



**ON AIR**  
**DIALOGUES**

**LISTENING TO  
RURAL AFRICANS 2022**

Rural Africans bear the brunt of climate change. From reliance on rain-fed irrigation, dwindling resources, and recurring disasters rural people in sub-Saharan Africa are particularly vulnerable to climate change, though they are among those least contributing to it. And yet, they are rarely, if ever, consulted in the development of solutions to climate change.

Whether protecting natural resources and biodiversity, diversifying livelihoods, or adapting new farming practices, small-scale farmers are already part of the solution to climate change. They are experts in their fields and are ideally situated to identify the needs of their communities.

In October 2022, Farm Radio International organized a series of three On Air Dialogues in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso to gather the views, perspectives and experiences of rural people as they contend with climate change. The questions touched on how communities are taking action in response to climate change, and most importantly, what supports they identified as being most useful.

The On Air Dialogues prompted more than 14,300 calls from rural people. They responded to poll questions and left voice messages sharing their opinions, experience and perspectives on the impact of climate change — and what they thought global leaders should do to aid them to adapt and prosper. In total, we received over 120,000 poll question responses and 9,300 thoughtful voice messages from rural people in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia.

This research was led by Farm Radio International in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and seven partner radio stations ahead of the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP27. This research was made possible by financial support from IFAD and Global Affairs Canada.

## CONTEXT

Ordinary people across sub-Saharan Africa rarely have a chance to be heard by those who make policies and decisions about development and climate action. Geographic distance and lack of functioning feedback systems create a situation where decision-makers do not hear citizens' opinions about decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities.

Small-scale farmers in rural Africa are among the lowest contributors to global carbon emissions—and yet they are among the most vulnerable to its effects. They depend on rain-fed agriculture, cultivate small plots of land, and lack access to the technical or financial support that facilitate adaptation to climate-change's impacts.

However, small-scale farmers are extraordinarily resilient. They are often the best-placed, alongside Indigenous people, to steward ecosystems and protect biodiversity. These individuals feed their countries and communities, contribute to local and international economies, and preserve the local environment.

When farmers' voices and perspectives are amplified, we can base decisions, policies, and programs on what people really need and want. Learning from farmers' vast knowledge and experience can bring the world one step closer to resolving the impacts of climate change, and make sure solutions are equitable, sustainable, and productive for all.

Farmers and rural people have much to say. As nations, organizations, and individuals, we all must commit to listening and taking action together.

## WHAT ARE ON AIR DIALOGUES?

In partnership with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Farm Radio International led On Air Dialogues to gather thousands of small-scale farmers' and other rural peoples' perspectives on climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience.

The goal: to bring the voices of those least heard — small-scale farming women, men and youth in rural Africa — to the global conversation about climate change.

We worked with seven radio stations in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia to create 21 original episodes of radio programming, complete with mobile phone-based polling. On air, broadcasters invited local experts, farmers, and guests to speak their mind and share their knowledge. Off air, we engaged listeners to join in the discussion with their own thoughts. We wanted to know: What changes have had the biggest impact on their farms? How have their communities taken action in response to climate change? What kind of information and advice is needed to help them adapt? And what message did they want to send to governments and global leaders?

## WHY RADIO

Radio can reach the most remote, rural, and vulnerable communities in sub-Saharan Africa—places where literacy is low and the internet is too expensive to access. Broadcast in local languages, radio is an inexpensive and convenient way to reach communities that might not otherwise be reached.

Combined with mobile phones, radio becomes a powerful tool for dialogue and engagement.

Farm Radio International's Uliza suite of digital services combines radio, mobile phones and Interactive Voice Response systems enable listeners to communicate and exchange information immediately with their radio station quickly, easily and free of charge. When combined with interactive radio programming, Uliza is a powerful tool for farmers to join important conversations.

# WHO ANSWERED



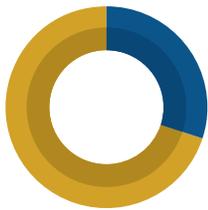
**5,905**  
BURKINA FASO



**8,451**  
ETHIOPIA

## 5 LOCAL LANGUAGES

### GENDER



● Women **30%**  
● Men **70%**

*\*It is essential that the opinions of women are heard and listened to. The On Air Dialogues took steps to encourage and promote the participation of women, which resulted in a higher rate of engagement than is typical for self-initiated surveys.*

## HOW IT WORKED: LISTENER POLLING

Each episode in the On Air Dialogues featured conversations about a different dimension of climate change: first, the changes that farmers were observing, then, the adaptations they were making, and then, the support they were looking for from governments and other decision-makers. After each episode the On Air Dialogues posed a series of questions to listeners.



As advertised on the radio program, listeners could use any mobile phone to leave a missed call (or “beep”) to a phone number advertised on the radio program.



Uliza, Farm Radio’s polling tool, returns the call, free of charge.



Uliza presents the caller with a series of multiple-choice questions. Callers respond by pressing numbers on the keypad.



Uliza also presents the caller with an open-ended question. Callers record a voice message in response.



Responses to multiple-choice questions are analyzed and disaggregated to shed light on key themes by country, age, and gender. Voice messages are similarly analyzed and documented.

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

2

COUNTRIES

7

RADIO STATIONS

3

ORIGINAL EPISODES

14,356

RESPONDENTS

122,529

POLL RESPONSES

9,317

AUDIO COMMENTS

# WHAT WE HEARD

## THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Communities in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia told us over and over again that climate change was harming their communities. Almost 90% of respondents identified changes in at least one of these areas: the timing and duration of rainy seasons, the volume of rainfall, the frequency of flooding, average temperatures and the type and quantity of food available since their youth. What struck us was this: the majority of respondents told us that farming and raising livestock is more difficult today than it was in the past.

## BIODIVERSITY

Climate change has a direct influence on the diversity of plants, animals, birds and insects in communities. We asked rural farmers if they had seen any changes in their communities' biodiversity. More than 60% of respondents in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia stated that their communities see less diversity of plants, animals, birds, and insects compared to the past.

Remarkably, 96% of participants in both countries agreed that it was important to take action to protect biodiversity. Rural farmers in both countries believe that the most effective approach to increase biodiversity is to promote and support more nature-friendly farming and livestock practices and to enable farmers to earn income by protecting and restoring biodiversity.

## CLIMATE-ADAPTATION

It's clear that climate change is affecting rural farmers — but rural farmers haven't given up. They are taking bold action. More than 90% of respondents told us they are taking steps to mitigate the impact in their communities and on their livelihoods. They are planting native plants and trees, adopting methods to find and preserve water, taking steps to prevent natural disasters, and working together to improve farming for everyone.

## GOOD INFORMATION

The livelihoods of rural farmers can be improved by giving them access to high-quality information. But what information do farmers want? They told us that their top priorities were information on weather and what crops to cultivate and animals to raise that were better suited to a changing climate.

## ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT AND DECISION MAKERS

Farmers in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso want their governments to assist them in climate change adaptation. Highest on their priority list? The improvement of water supply through irrigation and support for protecting nature and planting native trees.

## DIFFERENCES OF GENDER AND AGE

The information that was gathered through the On Air Dialogues was disaggregated by gender and ages. Women made up roughly one-third of all respondents in both countries, and 52% were youth. The perceptions of women and youth about the impact of climate change and adaptation strategies was not significantly different from those of men and older respondents. However, women over the age of 30 were more likely to say that farming and raising livestock is more difficult now than it used to be. They were also 15% more likely on average to have tried to find a different way to make a living. They were significantly more likely to identify access to accurate weather information and investments in irrigation to improve water supply as critical for dealing with the effects of climate change.



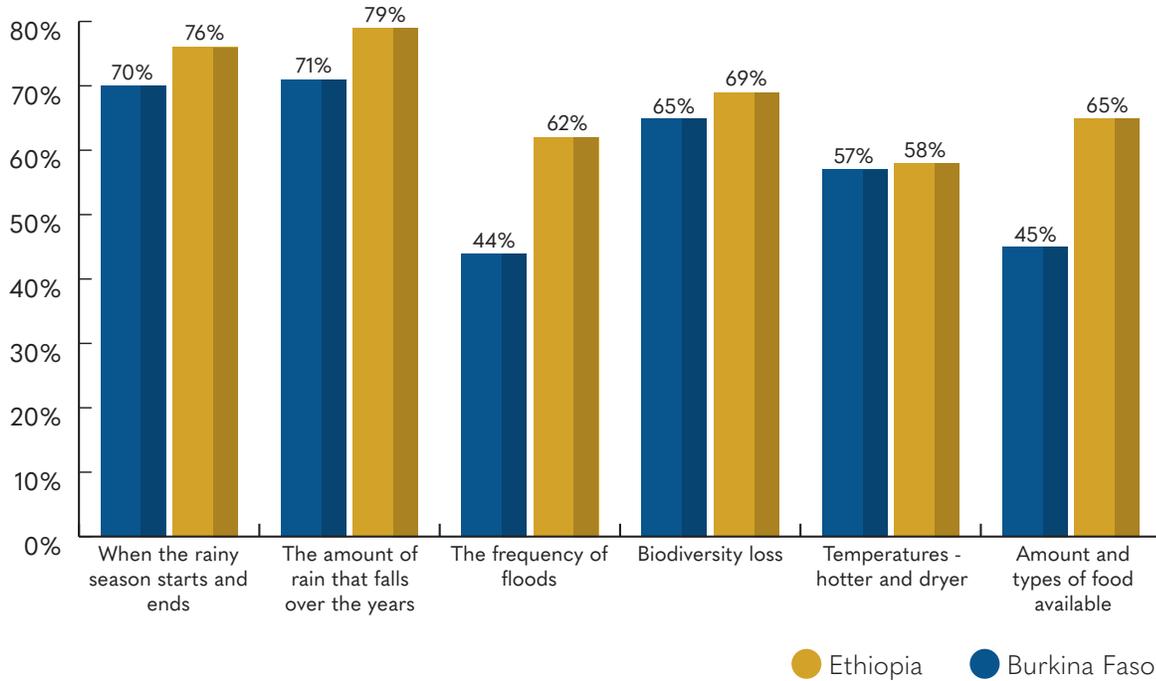
# EPISODE ONE

## QUESTION ONE:

**WORLDWIDE, THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN THE CLIMATE. WHAT KIND OF CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN YOUR AREA SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD?**

Notably, not only did Ethiopian respondents report a much higher frequency of floods than people in Burkina Faso, they also saw more drastic changes in the amount and types of food available.

### CHANGES OBSERVED BY RESPONDENTS



**88%** of Burkinabe respondents told us they had seen at least one change, and **90%** of Ethiopians reported the same!

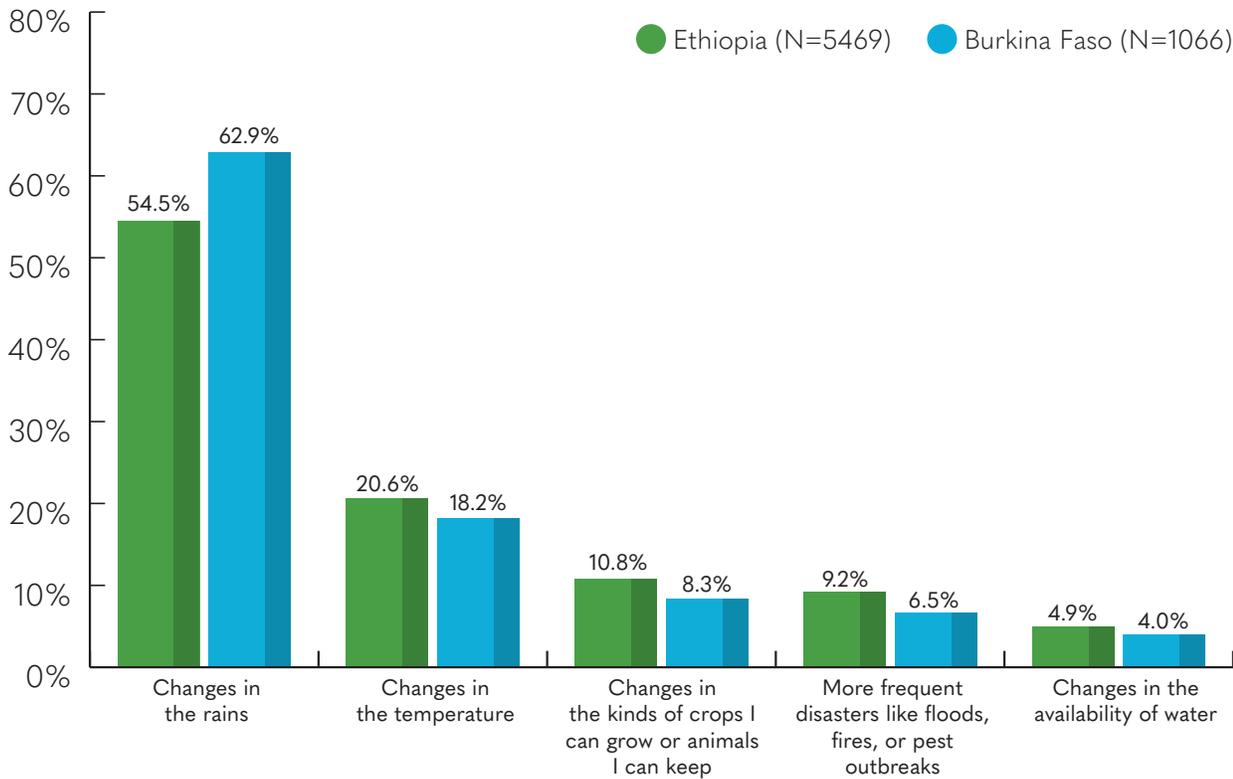


## QUESTION TWO:

### WHAT CHANGE IN THE ENVIRONMENT HAS HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR FARMING?

It's clear that changes in the rains are making the biggest difference for small-scale farmers.

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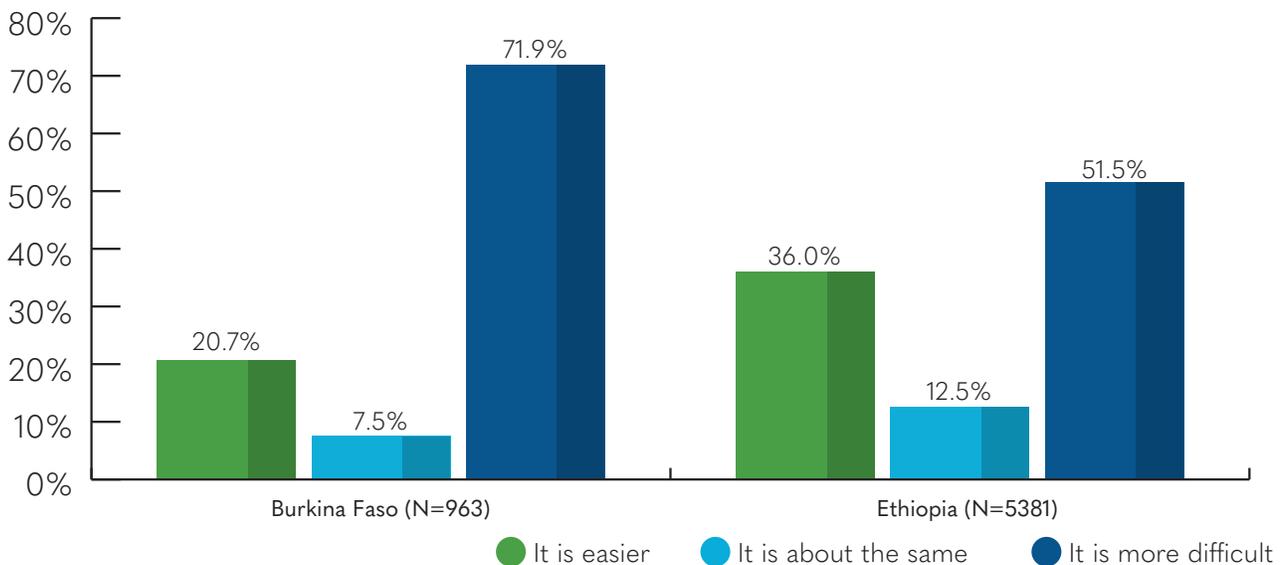


## QUESTION THREE:

### HOW IS FARMING OR LIVESTOCK KEEPING NOW COMPARED TO THE PAST?

Almost three-quarters of Burkinabe respondents told us that farming had gotten more difficult.

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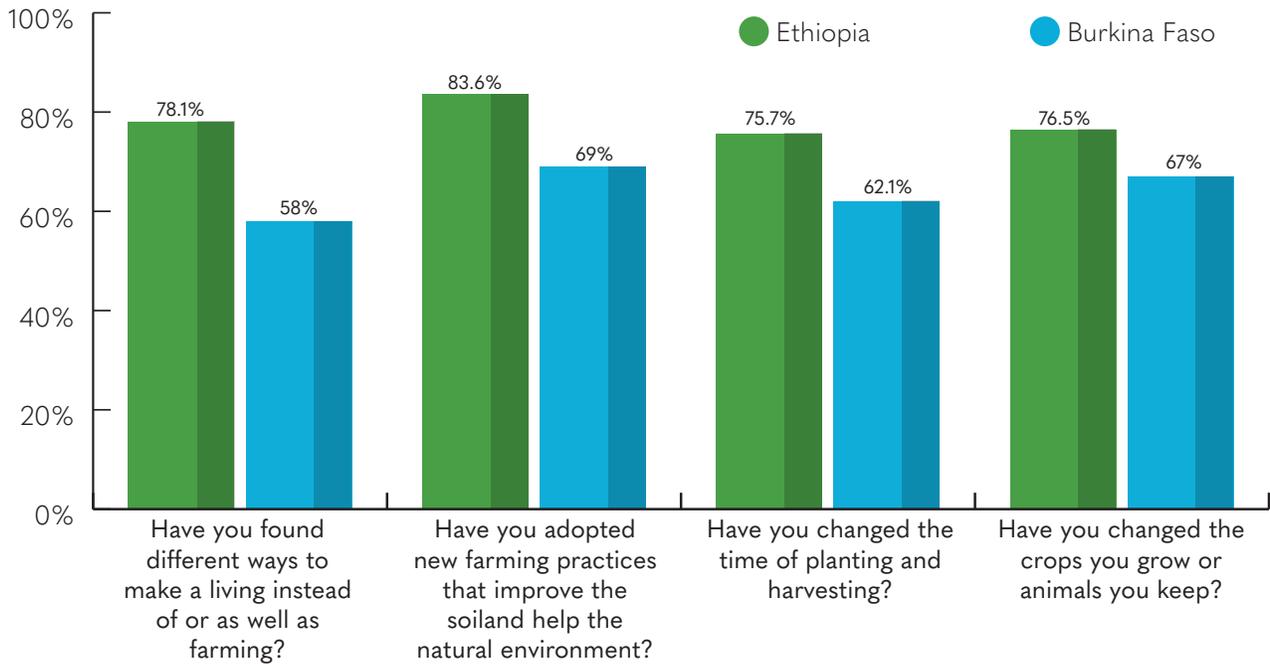


# EPISODE TWO

## QUESTION ONE:

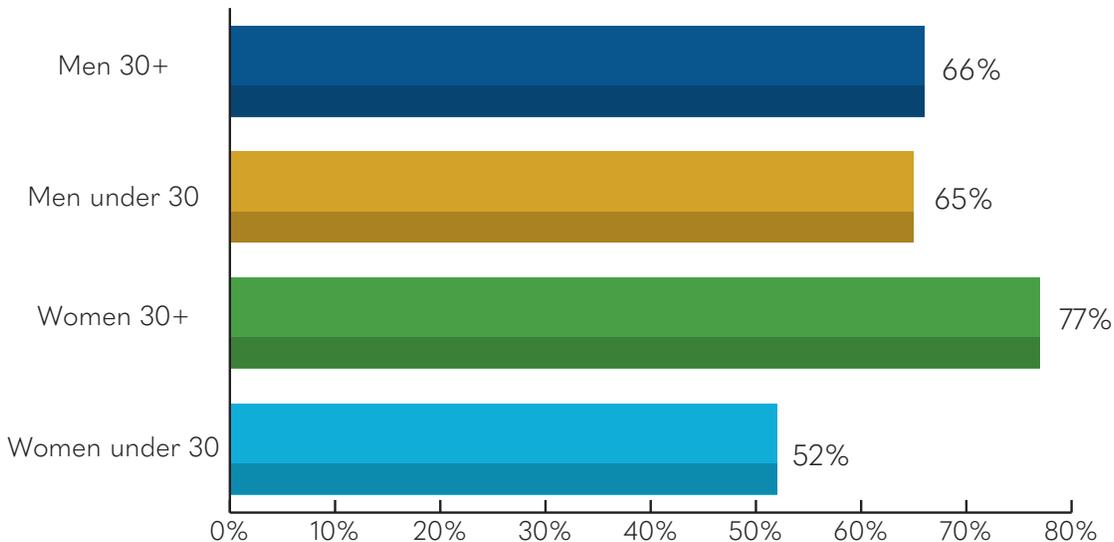
### WHAT TYPES OF CHANGES HAVE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY MADE ON YOUR OWN FARM?

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Interestingly, women over thirty were 15% more likely on average to have tried to find a different way to make a living. In fact, women over thirty were more likely than any other gender or age group to have made a change in general.

### HAVE YOU FOUND DIFFERENT WAYS TO MAKE A LIVING INSTEAD OF OR AS WELL AS FARMING?



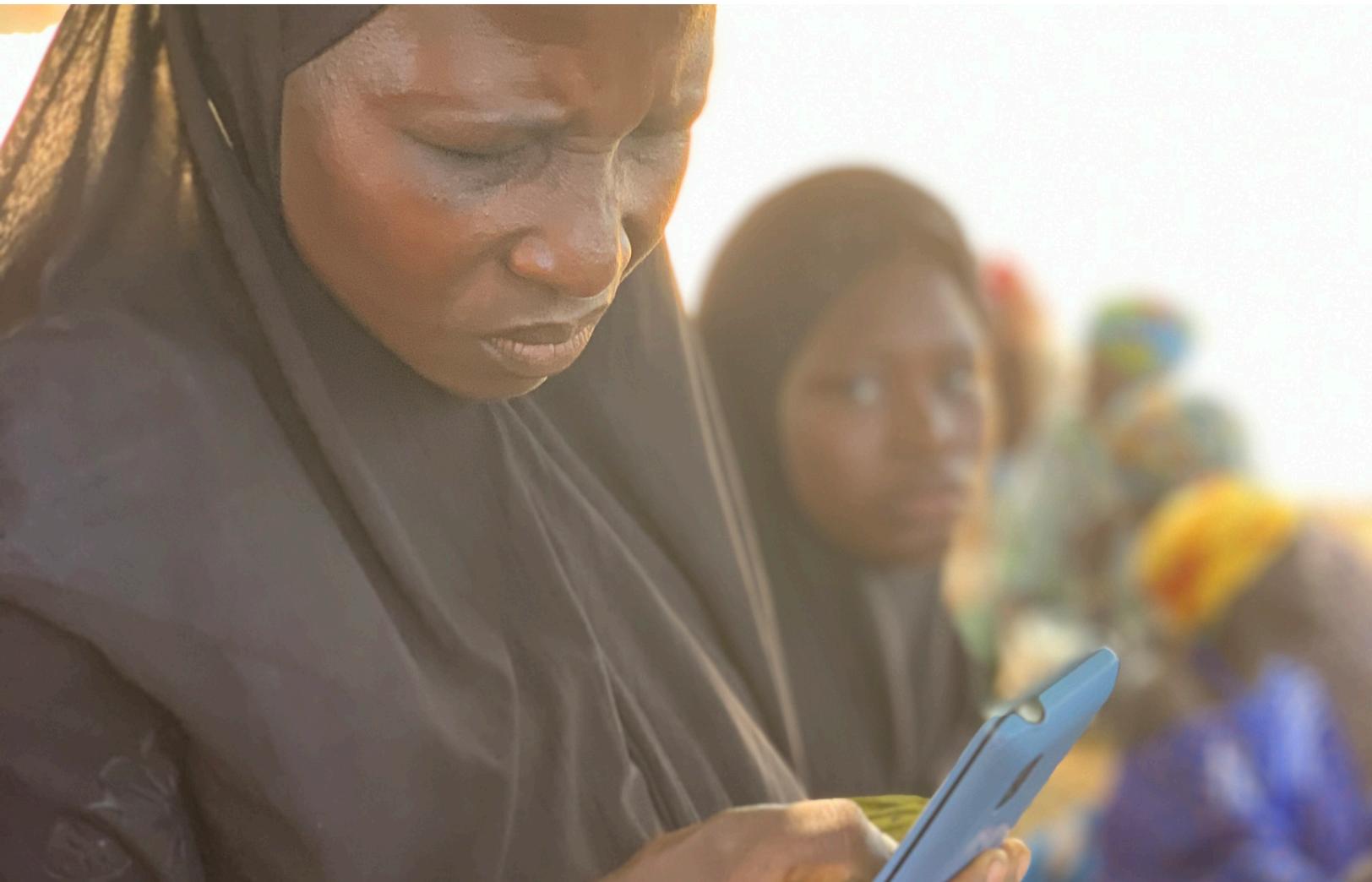
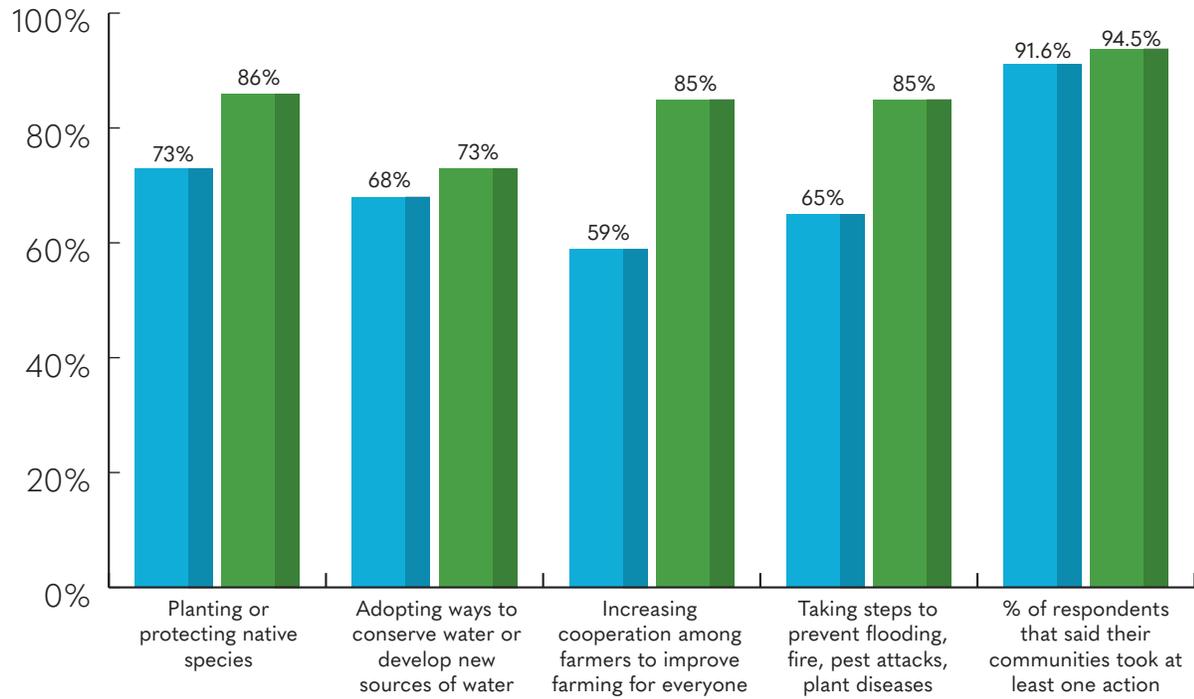
**QUESTION TWO:**

**HAS YOUR COMMUNITY TAKEN ACTION IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE?**

COMMUNITIES ARE TAKING ACTION BY

● Ethiopia

● Burkina Faso

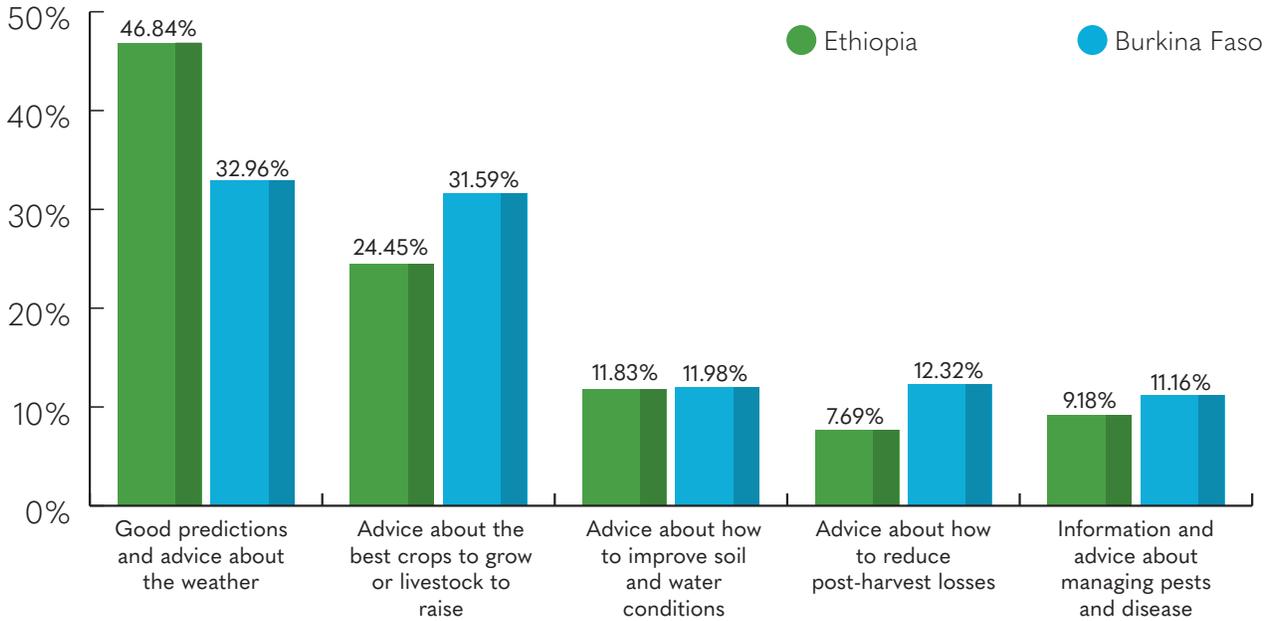


# EPISODE THREE

## QUESTION ONE:

**WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT KIND OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE THAT FARMERS NEED TO ADAPT TO CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENT?**

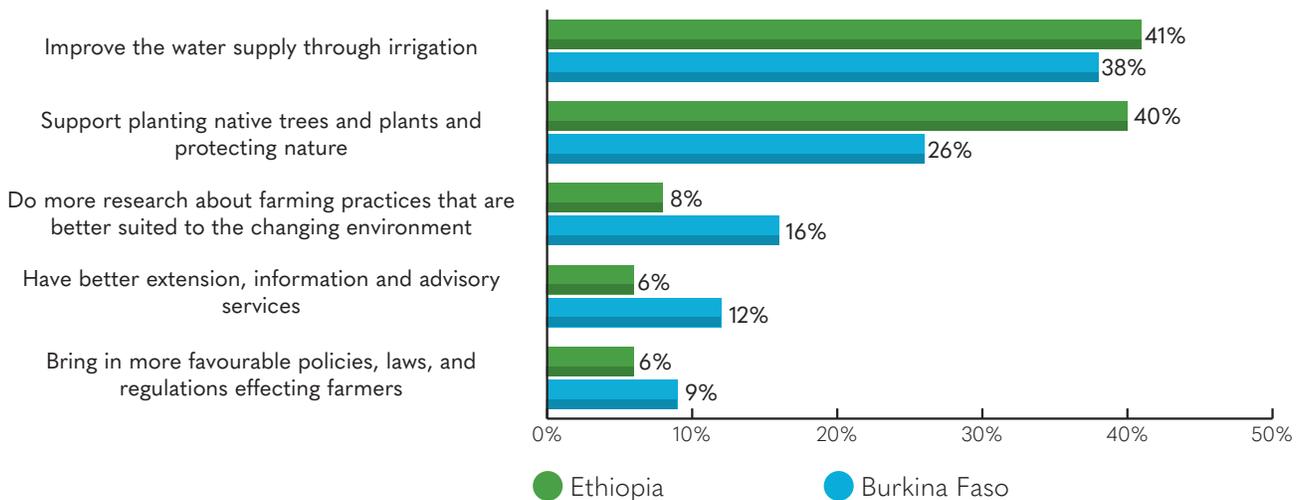
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## QUESTION TWO:

**WHAT CAN THE GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP FARMERS LIKE YOU ADAPT TO THESE CHANGES?**

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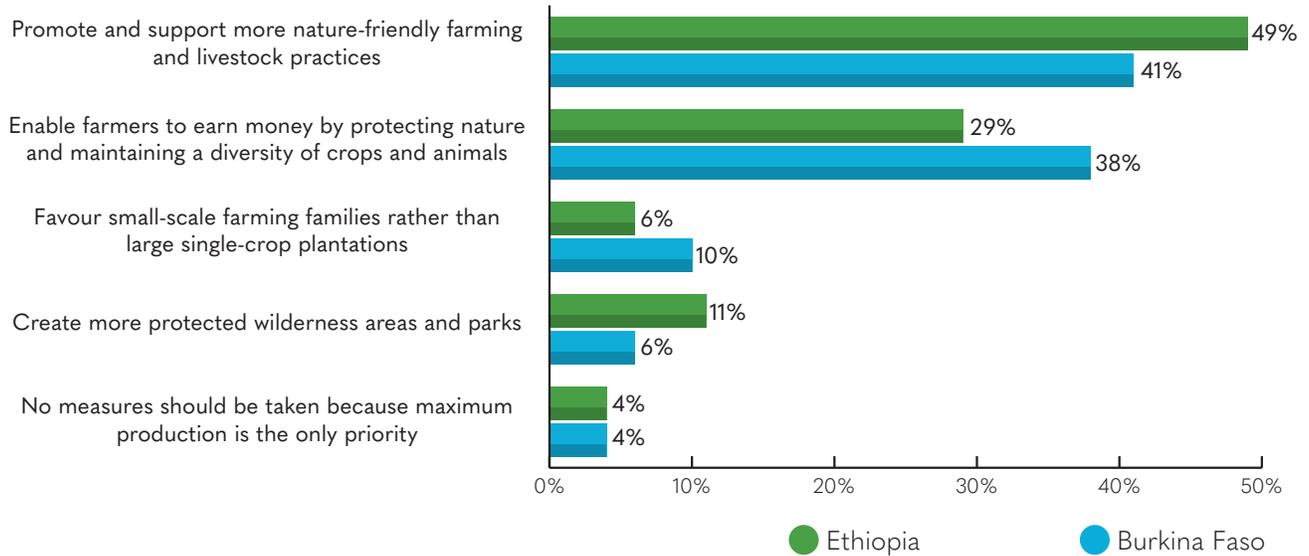


Interestingly, Ethiopians saw planting native trees and plants as equally important to water and irrigation — though Burkinabe respondents' clear priority was water supply.

### QUESTION THREE:

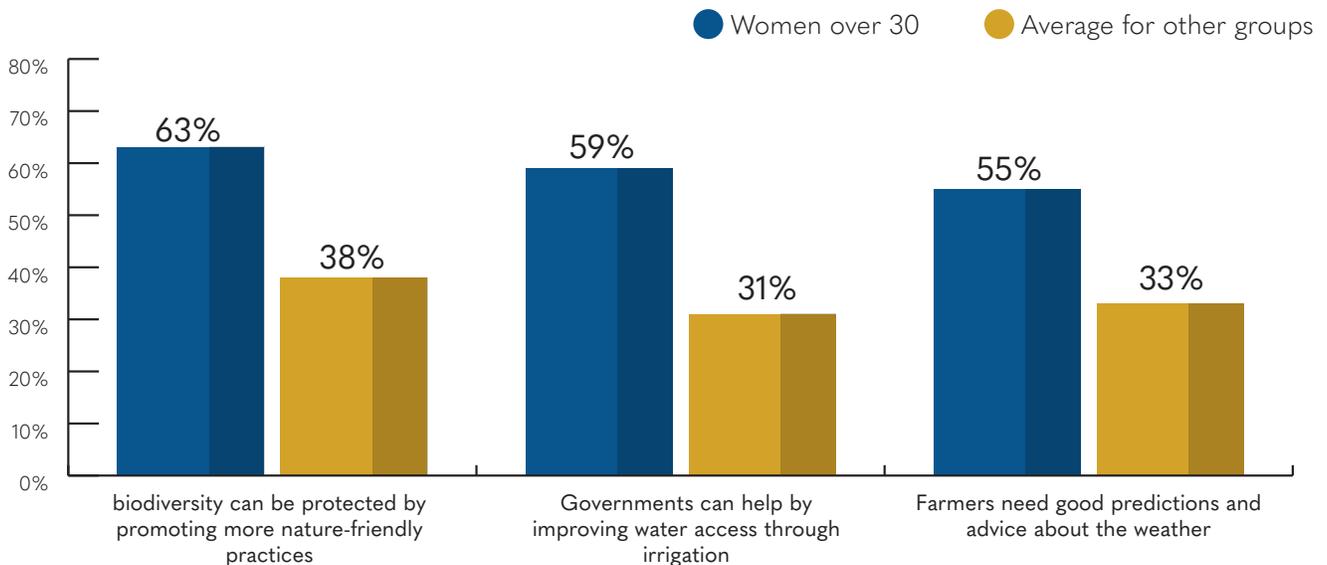
## WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT OR INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF PLANTS, ANIMALS, INSECTS, FISH AND OTHER FORMS OF LIFE?

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While women over thirty were much more likely to identify nature-friendly farming as their priority, interestingly they were on average 17% less likely than other groups to identify protecting nature and maintaining a diversity of crops and animals as important

### MEETING WOMEN'S NEEDS



Women over thirty were among the only group that had especially divergent opinions – but also very strong – opinions on what could be done when it comes to climate change.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was led by Farm Radio International in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) ahead of the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP27. Farm Radio International would like to thank all those who made this report possible. We express deep gratitude to all the farmers and broadcasters who shared their time and information with us. This research was made possible by financial support from IFAD and Global Affairs Canada.

## FARM RADIO INTERNATIONAL

Farm Radio International is an international non-governmental organization uniquely focused on improving the lives of rural Africans through the world's most accessible communications tool, radio, in combination with ICTs. We produce radio resources that help thousands of broadcasters across sub-Saharan Africa improve their programs for farmers; run radio projects that help millions of people achieve better livelihoods and health outcomes; and craft digital innovations that feature the latest technologies to make rural radio even more powerful.

## INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is an international financial institution and a United Nations specialized agency based in Rome – the United Nations food and agriculture hub. IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. Since 1978, they have provided US\$23.2 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached an estimated 518 million people.