

VILLAGE VOICES FOR DEVELOPMENT



A study in the use of radio to promote human rights and enable citizens to act on their rights to information and freedom of speech in Southern Madagascar

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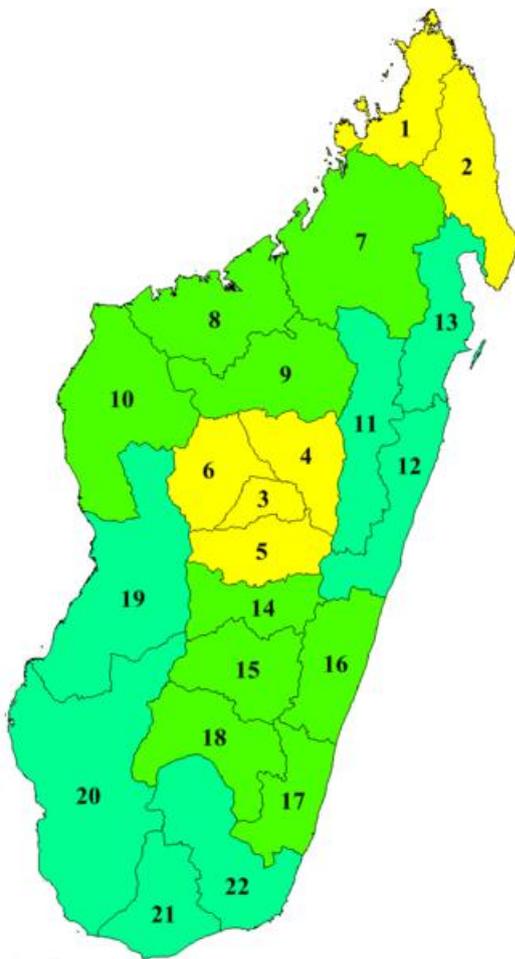
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Acronyms

ALT Mg	Andry Lalana Tohana Madagascar
ALT UK	Andrew Lees Trust United Kingdom
C4D	Communications for Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCB	<i>Development Communications Trust (DCT), formerly known Development Broadcasting Unit</i>
DREFT	Regional Directorate of Environment et Forests
DREN	Regional Directorate of National Education
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FM radio	Frequency Modulated radio
IEC	Information Education and Communications
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LG	Listening Group
MCDI	Medical Care Development International
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSP UK	Media Support Partnership UK
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NLG	Non Listening Group (i.e. village listener selected for the evaluation of VVD)
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission on Human Rights
PAM	Programme Alimentaire du Monde (World Food Programme)
SAP	Systeme Alerte Precoce (Early Warning System)
SBCC	Social Behaviour Change Communications
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
TTR	(Tranoben'ny Tantsaha) Chamber of Agriculture Androy
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFPA	UN Family Planning Agency
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
VVD	Village Voices for Development
WFP	World Food Programme (see also PAM)

Regional Divisions of Madagascar



	Number on map ¹	Area (km ²)
1	<u>Diana</u>	19,266
2	<u>Sava</u>	25,518
3	<u>Itasy</u>	6,993
4	<u>Analamanga</u>	16,911
5	<u>Vakinankaratra</u>	16,599
6	<u>Bongolava</u>	16,688
7	<u>Sofia</u>	50,100
8	<u>Boeny</u>	31,046
9	<u>Betsiboka</u>	30,025
10	<u>Melaky</u>	38,852
11	<u>Alaotra-Mangoro</u>	31,948
12	<u>Atsinanana (East)</u>	21,934
13	<u>Analanjirifo</u>	21,930
14	<u>Amoron'i Mania</u>	16,141
15	<u>Haute Matsiatra (Upper Matsiatra)</u>	21,080
16	<u>Vatovavy-Fitovinany</u>	19,605
17	<u>Atsimo-Atsinanana (South-East)</u>	18,863
18	<u>Ihorombe</u>	26,391
19	<u>Menabe</u>	46,121
20	<u>Atsimo-Andrefana (South-West)</u>	66,236
21	<u>Androy</u>	19,317
22	<u>Anosy</u>	25,731

The Administrative Divisions in Madagascar

Madagascar is composed of 22 administrative Regions. These formerly second-tier administrative divisions became the first-level administrative divisions when the former six provinces were dissolved on 4 October 2009. Each Region is divided into Districts, Communes and Fokontany. The Regions and Communes are territorial collectives. The Districts and Fokontany are decentralised administrative districts. The Fokontany is the primary administrative organisation within the community.

The Regions are each led by a **Chef de Region, elected by universal suffrage**, who is the direct representative of the State and responsible for the Districts, Communes and Fokontany within the Region. Each Commune is headed by a **Mayor**, who is also elected by universal suffrage during the Municipal Advisory elections. The **Chef du District** is nominated by decree by the Council of Ministers and is under direct authority of the Chef de Region. The Chef du District nominates the **Chef du Fokontany** following nominations from the local Mayor who proposes five people, all elected by the Fokontany.

¹ <http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b6/Madagascar-regions.png&imgrefurl>

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the Malagasy authorities in the Region of Androy, the Chef du Region Androy, local service providers, CSO and NGO partners who assisted in programme making; the radio listening groups in Androy who participated in the development of this project and gave voice to the concerns of the community; and the FM radio stations in Ambovombe, Radio Cactus and Radio Rohondroho who broadcast the VVD programmes to approximately 50,000 listeners. The UNDP kindly provided training to VVD and they are gratefully acknowledged; so too are the Malagasy Ministries at national level and the OHCHR, all of whom recognised the value of the VVD project and gave it their support. ALT is indebted to all the funders, and in particular to the Adsum foundation whose seed grant kick started the project and attracted the support of the Swiss Embassy Madagascar and Media Support Partnership UK.

A number of international practitioners and researchers assisted the project including Nicola Harford of Media Support Partnership, advisor on Monitoring and Evaluation; Dr Antonie Kraemer, social anthropologist and advisor on engagement processes; Yvonne Orenge, Director of ALT UK, acting Technical Advisor to VVD and managing the UK's collaboration and inputs to the project. Andrew Johnstone has latterly provided significant technical and editorial assistance in producing this evaluation report.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to share the key findings of the VVD radio project in Southern Madagascar after six months of broadcasts in 2012, in particular to document the design and evolution of the pilot project; feedback the outcomes to participating stakeholders; inform the donor community about the impacts of the VVD project; and provide lessons and perspectives to assist a proposed scaling up process. The document focuses on the findings of a two month evaluation process which was also informed by regular monitoring and feedback in the field during the course of the project activities.

Context

Following the 2009 coup d'état in Madagascar there has been a decline in development indicators and a widening gap between the Malagasy population and its leaders. In the south, characterised by low education and literacy levels, poor infrastructure, and strong traditional social constraints there is limited participation in local governance. It is in this context that the Village Voices for Development (VVD), based on a radio for good governance programme in Malawi, has used radio as a tool to empower and enable citizens to learn about, understand, and act upon their rights to information and freedom of expression. The VVD project was highly innovative for Madagascar; a 2008 UNDP study revealed there were no mechanisms for citizens to engage with media. VVD provided unique and unprecedented opportunities for men, women and young people to have a voice, and participate in local and regional debates with decision makers in public via radio, thereby making local authorities more responsive to their development needs and more accountable for local service provision. This dialogue, facilitated by VVD in the media, was highly inclusive of women and young men in a context where cultural norms usually favour male elders.

Collaboration

A collaboration between Andry Lalana Tohana (ALT Mg) and Andrew Lees Trust (ALT UK), the VVD project was supported by funding from the Adsum Foundation, Media Support Partnership, and the Swiss Embassy, Madagascar. Two months of volunteer time was supported in part by Vodafone World of Difference. ALT has more than fifteen years experience of working with communities in southern Madagascar on a range of development challenges from food security, energy issues, natural resource management, and HIV and

AIDS, and is a leader in using radio as a tool for education and development. Hence, ALT Mg was able to draw on well established relationships with development partners, communities and local media to conduct an unprecedented engagement of citizens with their leaders.

Pilot Phase

The pilot phase project was conducted in the Androy Region of Southern Madagascar by ALT Mg between February and July 2012 and was followed by a two month evaluation period between August and September 2012. The project then continued with bridge funding from Adsum Foundation until December 2012 when it evolved to assist the EU funded national elections communications campaign 2013 by providing a civic engagement component based on the VVD approach. **The main aims VVD included:**

1) to use the media to promote the human rights of access to information and freedom of expression; and
2) to facilitate direct discourse between villagers and their local leaders/ decision makers about local development policy and strategies. **The outcomes sought to achieve:**

1) improved understanding of the rights to information and freedom of expression for local communities;
2) increased confidence of villagers to prioritise and express their development needs to decision makers;
3) improved response and participation of decision makers in meeting villagers' information needs; and
4) positive change in the implementation of local public services.

Methodology

The ALT VVD 'Spiral of Engagement' followed an evolving, responsive process where the ALT team worked with existing radio "listening groups" (LGs) comprised of men and women drawn from the community, and helped them identify and prioritise development themes and concerns for discussion; citizens then debated these topics and recorded their questions and concerns about them ; the ALT team took the recordings to the appropriate decision maker who, in turn recorded his/her response to the community's questions. The questions and answers were then edited together to present a direct dialogue between citizen and decision maker. The VVD editor copied the programmes on to CDs and distributed them to two partner FM radio stations for broadcast during each. The team carried out monitoring of the broadcasts to gather feedback from citizens, decision makers and radio stations in order to deepen the debate and the responses on each topic until listeners were satisfied with the information provided. Additional phone in programmes were produced quarterly to open up debate and include the wider listening audience in Androy.

Evaluation

With international help, the project team delivered a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategy which consisted of monthly monitoring and feedback exercises, a baseline survey conducted at the start of the pilot phase, followed by an endline survey after six months of broadcasting . The evaluation assessed citizens access to the programmes, their understanding about and ability to act on their human rights to information and freedom of expression. It also evaluated changes in responsiveness of decision makers to citizens and any changes to the implementation of services in response to the needs of the communities. It should be noted however that, given the constraint of time, funding and other challenges, it was not possible to conduct a scientifically rigorous evaluation. The methodology tended towards qualitative over quantitative approach in the design of questionnaires and information gathered. However, the results provide a strong indication of the potential of using radio as a means to empower individuals and communities.

Key findings

1) Media engagement: There was a significant shift in relationship with the media as VVD actively engaged citizens in programme production, providing feedback to producers and calling in to phone in programmes:

Indeed, 45% of citizens in LGs called in to live VVD radio phone in debates whereas only 10% had previously had experience of speaking on the radio (requesting dedications and interviews with journalist). Moreover citizens were driving the VVD radio programme content with their questions, influencing development debate and catalysing action through their demands for information and service provision.

2. Rights 90% of the LGs, and 73% of NLGs drawn from the wider community said they had learned something new about their human rights; 68% of NLGs said they had learnt this new information via radio (VVD and its partners); included in this new understanding of rights was that listeners in LGs and NLGs believed that decision makers were obliged to answer their questions (66% on average); this knowledge increased levels of citizens' confidence. At the start of the project 55% thought it was not easy to ask for information but after VVD this shifted and 85% of LGs felt confidence in greater degrees to demand questions of local decision makers. Also, 60% said they had been able to act on their newly learnt rights – in particular women, 55% of whom called VVD radio phone in programmes and participated in public debate.

3. Improved relations and dialogue with decision makers All the decision makers who were asked questions by citizens responded in radio broadcasts and phone in programmes about public security, health services and food security techniques; also through changes in services and improved interaction in the field including eg: public dissemination of the hospital fees structure to reduce corruption and protect patients; greater transparency about mechanisms for providing school canteens and food for work; clarification on legalities of land inheritance for women; oversight on legalities of local charcoal production for domestic fuel.;and 86% of decision makers believed that VVD acted as an effective facilitator for communicating with citizens and clarifying development topics. Indeed, perception about access to decision makers shifted significantly during VVD with reliance on the Chef du Fokontany /Fokonola meetings diminishing from 68% to 32 % by the end of the pilot, and with notable positive shift towards citizens accessing NGOs directly from 3% to 15%. Additionally, 67% of target listeners were satisfied with the answers they received from decision makers via VVD broadcasts. This reversed the situation at the start of the project when 65% of citizens in LGs felt that mechanisms to access decision makers and subsequent responses were inadequate.

Lessons learnt

The project was delivered on a very small budget over just six months. It had a significant positive impact on local dialogue but there were a number of challenges identified which time and greater resources could address. ALT would in future like to assist radio stations to better manage phone in programmes and deal with energy and equipment failures; to train decision makers and local managers to become more adept at managing media engagement and answering spontaneously on a range of topics within their expertise; to provide technical training for project staff and increased human and technical resources to scale up the project into more communities since direct beneficiaries (LGs) benefit from the enhanced engagement with media and decision makers and they demonstrated a greater retention of information broadcast by VVD.

Sustainability

The longer term aim of the VVD project is to scale up into other regions, and enable a wider engagement of citizens with their leaders via the radio; also to increase local capacity of media, local authorities and CSO/NGO partners to adopt and master the VVD approach for public dialogue and debate via radio. ALT Mg is the first Malagasy NGO with long term experience in communications for development in Madagascar with an extensive grass roots track record and is already an example of a successful sustainability strategy that saw the full transfer from a northern based NGO to a southern based Malagasy NGO. They are well placed for support and partnership from national and international donors and partner organisations seeking to develop the use of media for development and good governance in Madagascar.

Introduction

Project Overview

Village Voices for Development (VVD) was based on a radio for good governance programme in Malawi² and adapted to the local context in Madagascar. The project aims to use radio as a tool to empower and enable citizens to learn about, understand and act upon their rights to information and freedom of expression. The project provides opportunities for local people to have a voice and participate in local and regional debates and decision making processes that affect their lives thereby make local authorities and decision makers more responsive to their development needs and accountable for local service provision. The VVD pilot project was a collaboration between Andry Lalana Tohana (ALT Mg) and Andrew Lees Trust (ALT UK) , implemented in the field by ALT Mg with technical and funding support from ALT UK.

Timescale and funding

Initially, the pilot phase of VVD was scheduled for six months. The Adsum Foundation provided a seed grant and subsequently the Swiss Embassy in Madagascar approved co-finance for the project, enabling it to build in a vital evaluation component and extend the timeframe to eight months from February to September 2012. Further financial support for the evaluation, and to meet project shortfalls, was provided by Media Support Partnership (MSP UK) and from October 2012 an extension phase was funded by Adsum Foundation to provide bridge funding while ALT Mg awaited outcomes of funding proposals. In December 2012 ALT Mg was contracted under a European Union funded consortium with Search for Common Ground to deliver a civic engagement component to the national elections communications campaign³, based on the VVD experience. The total VVD Pilot phase funding was £17, 674 GBP over eight months.

Target group/area

The Androy Region of southern Madagascar and specifically the District of Ambovombe with a listening population of some 50,000 people who were all able to receive the VVD programmes. Ten Village Radio Listening Groups each comprising 12 members were selected to participate in the project: a total of 123 direct beneficiaries. 12 local decision makers were approached to participate, seven participated in the research activities and five regularly made programmes in response to villagers' questions. The District is served by two local FM Radio Stations both of which were involved in the project.

ALT Project Team

The ALT Mg team in the field was composed of a Project Manager, a Project Assistant, two Field Animators (for data collection and programme production/editing), a Logistician; and an Administrative and Accounting Assistant. The project also benefitted from inputs from three international advisers for technical development and delivery of the project, monitoring and evaluation, and wider engagement processes including with national level donors and agencies (EC and UNDP/OHCHR).

² By the Development Communications Trust (DCT), formerly known as the Development Broadcasting Unit (DBU). The DBU was established in 1999, and – with DFID funding – started facilitating national dialogue on development issues, between rural communities and service providers, both governmental and non-governmental via radio.

³ ALT Mg working in collaboration with Search for Common Ground and the CENIT (national independent elections committee of Madagascar) to deliver 2013 electoral information via the media to the Malagasy electorate.

Context

The 2009 coup d'état in Madagascar which deposed Marc Ravalomanana has resulted in declining economic and human rights indicators and a widening communications gap between the Malagasy population and its leaders. With no mechanisms to ask for information, or hold their leaders to account, the population remains marginalised and disenfranchised from the democratic process with negative impacts on local and national governance. In the south particularly, high levels of illiteracy and low levels of education accompanied by poor infrastructure and the traditional constraints on social expression, leads to limited participation in local governance with resulting corruption and ineffective political processes.

The project was piloted in the Androy Region of Southern Madagascar, one of the most economically poor areas of the island. Local populations face regular drought, food shortages and limited opportunities for livelihoods and economic growth. Sometimes known as the 'graveyard of projects', the south presents many challenges: stretching across four regions with vast geographical distances, poor roads, isolated communities, and with traditional belief systems that challenge the development paradigm. For example, Antandroy pastoralists focus on acquiring cattle not for selling to provide income but to slaughter at death in order to ensure a 'better afterlife'; being a polygamous society without traditions of inheritance, this can lead to large families left without income, home or material support. In Androy a man is not distinguished as being rich or poor by his house, job, clothes or belongings – but by the number of livestock he possesses. Cattle are his spiritual and cultural bank and will be sold only in the event of absolute necessity.

The Antandroy people are known as 'the people of the thorns' because of the unique spiny forest which is their indigenous home. They are perceived as a warrior tribe having never been colonised and are considered the most direct of all Malagasy peoples and therefore make excellent partners to test new communications projects and methodologies. Nevertheless, it is not common, nor has it been feasible up to now, for the people of the region to seek clarification directly from local (village and district) decision makers on any matter affecting their lives and their development. Nor is it common for policy and decision makers in the region to provide direct answers to questions from the public and broadcast information transparently about their work and activities. Dialogue between villagers and policy makers in Androy is seen, by most, as an opportunity for settling accounts rather than as a means to solve problems.

ALT local track record

ALT has worked with communities in Androy for more than fifteen years, responding to their most pressing daily problems and needs ranging from food security, energy issues, natural resource management, to HIV Aids, and development education via the radio. The Malagasy NGO ALT is born out of the original Andrew Lees Trust local field team. It therefore has a long, respected track record of working relations in the region and commands the trust of local communities. This has provided a solid base essential for testing the new VVD mechanisms of engagement between citizens and their leaders via the media. The positive collaboration of local villagers and decision makers with the VVD project has enabled ALT to develop the project in the most culturally appropriate manner whilst also addressing complex social and political sensitivities. Lessons learned through the pilot process have helped shape the project and informed the design for scaling up. The same iterative approach was used for Andrew Lees Trust's Project Radio which scaled up from its original pilot in Androy to reach over 800,000 listeners across eight regions of Madagascar over ten years⁴, with notable impacts on the achievement of MDGs.⁵

⁴ see <http://www.andrewelestrust.org/radio.htm>

⁵ *Contribution of Radio Broadcasting to the Achievement of MDGs in S Madagascar, Metcalf, Harford, Myers, 2007*

Barriers to Communication

The World Bank has estimated that 70% of Malagasy live on less than a dollar per day. Poverty is a significant barrier to communications as education and literacy levels prevent ready access to written information and rural populations, in particular, remain isolated by lack of infrastructure. For over two thirds of the population living in rural areas⁶, access to information from decision makers is principally via the traditional mechanism of Fokonola meetings with the Chef du Fokontany⁷. These meetings are inevitably structured around cultural norms which favour male elders and where women and young men are frequently excluded from decision making processes and from expressing their needs.

Media can play a significant role in assisting the communications process by educating and informing the electorate en masse. However, in rural areas newspapers are inaccessible due to poor distribution and low literacy rates, as high as 60% in more isolated, rural areas. Internet access is also low –utilised by only one in 50 people -⁸ and lack of electricity confines internet and TV to the towns. However, by 2011⁹.mobile phone ownership had expanded to 41% of the Malagasy population.



Working in a typical Antandroy Village, southern Madagascar

Radio is the most popular and accessible of the media in Madagascar¹⁰ but lack of affordable batteries restrict the numbers of those who can run radios sets. Signal coverage is limited in rural areas leaving many communities with no access to broadcasts. Additionally, there is limited capacity and inclination in local radio stations to engage citizens to voice their opinions or express their views through open public debate in the media. A UNDP national survey of communications in Madagascar in 2008 found there to be no opportunities for citizens to engage in debate through the media¹¹ - one radio station on the island was experimenting with phone in programmes in 2008 but was considered too controversial and closed down.

The media in Madagascar is not considered free, being subject to high levels of self censorship with fear of reprisals if content is considered antagonistic to current government interests. After the coup swept Andry Rajoelina to power in March 2009, the ensuing dismissal of parliament, and the virtual suspension of the constitution, and any semblance of judicial independence ushered in a dangerous and violent period for the media that saw one journalist killed and more than 80 opposition media outlets closed through 2010. While 2011 did not see any further killings or closings, the press environment remained extremely unstable, with high levels of government censorship and intimidation of journalists and media outlets.

Several United Nations studies reported restrictions on freedom of expression still prevalent in country in 2011¹² and in 2013 Madagascar fell from 84 to 88 in the Reporters without Borders Press Freedom Index¹³.

⁶ <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/statistics/tags/madagascar> IFAD Rural poverty Portal 2010 stats

⁷ ALT VVD baseline study , Androy Region 2012

⁸ UNICEF 2010 country profile/statistics

⁹ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2>

¹⁰ UNDP Communications for Empowerment National Study 2008, Oslo Governance Centre

¹¹ UNDP Communications for Empowerment National Study 2008, Oslo Governance Centre

¹² SNU Vision Strategique Madagascar 2010-2011.

National radio does not reach all areas across the island and it broadcasts in the official Malagasy language (Merina) which is not always understood by more isolated communities who have their own dialect. Indeed, the UNDP 2008 report highlighted that, on average, only 57% of listeners surveyed in Merina speaking areas close to the capital could 'always' understand the language in radio programmes; one quarter stated they understood just 'sometimes'.

Fear of reprisals exerts pressure more broadly in Malagasy society especially when coupled with local belief systems – *fady*, *tsiny* and *tody*, - which prevent people from speaking out freely since this can be interpreted as a challenge to the social order and unbalance social harmony.

Together with political, gender and poverty barriers, taboos leave much of the population fearful and disenfranchised from public debate about their development and the decisions that affect their lives.

Fady, Tsiny and Tody. *The Fady (taboos) play an integral role in traditional Malagasy ancestry; Fady are generally linked to local beliefs (it is forbidden to bury the dead on Tuesdays) and are an elaborate means of ensuring social cohesion and protecting natural resources. 'Tsiny' and 'Tody', form a complex system of belief that influences and moderates communications and behaviour. The 'Tsiny' is the blame that one risks every time one acts or speaks, deliberately or not. The blame may manifest in sanctions, such as accidents, illness even sudden death. If someone has done something wrong without being punished by a neighbour, Tody - an impersonal force - will come and sanction the wrongdoer. To respect Fady is to respect a world order. 'Ota fady', to break taboo, is dangerous. You will have Tsiny and most probably be hit by Tody.¹⁴ 'The Tsiny is on the one hand an imperfection of the acting person and on the other hand the consequence of his imperfection, the more or less supernatural force that acts to sanction this imperfection'¹⁵.*

¹³ http://en.rsfs.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1054

¹⁴ Øyvind Dahl, *Malagasy Meanings*, 1993 Centre for Intercultural communication School of Mission & Theology

¹⁵ Andriamanjato 1957-59

Project Aims and Objectives

The project was inspired by a project implemented in Malawi by the Development Communications Trust which, since 2000, has successfully used radio to promote improved dialogue between citizens and service providers with positive impacts on service provision. A similar approach has been used in other parts of Africa. However, in Madagascar this approach was unprecedented and created entirely new challenges for the ALT Mg team and all the participants. Additionally, it was uncertain if the project would be accepted especially within the sensitive political environment in Madagascar at the time of delivery.

However, the VVD project was able to build on ALT's fifteen years of communications for development experience in the south of Madagascar and aimed to further develop ALT's participatory approach with local communities. In particular it evolved on the premise that ALT's oral testimony work undertaken between 2007 and 2009 had demonstrated that citizens were ready to give voice to their concerns in public and wanted decision makers to listen to their perspectives and views.¹⁶

Furthermore, ALT recognised that the political crisis had deepened communications gaps in all areas of the country and that the future sustainable development was dependent on addressing these gaps with proactive civic engagement in local decision making and governance.

In the first instance this relies on citizens understanding their rights and their readiness to act on these rights; also for local decision makers to acknowledge the rights of citizens and be responsive to demands for information and services. The project chose to use radio as the most effective tool to reach across all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender or educational level, and to act as a facilitator for engagement that otherwise would not occur. With this in mind,

Principal aims of the VVD Project included:

1. To use the media to promote the human rights of access to information and freedom of expression for vulnerable communities in southern Madagascar, and enable them to act on those rights.
2. To facilitate direct discourse between villagers and their local leaders/decision makers about local development policy and strategies, and enable them to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives e.g. services towards MDGs.

By delivering these aims the project hoped to then affect and subsequently measure **changes and improvements in:**

1. Understanding of rights to information and freedom of expression by local communities.
2. Confidence of citizens to prioritise and express their development needs to decision makers.
3. Participation and responsiveness of decision makers to villagers information needs through the creation of interactive radio programmes
4. Implementation of local public services, and engagement with communities from the local authorities, local service providers, and NGOs.

¹⁶ ALT Project HEPA oral testimonies 2007-2009 - <http://www.andrewleestrust.org/hepa.htm>

Project Methodology

The pilot was designed to enable ALT to develop assess and refine the project model and ensure it was culturally appropriate whilst addressing complex social and political sensitivities. The inclusion of an evaluation component was important for assessing project impacts and to learn lessons for scaling up. A participatory approach was applied at all stages of the project, initially to identify the development issues, information needs, concerns and problems of local village communities but also to increase local ownership and ensure the views of communities, media and decision makers would shape the project.

The VVD team launched the project with courtesy visits to the local government representatives, the local service providers, NGOs and dignitaries in Androy in order to establish support for the project and its aims. Following a public broadcast of encouragement recorded by Msr Germain Rasolondraibe, Representative of the Androy Region, the field team then identified the most dynamic Radio Listening Groups (LGs) in Androy. These had been established by ALT Project Radio during 1999-2009 and many were still functioning but needed to be re-energised and contracted to participate in the project. Some of the LGs had their radios repaired or replaced by the VVD project, and all ten participating LGs were issued with mobile phones and solar panel chargers to enable them to participate in phone in programmes. The two main radio stations in Ambovombe were contracted to provide air time to the project for broadcasting.

The VVD field team then undertook a baseline survey to inform the project and provide data for measurement of change at the end of six months. The baseline helped also to establish prime development topics for focus group debate. The team then carried out focus groups with the LGs which included men and women aged between 19-45 years old who represented the community in the project. The themes that emerged during the debates were then prioritised for programme making e.g. health, security. Once LGs had prioritised and agreed the theme for programming the ALT team recorded their questions and concerns. The team took the recordings to the appropriate decision maker - local authorities, service providers, NGOs – and asked them to listen and respond. The team then recorded their response and took all the recorded material - questions and answers – to be digitally edited in the ALT production studio in Ambovombe. The final programme was produced in a Q & A format as if in a face to face dialogue.

The team then copied the VVD programmes on to CDs and distributed them to the two local FM radio station partners for broadcast during the month. Broadcasting times were negotiated to maximise listening opportunities. Monitoring of the broadcasts was undertaken the month following the broadcasts to gather feedback from the LGs, decision makers and radio stations. The team discussed the feedback - also in the form of questions on broadcast topics - with the appropriate decision makers and recorded more material to deepen the response and provide more detailed information in the following broadcasts until listeners were satisfied that their information needs were met.

A number of phone in programmes were organised and these focused on the subjects that were deemed to be highest in the LGs priorities: public security, health, land and inheritance- especially women's rights to inheritance. The phone in programmes were conducted in one partner radio station that had the widest broadcast range and also the skills and equipment necessary to manage the process. The phone ins enabled the wider listening audience to participate in debates and ask questions of decision makers.

The approach developed a spiral of engagement that allowed a highly responsive system of dialogue to evolve between the listeners (LGs) and decision makers.

The ALT VVD Approach – ‘Spiral of Engagement’



The full VVD spiral of engagement took approximately one month from focus groups to monitoring and recording new questions; this varied depending on the availability of the key actors: LG members and decision makers. In each month at least four VVD radio programmes were produced on separate topics. Monitoring continued into the following month and beyond if the listeners were not satisfied with decision makers' response. Phone in programmes were broadcast in months three and six to cover the most popular themes but are not shown in the above diagram. Ideally they would be produced on a monthly basis¹⁷.

Programme adaptation

During the frequent field trips by the VVD team to visit and discuss with LGs, it was found that the topic of land rights was one of the subjects causing conflict in the local society. Land ownership is a sensitive subject because the Antandroy are usually bound by family or neighbourhood relationships and it is taboo to launch a judicial or administrative proceeding against close family - even if it is only intended to resolve a misunderstanding and not to harm anyone. In order to enable the population to talk about and air their concerns on this subject matter the VVD team adopted a softer approach and developed a radio mini-drama to present the difficulties faced in daily life on the land issue. This mini-drama was created to act as a discussion guide during focus groups with the LGs and enabled citizens to talk about the subject without implicating their family or neighbours.



Recording a mini drama on land rights in the ALT studio with local actors

¹⁷ Phone in programmes were an entirely new format for all participants and presented a number of technical problems. The team took time to ensure they were prepared well; funds did not allow for more than two phone in programmes, although three were produced during the pilot.

Stakeholder Groups

1. Community Radio Listening Groups.



Radio Listening Group - Ambovombe

The project identified the most dynamic and accessible radio listening groups (LG) in the Androy Region among the two thousand listening groups put in place by ALT from 1999-2009 across the southern arc of Madagascar. Consequently the LGs selected were already accustomed to participating in ALT focus groups, radio programme production and monitoring / evaluation of broadcast impacts.

Each LG is usually required to consist of an equal number of men and women with different livelihoods, educational levels etc. The project worked with 10 Radio Listening Groups, composed of approximately 12 people per group. A total of 123 participated, including 70 women and 53 men. The majority of the LGs

are headed up by women since this favours greater participation amongst the members of the village community (see box). The VVD team presented the project to the ten selected LGs who understood and formalised their agreement to collaborate by signing contracts with ALT Mg. Each LG was provided with a wind up, solar powered radio to enable group listening and debate for the project's programmes. All radios were repaired or replaced to ensure full working condition and a mobile phone with solar power charger and credit was provided to enable participation in phone ins.

Women Heads of LGs

Women are chosen to lead radio listening group because they are not implicated in the decision making hierarchy in the Antandroy village and so can more easily facilitate broad participation from all members of the group without disrupting the status quo, especially with regard to men's' participation. This approach also circumvents the situation where it is always the village chief who leads a development process or dialogue and it proactively increases women's status and position in the development scenario. Additionally, women are traditionally more present in the village than men who have to regularly move cattle to new grazing pastures. Women who are not seen to be at home most of the time to care for children or elderly are known as the 'woman with the white door' (i.e. it is shut and sun bleached as opposed to open, looking into the dark interior shade) and they are not usually put forward by the community to lead a LG.

2. District Decision Makers and Service Providers. The project required the full co-operation of local leaders and decision makers in order to provide the necessary information and response to villagers' questions. The VVD team took extra care to ensure that the project was well presented, especially given the sensitive political environment across the island. A power-point presentation was produced and key messages developed to share and discuss with the local dignitaries and potential project partners. The project team had planned close co-operation with at least five service providers and local NGOs in the Androy Region. In reality the team presented the project to 12 key regional stakeholders (**Annex 1 List of Decision Makers**).

The ALT Director and National Representative also made thirteen, national level courtesy visits in the capital, Antananarivo, in order to further strengthen the collaboration with stakeholders locally in Androy, including to: Ministries of Public Health, Education, Agriculture, Communications; the Swiss Embassy Madagascar; the European Union; FAO; UNICEF; UNFPA; MCDI; GRET¹⁸; OHCHR; and UNDP.



Meeting with the Regional Director of Environment and Forests Androy

Among the 12 partners visited in Androy only one partner refused to cooperate with the project (the Regional Directorate for National Education (DREN)), stating personal reasons, which explain the absence of programmes on educational topics¹⁹. However, the Ministry of National Education in Tana gave its approval and agreement to support the project. Indeed, The Ministry of National Education and UNDP expressed a willingness to establish written accords with the ALT VVD project in order to formalise the collaboration.

The decision makers most called upon to answer questions from citizens and who were consequently active in this pilot phase were drawn from: the Region Androy; the DRDR Androy; World Food programme; the region's Hospital, the AES Androy²⁰; the Police Brigade; the DREFT, Guichet Foncier Ambovombe and associated experts, the Regional Agricultural Service, Jirama²¹; Representatives; a local mayor and elder also contributed to programme production.

In general, all the stakeholders visited were impressed and found this project both interesting and innovative. WFP in particular welcomed the project noting that it was essential for development of the South. The Ministry of Communication was similarly convinced by the importance of this project and provided a letter of recommendation for VVD. The project also received letters of support from OHCHR and the Head of the Androy Region.

3. Local Radio Stations

There are two local FM radio stations broadcasting in the target area of Ambovombe and its environs and both were engaged as partners in the VVD project:

Radio station "CACTUS" seen right, has been broadcasting in partnership with ALT since 1999. The station journalists have received training and technical support from ALT Project Radio²². This station has the greatest transmission power and therefore the largest signal coverage in the region. It is well respected and has an established place in the community.



Radio Station "CACTUS"

¹⁸ GRET is a French development NGO committed to providing lasting, innovative solutions for fair development.

¹⁹ Later negotiations would ensure the participation of the DREN

²⁰ The AES is the local provider of water supplies in Androy

²¹ Jirama is the state owned local provider of electricity in Madagascar

²² Project Radio (2006-2009) – a collaboration with the SE/CNLS (National HIV / AIDS Awareness Campaign). <http://www.andrewelestrust.org/radio.htm>

Radio station 'ROHONDROHO' was recently established by the Commune of Ambovombe, its journalists have previously worked with local radio stations that were supported and trained by ALT Project Radio.

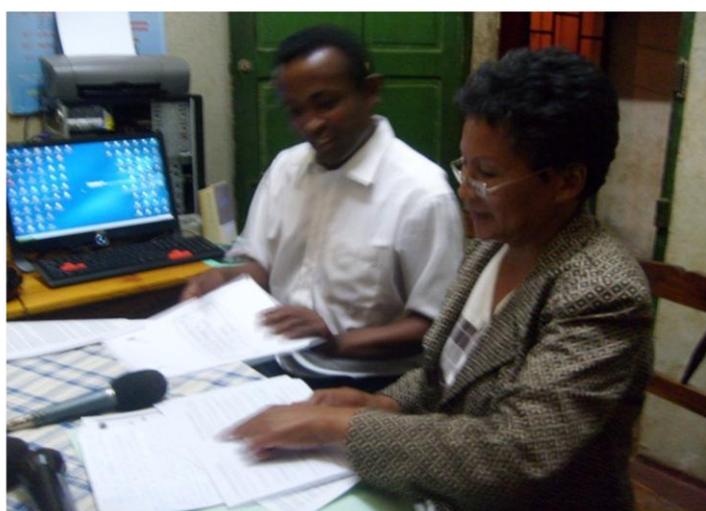
The broadcast times for each station were negotiated for different times to ensure the maximum listening opportunities for listeners tuning in between the two stations and to avoid unnecessary competition. The detailed programming times were:

- Radio CACTUS: 18.00 hrs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The evening slot preceded the news and was considered "prime time" listening.
- Radio ROHONDROHO: 12.00hrs on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. This offers a lunch time listening slot for those who go home to eat at midday.

Profile	Radio CACTUS	Radio ROHONDROHO
Frequency	FM 91Mhz	FM 100Mhz
Licence	YES	YES
Began broadcasting	4 April 1999	August 2008
Status	Private	Community owned
Signal coverage	80km	60km
Power of antenna/transmission	500W	200W
Listeners	All	All

Additionally, during the six months pilot phase, Radio CACTUS co-produced three phone in programmes with VVD. Radio ROHONDROHO was unable to deliver a phone in programme due to technical problems. Radio CACTUS long experience of local broadcasting, their skills base and technical expertise meant they were the partner most capable of co-producing the radio phone in for VVD. They also had previous experience of phone in programmes, inviting audience 'dedications', when listeners call in with requests for favourite songs; or to participate in games that are run in partnership with the mobile phone operator Airtel and a local store in Ambovombe 'Ezaka'.

Despite more than ten years partnership with ALT Project Radio, broadcasting development themes to the Androy, the VVD phone-in programmes provided an entirely new format and broadcasting experience for Radio CACTUS. The journalists were expected to host important guests, such as police officers, and facilitate their debate and response to questions and concerns raised by the community through live phone calls. They were assisted by the VVD team and the many years of collaboration afforded a collegiate atmosphere and strong working relationship.



Guest speakers at Radio Cactus prepare to talk about women's rights to inheritance

Project Outputs

During six months the VVD pilot project delivered the following activities and outputs which form the basis of the evaluation:

Opportunities For Learning About Rights:

- Training
(UN Charter and Rights to Information and Freedom of Expression).
- Research
(baseline study, focus groups, feedback).

Opportunities For Acting On Rights/Responding To Rights:

- Participatory programme production.
- Phone in debates.
- Increased capacity of ALT Mg to use radio to facilitate development dialogue.



Training on Human Rights with Mr Axel, UNDP

1. Training

Six members of the ALT team and two members of the local human rights NGO Trano Aro Zo (Anosy) received training on human rights by Mr. Axel Etoundi, the UNDP Officer for Human Rights in Antananarivo. Five principal topics were covered during the training:

- Introduction to Human Rights.
- Citizens' rights to participate in public affairs.
- Rights to freedom of expression.
- Quick Tips on Animation / Facilitation.
- Method and technical support for training groups.

Four trainings were subsequently delivered to the ten LGs in Androy. The total number of participants in four training sessions was 79 LG members (66% of the total participating in VVD) plus 7 NLG members. A radio programme about human rights was produced in March 2012 and repeatedly broadcast to share the information from the training with the wider listening audience in Androy (approx 50,000 listeners).

2. Focus Groups

In order to identify information gaps and prioritise themes for discussion the teams facilitated 2-3 focus groups with LGs each month. A total of 14 focus groups were conducted with villagers during the pilot period and nine key themes emerged namely Health (4), Human Rights (1), Food Security (4), Agriculture (4), Rural Development (1), Public Security (4), Access to Water (1), Land Rights (1), Culture (1).

3. Programme Production

Approximately five radio programmes were produced and broadcast each month from March until July 2012. In total, 21 programs during the pilot period. From July to August a further nine programmes were produced and broadcast and were included in the evaluation (endline survey) (see **Annex 2 List of VVD Programmes**). The programmes were prepared by the end of each month and were broadcast in the following month. There was no broadcast in the first month of the project (February 2012) as time was dedicated to establishing the listening groups and partners collaboration.

4. Broadcasts

Under contractual agreements negotiated with ALT Mg at the start of the project Radio Cactus broadcast the programmes on average three times each week and re-broadcast over six months; however radio station, Rohondroho was not functioning for a number of weeks due to a technical problems at the station in the month of June (transmitter failure). The final broadcasts totalled **108** broadcasts with Radio Cactus (all 30 programmes) and **60** with Radio Rohondroho (just 16 of the programmes) from March until September. A total of 168 broadcasts broadcast through two radio stations to approximately 50,000 listeners in Androy.

5. Monthly Monitoring

Follow up focus groups and interviews took place with LGs, decision makers and radio stations to gather feedback from both listeners and participants after the monthly broadcast. The data collected was used to orient programming in the following month by enabling the team to identify remaining information gaps and address additional questions or difficulties arising from the broadcasts. Feedback was collected at the start of each month in May, June and July by the Producer/Editor and Programme Assistant.

6. Phone in Programmes

Three phone in programmes were organised and broadcast during the pilot phase. All three were produced with Radio Cactus. The themes chosen were based on topics considered the highest priority by LG members through focus group discussion and feedback: security, health and inheritance (land).

An information session about the date, time and invited guests for the phone in was given directly to the LGs one week before going live with the broadcasts. Additionally, a radio spot about the phone in programme was broadcast twice a day over four days preceding the day of broadcast to ensure that the entire population of Ambovombe District was informed and encouraged to participate. An average of 12 listeners called in to each of the phone in programmes.



Villagers supplied with mobile phones/chargers

7. Baseline Study and Evaluation

The ALT Mg team worked closely with the project's M&E adviser, Social Anthropologist and Technical Adviser, to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and elaborate questionnaires for 1) a baseline survey which was carried out at the start of the pilot phase in February – March 2012; and 2) an endline survey conducted between September and October 2012 to measure impacts of VVD after six months of broadcasting. See below.

Project Evaluation

Design and Methodology

The pilot phase of VVD activity was completed between February and August 2012. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the project was realised through a range of activity including the initial baseline survey, monthly monitoring with focus groups, semi structured interviews, and an endline survey using structured interviews.

The team undertook the baseline survey in February 2012 with the main project stakeholders: members of village Listening Groups (LGs), decision makers and local radio station personnel. The endline survey was conducted in September/October 2012 in order to compare knowledge of those interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the project. A fourth questionnaire was subsequently developed for the endline to survey the Non Listening Group audience (NLGs) in order to assess impacts of VVD in the wider community. Overall aims of monitoring and evaluating the pilot phase included:

- 1) Review methodology in order to maximise the lessons learnt and ensure the project design was locally adapted and appropriate.
- 2) Assess the viability of the project for scaling up in the longer term.

The choice of citizens surveyed was based on criteria that ensured a mix of age, gender, employment, and place of residence. See **Annex 3 Sampling**. The selection of decision makers was based on the development discipline of the organisation, its status (state or private), and its areas of action. The wider NLGs included in the final evaluation were, as far as possible, matched to similar profiles of those in the LGs (e.g. by age, occupation, status, gender etc).

Three questionnaires were designed for the baseline that covered: members of LGs, decision makers and radio station staff. A fourth type of questionnaire was subsequently developed for the endline to include the NLG audience. The process was as follows:

Step 1. Baseline Survey The aim of the baseline was to establish and measure:

- Existing knowledge and understanding about human rights, particularly rights to information and freedom of expression, of the local population and decision makers.
- The existing capacity of citizens to act on their rights, in particular to express their needs and obtain information from decision makers and local authorities.
- The role of the media, especially radio, in civil society and its potential to help communities understand and act upon information and freely express their views.
- Establish local development priorities, to help and lead the focus group.

Step 2 Endline Survey The aim of the final evaluation was to:

- Measure changes in relation to the media/local radio and programme production.
- Measure the change in knowledge and understanding of human rights.
- Observe changes in the villagers' ability to act in relation to their rights.
- Observe changes in decision makers' willingness to respond publicly to these rights.
- Establish future participation of stakeholders.
- Learn lessons and identify ways to improve the VVD project.

The project team and its advisers anticipated that the effects of VVD impacts would be greater, or at least different among members of LGs compared to the NLGs for two reasons. The LG members would be actively listening to and discussing the programmes as a group as part of the project design whereas the NLG members would be listening as individuals. Secondly the LG members received direct training on their human rights and had participated in making the VVD programmes – so they had greater motivation for listening to information they had demanded; they were also sensitised to the aims of the project and able to immediately and directly apply their rights to information and freedom of expression.

The surveys were conducted with citizens in local language within the village setting. A sampling of the target groups was also conducted to ensure that those surveyed were representative of the wider community. See *Annex 3 Sampling*. Surveys among decision-makers and radio stations were conducted in the offices of each organisation. The questionnaires were translated into local language and pre tested with citizens and the decision makers to identify any comprehension, language or contextual issues.



Surveying villager in Androy

Data from the questionnaires was collated in Ft Dauphin and sent for analysis to local independent researchers, Ms. Junassy Rabemazaka and Mr Loubien Ndiriaka. The analysis, together with evidence reported in monthly project reports from the field teams, has been used to draw out the impacts of the project as presented in this report. Monthly monitoring and feedback exercises were able to track any significant changes brought about by the project as it evolved. Anecdotal evidence and qualitative data from these mechanisms are also included in this report. The project also took into consideration existing research undertaken previously by ALT project Radio (DFID funded evaluation), Francken et al 2007 on radio for governance in Madagascar, the UNDP 2008 national communication survey and some recent findings by SFCG.

Caveat – research limitations

The pilot activity was only six months in delivery and the evaluation followed over the ensuing two months. The total project budget was £17, 654 and the evaluation component cost just over 10% of the budget²³. It is therefore recognised that there are some limitations to the study design, execution and subsequent data analysis. Given the constraints, the project was not able to conduct a scientifically rigorous evaluation and the emphasis of the evaluation was qualitative over quantitative in terms of both the approach, the design of questionnaires and information gathered. The size of the sample groups is not statistically significant of the whole community under observation. Hence the analysis is only able to suggest causality through self-reported attribution of change. The project team did not have a true control group but rather by assessing two types of listener the team expected to see differences in the varying levels of exposure to the information that the project imparted - but at the same time to support the case (as made with Project Radio evaluation) that even without direct intervention radio can have a powerful influence. In this respect the results can only provide a strong indication of the potential of such an approach to empower individuals and communities. Taken in the context of these limitations, the results as presented are in no way diminished. Other difficulties and limitations encountered will also be touched on in this report.

²³ Technical advice was provided on a voluntary basis

Findings

1. Access And Relationship To The Local Media

The key to the project's functionality and success, and the main premise of its approach has been reliant on citizen's and decision maker's ability to access the media (radio).

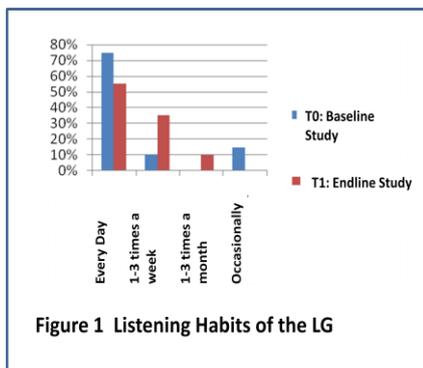
The project evaluation sought to understand how much citizens were able to access and engage with the media, and to hear and debate the VVD programmes. This information enabled the project to assess whether VVD broadcasts had increased understanding of rights to information and freedom of expression and enabled citizens act on these rights.

Access to Media for Development Information

The baseline confirmed that although there are several methods used by villagers to access information, radio is the predominant media source for the project's target group (47%). Radio is the source of all national and local news, weather warnings, and general information; as such radio represents a vital link to the outside world for many isolated, rural communities. Word of mouth (25%) is the traditional method of communicating information and recognised as widespread amongst Malagasy society. In both instances these sources highlight an oral culture and low levels of literacy. Newspapers rarely reach the rural areas and internet and TV (6%) are still largely the preserve of the wealthiest and/or educated urban dweller (access to electricity also being a key requirement).

Listening to VVD programmes

By the end of the pilot phase all members of the LGs had access to radio and had heard the VVD radio programme in accordance with their contractual agreement with the project (ie to listen and discuss VVD broadcasts together regularly).



Radio listening habits were firmly established in LGs with 70% of the respondents already listening together in a group from between four to six years. Consequently members listened and debated radio programmes on a regular basis. Over the period of the pilot phase, there was a 20% increase in the number of LG members who listened to the radio between one and three times per week.

This correlates with the transmission of VVD programmes which were broadcast three times per week, and suggests that the project influenced listening habits for LG members.

There was a slight decline in those who said they listened to the radio everyday but casual listening was not recorded at all. In the NLGs half the respondents were aware and had heard of Project VVD; the other half of the NLG had not heard them, or did not respond. The NLGs had no agreement to listen to the broadcasts regularly and were not directly involved in making programmes, hence the lower listening figure is unsurprising. Of the half of NLGs who knew about the VVD project almost all (90%) had access and had listened to the programmes. Most of the NLGs who heard the VVD programmes listened to the radio with members of their family (68%) while the others were listening in to their neighbour's radio or alone. The frequency of listening varied according to their time availability and the ease of access to a radio. Some had problems with batteries (poor quality and /or too expensive to replace).

VVD thematic preferences

VVD programmes focused on topics selected and prioritised by villagers. The evaluation assessed the relative popularity/interest of different programmes. For LG members and NLGs alike, the programmes on hospital services and their costs were particularly popular (29% and 28% respectively).

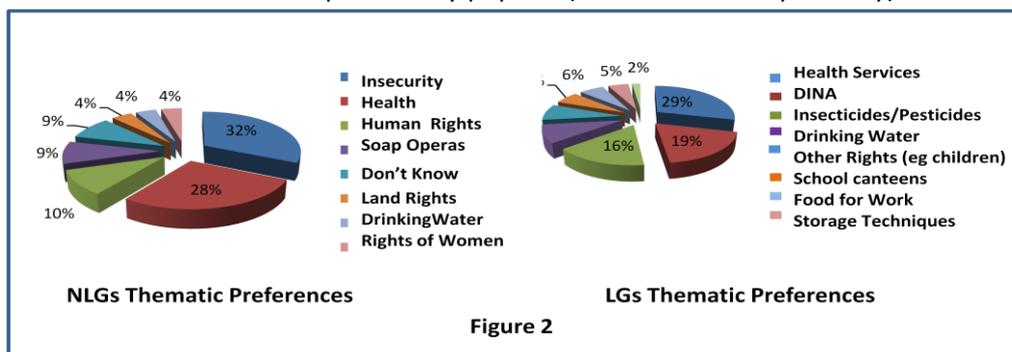


Figure 2

Security was also of high interest and it is noteworthy that many listeners showed interest in the new programmes on human rights, especially the NLGs who had not been beneficiaries of the direct trainings from ALT and Trano AroZo on this subject; farming and agriculture choices reflected the challenges of food security in the drought prone south where the majority of the population are local producers. Based on their listeners' informal feedback, Radio Rohondroho claimed that programmes about women's inheritance were the most popular with their listeners; Radio Cactus said it was programmes about public security.

Debating programmes

The extent to which radio programmes are talked about by the audience is both an indicator of audience interest and also a way in which information can be shared and ideas popularised beyond the immediate LG audience. Discussion habits are particularly strong with the LGs set up by ALT Project Radio (1999-2009). At the outset of the project, 75% of LG respondents reported that they debated programmes together in their LG group following a radio broadcast. Unlike the LGs there was no structured listening in the NLGs and there was no shared radio provided by the project which would ensure regular participation in group debates. Nevertheless, the endline survey revealed that 86% of the NLG respondents had discussed the VVD broadcasts - including those who had not heard the programmes directly.

Frequency of discussion

The number of times that LGs talked about radio programmes remained almost the same throughout the project and corresponded to the group discussion habits established previously under their ALT PR contract: e.g. between 1-3 times per week. However, respondents explained that their participation varied according to their availability and occupational commitments. Over a quarter (28%) of the NLGs reported discussing programmes regularly with others between 1-3 times per week, and 18% once per month. The level of discussion in the NLG depended on the nature of the programme, their interest in the subject matter, or if they had not understood the content of a programme (e.g. to exchange understanding).

Discussing programmes spreads the word: there was a 20% increase in LG members' radio listening 1-3 times per week corresponding with the frequency of VVD project broadcasts, and there was no casual listening. This suggests that VVD programmes reinforced and elevated the existing, well-established listening and debating habits in Androy. This supported the finding of a study by SFCG in January-February 2013 which revealed that discussion of radio programmes after broadcast at community level is highest in the Androy region of southern Madagascar²⁴.

²⁴ SFCG baseline study 2013 for the EU funded national elections communications campaign

Listening and discussion of VVD programmes by decision makers

As the VVD programme format was new to the decision makers participating in the project we might expect them to have listened to the VVD programmes when broadcast in order to learn from the listener's perspective what they had heard as well as to learn lessons about delivery and presentation in the radio format. However, the decision makers were not always able listen to the programmes when broadcast. 14% listened when VVD broadcast between 1-3 times per week; 57% only occasionally and 29% listened 1-3 per month. There were two key challenges to listening for decision makers:

- 1) constraints on their time and,
- 2) the broadcast times that suit villagers do not always work with the decision maker's timetable.

Some decision makers did not listen because they had not been directly involved in the programme production. The ALT VVD team distributed a CD containing the VVD broadcasts to all participating decision makers so they could listen at times convenient to them. Despite low listening frequency, 71% of decision makers said that they had discussed the VVD programmes: 34% with family, 25% with colleagues internally, 25% with other development partners, 8% with beneficiaries and 8% with the VVD team.

Media interaction for radio listeners – Phone in programmes

At the baseline, only half of the LG members were in possession of a mobile phone and three quarters of LGs interviewed explained they had only ever heard of '*dedications*' programmes which allow citizens to phone in to the radio station – these are radio programmes that invite the audience to send messages or dedicate songs to their friends and family. The station journalists usually make the announcements. Indeed, just 10% of the LGs said they had actually spoken on the radio, either to send dedications or to '*participate in an interview at a local music festival*'.²⁵

Similar levels of interaction were also the norm in NLGs and only three of the decision makers interviewed had heard of a programme that invited listeners to call in. As was the case with the LGs, we can assume that these also referred to '*dedications*' programmes.

Many listeners had never called in to a radio show (e.g. to send '*dedications*') because they had no access to a phone. However, those who did not own a mobile phone reported being able to access one from their family or neighbours as needed. There are also phone stands in and around the main towns of the south where phone calls are sold on an ad hoc basis but a challenge for phone in participation is the problem of recharging phone batteries. There is no electricity in rural areas of southern Madagascar and in general villagers have to wait for a market day to find individuals with a generator who offers a recharging service.

Interaction with the radio – impacts of VVD

In order to increase interaction via the media, the VVD project supplied each LG with a mobile phone, call credit, and a solar charger to ensure their participation in live radio phone in debates. The LGs were also in possession of wind up solar powered radio for listening and debate, and they had regular interaction with the ALT VVD team for programme production and monitoring impacts. Live Interaction with the media changed dramatically during the VVD project.

²⁵ Note : It should be highlighted that these LGs have not been fully functional since the closure of ALT Project Radio in 2009 when their participation in radio programming and as actors in programmes may have been higher.



Listening and calling into a radio programme

After six months *all* of the LG members and 14% of the NLG respondents had interacted with the media (radio) - either through focus groups, debates about broadcasts, programme production, recording questions, feedback, or by phoning into live radio debates.

Almost half (45%) of the LG respondents said they had spoken on the radio during the VVD phone-in programmes broadcast over the six month pilot period; of these over half were women (see also gender impacts page 32). The remaining (55%) listened in to these phone-in debates. It is self evident that those who called in also listened to the programmes.

Half the NLGs also said they had listened and called in to the VVD radio phone-in programmes. Some had not succeeded in having their calls heard in public because the audience participation was so high. Indeed, during feedback sessions many listeners said they were frustrated that there was not enough time to receive their calls and questions. In analysis, this is a positive indicator of the high participation of listeners and the popularity of these stimulating new programmes which clearly need to be increased in frequency in order to meet demand and to improve the media literacy of all the participants.

Change of relationship with the media

There was a significant increase in access to and relationship with radio as a result of VVD – not only in terms of deciding programme content, assisting programme production and providing feedback to producers but also through live phone in programmes which engaged citizens in direct dialogue with their leaders and opened up debate to the wider listening audience.

Perspective of local radio stations on audience listening

Local and community radio stations in southern Madagascar rarely conduct formal audience surveys since funds are usually scarce for programme production and even less available for market research. Consequently, journalists are dependent on informal interchange with their audience: in the street; at social gatherings; in meetings with local representatives; and when audience members come to their stations – often on a daily basis. Gathering information about listeners' habits and preferences in the VVD project from the radio station partners was similarly informal.

Both stations attested that their listenership had increased during the VVD project (informal surveys); *'everyone has turned on their radio!'* and *'a multitude of people come and thank us at the studio or on the road and ask that this programme (VVD) continues'*. The stations commented that VVD programmes attract more listeners and everyone is interested in them by comparison with other programmes – and remarked on the increased openness *'if this programme did not exist people would not be able to express themselves so freely'*.



Citizen calling in to the phone in programme

The stations also claimed that listeners understand the programmes because they are in the local dialect and about issues that concern them. "*People do not just listen to the program, they also discuss*" reported the Director of Rohondroho.

Adapting to new formats and programming

Some citizens claimed they had listened to VVD programmes but could not understand the purpose of them, or they were unaware that the VVD programmes were broadcast at specific times. However at the start of each VVD programme the theme and guests were introduced in detail. The lack of comprehension could be due to missing the programme introductions or listeners were unable to hear the whole broadcast. It should also be acknowledged that the Q & A format, and the radio phone ins in particular are a new type of programming and as such may demand a different kind of attention from listeners who are more familiar with hearing pre-recorded, IEC focused radio programmes with no direct participation or interaction between listeners and decision makers.

New relations with the media

The ALT VVD team observed from the monthly feedback sessions they conducted with listeners that it was not until the third month of programming that listeners really began to fully appreciate what the VVD project could do for them – for instance catalysing tangible, positive outcomes to their development and opening up opportunities for engagement with local leaders. In fact it was in the third month of broadcast that the first phone in programme took place. This focused on the local hospital fee structure for health services. There had been allegations of corruption: patients were being made to pay for health care services that should normally be free. The dialogue facilitated by VVD resulted in the public dissemination of all fees and free services for health care at the hospital via the radio and on notices posted on the hospital walls; this ensured that the whole community understood the fee system, thereby reducing the opportunity for corruption and protecting patients' rights.

2. Human Rights, Rights to Information and Freedom of Expression

VVD Outcome 1: Improved understanding of the rights to information and freedom of expression for local communities.

A principal aim of the project was to promote Human Rights to the citizens of southern Madagascar and enable them to act on those rights – specifically their rights to information and freedom of speech.

In order to educate and inform both the team and the beneficiaries, the project engaged a UNDP trainer and a local southern based rights organisation, Trano Aro Zo, at the start of the project to work with the ALT team and increase the knowledge and understanding of human rights in the target groups.

Knowledge of Rights

At the start of the project, 75% of the LG members declared they knew about the UN Charter of Human Rights. However, only 35% of the respondents said they had received any training or explanation of their rights covered by the Charter. It was also noted that when pushed to define their understanding of their right to access information, their responses yielded some interesting caveats. For example: *‘Those who have a radio have the right to listen’*; *‘Those who are interested freely have the right to information in the gazette’*; *‘When there are local radio stations then we have the right to access information’*.

It was also expressed that maybe the deaf do not have the right to information (not able to hear the radio?). One woman mentioned she had a right to access information due to her marital status as she is already married - *‘I am free to get information because I am married to someone on whom I can rely’*. It is interesting to note the many references to radio/media were linked to providing a ‘right’ to information. Similarly for freedom of expression, responses showed a mixed comprehension of their rights: *‘a person who has a free spirit can talk all he wants’*; and *‘only adults can express a mature ideas’*. However some respondents had a more fundamental grasp of this right: *‘to be free to speak without prejudice or censure’*.

Decision makers understanding and perspectives on human rights

At the beginning of the project six of the seven decision makers interviewed said they had heard of the UN Charter on Human Rights. Almost half (3) said they had been given an explanation of their rights as a citizen, whereas the other three did not. One did not respond (not a Malagasy citizen). These six respondents also had knowledge of their right to information as well as the rights of their beneficiaries but only five respondents knew of the right to freedom of expression. When asked what it meant for them to "have the right to information" each respondent offered their interpretation:

- Access to information signifies the initiation into development.
- As a human being living in a society, a man needs rights, or wants to have and practice them.
- Every citizen should know his environment: political, social, economic, technological.
- Malagasy law says every Malagasy citizen has the right to information. But there are blockages which restrict access e.g. lack of newspapers, frequent power cuts, lack of means of communication.
- Right to demand more responsibility.
- Right to have ‘acknowledgement’– know they must respond to citizens rights and give answers.
- Right to access the means to get information and the measures that accompany such information.

When asked what it meant to them to "have the right to freedom of expression", each respondent offered their interpretation:-

- Know and understand the reactions of others when you act on your rights - self-control without hurting others.
- The ability to speak freely while respecting the freedom of others.
- The power to inform for the common interests of the community; and right to discuss problems in society without criticizing others.
- A fundamental right that allows everyone to express themselves freely without fear or obligation.
- One meaning of being human: the right to speak and to express oneself, it's democracy.

It is interesting to note the repeated references to self control and restraint that reflects the normal cultural relationship in Androy which respects and favours the traditional hierarchy and authorities.

New Understanding About Human Rights



Villagers participate in VVD trainings about their rights including watching and debating a film that dramatizes domestic violence and highlights the rights of women.

At the end of the pilot phase of VVD 80% of the LG respondents said they had received training on the UN Charter and their human rights. The 20% of Project VVD participants who said they had not been trained were not available during the designated workshop days.

However all the LG respondents affirmed they had heard the VVD radio programmes broadcast about the UN Charter and their rights. Following the training, and at the end of six months of listening to VVD broadcasts, which included phone in programmes and direct dialogue between villagers and decision makers, the knowledge and comprehension about human rights had shifted.

From the LG members interviewed, a number of the respondents expressed that *'It is not like before'* and they felt free to access information. The term 'free' was used by many respondents *'I can ask freely for information'*. There was also a notable sense of egalitarianism *'Everyone has the right'*. This is important in a society that constrains citizens with complex hierarchical taboos. Many observed *'There are no more obstacles'*. A number referred once again to the role of media *'Thanks to the existence of the radio and new technologies nobody can prevent me from having information'*.

On rights to freedom of expression the LG respondents also stated they felt things had changed: *'No more pressure or constraints'*; *'everyone has the right to speak'*. A few mentioned that *'we are in a democracy'* and *'to be human one is obliged to express one's ideas'*. Unsurprisingly, some LG members were not comfortable or did not accept the implications of these new freedoms: *'Everyone can give their view but they must respect the hierarchy – they must first pass by the Chef du Fokontany'*, and *'Antandroy women cannot lead a discussion'*. Amongst the NLG members, although they had not received a direct training, 77% of respondents said they had heard the VVD broadcasts on human rights. Half of those interviewed about their rights to access information explained that *'it was the right to have the information you needed when you needed it'* and just under a third (31%) said it was the right to *'demand information at the time they needed it'*.

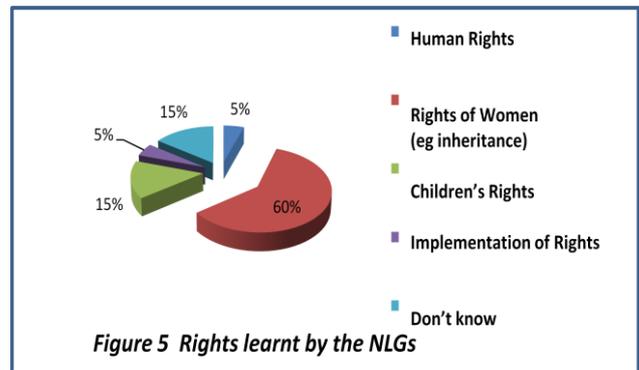


Gathering opinions from villagers in Ambaro

On freedom of expression, 85% of the NLGs responded with varying degrees of clarity on the subject including: *'present my views without pressure'*; *'be free like everyone else'*; and *express myself in a village meeting'*. Again, some interesting caveats appeared which suggested either gender issues or other social /traditional influences were conditioning the response: *'Everyone has the right to put forward their ideas if the debate is about development'* and *'women can express themselves but with respect'*.

In measuring changes brought about by VVD, the evaluation showed that 90% of LG members and 73% of NLG respondents said they had recently learnt new information about their rights that they considered important, notably about:

- ✓ Rights of man
- ✓ Rights of women (inheritance, divorce, domestic violence)
- ✓ Rights of children (study, play, inheritance)
- ✓ Equality between men and women
- ✓ Rights of the unborn child
- ✓ Freedom of speech (to speak with decision makers)



The remaining 10% of LG respondents said they already knew these rights but they had recently received more explanation and deepened their understanding. The remaining 27% of NLGs also said that they already knew their rights but that the *'application of them was very recent'*.

Radio as the medium of change

Almost all of the LGs (90%) and nearly three quarters of the NLGs (73%) said they had learnt something new about their human rights in the last six months and; when asked, 68% of NLGs explained they had learnt this new information via the radio and named VVD's partner radio stations and ALT as sources; 16% mentioned television and 12% via other sources (meetings, school, library) whereas 4% had been the result of an information exchange between women.

NLGs are representative of the wider listening audience in Androy, some 50,000 of the population with access to radio, and the results indicate the potential of the VVD programmes to educate and influence communities in the wider region to learn about and better understand their rights.

3. Confidence and Ability of Citizens to Act on their New Found Rights

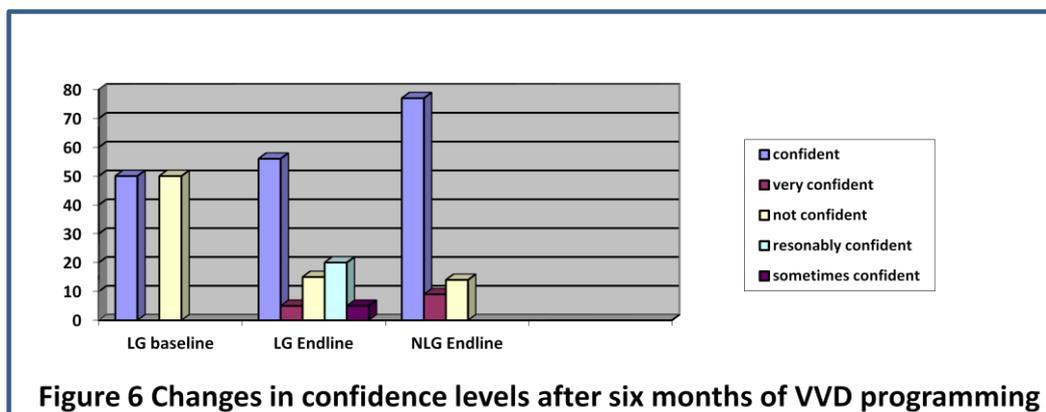
Outcome 2: Increased confidence of villagers to prioritise and express their development needs to decision makers.

VVD training, radio programmes and focus groups on human rights aimed to help citizens better comprehend their rights to information, and act on these rights by asking decision makers for answers.

Asking for Information, Expressing Needs

When asked at the start of the project if it was easy for them to access information about local development policy and projects from decision makers, over half of the LG respondents (55%) felt that this was not easy. They explained by saying that either they did not receive the information they wanted because it did not relate to the context of their own activity (not relevant); or only the elders had access to the information and it was their responsibility to disseminate it within the community. They also felt that corruption was a barrier to information, *'only the powerful know what is happening'*.

When pressed to explain the barriers they experienced in trying to access information directly, the majority expressed that these related mostly to *'fear of being targeted – seen to be an enemy and therefore vulnerable to repercussions'*. Otherwise it was because the people they needed to talk to were not available. When asked if they could see a solution to this challenge the respondents proposed meetings with the Fokonola, designation of someone responsible, and broadcasting via the radio. In most scenarios people anticipated they would still need to go through an elected representative of the community.

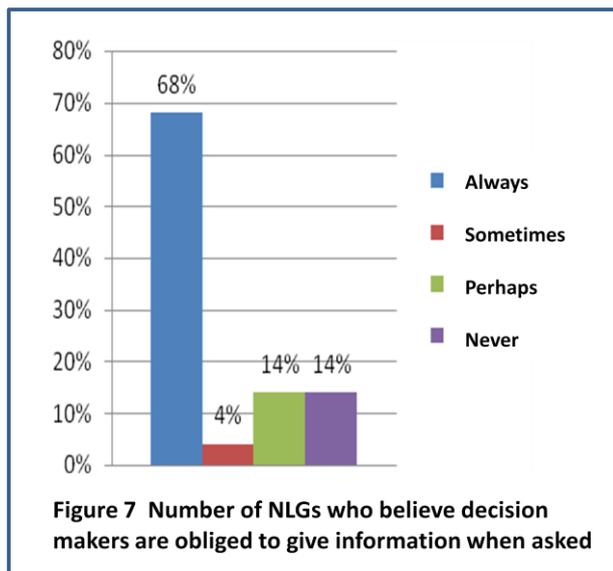


After six months of participation in project VVD, there was an overall increase in confidence to demand information directly from decision makers with 5% of LG members who now said they felt very confident to demand information, 56% confident, and 20% were feeling reasonably confident; 5% were only sometimes confident and 15% remained lacking in confidence. In the NLGs 77% felt confident, 9% reasonably confident and 14% not feeling confident at all.

Impact: Human rights - behaviour change

At the start of the project, over half of the respondents (55%) felt it was not easy to demand information from decision makers. After learning about their rights and participating in VVD, confidence to demand information had shifted. By the end of the pilot phase 15% of citizens felt lacking in confidence. This represents a positive shift in confidence for approximately 40% of the project beneficiaries interviewed towards feeling more confident or reasonably confident to demand questions of local decision makers.

Asserting the right to demand information



In parallel to the increased levels of confidence and possibly influencing the new found ability to demand questions of decision makers is the belief that decision makers are *obliged* to provide information when asked. After six months of VVD broadcasts and the initial training on human rights, almost two thirds of LGs (64%) said that decision makers must respond to questions when asked and they added *'we won't ask them questions that do not concern them'*.

Almost the same response emerged from the NLGs where 68% stated that decision makers were obliged to answer their questions. Some added caveats to these obligations such as whether the question was relevant to the decision maker and if they have the

time to help. Not one respondent in either the LG or NLGs thought that the decision makers could completely avoid a response, but some still perceived their poverty and class to be a barrier: *'it's only the Chef du Fokontany who knows me and will listen to me'*.

Knowing and feeling able to act on rights to information

In both the LGs and the NLGs there was a marked increase in confidence to act on newly understood rights to access information from decision makers with 64% and 68% of members respectively stating decision makers are obliged to answer their questions: *'no more pressure or constraints'*, *'everyone has the right to speak'*, *'we are in a democracy'* and *'to be human one is obliged to express one's ideas'* present my views without pressure'; *'be free like everyone else'*.

In the LGs it is the men who appear more confident to demand information. This may be due to the fact that women still do not feel equal in Androy, and traditionally Antandroy women have been marginalised, are not allowed to speak in public and are not part of the decision making hierarchy. This mirrors the sense of not having the same rights to speak, documented in the section on gender impacts below, Page 32.

Additionally, most of the local authorities are headed by men and the majority of local leaders in general are male (service providers, NGO directors etc).

For those in the NLGs who spoke of having confidence to demand information of their decision makers they explain this is due to *'freedom of expression'*; *'liberty and democracy'*, and *'women can speak as well as men'*.



Making sure that women's views and questions are recorded in the VVD programmes and feedback sessions.

Impact of new knowledge on behaviour

In both the LGs and NLGs citizens were able to offer specific examples about how their new knowledge on human rights had changed their lives. In many instances these reflect changes in daily life from simple tasks such as moving baggage, to decisions that will affect future development in the region, such as sending children of both genders to school and acts of generosity between family and non family members. Such changes offer insight into current restraints and practices as well as suggesting potential ways in which the community can begin to strengthen and work together in the future. (beyond family and clan loyalties).

'I can discuss transport of baggage and other daily tasks with my husband.'
'Before I did not listen to my wife, but we speak freely now.'
'I send all my children to school whether boy or girl.'
'I can study freely.'
'My parents listen to me and understand my rights.'
'I am able to advise my friends in many ways'
'I have a right to study but I have to convince my parents.'
'I spoke with a decision maker in front of everyone.'
'It was I who found the means to arrange my marriage and now my in laws respect me. I have rights like everyone else.'
'I liberated my husband from the police when he was falsely accused. It's the first time I spoke out and put forward my opinion to protect my rights.'
'I proposed a way to resolve a family tension over money. I felt that I had my rights respected because my husband accepted my ideas.'
'When I was selected as the community agent - I felt I was like everyone and had rights in society.'
'I chose to share my husbands salary with his second wife, though I did not have to.'
'I discussed with my brothers my right to inheritance of our parents land.'

What is particularly noticeable in many of the responses is the impacts that awareness of rights has had on women and their relations with husbands and family (especially with in-laws). This increased awareness of womens rights may in part be attributed to the initial training which included a film focused on womens rights (see also below); also to the impacts of the phone in programme about the rights of women to inherit land. The VVD radio programmes, phone in debates and a testimonial on this particular subject catalysed signifiant interest and discussion about women's rights in general - not least since it was increasingly understood that Antandroy customs are sometimes at odds with the Malagasy law e.g legally women can inherit land but not in Androy.

Gender Impacts - Rights of Women

The VVD project did not have an explicit agenda to address gender issues in Androy. However, the fact that radio acts as an *'egalitarian'* force (as mentioned by VVD listeners) means that women who would normally rely heavily on male elders in order to access information, were instead able to access it directly via radio and thereby circumvent customary and hierarchical barriers to communications. They could also participate in media debates in an unprecedented way.

In traditional Antandroy society women are not permitted to lead a discussion. They are not included in village decision making processes and have low economic and social status. Women are not allowed to inherit land and their rights are largely unrecognised or not respected.

Girls are deprived of education at an early age and in the south often enter motherhood in their teens²⁶. The southern society is polygamous and this often means tensions or loss of rights for women within the family setting. Some spiritual beliefs also impede equality.



Interviewing women for VVD

The VVD project broadcast a series of radio programmes and phone ins where the rights of women were explained, especially inheritance rights, and these reinforced the trainings that had been given at the start of the project by Trano Aro Zo. Of particular importance in that training was the viewing of a film that dramatised a typical domestic situation in Madagascar. The story showed a women being abused by her husband and a number of her rights were breached during the course of the story. Everyone recognised and related to the realities dramatised in the film and actively participated in the following debate.

The rights of women were highlighted and reinforced through this training and consequently citizens' comprehension about womens' rights increased across a range of issues including the right to bring a legal case, to avoid parental coercion (eg over marriage arrangements), the rights of single women, rights to divorce. During the evaluation it became clear that some significant changes had happened to women as a result of the training, the public broadcasts and debates on this subject.

One very important indicator of women asserting and acting on their new knowledge about their rights was the number of women who called in to the phone in programme to ask questions and express their views: ***half of the listeners who called into radio phone in programme were women.***

Interestingly, after six months of VVD broadcasting, members of the NLGs appeared more convinced of gender equality (95%) than members of the LGs where 30% of the women did not agree that they had the same rights as men. The women who disagreed explained that they were unable to express themselves in the family setting or to husbands, had no inheritance, and men decided their lives for them.

One woman exemplified the paradox between the Antandroy culture and the law very well: *'if I was elected Mayor I could speak publicly, but following the Antandroy tradition I am not allowed to lead a debate or to launch a discussion'*.

In this sense it is possible that those women who were not convinced they have the same rights as men (30%) may have been expressing what they experience rather than what they knew to be the case in the law or under the UN Charter. In other words - it is not that LG women interviewed were *unaware* of their rights or *thought* of themselves as unequal, but that the reality of their daily lives in the Antandroy culture does not manifest or accord them these rights so they did not *feel* equal.

²⁶ A third of Malagasy women under the age 19 have already had at least one child, Sharp, Maryanne; Kruse, Ioana (2011). *Health, Nutrition, and Population in Madagascar 2000-09*. Washington D.C: World Bank. ISBN 978-0-8213-8538-8.

If we take into account the training and other survey responses about new learning on rights, the rights of women were cited by respondents in both the LGs and the NLGs. We might then interpret the finding that 30% of LG women do not think they have the same rights as a shift towards their becoming increasingly *aware and vocal* about what they now understand should be their legal rights. Indeed, the fact that during the endline survey women in LGs specifically highlighted the differences between the Malagasy law on inheritance and the reality in Androy is perhaps in itself a clear indication of change.

In the representative NLGs, some respondents were very clear that despite the law there would always be differences in gender. For example they said equality did not mean that women would drink alcohol like men or ask for a marriage partner, but they did understand the right to inherit land – an understanding they drew from a VVD radio programme.

The important new understanding about land rights and inheritance was embodied in a testimony shared by a LG member and which became the subject of a VVD film and radio recording. The woman explained that directly after hearing a VVD radio broadcast on rights of women to inheritance her father, who had also been listening, agreed to give her the appropriate share of land in his legacy. This was a life changing moment for the woman and her children (see the video at [http://www.andrewleestrust.org/voices.htm](http://www.andrewleetrust.org/voices.htm)). Land inheritance rights for women became the subject of a phone in programme which was added to the pilot project schedule in response to the high levels of interest and demand on this subject.

Impact: Gender relations

Throughout the evaluation process many women in both LGs and NLGs reported significant changes in their marital and family relations: they could now speak openly to their husbands; men listened to their wives; women were now listened to by their parents. One woman who had been unable to separate from her husband expressed her regret at not knowing her rights sooner. Women also mentioned their right to bring legal cases and resist parental pressure (e.g. fathers wanting to arrange marriages). In the NLGs one woman explained how she had chosen to sit with the men at a funeral – something that is traditionally forbidden.

4. Responsiveness of Decision Makers to Citizen's Information Needs

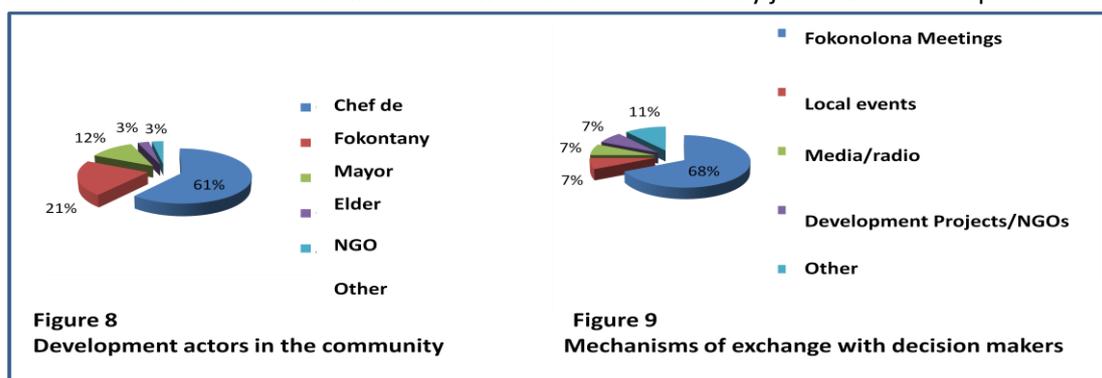
Outcome 3: Improved response and participation of decision makers in reacting to villagers information needs through the creation of interactive radio programmes

One of the primary aims of the VVD project was to address the gaps in communication between ordinary people and their leaders and to provide the mechanisms for citizens to dialogue with decision makers.

Traditional Relationships Between Villagers and Decision Makers

The baseline survey sought to understand what mechanisms were in place to enable dialogue between citizens and their leaders, then measure how VVD created a new dynamic. At the time of the baseline, almost two thirds of citizens in LGs viewed the Chef du Fokontany (village chief) as the primary decision maker in their local development (61%), with the Mayor in second position. These are the decision makers on the first level of governance for citizens who adhere to the rule of law and traditional hierarchy.

The meeting of the Fokonolona with the Chef du Fokontany was regarded, by 68% of respondents, as the main mechanism for brokering relationships with decision makers and discussing development. The media was considered a mechanism to communicate with decision makers by just 7% of the respondents.



The LG interviewees were asked if they observed or experienced any changes after they had met with and spoken to these decision makers. Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) reported there were no changes after the contact with local decision makers. Those who reported changes (35%) mentioned improvements in local services eg education (eg schools and teachers), training opportunities, food and agricultural aid (eg seeds, tools, food distribution), sanitation (eg latrines), electricity supply, and communications.

Decision makers' mechanisms for exchange with citizens

Just one VVD programme was made with a local mayor but none were made with the Chef du Fokontany. The project worked principally with the regional authorities, service providers, and NGOs who determine local development strategy and largely implement the ensuing regional projects and services. These are the decision makers referred to in the following section.

The baseline survey established that just 18% of decision makers used participatory approaches to engage beneficiaries in developing local development strategies. The majority of decision makers explained that their strategies were evolved from regional policies (28%); and 18% said they came from national decision making processes. The other respondents mentioned additional methodologies and approaches including government policy and collaborative/joint development of strategies involving several partners.

The decision makers reported that they used a variety of mechanisms to communicate their development strategies to beneficiaries, though for the most part they were reliant on their field agents (51%) and the use of radio (17%).

The frequency of contact with beneficiaries varied from one entity to another. Just over a third had contact with beneficiaries once a week; another third once a month; just one decision maker had contact daily and another only quarterly. The seventh respondent mentioned that their contact only comes when they are monitoring activities of their partners, such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

Listening to citizens' needs

In terms of learning what their beneficiaries want and need for their development, the decision makers used a number of different methods for collecting opinion and feedback. Individual interviews were the most popular mechanism used by decision makers to learn about their beneficiaries' requirements, followed by informal discussions, then meetings with mayors. None of the decision makers cited meetings with the Chef du Fokontany/Fokonola as a mechanism of exchange yet this is clearly an important forum for information exchange and discussion at village level.

Responsiveness to citizens' needs

At the baseline, all the decision makers interviewed believed that their engagement mechanisms offered good opportunities for local people to discuss their development needs and ideas. They also said that they had made changes to their development interventions and strategies after talking with beneficiaries including: the supply of services, the provision of training (5 organisations) to the improvement of infrastructure, food security (5 organisations), sanitation, seed and fertilisers (3 organisations) new health clinics, and improved schooling.

Indeed, five of the decision makers interviewed were convinced that beneficiaries understood and responded to their projects, based on uptake of training and advice, participation, contractual commitment and measurable changes in environmental protection. However, two of the decision makers did not believe that the beneficiaries understood their projects due to: low literacy, poor levels of education; lack of comprehension of messages; traditional and cultural barriers to development and lack of community ownership. When asked to propose solutions to some of these challenges many of the decision makers demonstrate a strong understanding of the place and role of radio in meeting these challenges.

New Relationships Following VVD Programming

At the time of the baseline, the majority of the decision makers had already worked with media to reach beneficiaries: including by radio (56%) video (22%) and cinemobile (22%). During the six months of VVD the use of radio had increased and five of the decision makers (71%) recorded answers in response to villagers questions in VVD broadcasts – either in a pre-recorded question and answer format, or in a radio phone in programmes. Two of the respondents did not participate (GRET and TTR) because villagers had not raised questions about their specific areas of intervention.



Understanding use of media - Baseline Survey with GRET representative

At least three of the decision makers were Directors/Heads of Organisations and were directly involved in responding to questions from citizens via the VVD Q&A programming, or had otherwise designated a knowledgeable colleague to assist and provide answers/technical expertise. For example, the Head of WFP could not participate in question and answer sessions since he is an expatriate and citizens' questions were voiced in Malagasy/local dialect. Additionally a number of the decision makers participated in phone in programmes to respond to citizens' questions in live debate on the radio.

It should be highlighted here that the VVD engagement process was entirely new to decision makers, who were willing to adopt the bottom up approach, enabling citizens to drive the agenda of the radio programme and input directly into the content.

Furthermore, the VVD spiral of engagement meant that development topics were revisited between citizens and decision makers each month until the subject had been clarified and delivered sufficient satisfaction to listeners. This approach created a new, highly responsive dynamic between the decision makers and citizens during the course of the VVD pilot.

New dynamic For decision makers, the significant change from previous radio programme production was that control of programme content had shifted from a top down IEC approach, led by the decision makers, to a bottom up SBCC approach where villagers determine the topic for discussion driven by what they want and need to know. Additionally, the VVD process re-engaged decision makers post broadcast in order to gather further information and record more detailed response to listeners' questions and feedback from the initial radio programme. This increased the responsiveness of decision makers and offered a new dimension to programme production for decision makers and listeners alike.

Technical challenges

Decision makers noticed that, as a result of VVD programming, villagers had become much more confident and were '*daring*' to discuss with the field agents what they had heard in the VVD programmes. They noted that once villagers start to ask questions all problems were brought out into the open and they have to provide solutions/answers. This created a *greater sense of responsibility* for decision makers and their agents to avoid making mistakes in their response to citizens' questions. In particular, the citizen's questions required a greater technical capacity and media literacy of the decision makers to respond effectively – and especially if they felt pressure to explain everything about a single topic in one session.

Four of the respondents mentioned that tailoring technical information to citizens' questions in just one radio programme proved the most challenging for them and they recognised, if not done correctly, could lead to problems. They deemed it necessary to produce two to three radio programmes on most subjects in order to cover all the technical information appropriately.

Getting it right – the case of the charcoal producers

The Head of Cantonment in Ambovombe explained in a VVD programme that to cut wood without permits or authorization is contrary to the laws and can cause sanctions. Upon hearing this, charcoal producers were afraid and instead of formalising their operating papers they stopped producing charcoal; this led to an immediate fuel shortage in the town of Ambovombe, capital of Androy, which relies heavily on charcoal as a domestic energy source. The team developed a new programme in more depth to clarify the situation, and mitigate the negative impacts of the previous programming. Additionally the DREFT representative met directly with the producers to clear up the misunderstanding and ensure production recommenced.

Increased responsiveness

The technical challenges experienced by the decision makers were in some part alleviated via the feedback loop of the VVD spiral of engagement that allowed them to understand the impacts of the radio programmes and follow up with more detailed information and clarification in subsequent broadcasts or with field action as and when necessary – as was the case with the charcoal producers.

Three of the five decision makers who were actively producing programmes also contacted their beneficiaries after VVD broadcasts to assess impacts. This did not represent a shift from the baseline when four out of seven decision makers reported that they measured impacts of their radio broadcasts with beneficiaries 1-3 times per month using focus groups, individual interviews, village surveys, and meetings.

However, the decision makers who did not directly contact LGs during the pilot phase received feedback via the ALT VVD field team *on a monthly basis* in order to produce new programmes and respond in more detail to citizens' questions and programme topics as required.

Because feedback focused attention on issues arising for ordinary citizens (largely about what was said on the radio) and required more specific information, the decision makers were able to appreciate that *'the VVD project is an opportunity to clarify what we communicate – as such it is a very efficacious facilitator'*. Even for those decision makers who did not make programmes it appears their beneficiaries spoke to them and discussed what they heard in the VVD broadcasts.



Working with Chef du Cantonment - the programme on forest regulations resulted in an unforeseen halt to charcoal production.

Importantly, decision makers recognised and acknowledged that it was the beneficiaries themselves who best understood the reality of development on the ground so their participation in the interactive dialogue was vital for creating sustainable development.

Through the VVD feedback mechanisms the decision makers found a range of response from citizens following the broadcasts that highlighted realities on the ground: -

Response and feedback from citizens to decision makers, influencing outcomes

- Health Service users wanted more information about hospital fees which were then broadcast.
- World Food Programme (PAM) beneficiaries in the most isolated areas had heard and understood the radio programmes and the information disseminated but they then realised that they had never seen the -
- 'PAM programme contract' mentioned in the VVD broadcast which enabled those responsible at WFP to understand the reality for these beneficiaries and take appropriate action.
- Local charcoal producers in Ambovombe ceased production when they heard the VVD broadcast about permits and worried that they did not have the right paperwork to operate; this situation was resolved through face to face meetings with DREFT.

Decision makers obligation to respond to citizens' rights to information

At the start of the project all the decision makers believed they offered good opportunities for citizens to ask them questions and request information. However, this was not reflected in the perceptions of citizens, more than half of whom felt uncomfortable to approach and ask question of decision makers.

When asked at the endline if they are obliged to give information in response to citizens' demands, four decision makers (57%) responded that they are always ready to answer questions from the community. They regard it as their duty respond to any questions relating to their domain and to provide explanations. Three decision makers (43%) believed that they do not have to respond if the question is insulting or if it refers to their private life.

Nevertheless, 86 % of the decision makers believed that VVD is a very useful way to facilitate information sharing and liberty of expression with the community.

Although largely aware of citizens' rights to information and freedom of expression, the VVD project helped the decision makers to understand that citizens' active engagement of these rights is critical for the success of their work. *'The people feel free to speak and the organisation then understands their reality'*.

Impact: Rights and Development Although decision makers knew about human rights at the start of the project, by the time of evaluation they had made a strong connection between the rights to information and freedom of speech and an improved development scenario. They understood that in speaking up about their concerns and difficulties, citizens were providing important insight into the reality of their daily lives. The decision makers' responsibility to answer citizens' questions and meet their demands was appropriately heightened through the VVD exchange, which inevitably became more dynamic. They also saw the value of an impartial mediator (the radio/and VVD) who could broker the dialogue, generate more confidence and thereby improve engagement of citizens.

Changes to the way that villagers perceived their access to decision makers

After six months of VVD programming the way in which citizens viewed how they could access their decision makers had shifted. Instead of relying heavily on Fokonola meetings - 61% at baseline - citizens were now talking about *'going directly'* to a decision maker: *'I can ask directly the decision maker if I have need.'* and only 32% (LGs) and 31% (NLGs) mentioned the Fokonola meeting at the endline survey.

The results also showed a changed perception of citizens to the *range* of decision makers who they saw were accessible and could provide them with information. These now included the local authorities (Chef du Region and his representatives), service providers and NGOs. For example there was a notable shift in access to information via NGOs from 3% to 15% (LGs) and 13% (NLGs) after the VVD programming.

Impact: Accessing and engaging decision makers The project appears to have shifted the relationship between villagers and decision makers towards a more direct engagement. Where before the Fokonola meeting was the principle mechanism for engagement at the start of the project (61%), and the Chef du Fokontany the main point of interface for villagers with decision makers (68%), after six months of VVD programming both the LG and the NLG members were relying less on the Fokonola meetings (31% and 32% respectively) and favouring more direct contact with decision makers, and with a more diverse representatives – including the Chef du Region, Service providers and NGOs such as ALT VVD.

Generating satisfaction

The evaluation confirmed that the new VVD mechanisms were having a positive impact for citizens since two thirds (67%) of LG respondents were satisfied with the answers they received from decision makers (very satisfactory and satisfactory) while 8% thought them acceptable, although 25% said they are not satisfied with the responses.

For those who were satisfied they expressed that *'all the questions we asked were answered'* and *'all our misunderstandings were cleared up'*; they also remarked that it was daring of ALT to bring decision makers to the radio to answer questions *'this is the first time there is a brave project like this'*. For those who were less satisfied it appears this was due largely to the lack of understanding about technical terms given by decision makers.

For the NLGs, only 59% of the respondents gave feedback about how satisfying they found the decision makers responses. Of these 23% found the responses very satisfying, 18% acceptable, 14% satisfying and just 4% not at all satisfying. In other words all but one person who responded to the question found the decision makers had offered a response that gave some level of satisfaction. For the 41% of NLGs who did not respond it is because they were unable to listen to the programmes or had no specific view.

Those respondents who were not satisfied mentioned that explanations given by decision makers were vague or were defensive – an example was the police. The radio stations also noted that the audience were conscious that decision makers still 'edit' their own response to villagers' questions and this impedes transparency. In order to address these shortcomings, the project team organised follow on programmes - including a second phone in programme with the police.

Impact: Addressing communications gaps between citizens and decision makers.

There was an increased sense of responsibility from decision makers to respond to citizens' questions and acknowledgement of the benefits of the bottom up approach which highlights communication gaps and citizens' information needs. At the start of the project 65% of LG respondents felt that the system to access information through the Chef du Fokontany and Village Fokonola meetings was unsatisfactory and did not yield the results they wanted. At the end of six months VVD programming we see that not only do more villagers feel confident to ask questions, they ask a wider mix of decision makers including higher authorities, and 67% of LGs are either very or reasonably satisfied that they receive the answers or information they need.

5. Implementation of Local Services in Response to Citizen's Needs

Outcome 4: Changes in the implementation of local public services, and engagement with communities from the local authorities, local service providers, and NGOs.

VVD was not empowered financially or otherwise to improve local services but, through promoting dialogue to increase awareness about service needs, gaps and anomalies, VVD was able to create greater awareness, transparency and accountability of local service providers.



The fee structure for health services posted on hospital walls following VVD broadcasts.

A notable example of impacts on service provision was the improvement in relations and services through the public debate about hospital services. The VVD programmes enabled both citizens and the Head of the Hospital service to address allegations of corruption which were negatively impacting access to health provision in Ambovombe. Citizens in VVD LGs demanded information about which services were free. This led to radio programmes in which hospital charges were publicly broadcast. A simple but highly transparent act of information sharing through mass media which reduced the opportunities for exploiting the non literate poor and sick who need to access free maternity and other health services in this region. See also below Page 42. The fee structure was also posted on hospital walls.

Mass media facilitates bottom up monitoring

This example echoes the work of Franken et al in 2005²⁷ in Madagascar which demonstrated a direct correlation between the availability of information through local media and local people's ability to monitor the distribution of government funds intended for local schools. Using mass media to '*stimulate monitoring from the intended recipients of the education fund i.e. the local schools and parents*', the research showed that wider awareness created a bottom up monitoring process that prevented '*capture*' of funds. The study also noted that '*the impact of local radio access on reducing capture is more important when illiteracy is more widespread*' and overall results indicated that '*corruption can be successfully contained*', indeed 98% of the total budget allocated by the central government arrived at District level and 90% of the total sum of intended grants by all district officers arrived at school level.

The hospital service programmes in particular helped listeners to really understand the potential of VVD broadcasts to affect their lives in positive, tangible ways.

The VVD partner radio stations also explained that their listeners were very satisfied with VVD programmes because they provide good information which reflects the reality, '*and especially with regard to public services*'. They cited the example of reducing corruption at the local hospital. The journalists themselves found the programming interesting and '*good for the leadership*' of the population.

²⁷ Francken, Minton, Swinnen, 2005 - Listen to the Radio! Media and Corruption: Evidence from Madagascar: Cornell University /World Bank Madagascar

Other local decision makers and development organisations (e.g. CRS) reinforced the position and claimed that VVD programming and the collaboration with ALT was a real advantage for development. They particularly liked the phone in programmes that provide guests with the opportunity to answer listeners' questions and were very stimulating and informative for the population; although they saw that responding live on air needs to be mastered to avoid any social problems.

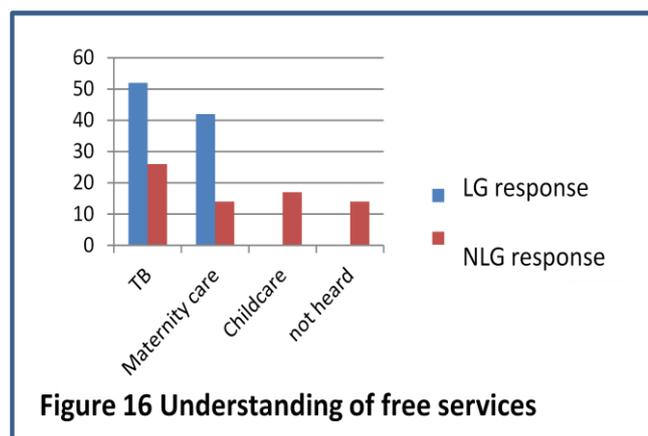
There was broad consensus that all the decision makers, authorities and service providers in the Region of Androy should aim to participate in the VVD programmes.

Impacts to Service Provision and Local Development in Androy

All VVD programmes were focused on themes prioritised by citizens in relation to their daily concerns and development needs. The evaluation measured citizens' ability to understand and retain the information which had been shared by decision makers in response to these concerns – some of which related to delivery of local services. The evaluation therefore sought to measure how much information had been retained by the citizens, verify the impact on the target audience and any changes to service provision: -

1. Hospital Services.

The first topic that was addressed by VVD was health services. This followed concerns that citizens were being charged for hospital services that should normally be free. Formal complaint mechanisms would not work for citizens due to fear of reprisals. The VVD programmes afforded anonymity and thereby opened up



a real opportunity for citizens to confront the situation and bring allegations of corruption to light via the radio broadcasts. The Head of the Hospital Services gave his full support to the process and, following the citizens' feedback, broadcast the costs of all the hospital services. The fees system was also publicly posted on the hospital walls following the broadcasts. In the endline survey listeners were asked:

Q1: "Which services are FREE at the local hospital?"

94% of the LGs and 86% of NLGs were able to cite a range of health services that were available free of charge in the hospital including TB treatment, maternity and childcare. In the NLGs, 14% who could not respond had not heard the programmes.

The programmes on hospital service charges made the information on health fees public and thereby had a significant impact on service provision since citizens could now take their sick to hospital without fear of being charged unfair or inappropriate fees. Free healthcare services are vital to a population living on less than a dollar a day, and especially for the maternity and childcare services that had been a cause for concern.

The fact that both the LG and NLGs retained most of the information on the hospital charges highlights the importance of the subject (also confirmed though the high listening preference – see page 22). Through their participation in VVD programme making, and with the hospital's co-operation, citizens brought about a tangible change: protected access to free health service provision in Ambovombe and reduced corruption.

2. Public Security (focus on cattle raids)

The south has been blighted with cattle raids over many years. Indeed in some regions and with certain ethnic groups, such as the Bara, stealing cattle is a right of passage. However, 2012 saw an escalation in cattle rustling which reached serious proportions leading to the burning of villagers and murder of citizens on an unprecedented scale. It reached the national and international press and has been the subject of a number of government, UN and international enquiries.



Police answer questions for a VVD phone in

It was therefore unsurprising that security became a priority issue for many citizens, many of whom were seeking to understand what protection they could expect from the local police force and wanted to know how to improve the service. There were a number of programmes and phone ins produced by VVD with local police force representatives to address citizens questions. One specific question which was answered in these broadcasts was the subject of the evaluation question: **Q2: What are the roles of the villagers to help the police to perform their duties?**

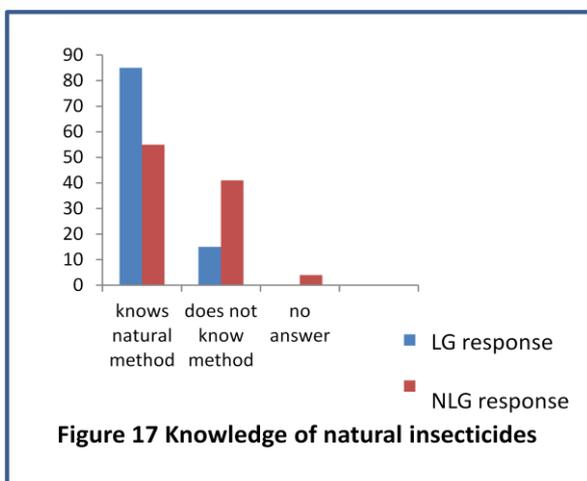
All the LG respondents answered that they must assist the police: to inform them of any suspicious circumstances or people; and that the community as a whole must collaborate with the police. In the NLGs, respondents replied that citizens have a very important role in helping the police to perform their duties: a) provide the necessary information on criminal or suspicious circumstances that occur in their village; b) the Chief Fokontany should always be informed of the presence of visitors in each village; c) the implementation of the vigilance committee in the village or organization of patrol inside the community must be reported to law enforcement. The high importance of the subject is reflected in the full response from all LGs and NLGs. There is as yet no independent survey to measure changes in the delivery of security services in the region; the investigations about organised cattle rustling are ongoing.

3. Production of Natural Insecticide.

The rural population is heavily invested in food production as a main source of survival and income; they are continually challenged by the arid conditions of the south and need to protect crops from frequent infestations of locusts and other insects to ensure a viable harvest. Following complaints from villagers that they did not have the means to travel to Ambovombe to learn about or be able to purchase chemical

pesticides, the DREN produced a programme detailing instructions on how to produce a natural insecticide. The question was therefore: **Q3: Give an example of how to produce natural insecticide against insect pests in the field?**

In the LGs all those who had heard the programme (85%) knew how to produce natural insecticide following the broadcasts; 15% of the LG had not heard that particular broadcast. In contrast only 55% of the NLGs knew about natural insecticides and 5 of these respondents were farmers who offered a variety of responses, some of which were gathered from VVD broadcasts.



Some 45% (10) of NLGs displayed no knowledge of producing natural products as insecticide. Since it was the LGs who decided on this theme and requested the information, we can assume a higher number of farmers in the LGs with concerns on this subject and who went on to listen and retain the information broadcast in contrast to the NLGs where just over half of the respondents reported knowledge of the subject following VVD broadcasts.

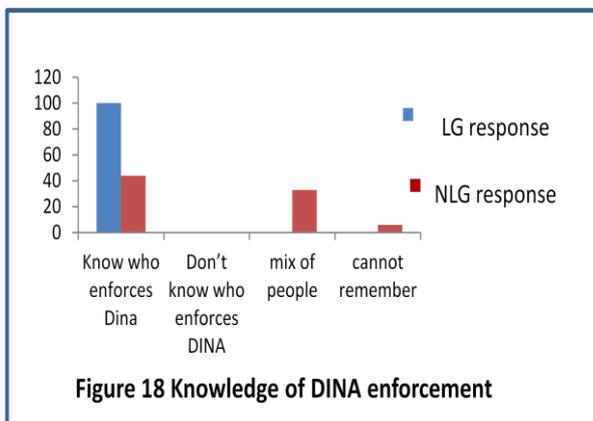
4. Application of the Dina

The Dina is a pact which is decided by the inhabitants of a Fokontany (village) to govern the lives of their community. It is a custom practised since the reign of King Andrianampoinimerina, where a Dina is ratified following a validation meeting to which all the concerned members of the community have been invited and have participated. More recently the Dina has been linked to rural security (e.g. cattle theft, banditry); also, for a number of years the Dina has been applied for the protection of the environment. Traditionally a community would sacrifice a cow to further cement the Dina pact.

The application of the Dina is a subject of huge importance to southern communities as it is a traditional and vitally important method for protecting land and property. As populations grow and migrate some of the traditional forms of regulating property become undermined. How they are reinforced and by whom is an important matter for clarification and understanding. The question was therefore:

Q4: Who is responsible for the implementation of the Dina?

All of the LGs respondents knew and replied that it was the Chef du Fokontany, mayor, the District office, the Regional Offices, the Tribunal, as well as the population as a whole who are implicated in enforcing the Dina. The Chef du Fokontany is responsible for issuing cattle passports (to permit movement of cattle across regions) and the Tribunal approves the content of the Dina. The population survey and monitor those who do not respect the Dina and report them accordingly.



A much lower number of NLG respondents (44%) replied that the Dina is enforced by the Chief of Fokontany, Mayor, Chief of District and Chief of Region. Some 6% could not remember; 19% have included the police; 9% said the elders and 3% said the community were implicated in ensuring the settlement of Dina. In reality, all of these entities have their share of responsibility in monitoring the implementation of the Dina. Some respondents explained in detail how each of these authorities interacted with each other.

Once again the LGs demonstrate the higher retention of the programme information; none of the NLGS said they did not know. Enabling citizens to clarify this process strengthens their ability to protect their property and enforce traditional land rights.

5. World Food Programme (WFP) Services

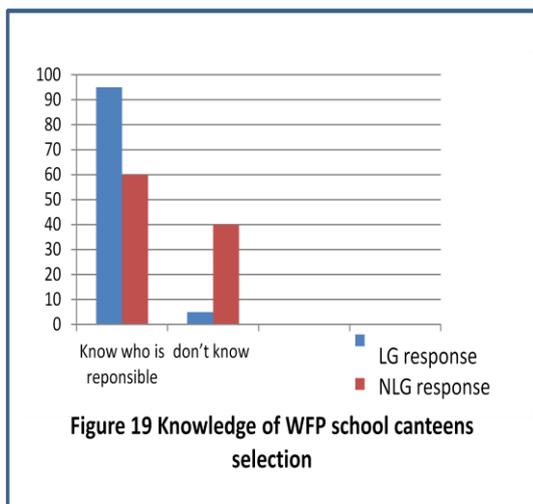
a) School Canteens

WFP (known as 'PAM' locally, Programme Alimentaire du Monde) has been delivering food aid to the Androy region for more than two decades. Its food for work programme has been delivered in all the food

insecure communes of the Androy in response to annual drought, and recurring food shortages which are diagnosed annually by the Systeme Alerte Precoce (SAP) (EU funded Early Warning System). PAM also installs school canteens in the region and these are of high importance to families whose children can then be assured of a meal during the day.

Despite its long presence in the region it was clear that many citizens had no idea how WFP made their decisions on which schools would receive the canteens and how they to go about ensuring a school could be considered for the service. Villagers therefore requested more detailed information via VVD about who was responsible for putting in place school canteens and what was the process for selection. The question was therefore:

Q5: Who are the different people / entities responsible for the implementation of school canteens?

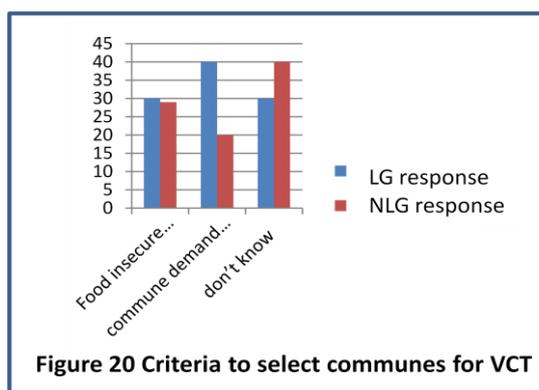


In the LGs, 95% of respondents were able to answer this question clearly and mentioned that the Director of the school, storekeepers, personnel of WFP are responsible. In the NLGs, 12 individuals (60%) gave multiple responses and most said that the officials responsible are the Director of the school, the parents, the Management Committee of the canteen, storekeepers and WFP. Eight of the NLG respondents were unable to answer the question, either because they did not remember or did not hear the broadcast

Again it was the LGs who posed the question and who demonstrated a much higher level of retained knowledge and understanding from the VVD broadcasts on this subject. Nevertheless, a significant proportion (60%) of NLGs who had heard the programme could demonstrate a detailed response in the evaluation, and this is indicative of the wider audience in Androy and their interest in this subject.

b) Food for Work (VCT) - Selection criteria for Beneficiary Communities

The WFP Food for Work programme (known locally as VCT - *Vivre Contre Travail*) scheme is an established part of the development landscape in the Androy region. However, it emerged in focus groups that villagers were unaware how communities were selected to receive this form of aid. The question was therefore: **Q6: What are the selection criteria used by WFP to choose the beneficiary villages of Food for Work?**



In the LGs 30% replied that WFP targeted the communes that experienced food shortages²⁸; 40% responded that it is the community who must make the demand of WFP, and 30% did not reply (could not remember the content of the broadcast).

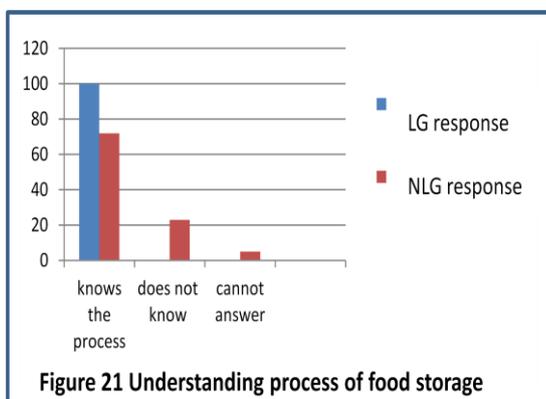
²⁸ Food insecure communes are diagnosed by the EU funded Systeme Alerte Precoce (SAP) Early Warning System that operates across southern Madagascar. WFP organises food aid in the Food for Work Programme for, on average, 13-18 communes diagnosed as deeply food insecure each year.

For the NLGs, 29% explained that it was according to the food security and ‘famine’ classification designation by SAP (see footnote); 20% thought it was the responsibility of the commune to ask the WFP; 44% did not know the procedures or could not remember.

In fact this programming helped highlight a number of gaps in information and understanding for the WFP beneficiary groups in relation to services and food aid. For example, many WFP beneficiaries in the most isolated areas had heard the broadcast. They had understood the radio programmes and the information disseminated but they then realised that they had never seen the “PAM programme contract” as mentioned in the broadcast. This enabled those responsible at WFP to understand the reality for these beneficiaries and consider the necessary action.

6. Food Storage

Regular drought in the Androy region results in a three month annual hunger gap. Consequently the storage of harvest produce is a primary concern for all families in the region. The question asked of listeners was: **Q7: What are the steps to follow before storing production?**



All the LG respondents (100%) demonstrated a good understanding of the methods for storing produce as explained in the VVD programmes; there was some small confusion about the application of insecticides on the produce before stocking but they knew the process of drying and ensuring the stock house was disinfected before use. For the NLGs, 77% responded with the information as broadcast in the VVD programme: very dry products ready to mix with insecticides (natural), set displays to put bags containing products ready for storage and maintain

cleanliness of the site. But 23% of respondents did not know the answer and explained that they were not farmers.

In both the LGs and NLGs the retention of this programme information was high, with a lower count in the NLGs due to fewer farmers in the group. This reflects a reality in the wider listening audience in Androy where approximately 80% of the population are rural producers. Correct storage information enables them to secure food stocks for the most vulnerable periods of the year and maintain nutrition and health levels. This programme was therefore significant to the majority of the community.

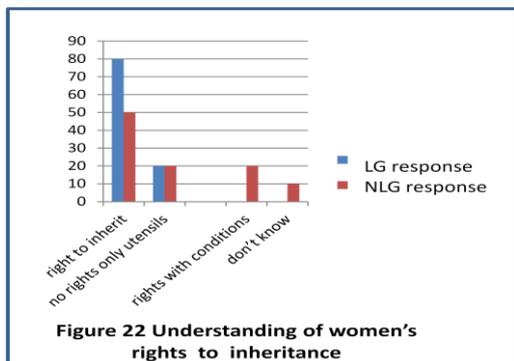
7. Rights of Women to Inheritance

The project produced a number of programmes about the rights of women to inherit land including a radio phone in programme. Malagasy law provides that women have the right to inheritance. However, Antandroy customs conflict with Malagasy law by asserting that women cannot inherit and that property, especially land, must pass through the male lineage. The subject is of high importance since land provides livelihoods for the majority of the population; women are vulnerable once they fall outside of the traditional family structure through divorce, separation or widowed.

The question was therefore: **Q8: What is the woman's right to inheritance?**

The majority of LG respondents (80%) knew about and were convinced they had the right to inherit – whether it is land, a house or cattle.

However 15% persisted with the notion that they have no rights to inheritance. They see their inheritance coming via their husbands. Finally, 5% think they only have the right to inherit kitchen utensils and furniture; they do not believe they have a right to inherit cattle or land.



Half of the NLGs responded that women have the right to inherit and some have even added the right to their husbands' pension; 20% replied that women have the right to inherit if they have a son, or if the parents and brothers accept, or if they are legitimately married. Ten percent were unable to respond to the question and the remaining 20% said that women have no right to inheritance other than cooking utensils (Antandroy custom).

A possible differential in the response levels between the LGs and the NLGs on this important subject is the face to face training in human rights that was given to the LGs at the start of the project which included a film focused on domestic violence and women's rights. Additionally the LGs were enabled to participate in phone in programmes on this subject and they also posed questions to decision makers in the Q & A broadcasts.

There are still a number of barriers to understanding and accepting women's rights to inheritance. The VVD programmes have nevertheless made a significant contribution to changing ideas and more importantly to opening up public debate on this subject. See Gender impacts page 32.

Difference Between LGs and NLG Respondents on VVD Programmes



Listening Group in Androy

Between 1999-2009 more than 3000 radio listening groups were set up by Andrew Lees Trust Project Radio, funded by the European Commission. They were provided with solar/wind up powered radios, trained and engaged in programme production either directly with the ALT teams or via their extensive partnerships with 60 NGOs and local service providers across eight regions of the south. In 2006 these radio LGs were also connected to the CNLS national HIV AIDS communications programme in which ALT was a strategic partner.

The VVD Baseline study showed that many of the ALT Project Radio LGs were still functioning - at least in terms of their listening habits and their

debating practices and from all the above VVD findings, there is, for the most part, an advantage gained from being in a LG with the project.

Levels of understanding about the key information is slightly higher than in NLGs, although discussing programmes and sharing information is high in both LGs and NLGs due to customary practises and oral traditions. LGs have been actively involved in VVD by identifying themes, posing questions and recording them for decision makers; they also have contractual obligations to listen and debate the VVD programmes. Their consequent attention to, and retention of, programme content is therefore inevitably elevated above those of the more passive NLGs listeners to VVD broadcasts.

The VVD participatory spiral of engagement strengthens the LGs comprehension and retention as demonstrated by all the results. The NLGs recognise there are benefits to belonging to a LG, aside from simply sharing access to a radio. When the NLGs were asked about what they thought would be the advantages of belonging to a Listening Group²⁹ half replied that it was source of information. Almost a quarter also saw it as a way to ensure equity of knowledge : *'have the same level of understanding as the programme content broadcast'*. Other saw it as a way to share information and knowledge and to develop the capacity to open up and *'receive new ideas'*.

The benefits of being a LG were discussed with both LGs and NLGs and reported accordingly during the evaluation as:

- Changed behaviour: citizens dare ask for information directly, dare to speak openly and take responsibility.
- Creating a spirit of trust between local decision makers/authorities and the community.
- Direct access - phoning in to the radio to get answers right away is very important to listeners.
- Learning new things.
- Decision makers/authorities are obliged to change their behaviour because the community no longer hesitates to ask for explanations or information (accountability).

²⁹ 11 people interviewed in the NLGs had previously participated in a LG with ALT Project Radio.

- Everyone can be aware of the procedures in decentralised services, such as the hospital.
- Questions followed by explanations can give all the necessary information.
- Decision makers/authorities experience benefits by passing messages about their services via radio.
- Program broadcasts promote openness (transparency).

Community engagement in LGs

Themes for the radio programmes were chosen by the LGs depending on their daily problems, and to reflect concerns for the majority of the community. When it came to citizens recording questions that would be broadcast publicly, there were inevitably issues: mostly related to the sensitivity of the question (i.e. if it was about corruption) and a need to maintain anonymity to avoid repercussions or reprisals with authorities, leaders etc. Consequently the LGs designated a representative to record the community's questions on their behalf. Those who had been chosen declared a range of reasons as to why they thought they had been selected including recognition of courage, respect and responsibility *'they trust me'*, as well as the volunteerism and readiness of the candidates *'I am young and audacious and I want to progress'*!

The principle of community participation and representation helped to create a sense of solidarity amongst the LG members. Over half the men (56%) and women (60%) interviewed said they had participated in programme making in order to help their community.

Impact: Community development

The LG members felt they were more informed as a result of being in the LG and felt responsible to share their knowledge with their immediate 'entourage' (friends and family). They also recognised that they benefitted from group debates, especially when they had doubts, and that they could help others similarly. They stated that the group enabled them to learn how to live with the community, and helped to change their ideas. The benefits of LG exchange were also perceived to be a way of opening up life and new learning opportunities.³⁰

³⁰ It should be recognised that many of these communities benefitted from ten years of participatory radio for development broadcasting from ALT Project Radio which demonstrated positive impacts on MDGs in Madagascar.

Wider Impacts of the VVD Approach

Wider Programme Benefits

1. Recognising the Role of Media in Development

The majority of citizens in both LGs and NLGs understood that radio was a source of education, information, and raised awareness that could help with their daily life and development. They expressed the view that radio and development rely on each other - particularly as development information could not be disseminated easily without the radio. Indeed, citizens could see little point in media (the radio) if it was not broadcasting development information; *'they are both interdependent'*. They also recognised that for a largely non-literate population, the radio offered an **egalitarianism** that would otherwise not exist in development; *'with the radio everyone can hear what is said without having need of an education'*.

Decision makers also saw a strong interdependence between media and development. Five of the seven decision makers had spoken on the radio and had already worked with radio listening groups as a means to reach their beneficiary groups. Decision makers wanted to see local radio stations strengthened and capacity increased to deliver development programming- especially for farmers.

2. Radio as a Development Tool

Decision makers saw radio as a primary means of communication *because it is cost efficient; quick to convey messages; accessible in the home; offering wide geographical scope; an educator and informer; easily understood and accepted by listeners; and positively affecting development outcomes.*

An important factor for decision makers was the reduced pressure on their organisations for face to face sensitisation in the community since much of what they needed to communicate was done via VVD broadcasts; this also catalysed greater interaction between villagers and their field agents on the ground.

LGs reported they could now speak directly to the decision maker via radio - *'and without leaving home'*. This is particularly important for given the vast geographic distances in the south, the isolation of communities and the poverty levels that restrict access to or ownership of transport and highlights the relevance of radio as a an appropriate medium for communicating, especially in rural areas.

The radio stations also appreciated the new VVD programmes formats as a source of new learning and stimulus to the local population, which was reflected in *increased* audience listenership and improved motivation of their journalists. The project's airtime contract was a source of income for the stations which helped meet running costs and the stations see that this type of programming will ensure audience listenership and is therefore important for their long term survival.

The VVD participants' fundamental understanding of the benefits of media reinforces the justification for the approach; it also reinforces the findings of the UNDP survey in 2008 which showed that 91% of respondents felt that media could help improve their lives.

3. Opening Up New Life Opportunities Through Sharing and Discussion

During the evaluation, the NLGs declared that they were able to develop their knowledge thanks to questions raised by others which, in turn, motivated them to ask questions themselves. They recognised that the new knowledge could be applied in their daily lives and which *'allows our lives to flourish'*. Moreover, they could share their new knowledge with others in the community.

Over two thirds of the NLGs expressed that what they had learnt from VVD had changed their understanding about human rights. This had come about not only from listening to the radio but also from debating programmes, holding meetings, discussions after phone in programmes, sharing ideas with neighbours. These interactions *'opened up the spirit'* and changed attitudes.

LGs who experienced changes in their knowledge about human rights (95%) also spoke about the positive effects on their life by permitting them to become more *'responsible for their family and community'*. The new found sense of *'responsibility'* that came with understanding their rights also improved well being – for example it was mentioned that daily life in the village had changed for the better. *'Parents are no longer seen striking their children since they heard the radio programmes'* and women were helping each other more with daily tasks. People said they could express themselves more freely and there was a general sense that life was opening up. When asked how they felt about these new changes, both LG and NLG groups strongly asserted the aspect of being able to discuss and share knowledge about their rights with their neighbours and community. They not only brought about an exchange of ideas but also became a source of self empowerment and pride; *'I become a source of knowledge and information'*.

The substantial new awareness and comprehension about human rights experienced by citizens in both LGs and NLGs was brought about not only by listening to the VVD programmes but also through debates and sharing of ideas amongst the community. This exchange helped instil feelings of responsibility, confidence and self efficacy. Since NLGs are representative of the wider audience (approx 50,000 listeners in the region) we can cautiously assume that these interactions and feelings are occurring across the wider community in Androy with positive effect.

4. Public Dialogue Promotes Greater Sense of Responsibility and Accountability

As the project progressed, decision makers saw that citizens were making demands and expressing themselves more clearly (i.e. with direct questions), and became more confident to state their case or to make complaints to officials when there was something that did not follow an explanation. This created awareness in decision makers that they could be publicly held to account, even if the radio programme and the broadcast questions did not immediately concern *them*. They became increasingly conscious about how they *account for service provision and 'regulate their activities'*.

In the LGs, citizens noted that the response from decision makers was much more immediate in dialogue by radio and engendered more openness and **transparency**. Importantly many remarked that this direct interface with decision makers encouraged *'a change of attitude and taking responsibility'*. The capacity of citizens to communicate to decision makers improved as well as their sense of responsibility in the engagement as they began also to understand that their questions could also influence outcomes.

The decision makers confirmed that from their perspective too, citizens became more prudent. After hearing the VVD programmes *'they knew the rules, and what is legal and what is not'*. The decision makers were able to provide specific information whilst also maintaining rules of engagement, and reinforcing them when necessary. This facilitated improved relations with citizens, for example there were fewer thefts in the WFP school canteens; and the charcoal producers' situation was clarified and regulated.

The radio stations noted the change of behaviour *'the listeners are learning different information and ways to do things'*. They particularly recognised the impacts of the VVD programme on women and the discussions on inheritance bringing a major shift in behaviour.

Factors Enabling the VVD Approach

VVD has demonstrated that with very small funds and a great deal of commitment from decision makers, citizens and local media, new and dynamic forms of dialogue can be facilitated via radio which promotes a more open, rights based society and offer the potential to improve local service provision and governance.

1. The approach is highly responsive to citizens information needs and allows them to set the agenda for the programme content by identifying their key concerns about development, services, etc and recording their questions on these topics. This process promotes **self efficacy and confidence building**, especially for rural populations and women who are frequently marginalized from decision making processes.
2. Questions and the decision makers response are broadcast in Q &A format; a public dialogue commences and through feedback loops continues until the audience are largely satisfied that they have received the information they need to understand and /act on the issue concerned. This part of the process helps build **comprehension, ownership and responsibility** as each party recognizes its role in the process.
3. Citizens' questions are recorded anonymously in the village setting; there is no face to face confrontation with decision makers. Consequently, citizens feel comfortable to express themselves and **transcend social and cultural barriers** of gender, class, age, that would normally prevent them from speaking out.
4. The bottom up approach engages decision makers to **understand communications and information gaps** that act as barriers to comprehension and participation in development activity, allowing them to reorient their interventions, influence local development strategy and be more accountable to local needs.
5. The field teams and radio stations, who work to build trust and dialogue between the community and decision makers, are seen to be acting in the interests of wider development. The radio acts as a neutral facilitator to communications and this encourages **greater openness and participation** from all parties.
6. Programming is produced in local dialects/language and broadcast through well known and established community radio stations. This provides two factors for loyal and regular listening as well as **improved comprehension and ownership** of the broadcast content.
7. Increased access to mobile telephony offers an immediate way for the wider listening audience and ensures a **diversity of voices** to call to phone in programmes with their questions and views.
8. **Responsive and adaptive** to local sensitivities and communications barriers.

Key actors contributing to the success of VVD

1. Regional and local decision makers willing to participate and be held to account publicly via radio.
2. Citizens who overcome fears and actively drive development debate by selecting topics and asking questions of decision makers in public.
3. Dynamic local media service providers- radio stations ready to facilitate phone in programmes and manage political risks of broadcasting public opinion.
4. Experienced and well respected local communications for development/empowerment team: ALT Mg.
5. National and regional partners endorsing/supporting the project

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Listeners

Some villagers found it hard to understand the technical information given out by decision makers on the radio. This emphasises the need for increased capacity building of the local decision makers in how to respond to villagers questions but also highlights the need for follow up face to face trainings and meetings with villagers when appropriate - especially where technical information is hard to master and apply. Radio on its own cannot meet all development needs and expectations.

Some villagers were unable to participate in phone in programmes due to lack of ownership of or access to mobile phones. For those who did have access, many complained that the phone in programmes should be longer in order to meet all the callers' questions. An increased frequency of phone in programmes would help to alleviate this frustration.

Due to the small level of funding and the project being in a pilot phase, only a limited number of communities were able to participate in LGs and therefore in direct programme production. Given that all the results suggest higher levels of comprehension and media engagement occurs through participating in an LG, it would be desirable to scale up the project to include more existing LGs, create new LGs and expand into other regions.

Decision Makers

Managing the technical content of the Q&A format and phone in programmes was challenging. The VVD approach presents a new way of producing educational broadcasts and capacity building is needed to assist local decision makers, NGOs and service providers to improve their communication skills and ability to work with the media.

Some decision makers were uncomfortable with the aspect of public scrutiny and accountability brought about by VVD programming and capacity building is needed to support this form of public media



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engagement so that decision makers feel less defensive and are encouraged by their superiors, e.g. at Ministerial level, to engage in this style of debate and dialogue with their constituents.

The programmes inevitably made demands on decision makers and in some instances this required additional or improved service provision. Decision makers have to manage the impacts of these demands so that they can respond realistically and ensure that the relationship of trust is not broken – managing expectations and service delivery will be key to the success of the public debate, as will ongoing transparency and openness.

Decision makers stated that they want to see local radio improved as the primary media in the south; in particular, to respond to the high demand for educational programming especially amongst farmers. They expressed a desire to hear serious, well produced programmes; more use of telephony, reduced price of batteries to help improve listening; greater capacity of station staff and journalists; increased use of

dialects and dialogue. They also understood the need for appropriately adapted communications, more visual communications, and literacy programmes to improve wider educational indicators.

It was clear that many decision makers had severe time restrictions that impeded their ability to participate directly in programme production, follow up listening to and debating of the VVD programmes. Although many allocated this responsibility to their subordinates, it will be important to find ways to assist decision makers to understand all aspects of the VVD process, especially programme impacts, so that they can manage their side of the process. During ALT 'Project Radio' similar constraints were a challenge to programme production and it was finally agreed that each organisation/entity designate a communications person. This may be the solution needed in VVD but strategic decision making about services will necessitate the inputs of Directors, Regional Representatives and Heads of Department.

Radio Stations

Radio stations were concerned that their equipment and personnel were not sufficiently functional to sustain the programme broadcasts. Both stations experienced technical problems that impeded their full



Director of Radio Cactus Msr Nofy with a journalist at the station

broadcast capacity. Radio Rohondroho felt they lacked a reliable and sufficiently powerful transmitter to reach audiences across the Androy. They also need a computer and partnership with telephone operators (e.g. Airtel, Orange, Telma³¹). Radio Cactus discussed the difficulty of managing the energy source; with regular electricity cuts the station would prefer solar energy to maintain broadcast scheduling. The radio phone in programmes suffered due to power cuts and interruptions to live broadcasts will inevitably have a negative impact on the listening audience.

Sustainability

The longer term aim of the VVD project is to scale up into other regions and enable local partners to learn and develop the capacity to deliver VVD programming. The ALT Team has already experienced some realities of scaling up the project for the EU funded national elections communications programme which commenced in December 2012. Key issues have included: access to appropriate editing equipment in the field (i.e. they have been removed from their professional production studios in the south); time constraints to work with both communities and partners; scaled down methodology; lack of radio listening groups in many areas; inexperience of local partners to work with radio /media; highly stretched field teams and resources; vast geographic distances; highly restricted remit for programme content.

In scaling up VVD, and in order to ensure the application of the full VVD methodology, a serious funding commitment over a realistic period of time would be required; also to enable the team to effectively respond to the challenges and put in place the necessary infrastructure, human resources, training and capacity building.

³¹ Airtel and Telma are two of the phone service providers in Madagascar

Extending into one or two regions in the first instance is desirable, especially if within the southern context, where media partnership has already been developed by ALT. The need for technical training, and in some instances new equipment, may be necessary to ensure that VVD programmes can be produced and broadcast more effectively. A scaling up process should consider these technical needs and schedule them accordingly into the project design and budget. Once in place the equipment and training can continue to serve the community in the longer term.

Working with other national partners could also provide support and the necessary structures to assist scaling up. However, ALT should be enabled to maximise its directorial role in such a partnership rather than being sidelined by internationals who may be driven by external agendas and funding pressures rather than deferring to local priorities, realities and capacity.

Local ownership

ALT is the main Malagasy NGO³² with long term experience and commitments in communications for development in Madagascar and with an extensive grass roots track record (i.e. not based in the capital



ALT MG team in 2009 at the hand over from Andrew Lees Trust

Antananarivo, and not commercially driven). International partners working in C4D and donors who support governance, rural development and community engagement in Madagascar could support the development of ALT Mg and strengthen its capacity to take a prominent role in development communication for the long term benefit of the country. This support would include strengthening its ability to train others and share its methodologies and skills across the different regions of the island.

Andry Lalana Tohana (ALT Mg) - sustainability and capacity

1. Since the transition to a Malagasy NGO in 2009, The ALT Mg management team has raised over 1 million Euros of funding and delivered development projects over more than four years of political instability when international donors have withdrawn support and many NGOs and projects have failed or had to close.
2. ALT Mg has a clean track record of audited financial management and an impressive portfolio of projects with excellent results on the ground (e.g. a key partner for IFAD in the south)
3. The ALT Mg team has required only small amounts of external support during its transition to an independently functioning Malagasy NGO - mostly mentoring and orientation with proposal writing. It has recently been able to contract international consultancy.
4. The ALT Mg management team members have used their own means and funds to ensure continuance of field activities during funding delays, e.g. awaiting payment tranches from donors. This demonstrates an unusually high level of personal and professional commitment for local Malagasy actors to their organisational development and aims.

For more information about Andry Lalana Tohana visit: <http://andrewleestrust.org/andry.htm>

³² <http://www.andrewleestrust.org/andry.htm>

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Annex 1

Regional Decision Makers

Local and regional decision makers based in Ambovombe Androy who were visited by the VVD team and introduced to the project for their support and collaboration.

- The Chief District of Ambovombe
- The Head of the School District Ambovombe
- The Regional Directorate of Health
- The Directorate of Hospital Center of Ambovombe
- The Regional Directorate of National Education
- The Regional Directorate of Environment and Forests
- The Regional Directorate of Rural Development
- The Brigade of Gendarmerie Ambovombe
- The Land Bank Ambovombe
- Food and Agriculture Organisation
- UNICEF
- World Food Programme

Annex 2

VVD Programmes Made Between March and August 2012

Month 1

N	THEME	TITLE OF BROADCAST	DECISION MAKERS
1	Development	Presentation of the project and request for collaboration	Region of Androy
2	Agriculture	Problem of access to insecticides	DRDR Androy
3	Food Security	The mode of operation of school canteens	PAM Ambovombe
4	Health	Information on the services of the Hospital of Ambovombe	Head of staff at Hospital Centre, Ambovombe
5	Food Security	Criteria for selection of beneficiary sites for VCT	WFP Ambovombe

Month 2

1	Human Rights	Origin, principles et definition of Human Rights	ALT
2	Access to drinking water	The price of drinking water	AES Androy
3	Public security	Collaboration agents of security/the population in the fight against insecurity - responsibility and limits	Colonel, the Police Force Ambovombe
4	Health	Rising prices of drugs/medication	Head of staff, Hospital Centre, Ambovombe
5	Public Security publique	Application of the Dina: conditions and limits.	Colonel, the Police Force Ambovombe
6	Health	Information system within the Hospital service Ambovombe	Head of staff at Hospital Centre, Ambovombe

Month 3

1	Health	Price of services, health care and surgical interventions at the Hospital in Ambovombe.	Head of staff at Hospital Centre, Ambovombe
2	Food Security	How the WFP school canteens operate Organisation et responsibility of the parents of students	WFP Rep for PAM school canteens Ambovombe
3	Food Security	Relationship between WFP school canteens and schooling of pupils	WFP Rep for PAM school canteens Ambovombe
4	Land Rights	The procedures for appropriating federal land	Head of Division of Guichet foncier Ambovombe Androy
5	Agriculture	Problem of access to insecticides: the use of the traditional and natural method	Regional Director of Agricultural Service Ambovombe

Month VVD 4

N	THEME	TITLE OF BROADCAST	DECISION MAKER
1	Agriculture	Techniques for treating produce before storage	Regional Director of Agricultural Service Ambovombe

2	Agriculture	Techniques for treating produce during storage	Regional Director of Agricultural Service Ambovombe
3	Public Security	Explanation relating to the application of the Dina	Commandant of the Police Force Ambovombe
4	Public Security	Role of the population in respect of public security	Commandant of the Police Force Ambovombe
5	Culture	Rights of women to inheritance (1)	Elder of Androy

Month 5

1	Development	Remediation of the market place in the urban district of Ambovombe	Mayoral representative Androy
2	Land Rights	Land schemes and domain service: roles and the differences.	Controller of the Land Service
3	Culture	Women's rights to inheritance (2)	Controller of the Land Service
4	Drinking water	Improving access to drinking water for outlying rural areas	Assistant to the Director General AES
5	Environment	Permission to cut wood, case of the charcoal producers	Head of District

Month 6

1	Land Rights	Topography Service: Roles and relationship to the domain service	Rep for the Topographical Service Ambovombe
2	Drinking water	Application for drinking water services from AES – systems and procedures to follow	Assistant to the Director of AES
3	Health	Organisation within the hospital service in Ambovombe during the days not working/open	Regional Health Directorate Androy Officer for women and child health
4	Energy	Conditions for installing electricity in a village	Technical Officer, JIRAMA

Annex 3

Sampling

1. Listening Groups

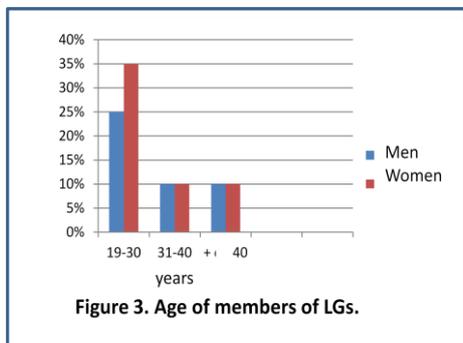


Figure 3. Age of members of LGs.

The project worked directly with the 10 of the most dynamic Listening Groups (LGs) based around the town of Ambovombe, Androy. Each LG was composed on average of 12 people, including 6 women and 6 men although in this study slightly more women participated due to better availability. Drawn from the 123 members of the selected LGs, the baseline study interviewed a total of 20 LG members including 11 women and 9 men.

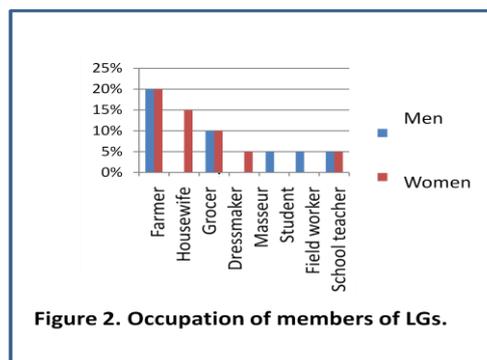


Figure 2. Occupation of members of LGs.

All had been members of a LGs for some years and 70% for at least 4-6 years and would have participated in the third phase of ALT Project Radio (2006-2009) when it collaborated with the SE / CNLS (National HIV / AIDS Awareness Campaign). For the main evaluation survey the same LG members were revisited. Only one person was unavailable and replaced with another person of the same age, status, occupation and gender.

2. Non Listening Group

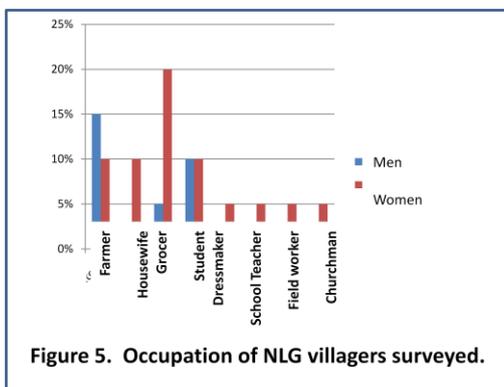


Figure 5. Occupation of NLG villagers surveyed.

In order to widen the findings from the evaluation, and compare impacts from exposure to the VVD broadcasts, a Non Listening Group (NLG) was set up with villagers who were not members of LGs but part of the wider listening audience in Androy. The study therefore includes 22 NLG individuals, eleven of whom had previously participated in radio listening groups with ALT Project Radio; of the 22 individuals interviewed, 15 (68%) were women and the average age was 34 years old. The respondents were indirect beneficiaries of the project; living in areas covered by the partner local radio

stations and hence in receipt of regular VVD broadcasts. It was difficult for the research team to identify 20 villagers with exactly the same profile (age /occupation) the LG villagers surveyed and more women were available to participate than men.

Village Setting: the availability of men is dependent on seasonal pressures such as the need to move cattle to pastureland, agricultural calendar and market days. More women tend to be available in the village setting any one time as they are tasked with caring for small children and the elderly.

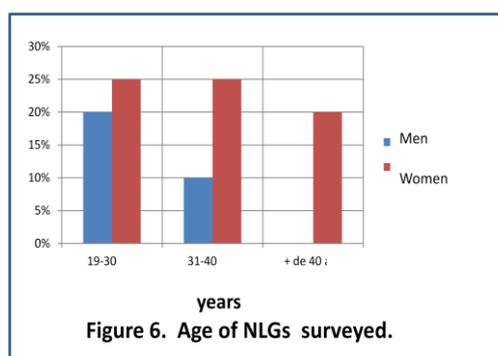


Figure 6. Age of NLGs surveyed.

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3. Decision Makers / Representatives of Organisations

In the southern Region of Androy, and based in the District of Ambovombe, there are twelve agencies/organisations that represent development. Seven participated in the baseline and endline surveys including:

- The Regional Director for the Environment and Forests in Androy
- The Coordinator of the Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Southern antenna
- The "Head of Sub-Office", World Food Programme (WFP) Ambovombe
- The President of the Agricultural Chamber of Androy (Tranoben'ny Tantsaha)
- The Manager of Ecology and Agriculture Component of SOA Project, Objectif Sud (GRET)
- The CISCO Ambovombe, Head for the Department of Education
- The Regional Director of Public Health, Androy

For the Baseline survey all the representatives interviewed were male and all been in their position of authority for a minimum of one year and a maximum of five years. They are all familiar with the social and development landscape of the region and the challenges associated with implementing projects and delivering services to the Androy people.

It transpired that during the course of the project many decision makers had allocated the task of programme making to one of their subordinates and had tasked others to respond to villagers' questions according to the project needs. Consequently many decision makers were unable to respond fully or appropriately to all questions in the endline survey – especially with regard to programme production, project interaction and exchange mechanisms. Therefore, in order to secure all the information needed for the endline survey, the researchers had to adopt a more flexible approach and conducted interviews with two or three people from any one organization – those who had participated in the baseline as well as those who had subsequently made the programmes in response to villagers. The onus was then on the research team to collate the information accordingly.

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