Canada is currently developing a new framework for international assistance policy, funding, and delivery. This is an unprecedented opportunity to review and rethink how we conceive of and deliver international aid, in line with the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Government of Canada recently launched a consultative process aimed at gathering input from Canadians and other stakeholders to inform this review.

Over a three-week period in June, Farm Radio invited Tanzanians to respond to four questions which are central to Canada’s international assistance policy. Nearly 3000 Tanzanians shared their perspectives in response to a survey administered in partnership with two Tanzanian radio stations.
Our international assistance decisions need to be informed by the best evidence, reflect local needs and priorities, enable sensible risk-taking and benefit from dynamic collaboration, including with local governments and civil society.

Encouraging Listeners to Provide Feedback

The Government of Canada recently launched a consultative process aimed at gathering input from Canadians and other stakeholders to inform this review of Canada’s international assistance strategy.

But how can we ensure that the decisions we make about competing aid priorities are truly demand-driven? How can we include the voices of citizens who will be affected by Canadian development policy in the conversation? Answer: We ask them!

Ordinary people across sub-Saharan Africa rarely have a chance to be heard by those trying to promote development. Geographic distance and lack of functioning feedback systems create a situation where decision-makers do not hear citizens’ opinions about decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities. Until recently, gathering the views and perspectives of rural people in sub-Saharan Africa was an unthinkably difficult, time-consuming, and costly endeavour.

Farm Radio International, a Canadian NGO, has developed a tool called the “Listening Post,” which combines mobile phone-based tools with an interactive radio program specifically designed to encourage listeners to provide feedback. Anyone with a mobile phone can participate with the phone they already have. When you combine this ease of use with the ubiquity of radio sets, you have a winning combination that can truly reach scale to gather feedback from tens of thousands of users in a short period of time.

WHAT WE DID

Over the course of 3 weeks in June 2016, and in partnership with Global Affairs Canada, FRI gathered unfiltered feedback from thousands of citizens across Tanzania. We worked with two of the country’s most popular radio stations: Radio Free Africa and Radio Maria, and reached out to every corner of Tanzania. Through four special and engaging radio programs, we aimed to learn more about the people’s priorities:

- What do they think would most benefit their country’s development?
- From better-quality teacher training to better-enforced laws to protect women against domestic violence, the questions reflected the thinking involved in Canada’s international assistance review.

HOW WE DID IT

We asked and Tanzanians answered! We used the most powerful technologies in rural Africa to gather polling information from citizens: radio and mobile phones. The response was overwhelming, with nearly 3000 people making their voices heard through the free radio and phone-based poll.

Farm Radio International worked with our friends at Voto Mobile to develop an interactive voice response (IVR) service that anyone could call from any mobile phone. Callers were presented with four key questions on topics ranging from food security to gender equality to climate change. By simply listening to voice prompts and voting with their keypad, any listener to the radio program could vote. We even allowed callers to leave open-ended comments on the system, to be included in later episodes of the radio program.
What is the Listening Post?

The Listening Post is an interactive radio platform that combines specialized interactive radio broadcasts with Uliza, a tool created by FRI for gathering and analyzing feedback and questions from audience members, particularly farmers. Uliza is built on an interactive voice response (IVR) system developed by Voto Mobile that enables listeners to vote on poll questions, leave messages, and request the delivery of specific information. Programs on the Listening Post include radio mini-series on specific topics—with listeners invited to participate in polls, ask questions and offer opinions. This feedback mechanism allows listeners to send unfiltered opinions to policy-makers and other development partners, including Global Affairs Canada.

How it works

Listener Polling

Each episode of a Listening Post program poses questions to listeners.

1. Listening farmers respond by sending a missed call or “beep” to a number advertised on the radio program.
2. The listener is called back by Uliza, FRI’s polling tool. This callback is free.
3. The system presents the weekly poll, a simple question with up to six multiple choice responses. The listener responds to the poll by pressing numbers on the keypad.
4. Listeners are given the opportunity to leave a message with their response to a more detailed follow-up question - or with questions or opinions related to the topic.
5. Callers’ votes are tabulated in real-time for use by both radio station personnel and development partners such as extension agents.
6. The poll results together with the audio recordings (opinions and questions) are assembled on the Uliza dashboard, where they can be accessed by broadcasters, extension officers and project partners. Audience feedback can quickly be converted to radio program content as presenters discuss poll results or play recordings left by listeners.
7. Data gathered from regular subscribers to the Listening Post allow FRI and partners to profile and map users by geographic location, gender, age or any other metric valued by project partners.
HEARING FROM TANZANIANS

We wanted to hear from ordinary Tanzanians about their own priorities with respect to four of the main strategies being contemplated as the focus for Canada’s International Assistance:

• reducing poverty and hunger
• enhancing gender equality and promoting the rights of women and girls
• responding and adapting to climate change
• advancing economic and social opportunities for youth

Over a 3-week period, we ran a series of radio programs on two Tanzanian radio stations that invited listeners to respond to survey questions. Each program focused on one of the four themes outlined above. Nearly 3000 Tanzanians shared their perspectives on the kinds of supports, services, and policies that could best address the challenges of income and food security, gender equality, climate change adaptation, and youth empowerment. They voted on multiple choice questions and left voice messages that elaborated on their experiences and insights.

AND SOME INTERESTING THEMES EMERGED

Income and food security

An equal number of Tanzanians favoured investments in farming, fishing and livestock keeping and in better education and training. They felt that the best way to help agricultural producers was to improve their access to markets and to information and training services. Those that ranked education and training first were most likely to favour investments in vocational training and in educating and motivating teachers.

Gender equality

Men and women alike were most likely to believe that the best way to advance gender equality in Tanzania is to strengthen laws and improve their enforcement, particularly laws related to the protection of women and girls from violence and abuse. Most agreed that the role of the police and courts in educating the public about these laws as well as enforcing them is critical. Improving access to quality education was the second most popular response, with many highlighting the importance of helping parents see the value of educating both sons and daughters. Women and men were equally likely (one in five) to say the focus should be on improving the sharing of work at home and on the farm, with 40% saying that men should help out more with childcare, and 30% saying they should contribute more work on the family garden.

Adapting to climate change

Tanzanians showed support for investments in tree planting, providing information to farmers about drought-tolerant crops and seeds, and water harvesting.

Youth

An equal number of Tanzanians told us that they would prioritize investments which improve educational opportunities, and investments which help youth become successful entrepreneurs. Key issues are better training for teachers, and improving access to credit.

The 1971 Law of Marriage Act needs to be changed because it discriminates against women and favours men. I would like to see the Parliament change that law.

Briton Kanadiasi (man) from Kagera
Q1 WHAT CHANGE WOULD MOST HELP YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR NEIGHBOURS EARN ENOUGH MONEY AND HAVE ENOUGH GOOD FOOD FOR THE WHOLE YEAR?

A. More support in farming, fishing and livestock keeping
B. Training and education
C. Improved healthcare
D. Better roads, electricity and security

1092 RESPONSES

39% Training and education

Follow up question 1
What kind of education or training would help ordinary Tanzanians earn enough money and have enough good food for the whole year?

The responses were:

- (45%) Good quality vocational training
- (35%) Good quality secondary education
- (20%) Good quality college and university education

Follow up question 2
What would do the most to improve education?
The majority chose:

- (55%) Better trained and motivated teachers

7% Better roads, electricity and security

Follow up question 1
What are the most important supports that farmers, fishermen and livestock keepers need?
The responses were:

- (42%) Roads
- (30%) Electricity
- (27%) Security

Follow up question 2
Which of these three is the most important?
The responses were:

- (42%) Roads
- (30%) Electricity
- (27%) Security

14% Improved healthcare

Follow up question 1
What do the most to improve health care?
The most popular responses were:

- (38%) Better access to medicine
- (32%) More trained health care professionals

Follow up question 2
What health challenge is the priority for you, your family and neighbours?
The most popular responses were:

- (41%) Diseases
- (36%) Care for pregnant women, babies, and new mothers

40% More support in farming, fishing and livestock keeping

Follow up question 1
What would help youth become successful in farming, livestock keeping and fishing?
The most popular responses were:

- (35%) Access to markets
- (24%) Better information and training services

Follow up question 2
What would do the most to improve education?
The majority chose:

- (55%) Better trained and motivated teachers

Minor variations of ±1% may occur in results due to statistical rounding.
Q2 WHAT CHANGE WOULD DO THE MOST TO HELP TANZANIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS TO MEET THEIR GOALS AND HAVE EQUAL STATUS AND OPPORTUNITY IN SOCIETY?

A. Better access to education, food, schools and training
B. Better health services, especially related to pregnancy, childbirth, childcare and care for new mothers
C. Better laws and law enforcement to support and protect women and girls
D. Better partnerships at home so that men share work with women equally and fairly

28% vs. 25%
Better access to education, food, schools and training
Respondents who chose this option were then asked:
Follow up question
What would be the best way to help girls get a good education?
The most popular response was:
Education for parents about the importance of education for both girls and boys

22% vs. 21%
Better partnerships at home so that men share work with women equally and fairly
Respondents who chose this option were then asked:
Follow up question
What work should men get more involved in so that it is a more equal partnership?
The most popular responses were:
Child care
Work in the garden or on the farm

40% vs 44%
Better laws and law enforcement to support and protect women and girls
Respondents who chose this option were then asked:
Follow up question 1
What laws would do the most to support and protect women and girls?
A clear majority chose:
Laws to protect women and children from violence, harassment and abuse

Follow up question 2
How can police and the courts do a better job of supporting and protecting women and girls?
The most popular responses were:
Police and courts educate public about laws that protect and support children and women
Access to legal aid for women and girls

Enforce laws that allow women to own land.
Venace Senge Tito (man) from Tabor

Most Popular!

Government should look closely at and punish those who discriminate against women. Religious leaders should also educate people on equal rights.
Alehena S. Shirima (woman) from Hashali Rombo
Q3 What can Tanzania do to create more opportunities for youth to meet their potential and contribute to the development of the country?

A. Empower youth to participate fully in society
B. Help youth become successful entrepreneurs
C. Improve educational opportunities for youth
D. Make sure the economy creates lots of jobs that are suitable for young people

**31%** Help youth become successful entrepreneurs

Respondents who chose this option were then asked:

*Follow up question 1*
What type of entrepreneurship would be best for youth?

*Men and women favoured different responses:*

**(Female favoured)** Self-employment for professionally trained youth

**(Male favoured)** Producing food for markets

**31%** Improve educational opportunities for youth

Respondents who chose this option were then asked:

*Follow up question 1*
What educational opportunities would be most helpful to youth?

*The most popular response was:*

**41%** Good secondary education

*Follow up question 2*
What would help youth gain more from education?

*The most popular responses were:*

**40%** Better training for teachers

**28%** More training institutions like schools and colleges
Q4 IN TANZANIA, IT IS CLEAR THAT WEATHER PATTERNS ARE CHANGING, CREATING CHALLENGES FOR FARMERS AND LIVESTOCK KEEPERS. WHAT SERVICES WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR NEIGHBOURS IN ADAPTING TO THESE CHANGES?

A. Good and reliable weather forecasts
B. Information and advice about seeds and plants that will do well in dry conditions
C. Planting trees
D. Ways of storing water during rainy season for use during dry periods

Most Popular:

- Planting trees: 37% (male: 30%, female: 28%)
- Ways of storing water: 28% (male: 29%, female: 19%)
- Information and advice about seeds: 30% (male: 29%, female: 30%)
- Good and reliable weather forecasts: 14% (male: 13%, female: 14%)

Minor variations of ±1% may occur in results due to statistical rounding.

To fight climate changes, we need to plant trees, and preserve natural vegetation.
Daniel Fanuel (man) from Singida

Farm Radio International, a Canadian charity that harnesses the power of radio to meet the needs of small-scale farmers. We work with more than 600 radio partners located in 39 African countries to fight poverty and food insecurity. FRI resources and training help African broadcasters produce and deliver practical, relevant and timely information to tens of millions of farmers. We also work with a range of partners to implement radio projects that respond to community needs. In 2015, FRI received the WSIS Project Prize in recognition of our innovative use of radio to change lives.

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Farm Radio International, a Canadian registered charity with regional offices and major projects in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Tanzania and Uganda, is at the forefront of using radio combined with other ICTs to serve small-scale farmers. Charitable registration number (BN) 11888 4808 RR0001.