization efforts. FRT mobilized resources through implementation of various projects funded by local and international development partners and the private sector. The FRT's social enterprise arm of Farm Radio Holdings Limited continued to play a critical role in expanding FRT's clientele base through engaging the private sector for business using its various digital platforms.

During the year, FRT mobilized a total of K1,058,579,405.16 through grants and private funds, compared to K893,180,419.24 registered in the 2021-2022 year, representing a 19% increase. The total revenue generated through grants was K731,949,094.26 compared to K738,958,654.70 generated in the previous year, representing a 1% decrease of the total revenue mobilized through grants. In the year, revenue generated through private funds leaped to K326,630,311.91 from K154,221,764.54 registered in 2021-2022 financial year, representing 112% increase.



## **FUNDING/GRANTS SUMMARY**

During the year, engaged four (4)development partners, who supported various projects. These included: FRT FICA (Government of Flanders), World Food (WFP), Farm Radio Programme, International (FRI) and Center for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI).

FRT mobilized resources from the private sector institutions including: Transforming Agriculture through Diversification and Entrepreneurship (TRADE), Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), GIZ and Trocaire.



### **BUDGET ALLOCATION**



FRT core values holds transparency and accountability with highest esteem. As an organization, we have made a commitment to ourselves and our partners to be clear on how the organization handles and uses funds. The charts below provide details of how the resources have been used under operation expenditure and expenditure tied to each strategic objective.

#### OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

During the year, under operational expenditure, program delivery used the biggest chunk, accounting for 69.9% of the total expenditure, followed by personnel at 13.2%, office operations at 12.7%, travel and transportation at 2.3% and capital expenditure on 1.9%.



PROGRAM DELIVERY
PERSONNEL
TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION 
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

OFFICE OPERATING

#### **EXPENDITURE BY STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

In the year 2022-2023, Strategic Direction 1 had the biggest share of expenses at 58% of the total expenditure, owing to its nature of central to FRT digitally based products and services.

Strategic Direction 7 accounts for 17% of the expenditure, followed by Strategic Direction 2 at 12% Strategic Direction 3 at 8%, Strategic Direction 4 at 4%, and Strategic Direction 5 at 1% of the total expenditure.



# **FRT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**



Dr. Albert Changaya, Chairperson



Dr. Rachel Sibande, Trustee



Mr. Peter Salamba, Trustee



Mrs. Gavelet Mzembe, Trustee



Dr. Jerome Chimgonda Nkhoma, Trustee

#### **MEMBERS OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

#### **PROGRAMS SUB – COMMITTEE**

Mrs. Gavelet Mzembe Dr. Patricia Mayuni Dr. Jerome Nkhoma Mr. Zack Mankhambo Mrs. Driana Lwanda

#### FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SUB - COMMITTEE

Mr. Peter Salamba Mr. Paul Chirwa Mrs. Tamara Tembo Dr. Rachel Sibande Mr. Daniel Tsoka



# FRTS MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

#### SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chief Executive Officer Mr George Vilili

Director of Programs & Policy Flora Khomani Director of Finance and Administration Mercius Mbewe

#### PROGRAMS

Radio Programming Specialist Clement Shema

Resource Mobilization, Networking & Partnerships Augustine Mulomole

Programs Officers Arnold Chimtengo & Stanley Chiyaka

Program Associate Ecklina Makobidi

Communication & Knowledge Management Associate Prince Kachiwanda

Systems development Officer Allen Maneya

ICT Officers Jimmy James Phiri & Emmanuel Mtambo

#### **FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION**

Finance Officer Brenda Nkata

Accounts Assistant Edward Mathuwa

Administrative support officer Anastazia Mdoko

Drivers Douglas Masiyano Prince Imanah Christian Mwajombe

Officer Assistant Alinafe kachere



# FARM RADIO TRUST

P.O. Box 30081, lilongwe 3 +265 (0) 999 970 417 info@farmradiomw.org

www.farmradiomw.org