



**ALT 'PROJECT RADIO'** aims to help isolated rural people in southern Madagascar increase food security and reduce the effects of poverty by providing access to vital education and information about farming, health, environment and other development topics via radio

Funded by the European Commission Food Security Division, the Trust (ALT) launched 'Project Radio in 1999, following a pilot study, and scaled up over three phases.

## WHY RADIO?

The majority of rural producers in southern Madagascar are non literate. Most are isolated across vast geographical distances and are living below the poverty line with few means to learn new ways to improve their live.

Lack of infrastructure and grinding poverty exacerbate the isolation and powerlessness:

***'The most striking features of poverty in Madagascar as identified by the poor are isolation and powerlessness. The poor lack the means of communications with all but their own immediate community' World Bank.***

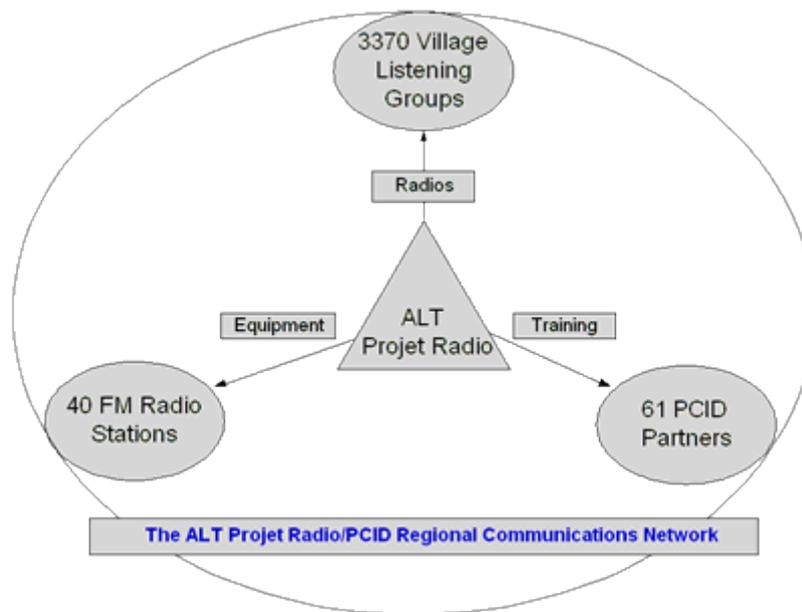
Radio remains the strongest most accessible medium to communicate with rural people in Madagascar. (UNDP communications survey 2008). It reaches all members of the community irrespective of age, gender or educational level.

Project Radio was launched to bring information and non formal education directly into the village, enabling people to learn new ways to meet their development challenges and improve their social and economic well-being.

## RURAL RADIO NETWORKS FOR DEVELOPMENT

In order to reach across a wide geographic area with little infrastructure, the project decided to capitalise on existing resources, maximise partnerships and create synergy with local development action. The project structure is therefore based on participation and exchange with **three groups of principle stakeholders**, who are also beneficiaries of the project:

1. Rural village communities – listening groups
2. Local NGO and service providers - associated as the *Partners for Communication and Information for Development (PCID)*
3. Affiliated FM community Radio stations



Project Radio provides training, equipment, radios and coordinates the mechanisms of exchange to facilitate a **Regional Communications Network** between the stakeholders. The Project Radio team also produce programmes, distribute radios to villagers, provide editing facilities and support partners:

### MECHANISMS OF EXCHANGE – LISTENING



**3370 Village Listening Groups** are direct beneficiaries of the project and agree to help identify information needs through focus groups, assist in programme production, provide feedback for evaluations and pre tests, and listen regularly to the broadcasts

**In exchange** the project has provided them with solar/clockwork-powered radios to enable them to regularly receive the projects' educational broadcasts.

Programmes are made to respond to villagers needs and provide them with ideas and solutions to help alleviate daily problems such as how to prevent disease in cattle, where and when to vaccinate children, how to graft manioc and improve rice yields, how to prevent HIV transmission, grow sorghum, and make windbreaks.

As well as learning about services, and new practices, the villagers also appreciate the improved communications that radio affords to link them with other communities, hear news about the rest of the country, and receive weather warnings. For many, the radio is a lifeline with the rest of the world.

## MECHANISMS OF EXCHANGE – PROGRAMME MAKING

The project recognises that radio information alone cannot bring about development change but that face to face contact, training, services and practical support is essential if villagers are to take up the new information they hear by radio and apply it in their daily lives

Extensive partnership and collaboration with local NGOs and service providers allows the project to respond to information needs across all sectors of development whilst ensuring synergy with local development action.

Already technically adept in their own particular discipline: health, agriculture, food security, conservation, energy and natural resource management, culture, primary education, family planning, fisheries etc, **NGO partners are well placed to produce educational programmes that can work in parallel to their field initiatives.**



Programme themes include how to treat cattle disease, store food, market prices, improved hygiene practices, protection against disease, and management of forest resources, improved agriculture and nutrition practices, HIV awareness.

The programmes also promote development activities in the region so people learn how to access supports and training such as building fuel efficient stoves, where to get locust control products, and free vaccinations at the hospital.

Given the vast geographical and logistical challenges of development work in this region, radio programmes greatly improve the capacity of NGOs and service providers to reach their target populations and reduce the amount of physical time needed to educate from village to village.

## PARTNERS FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (PCID)



**60 Local NGOs and service providers:** participate as active development partners and associate as **The Partners for Information and Communications for Development (PCID)** and agree to:

- act as a platform to discuss regional communications strategies
- help identify information needs with target village communities

- produce educational radio broadcasts in response to information needs
- distribute solar/clockwork radios to their target communities
- monitor the impacts of the programmes



***In exchange*** the project provides them with training, recording equipment, and facilitates regular meetings; also assistance and support with programme production, monthly programme editing, programme evaluations, and monitoring of programme impacts.

Project staff and partners have been trained in participatory production techniques and radio distribution. All programmes are edited in Projet Radio 'Regional Production Units' ( Unite de Production Regional – UPR) , where they enter a regional programme library, then are duplicated on to CD and distributed to affiliated local FM radio stations across the region.

Programmes are made in local language and CDs are labelled accordingly (by dialect).

**Approximately 40-44 new radio programmes are produced by the PCID each month.**

67% of partners reported changes in their organisation as a result of Project Radio mostly related to improved internal or external communications. Some noted 'a greater openness in their staff towards other PCID members, local authorities, communities etc'; and 60% said they already co-operate with other PCID members to plan campaigns on common themes. (Harford 2006)



## **MECHANISMS FOR EXCHANGE – BROADCASTING**



**40 FM Community Radio Stations:** participate by providing free air time for the project's educational broadcasts in their weekly schedules, and participate in an informal network of regional radio stations.

***In exchange*** the project provides them with equipment that will improve their technical capacity to reach the target audience (CD players; transmitters; studio equipment) and

training to help them maintain their broadcast studios, and develop programmes. They also participate in annual round table meetings to discuss network issues and plans.

The project has also increased FM radio signal across the south in order to improve access to its educational broadcasts. It launched two new radio stations in 2004: Radio VK with a community partner in Tshiombe and Radio Linta at the Lutheran hospital in Ejeda

The networked radio stations are establishing a clear development role in the region; local PCID partners are building communications into their project budgets, which ensures their ability to pay the radio stations for additional broadcasts, both immediately and beyond the funding phase of Projet Radio– thus helping to maintain the stations and the network in the longer term.

### **A PARTICIPATORY, PRO- POOR APPROACH**

The pro-poor approach of the PR/PCID programmes, delivered in **local language** direct to villages via radio, provides non-formal education to all members of the community irrespective of age, gender or education, and therefore benefits the poorest members of the population.

The participatory approach aims to ensure that villagers information needs are heard and prioritised, and radio programmes respond to these needs.

For many rural populations this is the first access to media and communications that has been made available to them.



### **COST EFFECTIVE**

**Projet Radio delivers non formal education and information to over 800,000 listeners for less than a dollar per head per year**



The project **produced a total of 3253 educational radio programmes** between 1999-2009 under the broad titles of animal husbandry, food security, agriculture and fishing, natural resource management, health and family welfare, governance, education and culture.

**An evaluation of Projet Radio funded by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) in 2007** revealed that Project Radio is achieving

some notable success in changing and enhancing knowledge and attitudes on certain Millennium Development Goals such as HIV/AIDS, family planning, mother and child health, environmental issues, social and administrative issues and gender inequality.

## SUSTAINABILITY



The project has **trained 1300 field agents** from local NGOs, service providers and radio stations in a number of participatory and production techniques including: focus group research, participative production cycle, distribution of radios and setting up listening groups, manipulation digital recording devices , digital editing, equipment maintenance and technical training, monitoring and evaluation; these skills remain in the region.

Additionally, in 2009 the project **handed over five Regional Production Units (Unité de Production Régionale – UPR)** to its local partners so that the communications networks could be managed and maintained by them in the future.

A twelve month **accompaniment programme** began in 2008 which enabled the project to hand over the studios one full year before the end of project funding so that Project Radio trainers and producers could train the local partners and accompany them in editing programmes, scheduling broadcasts with local radio stations, and managing the regional networks. This accompaniment programme gave the partners sufficient time to adjust to working on their own initiative, gain confidence and skills.



During this period an MBA graduate from Cornell University, Ryan Kelly, studied the risks and opportunities for income generating mechanisms for the studios and worked closely with the ALT teams in London and Madagascar to explore economic sustainability strategies. These were shared with staff and PCID partners in local strategy meetings.



One year after the start of the hand over process (July 2010), ALT requested updates from all the regional production units (UPR) and was encouraged to discover that despite funding constraints and difficulties caused by the political crisis (since March 2009), the studios were still functioning and producing programmes for broadcast on a monthly basis with local development partners.

**See below for 2010 update:**

## FEEDBACK 12 MONTHS LATER:

### UPR/Studio: Fianarantsoa Amoron'i Mania

- Based in GTDR offices and managed by an Editor/Producer (Andry). Security Guard in place. Maintenance offered by The Regional Authority.
- 10-15 programmes produced and Broadcast at least 2 x month
- via 4 networked FM stations
- 8 PCID partners ( 3 new members) affiliated
- Payment of a monthly fee and a membership
- meeting monthly with 12 partners including the Region to evaluate outputs
- Aim to launch their own independent radio station

### UPR/Studio: Fianarantsoa Haute Matsiatra

- Based in UNDP offices Anjoma, one editor-Producer / security guard on site
- 6 programmes produced and broadcast at least 1 x month
- via 5 local FM stations
- Funding and partners: FERT/AROPA, CUF, CISCO
- Payment of a fee for services
- meeting 1 x month, 7 partners assisting
- Previous PCID partners no longer fully active but 6 new partners affiliated

### UPR/Studio: Ambovombe

- Based in Radio Cactus Androy , managed by the Director, Nofy, plus technician /3 radio journalists/a security guard on site
- 8 programmes monthly ( by partners) Broadcast
- via 2 FM stations ( Cactus and Radio VK Tshiombe)
- 17 partners ( 2 previous PCID partners ) using the service
- Payment of programme production and broadcast services
- Dependent on goodwill of the station owner to continue
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### UPR /Studios Toliara /Ft Dauphin

- Currently Based in the offices of ALT Madagascar, in Ft Dauphin and Ambovombe )
- managed by ALT Mg staff /security guard on site
- 8 programmes produced and broadcast each month
- National partners contracting radio work to ALT Mg e.g. Toughstuff, PARECAM
- New radio project proposals have been submitted and awaiting outcomes
- PCID partners not meeting regularly
- Tulear studio/RPU temporarily relocated to Ambovombe

Projet Radio is providing a model for rural radio communications networks in Madagascar. It shares its expertise with national communications campaigns such as the **CNLS (National HIV AIDS Committee)**, and provides technical advice to national agencies such as **UNICEF Madagascar** for the communication component for its PEAFER national sanitation programme. In 2008 it assisted with the national study on **Communication for Empowerment for the UNDP** **read the report at:**

[http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/overview/ogc\\_communication\\_empowerment.html](http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/overview/ogc_communication_empowerment.html)