

Communicating climate change? The Caribbean experience

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Topics covered

- Perceptions of climate change and adaptation
- Voices for Climate Change Education
- Regional communication challenges and recommendations

Background

- In Bali, Indonesia in 2007, there was a dynamic debate about communicating climate change put on by the International Institute for Economic Development at the annual UN climate change meeting
- The general sentiments emerging from that were:
- 1. Climate Change is a difficult issue to communicate because of technical jargon filled nature of the subject
- 2. There is still debate about the 'credibility of climate change'
- 3. The perception is that Climate change is still to a large extent an 'academic and scientific' issue not yet a public issue.

Communicating climate change internationally

- A 2010 study by Oxford University's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism international media has analysed the marked differences between countries in the coverage given to the UN's Copenhagen summit on climate change in 2009.
- It finds that of the 12 countries studied, Brazil and India provided the most coverage, followed by Australia and the UK. Meanwhile, Nigeria, Russia and Egypt gave the summit the least space in its newspapers, according to the study published
- They found that the media in all the countries tended to 'under-report' climate science during the summit.
- Nearly 80 per cent of the articles mentioned the science in less than 10 per cent of their column space

Adaptation

- Based on anecdotal feedback that Panos has gotten in its work, Adaptation in the climate change context is not well known in Jamaica and the Caribbean
- In conjunction with Germanwatch under the Adaptation Fund NGO Network, Panos is doing a quick analysis of Adaptation perception in Jamaica.
- Should be ready by September 2012

Climate change and Jamaica

- 2005 KAP study done by the Jamaica Meteorological Office showed:
- general feeling of complacency and indifference towards climate change and its effects
- strong to moderate interest in climate change
- Many think that the Government should play a stronger role in addressing the impacts of climate change on communities

Media use

- 48.3% of all respondents reported only occasional exposure to stories that dealt with climate change
- (91.7%) responded yes when asked whether they would like to read, listen to or watch more stories that deal with climate change
- The most popular methods chosen for transmitting information about climate change were television and radio

What does the Jamaican media say about Climate Change?

- 2005 Panos London Policy brief:
- **Low coverage:** Jamaican journalists rated the level of coverage of climate change issues in the local and national media as low. Issues such as crime, poverty and violence are given higher priority
- - **Lack of resources:** The director of a nationwide news network said journalists – ‘don’t have the resources of rich countries and we are busy trying to cover issues of crime and poverty.’
- **Little impact:** One freelance journalist said that the quality is fair to good but ‘there is no impact because of the lack of quantity
- Voices 2009 content analysis showed increased media coverage – more quantity of stories but still quality needs improvement

Voices for climate education

- In Ja – Panos Caribbean with the National Environmental Education committee, MET office, Environmental Foundation of Ja and other key partners Voices for Climate Change Education – National Public Education and communication strategy project
- Panos Caribbean is a regional non-government organisation that uses information for development. Panos works with media to communicate for sustainable development. We are based in Haiti with offices in Ja and Washington.
- We work in French, English, Spanish and Kreyol.
- Using popular reggae personalities as climate champions – have 31 artistes in project



Voices

- produced a package of media products including theme song and music video, mini-album of climate and environmental songs available for general use
- Did 8 school tours – 7 community meetings – involving tree or mangrove replanting, 4 vulnerable sectoral workshops, consistent media coverage and policy intervention
- 5 city tours reaching about 10,000 persons
- Finalised Jamaica's national communication logframe - basis for our national Communication strategy for climate change



Media Outreach

- About 2.5 million persons reached through:
- Approx. 50 Stories printed (mainly Jamaica but some regional stories as well)
- 25 radio interviews (mini-album played in its entirety on at least two interviews with Hot 102FM and Roots fm)
- Public Service Announcements played on Power 106FM for the month leading up to Cop 15 in Copenhagen (Nov. 2009)
- At least 15 television interviews.

Television Jamaica, RE TV and JNN has given the Music Video continuous play over the three year period in addition to interviews on the project.

- Online - press releases and videos on facebook and youtube
- Partner websites such as the United Nations Development Programme Jamaica, Panos London, International Institute for Environment and development etc.



Significant achievements

- **Building of multi-sector partnerships** - the Voices Project has been able to attract strong partnerships in Jamaican society such as Christian Aid, NEPA, CARIMAC and FAO Bureau of Standards and media organizations such as the Jamaica Observer, TVJ and Power 106FM. Discussions are also under way on establishing partnerships with the ODPEM. This is in addition to initial partners of the Met Office, UNDP and EFJ.
- **Behaviour change among artistes** - At least six of the artistes in the project have said publicly that they have changed their behaviour re garbage disposal and are now trying to be more environmentally friendly.
- **Sectoral sensitization and dialogue** - The education sector, media, artistic and civil society sectors are being sensitized under the project and being worked with to improve dialogue for mainstreaming action and planning for climate change.
- **Policy Impact** - As a result of the work done in the Project, Panos and the NEEC were invited to be a part of the government committee for the Vision 2030 planning for hazards and climate change. The Planning Institute of Jamaica has also committed to working with Voices to upgrade the communication logframe into the National Communication strategy and implement the activities.

Voices for climate change (Regionally and Internationally)

International



PCI Media Impact's My Island-
My community Communication
Workshop, St. Lucia 2010



Oxfam's Making Cities Resilient
Seminar and Fieldtrip, Dominica
Republic 2010

- Named a UN best practice communication project in 2011
- The Project's Theme Song Video was used as the opening item at the 3 days Film festival at COP 15, Copenhagen, 2009
- Caribbean Environment Health Institute Regional Conference 2010 in Montego Bay
- United Nations Climate Change Convention in Poland 2008 and in Copenhagen 2010
- Communicating climate change meeting in Barbados 2010,
- 350.org and Caribbean Youth environment regional youth workshop, Dominican Republic 2010 - *the video was also used in their video from the event*
- *British Council Climate Champion programme for 2010.*

Communicating Climate change Regionally

- Discussing partnership with Media Impact to do climate change communication in 9 OECS countries plus Jamaica
- In Haiti Panos has been funded by the Macarthur Foundation to do a post earthquake recovery project infusing Climate change and biodiversity into the culture and policymaking.
- In discussions with Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Carimac/Food and Agricultural Caribbean Sustainable Development Initiative, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre re sustainable communication planning in the region

Regional climate change communication

- Ideas include:
- Through the CCCCC, 12 CARICOM countries collaborated to develop a *Caribbean Regional Climate Change Adaptation Public Education and Outreach (PEO) Strategy* which was published in February 2011)
- Workplan to support the strategy
- The goal of this project is to develop and implement a *Communications Strategy* that will guide targeted communication about the impacts of climate change on livelihoods in the Caribbean
- Research on most effective ways to communicate with different audience

Communicating climate change internationally

- Climate Change media partnership – Caribbean and developing country journalists attending annual UNFCCC meeting – need region to understand cc adaptation and to lobby international community to consider small islands vulnerable position
- CCMP took 19 developing country journalists in Durban for COP 17 – one from the Caribbean

Challenges

- No systematic dissemination hub in the region for climate change info
- Huge gaps between scientists, academics, policymakers and 'regular' publics
- Vulnerable sectors identified in national climate change and regional strategies still to be properly sensitised on climate implications for them as well as mobilised
- Political buy in – 108 leaders (Presidents, PM's) in Copenhagen but still political will to act on cc still needs work.

Recommendations from Ja KAP study

- mor effort to be made to get the message as to the *raison d'tre* for many of the common place Government interventions across to the wider public in general and to the media in particular .
- The schools are ideal for starting this process of awareness and responsible environmental usage and thus should be used more for climate change education.
- That the programme of public awareness on climate change be launched as a stand alone programme in the first place but be institutionalized into an overall environmental awareness Plan4.
- Some of this being done through the EU CCADRR public education project . The PIOJ PPCR project will also address some of these issues.

Recommendations from the media brief

- An image bank should be incorporated into websites that enables journalists to download and use images in stories on climate change. This will help combat low literacy levels in some countries
- Policy makers should invest in public media initiatives that will provide space and resources for journalists who want to cover key environmental issues.
- All stakeholders need to engage the interest of journalists
- There should be constant interaction between the people who have the information, the media and those affected.
- Policy makers should make available financial resources for capacity-building programmes for journalists
- The media see a role for themselves in engaging in climate change debates and should be encouraged to do so

Oxford study recommendations

- The recommendations include:
 - *More (re-)engagement by climate scientists with journalists to explain where there is scientific consensus and where there is not
 - *More dedicated climate change press officers at universities and research centres
 - *More media personnel at the IPCC
 - *More imaginative use of new media
 - *Less adversarial coverage of climate science, but more frontline reporting on what people are experiencing and what they are doing about it.

Recommendations

- Community involvement – the science and communication initiatives should also include indigenous knowledge as part of the adaptation and coping mechanism – Panos Voices from Mocho book
- Need increased and effective multi-sectoral communication mechanisms nationally, regionally and internationally to ensure better representation internationally

Conclusions

- Media playing a significant part but needs more strategic interventions and capacity building
- Alternative and social media can be very effective to fill the gaps that traditional media does not cater to
- Increased communication of climate change but still a lot to be done.

Sources

- Poles apart. 2010. Oxford University's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and international media
- Whatever the weather – Media attitudes to reporting climate change. 2009. Panos