



Introduction to radio soap opera series

Authors: Bonkano Bawa and Alice Van der Elstraeten

Introduction

A series of radio soap operas has been developed from fact sheets, experiences and good practices as part of the Capitalization project.

Given the high levels of illiteracy in Niger, which prevent people from having access to knowledge that could promote their personal development and that of their local development organizations, the Capitalization project identified community radio broadcasts as a useful communication resource. The programmes are made available in the two main languages spoken in Niger (Zarma and Hausa) and address themes linked to the management of inputs and food security.

For the broadcast format, the Capitalization project opted for a radio soap opera series. This allows the techniques and their good practices to be brought to life through real characters and situations, with which men and women farmers can easily identify. Ideally, the radio soap opera series should be aired over a long period and become a regular feature for men and women farmers, so that when it ends, they will adopt the new techniques and good practices that have been broadcast.

The series covers the following general interest themes: inventory credit, input shops, fertilizer microdosing, group orders and Farmer Field Schools. The broadcasts make a link between the different themes.

Scripts in French: Bonkano Bawa and Alice Van der Elstraeten

Validation of scripts: Teams from Capitalization and IARBIC projects

Director: Bonkano Bawa

Producer: Theatre group from Radio Fara'a, Gaya

Production languages: Hausa and Zarma

Year and place: 2012, Niamey/Gaya - Niger

Themes:

- 1. Inventory credit**
 - 2. The input shop**
 - 3. Fertilizer microdosing**
 - 4. Group orders for fertilizer**
 - 5. Farmer Field Schools**
-

Programme synopsis

1. Inventory credit

The harvests have been plentiful and men and women farmers belonging to the union meet to store their products through the inventory credit system. They go to a meeting held by the local microfinance institution, or decentralized finance system, and there they see a trader who wants to store a large quantity of agricultural crops.

2. Fertilizer microdosing

The winter season is approaching. Using revenues from inventory credit carried out by their producers' organization after each harvest, many farmers are purchasing supplies of fertilizer from the input shop. Following development efforts to encourage a more targeted use of fertilizer, the farmers use it in their fields to improve yields of the various crops they grow. In most cases, the crops appear to be in good condition as their first shoots emerge above the soil's surface. Idi, a small-scale farmer, sees the results of using fertilizer on a plot farmed by his cousin Mintou.

3. The input shop

An input shop is a small enterprise whose aim is to facilitate access to inputs for farmers and supply a local service. Driven by curiosity, Idi (a farmer who does not generally use fertilizer) goes to an input shop to inquire about conditions for purchasing and using fertilizer. Saidou, the store manager, explains the products he sells, as well as the local services that the input shop can offer.

4. Group orders for fertilizer

Group ordering is a system of obtaining supplies of fertilizer based on centralized demand from farmers which is channelled through their producers' organizations (PO), and subsequently through the unions of these organizations and their federations. The arrangement involves the POs and their unions and federations in negotiating sales directly with agreed suppliers, ensuring distribution of inputs, among other things. The management board of the Albarka union reviews this activity and programmes the next purchase.

5. Farmer Field Schools

The Farmer Field School is a participatory tool for technology transfer which brings together men and women farmers who are willing and able to learn. They meet once a week throughout an entire crop cycle (of a winter season) to follow training according to the Farmer Field School methodology. The aim is to learn good agricultural techniques and then share them with other farmers. Idi, a farmer wishing to learn certain new agricultural techniques, is coordinating a group of learners who face the same constraints, so that they can all receive instruction from a Farmer Field School run by the Bokki union.

