

Climate & weather information needs of target audiences

Kenya WISER project Formative
research
October 2018

Female farmer, Tanzania Radio for Resilience project, BBC Media
Action

The WISER Project

BBC Media Action's WISER project aims to improve **access** and **knowledge** of **climate and weather information** amongst **target audiences** living in **Northern Kenya**, around the **Lake Victoria shores of Kenya and Uganda**; and the **coastal strip of Kenya and Tanzania**.

It intends to do this by strengthening the capacity of media professionals and technical experts to respond to the climate and weather information needs of these audiences.

Activities will include:

- Training local journalists and technical experts on effective communication of climate and weather information
- Supporting selected radio stations to produce practical and relevant climate and weather content
- Holding 'Climate Cafes' bringing stakeholders together to discuss the implications of seasonal forecasts, and actions required

The project is funded by the UK Met Office's WISER (Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa) Programme.

BBC Media Action and NECJOGHA (Network of Climate Journalists of the Greater Horn of Africa) are delivery partners for the project.



*“The day to day weather predictions are okay but what people need most, is how to use this information . They ask ‘What can I do with this information?’” Media manager,
Radio Kwizera, Tanzania*

FORMATIVE RESEARCH –Objectives

A formative research study has been conducted to inform the project, with the following objectives

- To understand how target audiences are accessing and using climate and weather information, and any barriers they face
- To understand the priorities and needs of target audiences when it comes to climate and weather information
- To understand the opportunities and challenges faced by climate experts in reporting weather and climate information
- To understand the opportunities and challenges faced by journalists in reporting weather and climate information

Insights from the formative research will inform the content of workshops and radio programme development, to help climate experts and journalists understand the needs and priorities of their audiences.

FORMATIVE RESEARCH – Methodology

The methodology used for the formative research study was as follows:

1. Literature Review

Existing literature was reviewed to understand:

- a) How is climate change / changes in weather affecting our target audiences?
- b) How target audiences are accessing and using weather and climate information?
- c) What can we learn from existing initiatives training media on providing weather and climate services in the region?

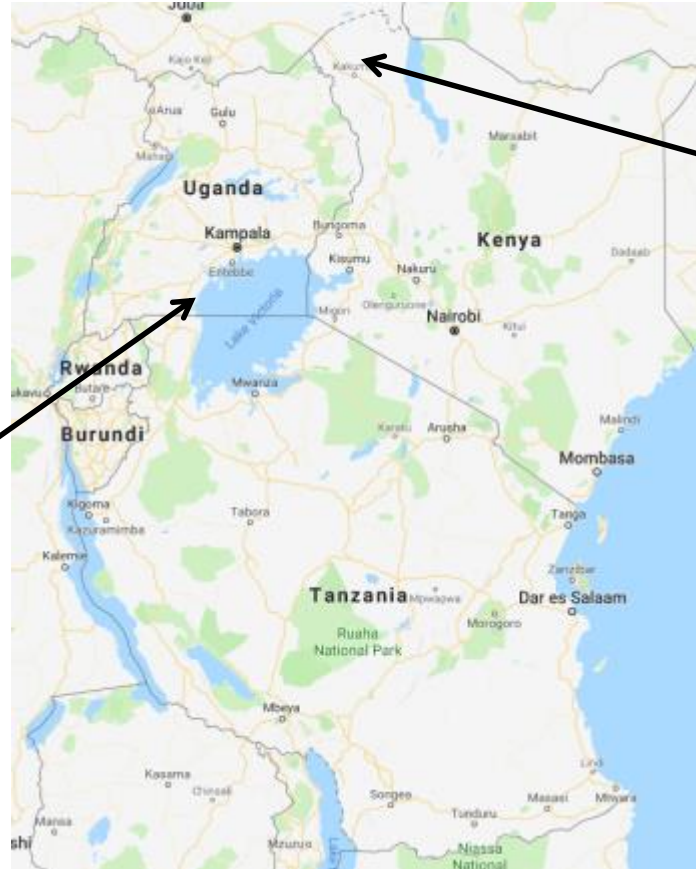
2. Key Informant Interviews with media and climate experts

23 Key informant interviews were conducted with climate experts, CSOs, government ministries, professional associations, journalists, academics and opinion leaders to understand the context of weather and climate services at country level.

3. Focus group discussions with target audiences

6 Focus Group discussions were conducted with three livelihood groups: pastoralists in Northern Kenya and farmers and fishermen in Uganda. Separate focus groups were held with men, women and youth in each location. Youth were included separately as it was assumed their livelihoods and access to media tend to be different to their parents.

Formative Research Study – Focus Group Discussions



Lake Victoria, Uganda

(Bwerenga, Najembe)

3 focus group discussions

- Male fishermen
- Female farmers
- Youth (male & female) from farming families

Turkana, Northern Kenya (Sopel, Kerio & Lorgum)

3 focus group discussions

- Male pastoralists
- Female pastoralists
- Youth pastoralists (male & female)

LIMITATIONS:

This study was limited by budget constraints, and can only provide an indication of target audiences' perspectives. Specifically:

1) No primary research was carried out in the coastal area of Kenya or in Tanzania

2) Limited numbers of focus group discussions were conducted in each area

Formative Research Study – Key Informant Interviews

LOCATION	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS PER CATEGORY			
	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	Others
Meteorologists/Climate experts	4	1	1	
Policy makers (local)	2	1		
Policy makers (global / regional)				3
Journalists	6		1	
Academics	1	1		
Agricultural extension officers		1		
Climate communication specialists		1		
Total	13	5	2	3

LIMITATIONS:

1) No journalists were interviewed in Uganda as they were unavailable during the fieldwork period

2) Key informant interviews in Tanzania were limited by budget constraints

FORMATIVE RESEARCH – Research Questions

The research questions this study sought to answer are as follows:

Target audiences' perspective

- What are the key challenges faced by target audiences in terms of weather and climate?
- How do target audiences currently access and make sense of weather and climate information?
- What are the target audiences' perceptions of weather and climate information services (formal/informal) currently available?
- What are the radio listenership habits of target audiences?

Climate experts' perspective

- What do climate experts feel are the opportunities and challenges to sharing weather and climate information with audiences?
- How do they currently communicate with audiences and journalists on these issues?

Journalists' perspective

- What do journalists feel are the opportunities and challenges to sharing weather and climate information with audiences?
- What are journalist's knowledge and attitude towards weather and climate information reporting?
- How do journalists access information and engage with climate experts?
- How do journalists engage with their audiences on climate and weather?

Key findings

- Target audiences trust indigenous climate predictions, which have been used for generations, more than formal, scientific climate predictions, which are accessed sporadically and not used by their communities to make decisions.
- Target audiences are caught between ceding reliance on indigenous climate forecasts, which are perceived to be increasingly unreliable due to unpredictable weather patterns, and the scientific approach, which is also perceived to be unreliable as people don't understand how data is generated and predictions are made.
- Target audiences want localised, contextualised , reliable weather and climate information that helps them decide what to do next.
- Different target audiences have different needs and attitudes to weather and climate information, which will affect how to communicate with them. For example fishermen live day to day, while farmers need information to plan and make decisions for the year.
- There is weak rapport and little co-production between climate experts and journalists. Most of the information flows top down from scientists to the media, with little interaction. This results in journalists reporting information verbatim, without understanding what it means for target audiences.
- Met departments in Kenya and Uganda are hesitant to talk to the media about weather predictions, as they have been blamed by politicians in the past when predictions were not accurate. This has contributed to audiences' lack of trust in formal weather predictions.

Key findings: Target Audiences



Fishermen relaxing at Bwarenga landing site, Uganda

How are changes in weather affecting our target audiences?

- All participant groups feel weather and climate changes have deeply affected their lives through:
 - Reduced mobility and productivity during extreme weather conditions
 - Reduction of household income
 - Increased migration in search of better catch or forage, leading to competition for limited resources
- Some communities blame climate changes on their own behaviour, and there are stories of rituals being conducted to appease the gods

Pastoralists in Northern Kenya

- Have had to change daily routines to mitigate the extreme variations in climate
- Drying of water sources and lack of adequate forage for livestock means having to walk further in search of pasture
- Prolonged dry spells have led to diminishing herd sizes, which means lower social status for men in society
- Reduced forage has led to increased malnutrition of both animals and humans
- Increased competition for limited resources has led to conflict

Fishermen in Uganda

- Increased frequency of unpredictable strong winds affect fish stocks and hamper fishing activities, including loss of life at sea

*"A few years back we could catch between 800- 2000kg of fish but today, less than 10kg!"
Fisherman, Uganda.*

*"I wake up at 4 am so that the livestock can benefit from the wet grass before the sun is up [and ground is too dry]" Male Pastoralist,
T...*

*"The winds are becoming too strong for the kind of boats, and recently a boat capsized and we lost a fisherman because of these winds".
Fisherman, Uganda.*

How are changes in weather affecting our target audiences?

Farmers in Uganda

- Increased cases of new or resistant crop pests and animal diseases
- Increased cost of production as a result of unpredictable seasons
- Dwindling yields mean farming can no longer support whole families, sometimes leading to family breakdown
- Inconsistent rainfall and prolonged droughts have impacted negatively on employment opportunities
 - Tea plantations that used to employ young people are downsizing
 - Traditional crops such as banana (Matoke) replaced by maize
- Most young people have given up on agriculture due to low production
- Young farmers complement their incomes through small scale business such as roadside water and chicken vending

"Last season I had high hopes in the rainfall and planted my crop but the rains failed, so I lost my labour, seeds and fertilisers. I have to try again this season"
Young farmer, Uganda.

"Some men have run away from their homes because women ask for money for food, there is a high cost of living and limited food leaving women to struggle on their own with the children" Female farmer, Uganda.

How are target audiences accessing and using weather and climate information?

Pastoralists in Northern Kenya

- Need early warning information on weather and security, to make decisions about where to migrate to keep livestock safe
- Use weather and climate information collected and disseminated through surveillance team of local scouts
- Elders are decision makers: at daily Kwokwo meeting, make decisions based on security, early warnings, livestock market and the general community outlook
- Indigenous methods of forecasting remain most trusted, despite growing apprehension on their reliability. Pastoralists feel they know more than meteorologists about predictions.
- Access to formal weather and climate forecasting is limited amongst pastoralists, and is mainly accessed through radio and mobile phones, state departments such as the National Drought Management Authority(NDMA) and NGOs such as World Vision.
- Younger scouts access formal weather information through FM stations on mobile when they get early warning alerts, and they compare formal with indigenous forecasting.
- Audiences rarely follow formal weather forecasting and information is not prioritised for decision making
- Formal weather forecasting is mostly national (not localised) and access is hampered by limited media reach, weak connectivity and language barriers
- Feel they need reliable early warning information in local language (Ngaturkana), which should include information on winds, cloud cover and birds' movement to support their own predictions

"Sometimes the intestines have been wrong, in 2017 the elders predicted it was going to rain but this did not happen" Male pastoralist, Turkana.



Listen to radio:
7-9pm when herders are back from the fields

How are target audiences accessing and using weather and climate information?

Fishermen in Uganda

- Need information about wind to make decisions about whether to go fishing
- Live day to day and rely mostly on indigenous forecasting, observing the clouds, the winds and stars for decision making
- Access daily and seasonal forecasts when at the shores but mostly do not follow formal forecasts, as they are not location specific
- They are more likely to trust stories from other fishermen than people who have never been on the sea, and therefore do not trust formal forecasts
- Fishermen often do not act on the formal forecast warnings if they still need to go and earn money
- Where fishermen access the formal forecasts on radio, the best time is between 11am - 1pm. They rarely listen to the forecasts as families, and any other discussions on climate is mostly with male fisher folk

"It doesn't matter the forecast. Sometimes even if you get the correct prediction but you do not have money to feed your family, it will force you to brave it and go out fishing, that is what men are made of".
Male fisherman, Uganda.

"The forecast is general, it does not have the information that we need we want to hear a forecast talking about the winds that affect the fishermen, to see the forecaster showing us our islands and what is happening in there, not some map that is not specific to us". Male fisherman, Uganda.



Listen to radio:
Between 11am 1pm, when on land and not asleep

How are target audiences are accessing and using weather and climate information?

Farmers in Uganda

- Need accurate information so they can plan in advance when to plant and sow, so their crop is not ruined.
- Mostly rely on scientific forecasting alongside the traditional seasonal calendar to make farm decisions. Both channels of information are perceived to be unreliable in varying proportions.
- Low confidence on the formal forecasts in some cases was due to poor understanding of how data is generated.
- Audiences easily access formal weather and climate forecasting (Daily, Monthly and seasonal) information, via the radio, TV, Mobile phones and extension workers.
- Traditionally, farmers observed signs such as changes in the environment, migratory patterns of birds, stellar arrangements to decipher climate information, today this is more indicative than a norm. Indigenous information prediction is no longer consistent and is becoming less prioritised for decision on farming activities.

"In the old days, if you see the swallows migrating from the East to the West, it was an indication that the rains are about to come, but today, the swallows migrate anyhow, could be somebody disturbed their resting places and they flew off, you cannot use that to make any farming decisions."
Young farmer, Uganda.



Listen to radio:
Before 9am,
when they go to
the farm and 7-
9pm when
relaxing after
work

Audience profiles



Female pastoralist preparing for migration: Lorgum , Turkana Kenya

Profile: Ekoporus, Pastoralist

Ekoporus is a 52 year old pastoralist from Northern Kenya. He is married and lives with his wife and 7 children in one of the Kraals in Sopel. He is the owner of 6 stones (herds) of livestock. He has 200 goats and 50 cows.

Ekoropus is a troubled man, the weather patterns have been unpredictable for a while now, the traditional seasons have changed, the wet season that was expected between February and March is no longer consistent. Livestock has been affected, with huge losses reported from the surrounding Kraals too. The animals do not fetch good prices at the market because of inadequate forage and water for the animals. Extreme temperatures in recent years have meant they have had to move further than 100 km from their original homes, which means the animals loose weight and are susceptible to attack by rustlers.

“For a long time our elders have been accurate about the weather, but nowadays even the intestines are wrong. Only God will help us now,” he says. “The chief now insists that we have to take our children to school, but who will take care of the animals?”

Ekoropus wakes up at 4am each morning, goes to the KwoKwo for a briefing with the elders, counts the animals and then releases the youth to go off to the fields. The scouts provide word of mouth accounts on events across the county, based on this information the elders might complement this information with ‘reading of the intestines’.

Ekoropus does not listen much to radio, but he loves programmes in the Turkana language, and he likes discussion programmes on Akicha or Mata radio. He is slowly warming to the formal seasonal forecasts to complement and compare information from the intestines. “What I need is information on the state of security, where I can find forage and water for my animals, that is most important information to me. I need to know when the first rains will come and where I can move my animals.”



Profile: Albert, Fishermen

Albert is a 45 year old fisherman from Uganda. He is married with 8 children, has primary level education. His main occupation is fishing. He specialises in deep water fishing at night. Every evening at about 4pm, Albert and two fellow fishermen set out to the sea. He uses a traditional canoe, powered by a diesel engine. Albert will spend up to six 6 hours in the Lake Victoria, when they identify the right place to trawl their net, they will lower the anchor, set out the net and lay in the boat. Sometimes they have a drink to help them get to sleep. "It is very cold out there at night and risky but we just have to brave it because we have to feed our families, sometimes we are lucky, sometimes not".

Previously, they used to make good catches, but today, he experiences challenges feeding his family and financing their school during the low seasons. He attributes the reduction in the amount of fish caught to the frequent strong winds. "Whenever I see these strong winds, I know there will be very little fish from such an expedition, but I will still go out there because fishermen are not cowards!" he explains. The strong winds are also associated with increased deaths at sea and Albert wishes there was a better way of predicting the winds.

At 4.30am Albert and his colleagues make their way back to the lake shores. They sleep up to about 10am and then walk down to the waterfront to catch up with other fishermen. At the shores he will find other fishermen telling stories, exchanging their experiences and information on the weather. They sometimes listen to radio on their mobile phones and discuss unfolding events. They enjoy light programmes that discuss social issues, and are not interested in politics.

When the winds are too strong, Albert and most of the fishermen will not go to sea. Instead they will spend the night at the local pubs, listening to local music and having fun. "There are a lots of women around to entertain us and drown our worries when there is no fish" he laughs. He dreams of the time when he will not have to go to the sea anymore. "When I make some money, I want to have a fleet of boats and send people out to catch the fish, my task will be to market the fish and give my family a better life."



**Fisherman, taking a break before the next fishing trip.
Bwerenga Uganda**

Profile: Nakkandi, Farmer

Nakkandi is a 47 year old a farmer from Uganda. She is married with seven children and has some secondary school education. She lives with her family on a one piece acre of land on which she has been growing bananas and vegetables.

In the last five years, she has had to introduce maize cultivation. “We have been forced to plant maize because the banana plant does not do well anymore in this area” she explains. Like many other female farmers, she ponders on what went wrong : the wet season is irregular, the rainfall is no longer adequate, the area experiences prolonged periods of drought.

Nakkandi does not appreciate the fact that she has to replace some of her staple crop (bananas) with maize - a foreign crop for the poor. But times have changed, the traditional banana plant does not perform as well as before, despite carrying on with the same type of farming that her family before her had used successfully for many years. “I remember in our family from this very same land, our parents were able to feed and us and even give away some food. We had two heavy meals, two times in a day” she says.

On a typical day, Nakkandi wakes up at between 6-7am, prepares her children for school, fetches water from the stream 30 minutes away, chops up firewood, and tidies up her homestead before heading to the farm. During the busy planting and weeding seasons she will stay in the farm from 9am to 3pm. Traditionally, she would carry with her some lunch consisting of tea, milk or porridge prepared from millet, but today she only carries with her a mixture of water and cocoa commonly known to as ‘cold power’ and left over cassava from the previous days meals.

Like other female farmers ,she loves listening to radio in the morning and later in the evening after dinner between 7 and 9pm. Programmes in local language from CBS and Bukkede radio are her favourite. She loves entertaining discussions on social issues affecting the community, and agricultural and religious programmes. She doesn’t like political programmes apart from listening to the news.

Nakkandi follows the weather forecast on UBC TV and compares the forecasting with actual weather events. Sometimes she says she is disappointed because the predictions are not true. “There is a time they told us on the radio that we will have El Niño rains but this never happened. The whole country was disappointed” she says.

Communication framework:

Information needs, barriers and motivators for target audiences

Information needs identified	Barriers	Motivators	Key target audience
Pastoralists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Availability of water and forage • Early warning information on the onset of rain and droughts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of scientific knowledge on what causes the weather variations 2. Low knowledge on mitigation measures 3. Poor attitudes towards formal systems of forecasting 4. Lack of localised and prioritised forecasting to the pastoralist livelihoods. 5. Over reliance on traditional forecasting/surveillance/word of mouth/chance 6. Hardly involved in the development of programmes targeting them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High degree of awareness and concern over weather and climate variations 2. Close connection between livestock losses and weather and climate variations. 3. Uncertainty about the future of their livestock is a threat to their very own existence. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pastoralists herders 2. Elders /Kwokwo 3. Weather scientists 4. Country government/MET 5. Local weather forecasters 6. Local Media 7. Local partners , state departments and non state organisations 8. Livestock value chain partners, traders, transporters 9. Mobile app companies
Fishermen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localised forecast information on winds and rainfall 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of scientific knowledge on what causes the weather variations 2. Low knowledge on mitigation measures 3. Lack of localised and prioritised forecasting to the fisherman's livelihoods. 4. Poor attitudes towards formal systems of forecasting. 5. Hardly involved in the development of programmes targeting them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Real time information services 2. Discussions on weather that explain nature of predictions 3. Respect other fishermen rather than weather professionals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fishermen 2. Beach associations 3. Met departments 4. Climate scientists 5. Local administration
Farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily and seasonal agro forecasting information • Early warning information on the onset of rainfalls/drought • Disease outbreaks and contingencies • Continuous education on sound agricultural practices all year round 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weather and climate information is not targeted for the varying microclimates 2. Believe formal forecasting is unreliable 3. Delays in seasonal forecast information relays 4. Hardly involved in the development of programmes targeting them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waning confidence in traditional forecasting and increasing awareness on formal forecasting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farmers 2. Agricultural extension workers 3. Met departments 4. Agro Mets/climate scientists 5. Agro partners/societies /financial institutions

Key findings: Climate experts' perspectives



Climate experts: Current communication approaches

- ▶ Data is collected through networks of scientists at global, regional and country levels, and information is generated for all audiences
- ▶ Target audiences for climate information are Government, commercial enterprises, public infrastructure facilities such as aviation /roads.
- ▶ County level/district level dissemination:
 - ❑ Weather information is disseminated through bulletins/media mostly TV and radio/websites
 - Aviation forecasts
 - Public forecasts (daily / 10 day forecasts / monthly)
 - Seasonal forecast
 - ❑ Both visual/audio and text communications
 - ❑ Mobile sms/ social media
 - ❑ Community discussion outreach programmes
 - ❑ National/trade shows/international conferences
 - ❑ Use of mobile phone applications for agro/livestock meteorology applications.

“Currently the climate information is not widely tailored to meet specific audience needs and that is what the WISER project is trying to achieve by encouraging scientists to identify the information needs of audiences and tailor the met data to respond to those needs” Climate scientist , Met

“We never we give an advisory, we ask them to find out the implications from the technical and focal people in their fields of interest ” Climate Scientist, Tanzania.

Climate experts: Communicating at local level

- ▶ Scientists are aware of the uncertainties surrounding climate information at the local level
- ▶ They recognise the fact that indigenous knowledge on climate influences most decision making at local level
- ▶ Scientists experience challenges translating scientific information into useful data for non-scientific audiences.
- ▶ They attribute this to :
 - ❑ The nature of climate predictions – it is difficult to predict climate to timescale in the long run
 - ❑ Technical capacities of met departments to generate precise information
 - ❑ Communication skills: communicating around probability of predictions has not been a priority
 - ❑ Assumptions around communication on predictions such as ‘El Niño’, which is commonly associated with heavy rainfall but is not always the case
 - ❑ Audiences are looking for ‘beyond’ prediction programming, and want to know what significance the predictions have to their own livelihoods and security
 - ❑ Scientists are highly sensitive to the fact that unmoderated dissemination of climate information can result in both political and individual backlash and hence opt to take the ‘middle lane’.

“If you tell someone in the village that it is going to rain and it does not rain, three times in a row, the next time, this person will not believe you, because they will never know exactly what is going to happen from such predictions.” Climate scientist, Met Office

“Consumers are looking forward to binary forecasts for example will it rain or not, without looking at the probabilities and this has been one of the barriers to effective use of climate information” Climate scientist , Met Office

Climate experts: Challenges faced

Climate scientists identified the following challenges to communicating about climate and weather information:

- ❑ Climate information is mainly discussed and disseminated at high level forums global/national level. County/district level information dissemination is less robust and less structured to meet audiences needs
- ❑ They have limited contextualised information on target audiences and tend to use “One shoe fit all forecasting”
- ❑ Climate experts overestimate journalists’ knowledge and understanding of weather & climate guidelines, policies and scientific instruments
- ❑ They have limited communication skills on how to deliver climate information to positively influence attitudes towards use of climate information.
- ❑ They are conscious of own inefficiencies to communicate climate information to non-scientists
- ❑ Scientist are overly worried about how target audiences will interpret and apply climate information, so tend to report cautiously
- ❑ Most information is not target specific and impact oriented
- ❑ They often have limited funds to facilitate sustained communication on climate information
- ❑ Most of the substantive discussion forums/programme on climate are non state funded and happen by chance
- ❑ Instruments for microclimate precision forecasting pose a challenge at national level
- ❑ Communities do not prioritise formal climate and weather information for decision making
- ❑ Little resources are invested to understand application or impact of information services to the end users

““ What needs to happen is that the information provided should not only contain an advisory but also impact based, for example communicate that a storm is coming but also on the potential outcome for the infrastructure” . Climate scientist , WMO.

“Scientists don’t often speak the language of the media , it is communicated in away that is not attractive to the media , there is need to communicate their information in a simple way that can be picked up by the media in a useful format ” . Climate scientist , WMO.

Climate experts: Opportunities for sharing climate information

Climate scientists feel opportunities for sharing climate information exist if they invested more in the following:

- ▶ Understanding target users' specific contexts:
 - ❑ Knowledge levels
 - ❑ Needs and practical uses for climate information
 - ❑ Choice of communication mediums (radio, TV, traditional networks)
 - ❑ Language differences
- ▶ Expanding use of trained mass media journalists for weather and climate information.
 - ❑ Use audience targeted formats – generate discussion and curiosity.
 - ❑ Must be repetitive and reliable, not adhoc
 - ❑ Must be multilingual where diverse communities co-exist.
 - ❑ Use impact based forecast, educate communities on how to rely on probability based prediction, which will give the users the opportunity to make own judgements on how to use forecast information

“ Our work is to collect and disseminate weather and climate information to audiences. It is the storewide experts' role to translate what this means to the different players in their local area” Met scientist, Tanzania.

Key findings: Journalists' perspectives



Journalists: Experience, knowledge and attitude towards climate reporting

- Journalists* from all the stations reported basic experience in climate related programming.
- They get information from met department forecasts; special ministry advisories (e.g. agriculture / transport); online sources and interviews with experts and communities affected by topical weather events.
- They reported use of different formats including features, running PSAs, infomercials, discussion programmes, vox pops, expert interviews and community outreach.
- Journalists do not feel confident communicating climate information because of the jargon involved and the attitude of scientists towards them.
- Daily reporting is done in a 'matter of fact' way, as journalists feel all they need to do is pass the information on they received it from the scientists - "Our job is to relay that information the way we have been given it."

"For the daily forecasting, we tell audiences, it is likely to rain so remember to carry an umbrella with you. But we don't follow up to find out whether it rained or whether audiences actioned on that point." Radio programme director, Tanzania.

"For weather and climate broadcasting, we really do not have a way of understanding how our audiences feel about that information or how they use it either. It is one way communication." Radio programme director, Tanzania.

Note: This data is from key informant interviews with 6 journalists at Kenya radio stations, and 1 journalist from a Tanzanian radio station.

Journalists: Challenges to sharing weather and climate information

Journalists identified the following challenges to sharing weather and climate information:

- Lack of understanding how to communicate technical climate information means they mostly regurgitate information from scientists
- They feel information is shared downwards with no opportunity for dialogue with climate experts
- Communicating climate information without sector-based support affects uptake and interest in climate information as people aren't sure what they can do with the information
- They communicate information which is general and cross cutting, therefore not structured to drive preparedness, action or future planning of any particular groups
- Community radio stations/state stations lack financial independence to create programmes as they would like to
- An aging work force is not always up to date with current trends
- Lack of proper equipment (recorders, notebooks, laptops, headphones)
- Competing interests – climate information is often not the most interesting, and is not packaged to make it more appealing to target audiences
- They are not adequately trained or interested in climate reporting

“Initially we had trouble with journalists communicating climate information. You would give climate information and have it distorted so we started working closely with the journalists to enhance their understanding of the information, now we have a good relationships and work closely” Climate scientist, Tanzania.

“ The NDMA will call us when there is an advisory, for example in Marsabit , during drought, there is a potential for conflicts, the NDMA will provide advisories through our station, the community will be advised on where to find water and forage and guidelines on how to use the forage between the different communities” Radio station Manager, Marsabit, Kenya.

Journalists: Opportunities to share climate and weather information

Journalists identified these existing opportunities to share weather and climate information:

- Media can reach large masses at scale with climate information
- Already existing climate related programmes in agriculture, livestock and fishing provide an entry point to enhance climate information programming for target audiences
- Media houses already have the skills to produce basic climate related programming. Climate information is covered in news, features, editorials, documentaries, commentaries, expert opinions/interviews, discussion programmes, and stations can leverage on this background to produce more focused, topical oriented climate information.
- Stations understand that a prediction is a probability - this is not the case with most of the audiences, who only want to know if it will rain or not. Media can be used to mobilise audience thinking around weather and climate use, mitigation, impacts and adaptation.

"Journalists have a role to play in supporting the local communities understand and use climate information but they have to be cautious because it is difficult to predict to a timescale , impact based forecasting will be most applicable "Climate scientist, Met Office

"Fishermen like programmes where there are discussions on issues affecting them, they want to listen to themselves discussing their issues " Media Manager, Kenya.

"Farmers want a platform where they can engage experts to explain what they see around them , for example in their fields, the want to ask , I can see this happening to my crop what does it mean" . Radio programme Controller, Coastal Kenya.

How do radio stations currently engage with their audiences?

Radio station staff were asked how they currently engage with their audiences to understand their needs, and get feedback on their programmes.

This is important because part of the project is to support radio stations to gather audience feedback, which will contribute to the overall monitoring and evaluation framework.

The key findings were:

- Main engagement with audiences is through discussion programmes
- Audiences also contribute to programmes through call-ins and engagement on social media platforms
- Some stations have broadcast programmes in local languages
- Stations have made limited attempts to study audiences and tailor products that respond to their information needs

Recommendations for the project

- ▶ Support climate experts and journalists to understand each others capacity, strengths and weaknesses, and role in communication of weather and climate information for target audiences.
- ▶ Co production between the met, media and sector wide experts can help address information gaps between the different players and will be instrumental to effectively communicating information to target audiences.
- ▶ Audiences need to understand how scientific weather and climate information is generated, to understand how reliable it is, what its limitations are, and how it fits in with their existing decision making processes.
- ▶ Media programmes should target specific livelihood groups to enhance trust and get buy in.
 - ▶ Broadcasting in local languages and hearing local voices can help audiences identify with a programme made for them.
 - ▶ Audience profiling and involving target audiences in production will be useful in developing this aspect of programming within the local contexts.
- ▶ Media programmes should use content and formats that will engage target audiences and encourage them to anticipate and use climate information for decision making. For example:
 - ▶ Including traditional forecasts alongside scientific forecasts
 - ▶ Helping people think through what the forecast means for them
 - ▶ Sharing examples of techniques others have tried