

*Forum on Communication for Development &*

*Community Media for Family Farming*

Rome-Italy, 23-24 Oct 2014



**REGIONAL VIRTUAL CONSULTATIONS - AFRICA**  
**Communication for Development, Community Media and ICTs**  
**for Family Farming and Rural Development**  
**FINAL REPORT**

September 17th, 2014

## **Contents**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Pre-consultation Process</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Themes and Questions</b>	<b>p. 4</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Proposed initiatives</b>	<b>p. 13</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>p. 15</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Annexes</b>	<b>p. 16</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>p. 21</b>

## 1) INTRODUCTION

The [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#) (FAO) with its mission to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition and the [World Association of Community Broadcasters](#) (AMARC) with its work on community development and participatory radio, have joined forces to launch this virtual consultation to give family farmers a voice and visibility on the global stage.

The virtual consultation is intended to prioritize a bottom up approach in Communications for Development (ComDev), to allow for knowledge sharing and dialogue among rural development actors in order to advocate for ComDev as an asset for family farming and to set up regional agendas. It happened over an [AMARC GNU Mailman mailing list](#) and a [Forum-For-Pages app on Facebook](#), enabling participants to make contributions by email and Facebook forum postings.

The consultation ran for three weeks from August 25<sup>th</sup> to September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Inputs from the African consultation will be combined with those from Latin America and Asia to inform the **Forum on Communication for Development & Community Media for Family Farming** (FCCM)—to be held at FAO's Headquarters in Rome, Italy, from October 23-24, 2014. The FCCM will amongst other things “showcase the role of Communication for development (ComDev) methods and tools as a driver for innovation and family farmers’ participation in rural development strategies<sup>1</sup>,” and start working on follow-up plans to support the engagement of family farmers in policy dialogue. These events are happening within the framework of the United Nation’s declaration of 2014 as the [International Year of Family Farming](#) (IYFF) with the goal of increasing the recognition of the potential of Family Farmers to play a major role in advancing developments in food security, environmental sustainability and socio-economic transformation in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

## 2) PRE-CONSULTATION PROCESS

Each of the three weeks of the consultation focused on a different theme; with open-ended questions posted every couple of days on both platforms to nudge the discussions. Participants were provided access to a reference document, *Cultivating Sustainable Development in the International Year of Family Farming*<sup>2</sup>, on the bases of which the theme and questions were formulated. *Cultivating Sustainable Development in the International Year of Family Farming* was a summary of an FAO-AMARC study that fused information from FAO reports, documents and field experiences, AMARC regional dialogues, and perspectives from indigenous rights movements and other social justice movements.

A 17 person team of subject matter experts was put together to serve as a resource team. They exposed participants to ComDev related insides in their fields, and made recommendations for improvements of weekly summaries of the virtual consultation if necessary. Two facilitators were identified to guide and support the discussions. They responded to logistical concerns from participants and made sure there was proper coordination and updating on both platforms. One facilitator focused on French submissions

and the other on English submissions. The facilitators were responsible for the weekly reports of the consultations and making sure the consultation achieved its goal.

Before the consultation started invitations were published on a host of web and social media platforms, and email invitations sent to several development professionals, communication and community media practitioners, civil society organizations, rural development agencies, government representatives, scholars, and private sector actors. In response we got some 291 email subscriptions on the list and 19 participants on the forum. All of the contributions on the consultation were made by people living in or working on projects in Africa. We got 74 submissions on the Facebook forum and 107 submissions on the lists.

It is worth mentioning that it was heartening to learn of the hurdles some participants went through to make their contribution to the virtual consultation; including struggling with intermittent network connection due to rolling blackouts, waiting in long lines at an internet café to get to make a submission, or making long trips to the city to get access to the Internet.

### **3) THEMES AND QUESTIONS**

#### *1. The Role of Communication for Development, Community Media and ICTs for Family Farming and Rural Development in Africa*

**-1- What are the key issues related to family farming that require communication/community media/ICT support? How does communication contribute to them in your region? Please, provide relevant examples.**

##### **1) Gender inequity**

o There is a need to focus more on gender inequity, as the issue is not currently getting the attention it deserves. It has far reaching negative socio-economic effects on most communities across Africa. Women, by a large majority, provide most of the labor for family farming but are mostly excluded from land ownership exposing them to rampant exploitation and poor compensation by landlords. ComDev can support efforts to raise awareness about the basic human rights of women, push for a change in attitudes towards women, factor women's condition in designing ComDev initiatives like in radio programming, and in the creation of judicial remedies to protect women. Proper compensation of women for their labor and providing them access to land ownership will lead most rural communities to experience an immediate jump in family incomes and the overall regional economy.

*When oil spills occur and pollute farmlands, compensation is paid to the men who hold the land titles, the women who engage in family farming are not recognized.... while engaging in this discourse, we should proffer ways on how family farming can be changed or made to improve the economic status of women, especially*

*those in rural communities (Emem Okon, Nigeria).*

*“Another challenging issue faced by these farmers especially women farmers [is] lack of access to fertile farmlands due to land grabbing in recent years by governments/development partners who take these lands for non-food crops activities.(e.g. typical of this large... farmlands of about 200 communities families were taken by the government for irrigation but now ...[is] owned by commercial farmers [;] therefore denying the smallholder families their rights) (Gurune Radio, Ghana).”*

## **2) Land grabbing**

o Land grabbing by governments and their cronies is a serious concern, and community media can be considered as a tool to educate farmers about the long term impact, how widespread the practice is, and the strategies used by other communities to resist this practice that is depriving family farmers and their communities of the vital resource of land.

## **3) Agricultural Extension and Rural Advisory services**

o There is a general need for agricultural extension services in most rural communities by family farmers and community media could go a long way to help satisfy this need.

*“For example, we see that it works well to disseminate agricultural extension messages through radio's in Mozambique. We have also experienced that often, women might not have as much time to listen to the radio as men. So we look at complimenting this approach with a call-in service to listen to pre-recorded messages. Both of these approaches are complementary to the traditional extension approach” (Espen Berg, Mozambique).*

## **4) Attracting the youth to Agriculture**

o With the majority of the population in Africa being under the age of 30 the need to factor young people into the future of family farming is very important. ComDev specialists shared some strategies used to attract young people to agriculture.

*“In IFAD specifically we are currently developing a small pilot project that looks at how games on mobile phones (feature phones used by young people in rural Africa) can be a tool to raise awareness of opportunities in the agricultural sector and help break down some of the misconceptions that youth might have of the sector.” (Espen Berg, IFAD, Mozambique).*

## **5) Youth and ICT**

o The point was made that ICTs have a big potential to provide young people employment as information service providers in their communities, increasing their profile and enriching the community at large.

*"...Mobile telephones are indispensable in the social life and interaction among rural youth. Interesting to assess how youth are using mobiles and how it related to agriculture. 2) Development actors can use mobile phones and other ICTs to attract youth to agricultural practices. 3) From the SAMWAKI experience in South Kivu, youth are indeed interested in agricultural practices. They simply need a motivating factor- ICTs can provide this! (Adeline Nsimire, SAMWAKI, DRC).*

## **6) Lack of access to Mobile Telephony network**

o Mobile telephony holds great potential for positive transformation of the lives of family farmers and rural communities, and there are advantages already being experienced in several communities. But then there are still huge stretches of Africa with no access to mobile networks. Prince Jonathan Tutsirai Kuipa from Zimbabwe detailed how Mobile agricultural platforms are used to send text and voice messages to farmers with Agronomic tips and alerts, operate weather indexed insurance, provide Mobile banking services, and used as a trading platform. Using this as an example, ComDev projects could support and push policy initiatives to expand these infrastructure so family farmers all across Africa can get the chance at some of the listed benefits above.

## **7) General lack of access to Agricultural information**

o There is a general lack of access to agricultural information; with most areas lacking Extension services. But there are some outstanding examples that could be replicated elsewhere. A School of Agriculture and Livelihoods for Youth and Adults was launched in the region of South Kivu in the DRC by the FAO with the objective of reinforcing the technical capacities of farmers through learning, observation, action, and by experimentation in their own farms. This is a complementary approach to the Community Listening Club of the local community radio. These two approaches use community radio to mobilize a vast audience. Successful experiences are shared via the radio and are the subject of discussions in the Listening Club. Experience from South Kivu illustrates that ICTs have a great potential to attract youth to farming. (SAMWAKI, DRC, Adeline Nsimire)

## **2• What current and emerging communication tools and services (including community media and new ICTs such as mobile phones, Internet, social media, etc.) are suitable, relevant or can be adapted to family farmer's priorities?**

### **1) Community radio**

o Radio, mobile telephony, ICTs (social media) and the internet are suitable to *"help farmers get information about the best practices and knowledge they need to better manage production"* (Israel Nyoh, Cameroon).

### **2) Video**

o Videos, some in local languages, can be used to share new farming techniques and information on best practices with farmers to maximize their potential. Organizations-known for producing some of these videos included [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD), the [Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation](#) (CTA) and FAO.

### **3) Visual literacy and low literacy brochures**

o Visual literacy and low literacy Brochures are popular and cheap communications tool to break through the barriers of reading and writing to get vital information to rural farmers. Low literacy writing techniques have demonstrated their effectiveness in communicating information to rural farmers for whom literacy can be a problem. Their use should be extended to other communities. Visual literacy (billboards, etc.) are the primary mass communication tool in some rural fishing communities, where the locals spend a big part of their day by the shore. Billboards would also be a suitable communications tool for family farmers in these communities.

“Low literacy brochures have been used with measurable success”. *(Charles Simbi, Malawi).*

## **II. Enabling environment & priority areas for action**

**Question 1: In your region, what should be priority areas of action for ComDev in agriculture and rural development?**

“Priority areas for action on ComDev in agriculture & rural development should begin with mapping of existing local initiatives; identifying gaps; capacity building on ICT to foster development through radio, television, [and] social media *(Ms. Emem Okon, Nigeria).*

### **1) Education, awareness creation and sensitization**

o There is a need for initiatives which focus on public awareness for ComDev in support of Family Farming, which integrate multiple communications strategies and other interfaces to mediate between the experts and lay people.

### **2) Government-civil society partnership**

- o There is a need for joint design and implementation of ComDev policies; in place of top down government ComDev initiatives, which family farmers and rural communities feel disconnected from, and only show up as curious observers.

*“There is an adage that no matter our good intentions excluding the afflicted party in seeking solutions to their problems usually ends up creating new problems for them. That is to say we need to included farmers in framing agricultural policies that will be impacting their lives” (Benoit Mazunda Mbambu, DRC).*

**3) Community-Engaged research**

- o Recommendations for community engaged research to get a true picture of the scale of ComDev resources available to family farmers, and their ComDev needs.

**4) Change Policies to ease Community access to the airwaves**

- o There is a need for access to airwaves. Community Radio is a key priority area of intervention for family farmers but the issue of licensing for community radio remains a challenge.

**5) Radio**

- o Radio is an established and recognized communication tool in most rural communities. Priority needs to be given in providing radio stations with material and human resources to produce and disseminate programs that cater for the needs of family farmers.

*Community radio is the communication tool for subsistent farmers (Adeline Nsimire, DRC).*

**6) Mobile telephone network**

- o Mobile telephones have the capacity to attract and connect technology-prone youth to agriculture, as well as modernize agriculture (South Kivu). The expansion of this infrastructure has to be accompanied by awareness campaigns on how they could be used to relay rural radio programs through podcasts (for example) or through the development of mobile applications diffusing audio programs on rural development and agriculture.

**7) Television content**

- o Television is a dominant tool of communication, compared to radio, in communities where it is accessible because of the added visual aspect. Expanding television access and developing programs to cater for the needs of rural communities and family farmers should be a priority as well.

**8) Internet access**

- o Internet access could have a dramatic effect in the improvement of the lives of family farmers and rural communities despite the high illiteracy rates and generalized poverty that would dampen the exploitation of the full potential of the Internet from the onset.

#### **10) Change of certain attitudes and practices**

- o There is a need for initiatives for Public Awareness that confront poor farming practices like slash and burnt, as well as gender discrimination and discrimination against other minorities; which are creating unnecessary and dangerous conflicts in certain Farming communities and disrupting progress.

#### **Question 2: What are the main limiting vs. enabling factors for the implementation of rural communication services and policies in the agricultural sector?**

##### **LIMITING FACTORS**

###### **i. Low literacy levels**

- o Low literacy is a serious limiting factor for family farmers as it deprives them from accessing important information that is available in written format.

*Most people now have access to mobile phones but they only use it to make calls. Some can't even send sms. I think that the literacy level of farmers has a role to play in communication development as it concerns family farming. Many family farmers own the blackberry phones but they are unaware of the facilities and opportunities such devices offer (Ms. Benedicta Chinedu, Nigeria).*

###### **ii. Generalized poverty and the general lack of tech skills**

- o Family farmers being at the bottom of the economic ladder means they cannot afford computers or spend to access the internet at cafes if they were to need information from it. Unfortunately their low tech skills means even when social centers provide free internet, most rural farmers still cannot use it by themselves.

*Most family farmers lack basic tech skills that could allow them use the internet with its wealth of information. We can't forget that to benefit the most, farmers will have to handle the technology by themselves. In addition computers and similar equipment are costly and when you add the cost of electricity this resource becomes just way too expensive for rural farmers. (AWE Baina Modest, Cameroon).*

###### **iii. Lack of infrastructure in general and mass communication infrastructure in particular**

- o There is a need to invest in expanding mobile networks access.

- o Lack of electricity, television, internet and community radio stations in most rural communities also pose a problem.

## **ENABLING FACTORS**

### **i. Youthfulness of the majority of the population**

- o With most of the rural population in several African countries below thirty the introduction of ICTs will be quickly adopted, promoted and used by this young population to the benefit of the whole community.

*With regard to the youth, communication gadgets can be an exciting attraction. These gadgets can encourage young people to stay in agriculture; this in addition to the availability of necessary inputs to production (Adeline Nsimire, DRC).*

### **ii. AMARC / FAO Virtual Consultation**

- o Regional Consultations like this AMARC/FAO virtual consultation can expose family farmers and their organizations to new and practical developments in ComDev and expand their understanding of the possibilities that are out there.

### **ii. The proliferation of Farmer's organizations**

- o The proliferation of farmer's organizations can provide a readymade interface to interact quickly with larger rural communities for the interest of farmers.

### **iii. The increase attractiveness of farming to youth**

- o Increase use of ICTs in farming serve to modernise farming and make it attractive for young people including university graduates. These young people can be an enabling force both to attract other young people as well as help their communities adopt and adapt to new ComDev tools.

## **Question 3: What steps can countries and farmer organizations take to promote rural communication policies and initiatives for family farming in the region?**

### **1) More regional networking and cooperation by farmer organization**

- o Increasing regional networking amongst farmers (farmer organizations) and to embark on region wide policy change promotion tour is recommended.

*Have exchange programme within the regions/countries where farmers can meet with other farmers from outside their region or country so as to cross fertilize ideas on emerging trend in rural communication [for] farming (Philip Slaboh, Nigeria).*

**2) Governments need to urgently invest in updating agricultural techniques especially those related to climate adaptation strategies.**

o With new technologies in this sector, some governments have been slow to take steps to help their farmers get exposure to them so they can both protect their investments and increase their productivities.

**3) Governments need to invest in providing farmers access to ICTs**

o ICTs have a bright future in family farming and the sooner governments invest in them the better for them and their peoples; especially in the case of Africa where Family farming is the main source of food for the countries and by far the biggest employer.

*Without a doubt we are experiencing a massive increase in ICTs and community media usage in our daily lives; despite the difficulties for rural farmers to get access to them, with the exception of mobile phones. Mobile phones remain the cheapest and easiest to use ICT by all stakeholders (farmers and media). The media is using it to collect information for replays and implementation of interactive programs on agriculture (Mama Adama Keita, Guinea).*

### **III. The way forward**

*Remember that the rural peasant farmer is one of the marginalized segments ... In addition to having little access to information, sometimes when that is possible, it exists in a language difficult for him[/her] or using technology that is more advanced (Joseph Sekiku, Tanzania).*

**Question 1: What processes and methodologies can be applied to design demand driven and inclusive rural communication policies/services to advance family farming in your country/region?**

**1.) Starting with an overall picture of the state of ComDev in Africa**

- o We must begin with a bird's-eye view of the situation of ComDev in Africa to better zoom in for maximum effect.

*"There should be baseline/mapping of existing methods and practice as regards family farming and rural communication in the various region/countries. This will help provide concrete data that will be built upon. It will also bring out the best approach in the respective region/countries as different experience tells peculiar stories and nature. It will help to give a balanced evaluation of success and failure of already existing practices" (Philip Slaboh, Nigeria).*

## **2.) Participatory Field Research and ComDev policy framing over strictly expert research and policy definition**

- o There is a need for a participatory approach in field research and definition of ComDev policy, thereby allowing the proper factoring in of socio-economic and environmental factors on the ground. The dominant deficit model approached by most African governments and international agencies is to be blamed for the nonparticipation or skepticism of farmers towards current policies.

## **3.) Creating a conducive policy environment for community media especially Community Radio**

- o The record of the success of community media, and community radio in particular, as a source of vital information, empowerment, and rural development is highlighted. This success should be reinforced by the redesigning of public policies, licensing laws and other practices that have made the availability and access to community radio so difficult in some countries.

*"When the radio goes to sleep, we also go to sleep. When the radio wakes up, we also wake up!"- Damaris Muisua Vice-Chairperson, Mbodoni self-help group....*

*[Mr. Jonathan Ndoto] heard from the community radio some farming tips, especially on the need to diversify crops and the experimental planting of long-lasting, drought resistant crops such as hot pepper. He also heard some information on the market prices and on the financial management tips which enabled him to plan his finances and buy the brand new diesel water pump. (Njuki Githethwa, Kenya).*

## **4.) Making Investing in ComDev infrastructure for Family Farmers a central piece of Community Capacity Building (CCB)**

- o There is a need to prioritize investment in ComDev infrastructure for family farmers. Such investments could enable family farming to becoming central to the effort to eradicate hunger, bring about food self-sufficiency, a sustainable environment, economic growth and positive social transformations. Hence, there are repeated calls for support to community media through infrastructure investment, training of journalists and investment in other information sharing platforms.

*"Rural communication policies [should advocate] ... for special government allocation of funds and resources,*

*support for the establishment of fully fledged rural and community infrastructure such as rural and community radio and television where possible, promote mobile telephony messaging services among them, train the respective rural communication and development cadres, organise farming communities around radio forums and build networks of farmer/development cadres/experts on the advancement of family farming and put in place specific, measurable and time bound targets for achieving set objectives in the this particular discipline” (Ismaila Senghore, Gambia).*

**5.) Prioritize the establishment of community based peer review systems for ComDev**

- o Community based peer review systems like listeners clubs, Farm schools or the use of community score card (CSC) process should be established to ensure the continuous participation of communities in improving ComDev practices and the overall ComDev movement.

**6.) Collaboration amongst community radio stations**

- o Community radio are the most influential and accessible ComDev resource, its impact would be further expanded by more collaboration amongst stations.

**7.) Capacity building of Farmers Organization**

- o Some submissions in different ways called for the strengthening of farmers’ organizations through trainings in the building of structures that are participatory and transparent, as well as in lobbying for the interest of family farmers, and networking to provide their communities with regular updates on new marketing and farming techniques that can benefit their rural members.

*“First peasants and farmers have to take the lead in defending their interests. Lots of the existing Farmers organizations and producers associations ...are dysfunctional, a situation made worse by their usurpation by politicians who have defanged and rendered them impotent. Most have no real structures i.e. non-renewal of leadership or a legal framework. Unfortunately more than 60% of these organizations operate with informal structures. Hence the need to establish structures, legal frameworks and systems of accountability for them to be effective in their task” (Issa Dior, Senegal).*

**8.) Adult Education, Agricultural Extension and ComDev Training for all stakeholders in rural communities**

- o Adult education is an asset and enhances the ability of family farmers and rural communities to benefit from available ComDev resources. For maximum effect, there is the need for proper training for public officials, local community leaders and ComDev outfits like community radio journalists. However, the lack of Agricultural Extension in several communities leaves farmers grappling as if in the dark.

*“... farmers have continued to live below one dollar after reporting post-harvest losses, lack of finance, manifested signs of inadequate knowledge on production and marketing. Providing necessary useful production, harvesting and preservation information updates through community radios, agricultural newspapers, focus group discussions and many other informal channels around local farmers is important (Bangsi Song, Cameroon).*

*“The farmers [in Ndele rural community]...from my own judgment are really trying within the limited information and techniques they have from personal efforts. They do not have any form of extension services, not to talk about improved agricultural inputs. The so called inputs do not get to the right farmers. It is highly politicized. If only 50% of these inputs and the right marketing channels are provided I believe their production will expand to solve the food crisis as well as improve their livelihoods” (Dr. Godfrey Kalio, Nigeria).*

### **9.) The right to information and to Engagement in public policy initiatives**

o There is a need for farmer’s organizations and their allies to be supported in becoming active in public policy debates in Africa. It is not currently the case. They should be able to take advantage wherever there are opportunities to let their voices be heard; like in the – *ongoing public debate on the elaboration of a national ICT policy in Mali called “digital Mali 2015 and 2020” (Moussa Coulibaly, Mali).* And, where there are no opportunities to participate in public policy debates, farmer’s organizations and their allies are encouraged to look for ways to get their voices heard.

*“[Radio Gurune is]... initiating the campaign on the right to information from our local government authorities that will ensure transparency, accountability and respect of the rule of law that supports family farming”. (Lydia Ajono, Ghana).*

### **10.) A Committee for Communications Support for Rural Development**

o The creation of Committees for Communications Support for Rural Development in Ministries of Agriculture is recommended as a way to dedicate manpower and resources to the question of supporting family farmers, who are currently neglected by most governments.

*“In countries where such committees already exist, it will be appropriate to redefine their mandates and provide them with the more tools carry out their task. An example would include a routine coordination with the media to broadcast Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and mass awareness campaigns to include community media as well.... Development partners’ financial and other support for such initiatives on subjects like nutrition, food security, climate change etc. will be handy.” (Minielle Mansur, Senegal).*

- **Question 2: What type of initiatives do you think should be put into practice? How could you or your organization participate or contribute?**

## **PROPOSED INITIATIVES**

### **1) Gender equity initiatives**

o An Initiative for gender equity was proposed to give this question the attention it needs in the ComDev community in Africa.

*"Women farmers need secure land tenure and access to information, productive resources, and market opportunities to increase production, income and food security. By securing land for female farmers, women's groups can test new agricultural techniques, such as composting, which is likely to result in lower input costs and increased yields per hectare" (Jules Gahamanyi, Rwanda).*

## **2) Organizing similar consultations at local level**

- o The virtual consultation received active participation but it would be most interesting to push these consultations further by organizing face-to-face meetings as most people at the grassroots levels do not have access to Facebook and email.

*"I think we need to take these consultations further by organizing local exchanges along the same line; the structure of which is yet to be determined... (Zoul, Togo)."*

## **3) Establishing ComDev hubs**

- o An initiative for farmers run Agro-information and communications hub was proposed. This network of Family Farmers run, participatory democratically structured, ComDev spaces will boost access to information and ComDev resources to several rural communities by pulling the human and material resources of a geographical area together. It will also make it easy to support these communities by supporting the initiative.

*"Establish Agricultural information and communication hub for five to six cluster communities' family farmers. The centre to be furnished with audio video ICT equipment. Video films on improved and modern agricultural practices, information on improved seedlings and how they cultivated. Films on inter cultural farming systems and method of adaptability. The hub should also be used for family farmers' adult education, ICT training skills and community based Agricultural best practice research centre. The hub to be linked with international and local agricultural research centres, government agricultural ministry and agencies....(Phillip Kalio, Nigeria).*

*"These centers should be run by farmers themselves ... like the source project by Kunnafofi initiative in Mali" (Moussa Coulibaly, Mali).*

## **4) A Training initiative for farmers**

- o There is a need to empower family farmers with a broad range of skills.

*" farmers' organizations and civil society organizations working in agriculture should transfer skills to local*

*farmers, especially youth: transferring the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to volunteers and then train community groups on literacy, financial, agricultural, health and nutrition services". (Jules Gahamanyi, Rwanda).*

**5) A Sustainable energy initiative**

o Farmers should be provided with the skills and techniques to use renewable energy which will give them a sustainable source of energy for projects requiring electricity — *"...including traditional biomass and the solar energy"* (Moussa Coulibaly, Mali).

**6) A family farmers credit initiative**

o An initiative to help provide farmers with loans and other financial services, needed to purchase seeds and fertilizer, which they cannot get from normal banking institutions for lack of collateral should be set up.

**PROPOSED ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION**

See ([AMARC GNU Mailman mailing list](#) and a [Forum-For-Pages app on Facebook](#))

**4. RECURRING THEMES**

**These were the recurring themes throughout the consultation.**

**Overall view of ComDev in Africa**

o There is a need for an overall view of the ComDev landscape in Africa because this information seemed not to exist anywhere. Even in places like Kenya with an advance ComDev infrastructure, there seems to be little national coordination. For most of the 290 subscribers to the virtual consultation list, the consultation was the closest they ever had to a view of ComDev activities around the continent.

*"...the write-ups have been very enriching especially for those of us who work in rural communities. I [have] learned a lot about other local communities in Africa." (Bangsi Daniel Song).*

*"I'm very happy to know this innovation!  
I work in an institute research (INERA) in Burkina Faso. Some time we have many difficulties to do the trials, Because others farmers can't read the protocols. So I want to change directly with a person who work with mobile telephony to support family farming. Thanks and best regards to all" (Zongo Hamadou, Burkina Faso).*

### **Radio**

- Community radio is the most effective ComDev resource in Africa. Focus should be put in expanding coverage to communities which do not yet have access to radio.

*"I am suggesting that since the community radio is so successful with the Kenyan folks that it should be replicated in other places ..."* (Emem Okon, Nigeria).

- For stations in existence, training of operators should be facilitated to ensure better service to family farmers and rural communities.
- For governments and development partners, there is a need to increase funding for radio and make legal changes necessary to encourage the growth of community radio like changes in licensing laws.

### **Cooperatives and farmers Organizations**

- There is a level of frustration and disappointment directed at the ineffectiveness and dysfunctional condition of farmer's organizations and associations.

*"First off, farmers and peasants have to come together to defend their common interests. Most Farmer's organizations and associations ... either have informal structures or just dysfunctional with undemocratic internal structures. The situation is further aggravated by party politics infiltration of some of these associations. There is the need for real legal and participatory structures for these associations (Issa Dior, Senegal).*

The consultation was broadly welcomed and seen as the start and hope for more regional coordination and networking of ComDev practitioners towards improving the state of family farmers and rural communities with ComDev resources and knowhow.

The consultations confirmed the views and suggestions of *Cultivating Sustainable Development in the International Year of Family Farming* that family farmers hold the unique potential to take us into a future of more and sustainable production of food, and to succeed in this task they need lots of information which ComDev is well placed to provide. And to do so through participatory research, policy design, implementation, monitoring and management.

The next step is to expand this dialogue beyond those of us who could manage the time and access to participate, to the people on the ground in Africa; and to do so in an effective and sustained way.

Luckily we still have our brain trust of resource persons and 291 subscribers to consult for the next iteration of taking this consultation closer to the grassroots; with this report as an added reference for the next stage.

**Annexes**

**Appendix - 1  
List of participants and postings**

Facebook Forum postings				
	EN		FR	
Topic:	Postings	New individuals	Postings	New individuals
Welcome	2	2	7	5
Wk1: Q1	15	8	8	3
Wk1: Q2	5	2	8	1
Wk2: Q1	0	0	3	0
Wk2: Q2	0	0	1	0
Wk2: Q3	2	1	2	0
Wk3: Q1	7	2	6	1
Wk3: Q2	3	0	5	1

Facebook Forum	
Participants	Country
1. <a href="#">Adeline Nsimire</a>	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
2. <a href="#">Peter Balaba</a>	Uganda
3. <a href="#">Espen Berg</a>	Mozambique
4. <a href="#">Jules Gahamanyi</a>	Rwanda
5. <a href="#">Gladson Makowa</a>	Malawi
6. <a href="#">Benoit Mazunda Mbambu</a>	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
7. <a href="#">Oumy Ndiaye</a>	Senegal
8. <a href="#">Kares Blondy Desantilles</a>	Cameroon

**Forum on Communication for Development &  
Community Media for Family Farming**

Rome-Italy, 23-24 Oct 2014

9.	<a href="#">Njuki Githethwa</a>	Kenya
10.	<a href="#">Sphynx Indy</a>	United States of America
11.	<a href="#">Prince Jonathan Tutsirai Kuipa</a>	Zimbabwe
12.	<a href="#">Lydia Ajono</a>	Ghana
13.	<a href="#">Stacey Zammit</a>	Italy
14.	<a href="#">Joseph Sekiku</a>	Tanzania
15.	<a href="#">Ariel O. Djomakon</a>	Benin
16.	<a href="#">Minielle Mansur</a>	Senegal
17.	<a href="#">Lamine Coulibaly</a>	Mali
18.	<a href="#">Odwuor Maryanne</a>	Nigeria
19.	<a href="#">Ismaila Senghore</a>	Gambia

Mailing List		
	Participants	Country
1.	Emem Okon	Nigeria
2.	Inoussa Maïga	Burkina
3.	AWE BAÏNA Modeste	Cameroun
4.	<a href="#">Jules Gahamanyi</a>	Rwanda
5.	Bangsi Daniel Song	Cameroon
6.	<a href="#">Benoit Mazunda Mbambu</a>	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
7.	<a href="#">Oumy Ndiaye</a>	Senegal
8.	ZONGO HAMADOU	Burkina
9.	Mama Adama Keita	Guinea
10.	<a href="#">Sphynx Indy</a>	United States of America
11.	<a href="#">Prince Jonathan Tutsirai Kuipa</a>	Zimbabwe

12.	<a href="#">Lydia Ajono</a>	Ghana
13.	<a href="#">Stacey Zammit</a>	Italy
14.	<a href="#">Joseph Sekiku</a>	Tanzania
15.	<a href="#">Ariel O. Djomakon</a>	Benin
16.	<a href="#">Minielle Mansur</a>	Senegal
17.	Moussa Coulibaly	Mali
18.	Dr. Solomon A. Ikunga	Nigeria
19.	<a href="#">Ismaila Senghore</a>	Gambia
20.	Adeline Nsimire	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
21.	Bart Doorneweert	Kenya
22.	Karen Hampson	Tanzania
23.	Philip P. Slaboh	Nigeria
24.	Bwakali, David John	Kenya
25.	Sebastian Alzerreca (Zoul)	Togo)
26.	James Onyango	Kenya
27.	Dr. Godfrey Adokiye KALIO	Nigeria

**Appendix - 2**  
**List of Resource Persons**

Marcelle Achi	<a href="#">Réseau de Solidarité et d'accompagnement des initiatives de développement des populations défavorisées</a> (INADES)
Emmanuel Atenga	<a href="#">African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services</a> (AFAAS)
Espen Berg	<a href="#">International Fund for Agricultural Development</a> (IFAD)
Justin Chisenga	<a href="#">FAO</a> Regional Office for Africa

**Forum on Communication for Development &  
Community Media for Family Farming**

Rome-Italy, 23-24 Oct 2014

Riccardo del Castello	<a href="#">FAO</a> ComDev
Carly Griggs	<a href="#">BBC Media Action</a>
Hagos Nigussie Kahssay	Mekelle University University of Queensland
Prince Kuipa	<a href="#">Zimbabwe Farmers Union</a> (ZFU)
Djamila Mathu	<a href="#">Young Professionals for Agricultural Development</a> (YPARD)
Adeline Nsimire	Sauti ya Mwanamke Kijijini - SAMWAKI - Voice of Rural Women
Oumy Khaïry Ndiaye	Independant Consultant
James Onyango	Kenya AIDS Intervention/Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG)
Steven Sam	University of Queensland
Minielle Tall	<a href="#">Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation</a> (CTA)
Anastasia Zammit	<a href="#">FAO</a> ComDev
John Dada	<a href="#">Fantsuam Foundation</a>
Carl Opperman	<a href="#">AGRI SA</a> - Chairperson of Communication and Image Building Committee

***Forum on Communication for Development &  
Community Media for Family Farming***

Rome-Italy, 23-24 Oct 2014

**References**

FAO-OPC, [\*Forum on Communication for Development & Community Media for Family Farming, Concept Note\*](#), 2014.

FAO, [\*Cultivating Sustainable Development in the International Year of Family Farming\*](#), 2014.

AMARC-FAO, [\*Towards Concerted Action on Communications, Community Media and ICTs for Family Farming\*](#), 2014.