

DJs show videos in Malawi

IMPACT
STUDY

13

Introduction

Farmers who watch learning videos tend to understand the new ideas, creatively adapt them and improve their yields. Yet ways must be found to get videos into the hands of all the farmers who need them. Some projects help distribute videos, but most farmers are on their own, out of touch with any extensionists, projects or NGOs.

DJs in every small town

In 2013, Ronald K. Udedi, a media specialist at The Polytechnic (University of Malawi), noticed that almost overnight, with no outside encouragement, young men (and a few women) had started small digital entertainment businesses in every market town of Malawi. These youth called themselves “DJs” and they bought or traded DVDs, copied the movies and music videos onto their computers and then installed videos onto the phones (not the smart variety) of people living in small towns and villages. Farmers going to town for market could pay to have a few movies loaded onto their phone, to watch later at home with friends and family. Farmers who had bought a cell phone were suddenly finding that they also had a miniature home entertainment system.



With some DVDs and a suggestion about a new business angle, DJs will distribute training videos

The DJs distributed farmer learning videos

In 2015, Access Agriculture supported a trial to see if the DJs would share agricultural training videos with farmers, with the implication that if the idea worked, DVDs could be distributed through informal entertainment dealers all over Africa. Udedi made copies of 3 DVDs (Rice Advice, Fighting Striga and Chilli), in English and several of the languages of Malawi (Chichewa, Yao and Sena). He gave these DVDs to 95 DJs in southern Malawi and encouraged them to make copies of the learning videos to share with farmers.

A study in 2016 found that some of the DJs had gone back to school, or taken jobs elsewhere, but the study team was able to find 56 of the DJs, and learned that 27 of them had burned new copies of the DVDs and 36 had copied videos onto customers’ cell phones. All of the DJs distributed the videos in some way. At least 28 DJs (50%) sold videos. Others added the agricultural videos as freebies for customers who bought movies. Some DJs found that the videos brought in new customers by attracting older men from the countryside, serious family farmers. The DJs reached an estimated 2100 people directly and perhaps 21,000 indirectly.

The DJs were all happy with their trial experience. Their only complaint was that they had not received more DVDs. They would have liked to get a new DVD every month, to have fresh titles to share with their customers.

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Contact: Jeffery Bentley jeff@agroinsight.com

Bentley, Jeffery, Paul Van Mele, and Ronald Kondwani Udedi 2014 Digital information flows in Malawi. Copy available from senior author.

Bentley, Jeffery W., Ronald Kondwani Udedi, and Paul Van Mele 2016 Malawi DJs Distribute Videos to Farmers. Access Agriculture.

[Read the study.](#)

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Summary &
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Jeff Bentley