

**Community radio for local solutions, resilience and innovation
in response to climate change**

**African Climate Policy Centre
and
Developing Radio Partners**

Background and rationale

The African Climate Policy Centre, through the ClimDev-Africa programme, partnered with Developing Radio Partners on a pilot project to build the capacity of community radio stations and their staff regarding climate change, development and analytical reporting.

The project was initiated in recognition of the fact that addressing climate change has become central to the development and poverty reduction agenda. Poorer countries and communities suffer earliest and hardest because of weaker resilience and greater reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture.

The key premise of the pilot project was that, in addition to being essential for information dissemination, the media plays a critical role in raising awareness and building capacity to better cope with the challenges of climate change, as well as the importance and benefits of climate-resilient pathways.

Thanks to the support of the African Climate Policy Centre, Developing Radio Partners was able to provide technical assistance to build the institutional and human capacities of community radio stations regarding climate change, development and analytical reporting. In total, seven radio stations in three countries – Cameroon, Cabo Verde and Rwanda – received assistance.

The specific objectives of the project were to:

- Build the institutional and human capacities of selected community-based radio stations in terms of programming and reporting on climate change adaptation, mitigation and African development;
- Raise awareness among policymakers, local administrations, communities in general and rural Africans in particular on the causes of climate change, ways to cope with its adverse effects and the role of ClimDev-Africa;
- Establish the Climate Change News Service website – a resource for journalists and the public;
- Develop and implement, in collaboration with selected community radio stations and the African Climate Policy Centre, reporting programmes on climate change, development and appropriate response strategies tailored to community needs;
- Develop and implement youth and radio listening club programmes on climate change issues, journalism and production.

The project has seen significant impacts at individual, community and policy levels. Some of the key implementation impacts are detailed below.

Cameroon

Activity: Bonakanda Community Radio, in Buea, produced a radio programme on the benefits of rain harvesting to irrigate vegetable crops during the dry season or when rainfall drops.

Impact: Farmers along the slopes of Mount Cameroon have begun to harvest rain water. “I have tomatoes when most people don’t have tomatoes,” says Idah Mwambo, who is 56. “My harvest has increased and I make more money because off-season tomatoes are more expensive.”

Activity: Developing Radio Partners introduced a weekly bulletin and organized a mentoring session at Lebialem Community Radio, in Menji, on the need to protect the water supply.

Impact: Water management committees have been formed in 25 villages. According to Menji water authority official Philip Forchap, there have been “a floodgate of applications for the council authority to create water management committees”.

Rwanda

Activity: Changing weather conditions caused a spike in malaria infections in early 2016 in parts of Rwanda. Radio Huguka and Radio Ishingiro produced a radio programme sponsored by Developing Radio Partners that educated the public about the causes of malaria and how to protect against infection.

Impact: After the programme was aired, the Ministry of Health announced that it would be increasing its prevention efforts, including the use of radio bulletins, to help educate citizens and urge them to take basic steps to avoid infection. The Ministry also began distributing mosquito nets within those districts most at risk.

Activity: Radio Huguka and Radio Salus produced a radio programme linking population growth and climate change, noting that 80 per cent of the district’s female population is currently of child-bearing age.

Impact: The Huye district of Rwanda decided to include family planning education in their annual performance contract that is submitted to the Government. Performance contracts are used by the Government in Rwanda to help identify strategic plans and investments that can have a transformational effect within society.

Cabo Verde

Impact: Jose Almeida, the station manager at Sodade FM on Nicolau Island, said the Developing Radio Partners project had helped his station to build stronger relationships within the community and improve conflict resolution. In the past, trash had been strewn on the streets. The station got involved after hearing complaints from listeners and reported on the problem. As a result, the municipality had begun to arrange regular trash pick-ups several times a week for residential and business customers. He also cited how the station had done a story on complaints about trash trucks not covering their loads and how the trash would blow off into yards and crops. In response, the municipality bought a truck with a metal cover. Mr. Almeida and others said that their stations were “problem solvers” within their communities as a result of the radio programmes on climate change and the environment.

The Developing Radio Partners project has had both an immediate impact on communities in Cabo Verde and ensured long-term growth for the station. In Mr. Almeida’s words, “the station has become a partner for community development.”

The pilot project has yielded some excellent results. The radio stations and their staff have been considerably strengthened with the tools, approaches, training and equipment provided by the project. Links between the radio stations and their communities have evolved into partnerships with increased trust and ownership of the programming by different actors within the community. Resilience and livelihood strategies and innovation have evolved out of the radio programming.

There are, however, challenges associated with the project.

Sustainability: Most stations operate with limited budgets and depend on volunteers for programming. Some stations have no paid staff.

Within many community radio stations, the notion of long-term planning is often viewed as somewhat of a foreign concept. These attitudes prove to be especially challenging to projects that rely on consistency of purpose within a group of people that can be sustained over several years. Developing Radio Partners will need to highlight both immediate successful resolutions to current problems as well as the importance of maintaining a focus on targets that are much further down the road

Ongoing mentorship and engagement: Active engagement is needed at the community level to ensure that community radio partners are linked to the appropriate resources for the content of their programming. As the capacity of many stations is low, it is necessary to have a local resource person to facilitate the access to resources and keep the project on course.

Monitoring and evaluation: While every development project relies on impact data to evaluate success, it can sometimes prove problematic to provide direct evidence of immediate results that are tied to each individual radio broadcast. Many initiatives require group discussion to solicit responses.

Adaptability and flexibility: As the science of climate change continues to expand exponentially with each passing year, community radio projects need to be designed with enough flexibility to meet the changing conditions in each partner country.

Building upon the successes and lessons learned in the first phase of the project, the African Climate Policy Centre and Developing Radio Partners aim to strengthen the foundation laid by continuing to work with and support the 7 radio stations already participating in the project (2 in Rwanda, 2 in Cameroon and 3 in Cabo Verde) and by scaling up the scope of the project to 30 radio stations in an additional 7 countries.

Project justification

Throughout the developing world, radio is considered to be the most widely accessible and affordable source of information, news and entertainment. Available to nearly 98 per cent of the world's population, radio provides a democratic form of communication that transcends many of the borders imposed by geography, education, economic status or illiteracy. In contrast, only 14 per cent of Africans have regular access to the Internet.

Communities across Africa are already feeling the effects of climate variability and change. Droughts, floods and increasing temperatures have had an impact on millions of lives and livelihoods, particularly for those working in the agricultural sector. Health problems as a

result of increasing vector-borne diseases are also on the rise. All projections and scenarios only point to the fact that the most severe impacts are expected in the years to come. This raises the need to strengthen understanding, preparedness and resilience by providing local, culturally and contextually relevant information for decision-making processes.

Many of the solutions to climate-related problems are founded upon local knowledge and contextual realities. However, the rapidly changing effects of climate change require scientific information for adaptation and mitigation strategies. Such information is difficult to convey to those hardest to reach and most affected by climate change. The outcomes and lessons from phase one of the project have demonstrated that community radio plays an important bridging role between the providers of scientific information and local communities and between different community groups and community-based experts in solving community problems, particularly as they relate to the impacts of climate change.

By continuing to build the capacity of community radio stations and their staff to engage with meteorological offices and experts to inform their audiences on issues of critical importance, local communities will be able to make informed decisions about what they can do to adapt to climate change.

In addition, climate change is an entry point to engage other organizations and be a catalyst for change, creating an interactive community network. Taking a holistic approach, stations will be encouraged to reach out to farmers, health organizations, women and youth organizations and agricultural agents and meteorological departments, among others.

Objectives

The overall objective remains the same for phase two, namely to empower rural Africans by providing them with climate information for informed decision-making, resilience-building, innovation and increased livelihood options.

Expected outcomes, outputs and activities

Expected outcome 1: Strengthened community radio climate change programming that supports decision-making

Output 1.1: Identification of radio stations and coordination facilitated at national level.

Activities:

- Establish selection criteria and identify community radio stations with which the project will work based upon lessons learned during the pilot phase
- Engage in-country coordinator with environmental/journalism background, to provide guidance and support to each station, as needed

Output 1.2: Radio programming informed by user needs and supported by appropriate tools and climate information sources

Activities:

- Interview farmers and other beneficiaries and identify key climate change issues and how radio can be used to address them, which will inform the topics and approach used to disseminate the information
- Facilitate participatory community events to discuss programming needs and resources available in the community
- Collaborate with women and youth clubs and associations and facilitate contributions by women and youth to programming through talks, songs and other creative approaches
- Develop and provide programming tools such as weekly bulletins, seedlings¹ and other resources adapted to local needs, such as programming tailored to the daily schedules of women and young people
- Establish relationships between local non-governmental organizations to facilitate the sharing of information

Expected outcome 2: Improved sharing and access to climate and weather information for awareness, resilience-building, innovation and livelihood options and opportunities.

Output 2.1 Information access facilitated to build resilience, support innovation and livelihood opportunities

Activities:

- Host national multi-stakeholder workshops in each country, bringing together radio stations and national and regional specialists in areas such as the environment, climate change, meteorology, agriculture and health
- Facilitate ongoing collaboration and information exchange between meteorological offices, national specialists, indigenous knowledge experts and community radio stations
- Engage farmers as sources of information about their observations and adaptive strategies
- Establish youth, farmer and women's radio listening clubs to share experiences, innovations and livelihood opportunities
- Facilitate collaboration with primary and secondary schools to engage students on climate change issues

¹ Seedlings are short radio pieces that are country-specific and are an appreciation of the environment. These short pieces can include facts, simple solutions, nature poems, songs, sounds of birds and listener ideas on the issue of climate change. The aim of such pieces is to deepen communities' appreciation of what the environment means and its importance to life. The stations broadcast these short pieces throughout the day to keep the issue of climate change fresh in the minds of listeners.

- Identify community ambassadors to discuss topical climate change issues including livelihood opportunities and local innovation
- Host live town hall style gatherings where male and female farmers discuss community best practices relating to adaptive techniques
- Build the project website to meet the growing needs of partner stations

Expected outcome 3: Sustainability of community radio stations and programming enhanced through capacity strengthening and partnership.

Output 3.1: Institutional and individual capacities strengthened to support the sustainability of community radio stations and climate change programming

Activities:

- Train meteorological departments on user needs and the importance of timely, relevant and appropriate formats for forecasts
- Train community radio staff on reporting techniques, programming and climate change issues
- Identify and collaborate with “mentor stations” to support the development of the selected radio stations
- Train select groups including farmers, health workers, educators, women and young people to be informed advocates, leaders and agents of change within their communities
- Facilitate mentoring between mentors and mentee stations
- Provide stations with digital recorders/laptops
- Provide stipends to stations for transport to cover stories and to the station lead producer to ensure the quality of the programmes aired

Output 3.2 Establish partnerships with national and community institutions to support community radio operations

- Collaborate with the appropriate departments of national universities to audit community radio programmes and, where feasible, to facilitate student attachments to stations
- Establish collaborative partnerships with local non-governmental organizations to improve the effectiveness of implementing good practices and to engage the community.

Expected outcome 4:

Output 4.1 Facilitate the integration of mobile telephone technology and community radio **Activities:**

- Identify best practices in the integration of mobile telephone technology and community radio
- Promote the use of mobile phones to record audio material for broadcasts
- Promote, where feasible, the use of mobile phones as call-in listening services, where individuals listen to the news by dialling a local number on their handsets for those without FM receivers, Internet access or smartphones apps
- Promote the use of mobile telephone technology for income generation for radio stations
- Support the use of technology and social media such as WhatsApp and text messages to share information and alerts and promote community issues
- Use such technologies to allow listeners to contribute to radio programme conversations
- Crowd-source climate information as well as community opportunities and challenges and assist the stations in becoming facilitators for community-based solutions
- Facilitate the submission of questions and issues from the community that could be covered in radio programming.

Methodology

Over three years, the project will work with 30 stations in 10 countries: Namibia, 2 stations; Lesotho, 2 stations; Cabo Verde, 4 stations; Cameroon, 4 stations; Rwanda, 3 stations; Mozambique, 3 stations; Sierra Leone, 2 stations; Malawi, 2 stations; Uganda, 3 stations; Comoros, 2 stations; and Egypt or Morocco, 3 stations.

Start-up workshops will be held to identify and discuss national and community issues and identify different stakeholders and actors that will collaborate and partner with the project. Training will also be provided to ensure that participants have a pedagogical approach to produce consistent, engaging and informative programmes that can help their listeners to understand and respond to the complex issues related to climate change. Within each country, the workshops will follow a similar methodology, although flexibility is built into the project to accommodate local conditions and unique needs.

An in-country coordinator will be identified in each country to provide on-site mentoring, assess the implementation of the project and identify challenges and opportunities.

After the initial workshop with journalists and managers of community radio stations, the Developing Radio Partners country coordinator will engage in ongoing on-site mentoring and evaluation. The stations will submit monthly reports on their activities. This is formative evaluation so that course corrections can be made.

Analysis of findings and interpretation

Four basic tools will be employed to determine project impacts:

- **Surveys:** Before projects are scheduled to begin, Developing Radio Partners will conduct a series of community baseline surveys within each partner station's listening audience. These surveys will be designed to help assess the current understanding regarding the causes and effects of climate change and explore opportunities for community action. A follow-up survey will be conducted near the end of the project.
- **Impact stories:** Each partner station will submit monthly reports, offering details of specific programme topics, and provide examples of any local actions undertaken as a result. These reports will help to assess the effectiveness of past programmes while providing insights that could help to drive future programme content.
- **Most significant change:** One of the most widely used methodologies incorporated to assess the impact of communication projects, "most significant change" provides insight into how information can result in positive, sustainable change, leading to the possibility of creating resilient farming communities for the next generation and beyond. "Most significant change" stories are collected in focus group settings, made up of 10-12 farmers each, who are asked to answer specific questions related to past radio broadcasts and engage in conversations that reveal changes in behaviour and attitudes leading to positive change within their individual families and communities.
- **Station evaluations:** After their first year of participation, each partner station will engage in an evaluation process to determine how the equipment and training provided by Developing Radio Partners have increased their overall capacity to deliver quality programming across the entire spectrum of their broadcast schedule.

Log frame: To be developed.

Budget

Overall budget: \$3,021,000.00 for 3 years.

Institutional arrangements

The African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) is the overall coordinator of the project. ACPC will provide project implementation monitoring and budget oversight.

ACPC is part of ECA and as such complies with the established risk management framework of the Commission. The ECA programme and budget is approved by the United Nations General Assembly and includes risk mitigation measures. Risk analysis is undertaken in consultation with external stakeholders, where a risk management plan is produced at the inception stage of project development. The risks are then reflected in the Division's annual plans and reported accordingly. Risk analysis is also undertaken with the Enterprise Risk

Management Task Force on Extra-budgetary Funding and Management, which identifies related risk areas and develops a risk treatment and response plan.

In addition, ACPC uses a monitoring framework and evaluation approach tool, which also serves as a risk management tool to provide alertness and information about progress made with programme implementation.

Developing Radio Partners will provide the hands-on support and coordination of national-level activities.

Developing Radio Partners strengthens the quality of radio programming and stations and back-stops local radio stations to achieve explicit development objectives. Developing Radio Partners works alongside station staff to achieve programming excellence that leads to more vibrant, participatory communities.

The **national coordinator** will work, on an ongoing basis, with the community radio stations, community-level groups such as local farmer unions, women's groups, cooperatives and other appropriate non-governmental organizations, as well as national actors.