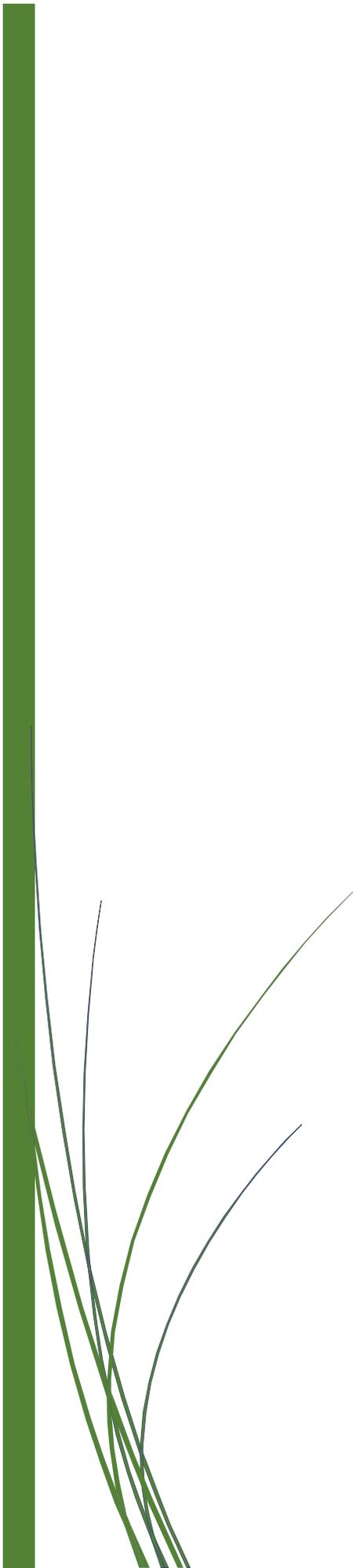


# **RADIO FOR AGRICULTURE EXTENSION**

## **MID - YEAR REPORT (Quarter one and two)**

**January - June 2020**



## **Kilimo Media International Mid-year report (Q1 and Q2)**

### **Period covered: January to July 2020**

#### **Project brief**

Kilimo Media International (KIMI) in partnership with Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture is implementing a project on providing agricultural extension services to farmers through local language radio stations. The aim is to increase the agricultural productivity of farmers by enhancing their access to agricultural information through radio, with the support of the local extension service providers. The project has invested in hands-on training for both radio production personnel and the extension service officers, including on-site monitoring and support meetings to ensure the observance of quality and soundness of content delivery. This initiative has vastly increased the reach of extension services in remote areas, with farmers adopting various farming practices discussed in the programmes.

#### **Latest progress**

During the quarter, Kilimo Media has incorporated two more radio stations - Wikwatyo FM based in Kitui County and IBSE FM in Marsabit County - into the project. Wikwatyo had no previous experience in agricultural programming and is one of the stations that had approached KIMI to be brought on board the project. As KIMI is already working with Syokimau FM also based in Kitui, the request to extension officers to extend their services to Wikwatyo was received with open arms. IBSE FM in Marsabit came in as an alternative for the dynamic extension officer in the county when he could no longer travel to Radio Jangwani (located in the outskirts of the town) due to the curfew on night travel imposed by the government. However, Radio Jangwani continued to do the radio programmes albeit at scaled down level.

In January 2020, Bus Radio based in Kajiado County expanded the station's reach by erecting a 30-meter mast. This has increased the stations coverage from a 30kms to 60kms radius from Kajiado town. The station plans to carry out an assessment to establish its new audience reach.

The participating radio stations have reported an increase in listenership, which they attribute to more people staying at home due to COVID-19. Kilimo Media is in the process of developing COVID-19 messages relevant to farming communities to be syndicated to the radio stations it is working with.

KIMI has established partnership with the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) on the provision of weather information to farmers, through radio. KALRO convened a training in February whose aim was the development and dissemination of agricultural weather advisories for Kitui, Machakos and Makueni counties for the March-April-May season. KIMI took the participants through a session on radio for agricultural extension. The radio stations in attendance were Wikwatyo FM, Syokimau FM, Mwatu FM of the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, and Athiani FM, all based in the region. KIMI had invited the additional stations for them to enhance the programming on Syokimau FM in reaching farmers with the very useful information on weather and climate change, for their farming activities. An in-house training on production of agricultural programmes for Wikwatyo FM was done by KIMI, after the KALRO training.

#### **Challenges**

##### **Radio stations**

Radio stations reported that the nationwide curfew, instituted by the Kenyan government due to COVID-19, has restricted movement of radio producers to conduct interviews with farmers and experts in locations away from the radio station. Most of the radio programmes are aired in the

evenings from 8.00pm just when the curfew starts. Consequently, some radio stations were unable to host experts during live shows. This necessitated radio station producers to conduct telephone interviews (aired live or recorded) with experts, often resulting in low quality interviews due to connectivity problems. Radio stations also reported that COVID-19 has led to a drop in advertising revenue leading to staff layoffs. Consequently, the limited staff capacity took a toll on programming, agriculture included. For the stations that rely on generator to power their studio machines during the occasional power failure, reduced revenues meant that they were not able to fuel their generators, thus reducing the number of hours the station was on air. In some instances, this affected agricultural programming.

### **Extension officers**

COVID-19 created a challenge for extension officers' access to farmers in the first quarter due to the government regulations on the curfew which started at 7.00pm to 5.00am. The curfew hours have since been revised to start from 9.00pm to 5.00am. Conducting Farmer Field Schools (FFS) was also a challenge due to COVID-19 social distancing regulations which have resulted in the coming together of fewer farmers to be trained on various farming practices. Extension officers reported that many farmers did not have access to masks, and hand washing stations had not been placed at the venues for these activities. This led to the cancellation of many FFS and farmer visits by extension officers.

Another hindrance to delivery of services to farmers was the high rain fall experienced throughout Kenya in the first months of the year, rendering many roads impassable, thereby curtailing movement for the extension officers.

### **Farmers**

For the pastoralist communities in Marsabit and Kajiado counties a ban on inter-county movements, the closure of live animal markets coupled with the closure of livestock export destination markets such as the Middle East due to the COVID-19 pandemic are negatively affecting the pastoralists' livelihoods. Other challenges included insecurity in Marsabit county which has affected movement of people including extension officers, destruction of crops by heavy rains and the fall army worm, desert locust invasion and drought conditions having a negative effect on agricultural productivity. Also, due to COVID-19, some NGOs that provided farmers with much-needed extension support have had to cease operation.

### **Outlook for July to December 2020**

The Ministry of Agriculture has developed COVID-19 protocols and guidelines that sector actors in the agri-food supply chain should adhere to by practicing proper sanitation and social distancing.

Kajiado County government plans to start an irrigation project, for food security. Bus Radio plans on following up with this initiative. Thiiri FM plans to develop COVID-19 guidelines on how to handle transport logistics for producers to record content in the field and how to package pre-recorded programmes. KiMI is supporting the station on this. Syokimau FM also plans to repackage programs already aired and develop programmes that address farming under COVID-19 such as aggregated marketing via digital platforms. Wikwatyo FM plans on continuing their collaboration with the Kitui County Ministry of Agriculture to run weekly programmes on crop and animal husbandry from July to December 2020.

The COVID-19 situation has necessitated both radio stations and agriculture extension officers to think innovatively in reaching farmers. The use of ICTs and social media platforms such as WhatsApp groups and Facebook are becoming the norm for radio stations that have not been using

them. Extension service providers are looking into increasing their use of online extension services such as conducting e-trainings with farmers and developing e-learning resources such as recorded videos to share with farmers via smart phones.

### Location names (counties covered by the project)

Kilimo Media continued to provide remote support to seven radio stations in the project namely: Rware FM (Nyeri), Syokimau FM (Kitui), Thiiiri FM (Meru County), Bus Radio (Kajiado County), Radio Jangwani (Marsabit County) Wikwatyo FM (Kitui County) and IBSE FM (Marsabit County). Radio stations reported taking precautions such as maintaining social distancing regulations, sanitizing and use of masks when interviewing farmers and conducting live programmes with experts visiting the radio stations studios.

Data tracked (weekly)		The method used to track those numbers	Notes
Number of Radio listening groups	36	-Telephone calls to the groups by agriculture extension officers -Radio listening group membership list	
Total number of farmers in the listening groups (sum of all the groups)	3258		
Male	1273		
Female	1985		Important to note the higher number of women farmers because most of the listener groups consist of women only
<b>Data tracked</b>			
Number of in house trainings held	1	Attendance list	Wikwatyo FM
Number of participants at the in-house trainings	2		
Number of officers trained on the radio for agriculture extension	22		8 radio staff 9 extension officers 3 KALRO researchers 2 scientists from Kitui County Meteorological department All present during the training on weather advisories
Estimated number of farmers reached by the radio station (Jan to July 2020)	1,945,250		*This number does not take into account the increased number of farmers reached by Bus radio based

		<p>in Kajiado County following the erection of a 30-meter mast. The radio station plans to conduct an assessment to gauge their new audience reach.</p> <p>*The number of listeners increased from figures provided in the 2019 report owing to the addition of Wikwatyo FM and IBSE FM and the fact that most people are at home due to COVID-19 and are listening more to the radio.</p>
<p>Practices implemented after listening to the programs (please add a short description)</p>	<p>All stations are currently airing agricultural COVID-19 programmes in various formats including live shows and radio spots in Kiswahili and local languages. Experts on the show are mainly from the Ministry of Health and Communication Authority of Kenya.</p> <p><b>Wikwatyo FM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing pigeon peas, post-harvest management and storage</li> <li>• Safe use of pesticides</li> <li>• Weather advisories for March-April-May season</li> </ul> <p><b>Thiiri FM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rearing mud fish</li> <li>• Preparing nursery beds</li> <li>• Chicken rearing</li> </ul> <p><b>Syokimau FM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather advisories for March-April-May season</li> </ul>	<p>The implementation of these practices was confirmed by agricultural extension officers providing on-the ground extension support to farmers.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing of vegetables such as kales and cabbages</li> </ul> <p><b>Radio Jangwani &amp; IBSE FM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control of fall army worm</li> <li>• Control of desert locusts</li> <li>• Planting, pest control, harvesting and post-harvesting of maize, beans and sorghum</li> </ul> <p><b>Bus Radio</b> Practices that farmers listened to and implemented included beekeeping and irrigation of horticultural crops.</p> <p><b>Rware FM</b> Did not air any programs. The extension officer assigned to the station was transferred to another region and the radio staff was laid off due to downsizing of staff as a result of COVID-19.</p>	
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## Success stories

### Sweet potato enterprise in Meru County

Mr. Muringi, a retired banker in Tigania West in Meru County, ventured into orange fleshed sweet potato farming after hearing about the enterprise over the radio on Thiiri FM. Extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture provided information on how to grow sweet potatoes and where to source certified vines. He has been successful in his venture where he harvested about 7000kgs of sweet potatoes from his one-acre farm which he sold for Ksh 360,000. Mr. Muringi had never made so much money from a farming activity.

### Kitchen gardens

Another farmer from the same region who is an avid listener of Thiiri FM, listened to a programme about kitchen gardens aired on the radio station. Mr Isaiah Naibocha carefully followed the instructions on the establishment of a kitchen garden given by the extension officer. He grows kales and spinach and the vegetables did so well that he thought his fellow villagers would also benefit

from the same initiative. His success made it an easy task to organize them to contribute towards digging a borehole that would provide a reliable source of water for the kitchen gardens. Ntirutu village has benefited from this initiative by having a wider variety of vegetables for improved household nutrition and improved livelihoods from the sale of the vegetables.



Tomatoes growing in one of the farmers' fields who joined the vegetable growing initiative in Ntirutu village

### Control of *Ipomea* weed in pasture

Naretoi women group based in Duka Moja in Kajiado central sub-county, in Kajiado county learned about how to control *Ipomea purpurea*, an invasive weed that hinders pasture from growing, over the weekly agricultural radio programme Olaramatani Odupa aired on Bus radio. The women farmers who keep livestock mainly for milk production were facing challenges of controlling the weed on their pasture. They contacted the extension officer attached to the radio station who visited the group and trained them on how to control the weed by regularly uprooting it and cutting the flowers to prevent the spread of its seeds. While the weed still presents a challenge to their neighboring farmers, Naretoi women group have been able to control the weed on their land since the training. They report that their livestock now have good pasture which has led to increased milk production.



*Ipomea* weed growing in pasture



*Ipomea free pasture being harvested*