

Hidden Heat

Communicating climate change in Uganda:
Challenges and Opportunities



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Communicating climate change in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities

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Foreword



Okubal Peter James Ejokuo

Executive Director, Panos Eastern Africa

Climate change is the most rapidly growing world concern with hidden and grave consequences for the livelihoods of our people today. Yet it is also the least understood, funded and attended to by government and non-governmental organisations at all levels of Ugandan society. It is increasingly becoming apparent that the effects of climate change are beginning to be observed in the East and Greater horn of Africa. Uganda – once called the Pearl of Africa by Winston Churchill – is no exception. Droughts, floods and deaths as a result will become more common.

As the climate change problem aggravates, global, national and regional efforts are being made to avert this looming hidden heat. But it is also true that these efforts are often a low priority, poorly coordinated, or are even not known in countries like Uganda.

A critical component in the fight against climate change is effective communication: if the right information gets to the right people at the right time, it facilitates accurate decision making and therefore accurate interventions.

The *Hidden Heat* research project was conducted by Dr. Adam Corner with financial support from a Leverhulme Trust Award held by Professor Nick Pidgeon (Cardiff University) in partnership with Panos Eastern Africa. The findings shed light on the reality of climate change in Uganda, what it means for Ugandan citizens and some of the initial attempts to address it. While there are a small number of Ugandan initiatives aimed at communicating and increasing public engagement with climate change in Uganda, these efforts are typically poorly funded and have a low profile.

The *Hidden Heat* findings highlight the challenges affecting climate change communication in Uganda and also identify the opportunities that can be tapped to effectively combat and adapt to climate change. The study recognises the crucial role of media as a platform for information sharing, dialogue and debate. It also recognises the need for participation of the poor and marginalised in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change.

It is therefore our considered hope and wish that the findings of this study contribute to a broader spectrum of communication mechanisms to address climate change in Uganda. It is available for use by government, civil society organisations, academic institutions and all those with a stake in minimising the harm that climate change will cause.

Executive Summary

Climate change poses a significant threat to lives and livelihoods in Uganda. Government policies, low-carbon technologies and financial support from international donors will all play a role in Uganda's response to climate change. But central to the fight against climate change in Uganda is effective communication and public engagement.

At every level of society – from ordinary citizens and farmers, to the media, civil society organisations and local and national government – the need for accurate and reliable information about climate change is very high. For Ugandan citizens, the opportunity to have their concerns listened to and their voices heard is equally important. But little is known about how to communicate climate change in Uganda.

Through a series of 30 interviews with key climate change communicators, this report identifies some of the challenges and opportunities of communicating climate change in Uganda. The findings follow directly from the information provided by the participants in the *Hidden Heat* research project, and represent a wide range of climate change communication stakeholders – from civil society organisations, the media and government representatives. This report aims to amplify these voices – to summarise the expertise that exists in Uganda on climate change communication, and to disseminate this as widely as possible.

There is a major lack of co-ordination in the communication of climate change information in Uganda. Although several governmental and non-governmental bodies are potentially in a position to act as a central hub for climate change information and engagement, currently they are poorly funded and have a low public profile. **Perhaps the most urgent priority for effective communication of climate change in Uganda is the development of a central co-ordinating body that can engage with all sectors of society.**

The media is not fully engaged in covering climate change – certainly not to the extent warranted by the seriousness of the threat. **Training programmes to assist both journalists and editors are essential, but civil society organisations must also improve the way they engage with the media, packaging information in a clear and simple way and actively attracting media attention.**

Local languages lack terms for many key concepts involved in climate change –including 'climate change' itself. **Communicators should attempt to explain climate change using terms that already exist, using graphic examples of local environmental problems and innovative communication methods (e.g. dramatisation) to get the message across.**

At a national and international level, politicians are not being held to account for

taking action on climate change – but this is partly because there is such little awareness of the international causes of climate change. **Raising awareness about the role of industrialised nations in causing climate change, and pressuring national politicians to make greater progress at international negotiations is critical.**

At the local level, politicians tend to be poorly informed about climate change, yet local government structures represent a crucial opportunity for reaching large numbers of ordinary citizens. **Sensitisation campaigns should focus on local politicians as a key constituency that can catalyse action on climate change.**

Indigenous knowledge about land management and the environment is incredibly valuable when trying to engage people on climate change – but it must be supplemented with scientific information about the causes and consequences of climate change. Climate change represents a significant challenge to indigenous ways of understanding the weather and farming – and so **people must be supported with additional knowledge and information wherever possible, including the improved dissemination of meteorological information through local radio stations.**

National politicians have the task of developing a model of sustainable development that provides a higher standard of living for Ugandan citizens, but does not compromise the environment for future generations. This is a major challenge, but one in which as many different sectors of society as possible should be given a voice in. What does a sustainable Uganda look like? **Articulating a positive vision of sustainable development for Uganda will provide a major tool in effectively communicating the message of climate change – what is the alternative?**

Finally, awareness must be raised about the emerging carbon trading sector. There is the potential for carbon trading to deliver much-needed income to ordinary Ugandan citizens, but there are also major risks. **An honest and open dialogue about the risks and benefits of carbon trading for Uganda is an essential first step to accessing the financial advantages that carbon trading may bring.**

Section 1 – What is climate change and what does it mean for Uganda?

After decades of research, scientists are no longer in any doubt that the climate is changing¹. The earth is getting hotter, and weather patterns are altering. But what is ‘climate change’, and what does it mean for Uganda?

When fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) are burned to produce energy they release gases – in particular carbon dioxide (CO²) – which build up in the earth’s atmosphere. These gases act like a greenhouse, trapping more and more of the sun’s light and heat (‘solar radiation’) as more fossil fuels are burned (see Figure 1). Globally, fossil fuels are being used at an increasing rate to generate electricity, provide fuel for transport, and heat people’s homes. This means more ‘greenhouse gases’.

The rapidly increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are causing global temperatures to rise at a rate that is unprecedented in modern human history. They are also causing changes in weather patterns, altering rainfall and the timing of the seasons.

At the same time as coal, oil and gas is being taken out of the ground and used for heating, electricity and transport, the world’s forests are disappearing. Deforestation is also a major contributor to climate change, because trees absorb CO², the most important greenhouse gas. Fewer trees means more CO² in the atmosphere. More greenhouse gases are being released, and less are being absorbed by forests.

The 20th Century was the warmest the world has seen in 1000 years – and average global temperatures are continuing to increase as the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continues to rise. Left unchecked, climate change is expected to have very negative effects on many human and natural systems – including increased floods, droughts and extreme weather events, lowered productivity from large areas of existing farmland, migration due to climatic changes and conflict over dwindling resources (see Figure 2).²

1 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2007). *A Report of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Summary for policymakers*; Royal Society. (2010). Climate change: A summary of the science. <http://royalsociety.org/climate-change-summary-of-science/>

2 IPCC (2007), see footnote 1.

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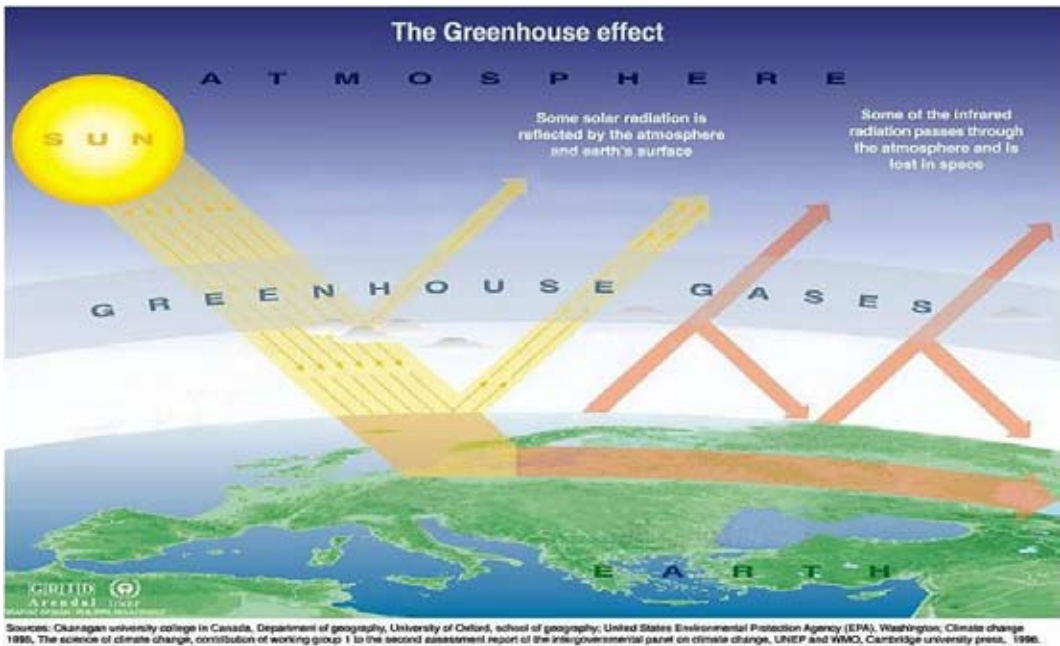


Figure 1: Why are temperatures increasing? Greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO²) are rapidly building up in the atmosphere, caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Greenhouse gases trap heat (solar radiation), and warm the planet.

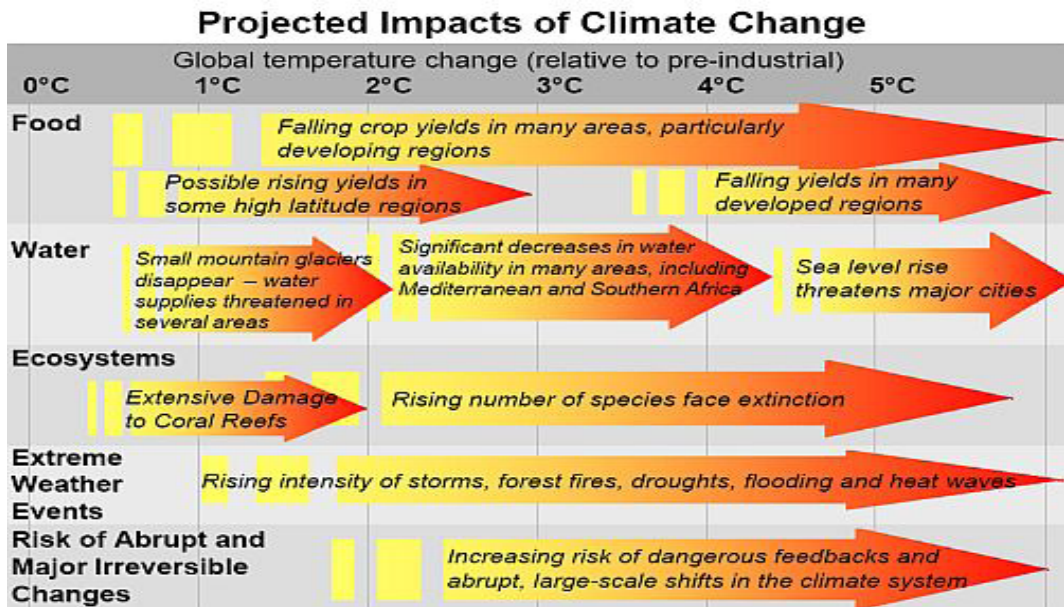


Figure 2: What will the global impacts of climate change be? The more that temperatures increase, the more dangerous climate change will become. There is a general political consensus that globally, temperatures should not increase by more than 'two degrees'.

Climate change is a global problem, but it is not one that is evenly distributed in

causes or effects. Industrialised nations bear the historical responsibility for the burning of fossil fuels, and there continues to be a huge difference between the level of greenhouse gases emitted in industrialised nations and the least developed countries. In the USA, an average person is responsible for releasing about twenty tonnes of CO² into the atmosphere every year – in Uganda, the average amount of CO² used per person is less than one tonne.³

But while industrialised nations are primarily responsible for causing climate change, the effects will be felt first – and hardest – in developing countries.

According to the most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the independent body responsible for providing periodic assessments of climate science to world governments), all of Africa is likely to warm during this century, and at a faster rate than the global average.⁴ But Africa is also the continent that is least likely to be able to cope with climate change.⁵ Many African nations already have extreme climates, and are highly dependent on climate-sensitive industries like farming and food production. As a continent, Africa lacks the financial and technological resources to adapt to a changing climate.

In the East African region, average temperatures have increased by about 0.5 °C over the last century. But in Uganda, there is evidence that average temperatures have increased by as much as 1.4 °C since the 1960s.⁶ Looking further ahead, up to 4.3°C change in average temperatures by the 2080s is possible.⁷ A temperature rise of that magnitude would have disastrous consequences for Uganda.

To put these numbers in perspective, there is a general consensus among politicians that if the most dangerous effects of climate change are to be avoided, average global temperatures should not rise by more than 2°C.

This means that there is an extremely small window of opportunity to get to grips with climate change. Unless urgent action is taken, climate change will cause a range of serious problems in Uganda.

The main predicted effects of climate change in Uganda are summarised in Figure 3:

3 Toulmin, C. (2009). *Climate change in Africa*. Zed Books: UK.

4 IPCC (2007), see footnote 1.

5 Kumssa, Asfaw and Jones, John F. (2010) 'Climate change and human security in Africa', *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 17: 6, 453 — 461; Samson et al (2011). Geographic disparities and moral hazards in the predicted impacts of climate change on human populations. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* DOI: 10.1111/j.1466-8238.2010.00632.x

6 McSweeney, C., New, M. and Lizcano, G. (2008). *UNDP Climate Change Country Profiles: Uganda*. New York: UNDP.

7 Hepworth, N. & Goulden, M. (2008). *Climate Change in Uganda: Understanding the Implications and Appraising the Response*. Scoping Mission for DFID Uganda.

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Impact	Mechanism
Water	Change in river flow regimes Higher temperatures and melting of Rwenzori glaciers temporarily increasing and then reducing flows in the Semiliki river downstream
	Water scarcity Higher temperatures, evaporation and recurrent drought leading to stress, higher demands for water, conflict, and biodiversity loss. Partially implemented water resource regulation system hands legal access to water to the powerful
	Flooding Higher mean and increased intensity rainfall, coupled with land degradation and encroachment raises risks of loss of life and property and damage to infrastructure via flooding
Health	Malaria Extension into higher or once cooler areas with temperature increase where resistance may be low
	Water Bourne Disease Flooding is associated with diarrheal disease including cholera epidemics, particularly where sanitation is poor and in slum areas
	Respiratory disease Associated with prolonged dry spells
	Malnutrition and famine Associated with lower food production and insecurity, particularly with widespread damage brought by floods and droughts
Agriculture and food security	Seasonal rainfall change Erratic onset and cessation of the rainfall seasons. Shorter rains. Crop failure or lower yields of staple foods like beans, cassava, maize and matooke; reduction in traditional varieties; and more crop disease Additional agricultural workloads – particularly women.
	Higher average rainfall, high intensity events Crop damage and soil erosion
	Pastoralists Increase in rainfall in semi-arid areas could be beneficial, given mobile to take advantage of the rains. Droughts reduce viability of cattle corridor and precipitate conflict Lower milk production
	Fisheries Changes in nutrient cycling and loss of spawning brought by temperature and water level change reduce productivity
Environment	Land degradation and deforestation Higher forest fire risk in dry periods; pressure on forests when other livelihood assets collapse; salination and soil erosion
	Species extinctions As niches are closed out by shifts in climate regime
Infrastructure	Transport links and settlements Damage to bridges, roads, telecommunication and buildings during flood and storm events
Economy	Energy Changes in Lake level reducing flows available for power generation. Higher energy costs and energy poverty with knock on implications for charcoal use, deforestation and land degradation
	Coffee Uganda's primary export crop. Robusta sensitive to higher temperatures. Too much rain reduces flowering, which reduces production and also effects drying of beans. Diseases, pests and mould, hit both production and quality.
	Food prices Increase due to pressure on internal and international production capacity
	Tourism Potentially in decline due to degraded environment and infrastructure
Poverty	Multiple Exacerbated. Vulnerability increased
Insecurity	Nile flows Changes in water balance and demand heightens competition, potential for conflict.
	Migration In response to acute or chronic climate induced stresses

Figure 3: The predicted impacts of climate change in Uganda. This summary table is from Hepworth, N. & Goulden, M. (2008). *Climate Change in Uganda: Understanding the Implications and Appraising the Response. Scoping Mission for DFID Uganda.*

Worryingly, there is some evidence that the effects of climate change are *already* being felt in Uganda. Attributing *current* changes in Uganda's climate to human

causes is difficult. The East African climate is naturally dynamic and variable, and there is a severe lack of regional-level (i.e. East African) research on climate change.⁸ But the Ugandan government has presented tentative evidence that the number of droughts per decade is already increasing, with the period 1991-2000 especially drought prone.⁹ The snow on Mount Rwenzori is melting year by year. And a number of studies have documented observations by Ugandan citizens that the climate is changing.¹⁰ We may not be able to say with certainty that a particular extreme weather event is directly linked to climate change – but we know that extreme weather events will become more frequent and more severe as the global climate warms. An increase in droughts is completely consistent with scientists' predictions about how climate change will impact on lives and livelihoods in Uganda. Climate change is becoming a reality in Uganda.

Climate change is not a problem for the future – it is a problem that needs dealing with now. But how can Uganda respond to climate change?

Uganda has a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)¹¹, but a co-ordinated national policy on climate change has not yet been implemented. Civil society has begun to develop and promote responses to climate change – but Uganda is at the beginning of a long and challenging battle.

Responses to climate change are usually divided into two categories – 'mitigation' and 'adaptation'. Mitigating climate change means reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, in an attempt to avoid the effects of climate change. Adaptation means taking action that increases the capacity to cope with the effects of climate change – building resilience.

The capacity of Uganda to mitigate climate change through changes in energy use is extremely limited. Fossil fuel use is low, and greenhouse gas emissions from Uganda barely register at the global level. This does not mean that steps to mitigate climate change should not be taken. Some actions – such as the use of solar fuel cells for heating water, or fuel stoves with increased energy efficiency for cooking – will reduce Ugandan greenhouse gas emissions and perhaps more importantly provide tools for sustainable development.

8 Although see Conway et al (2005). Rainfall variability in East Africa: implications for natural resources management and livelihoods. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. A* **363**, 49–54; Williams & Funk (2011);

9 Government of Uganda (2007). *Climate change: Uganda National Adaptation Programmes of Action*. Kampala: Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources.

10 Neville, L., Musiime, D. & Alana, A.O. (2010). *Uganda Talks Climate – The public understanding of climate change*. BBC World Service Trust; McGrath, J. (2008). *Turning up the heat: climate change and poverty in Uganda*. Oxfam GB; Osbahr, H., Dorward, P., Stern, R. & Cooper, S. (2011). Supporting agricultural innovation in Uganda to respond to climate risk: Linking climate change and variability with farmer perceptions. *Expl Agric* **47** (2) 293–31

11 Government of Uganda (2007). *Climate change: Uganda National Adaptation Programmes of Action*. Kampala: Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources.

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Uganda does have significant forest reserves (although they are rapidly being reduced). If these forests can be maintained or increased, they will help to absorb the extra CO² in the atmosphere, and tree planting has become a major focus of efforts to tackle climate change in Uganda.

But mitigation actions in Uganda (or East Africa, or even the African continent) cannot prevent the effects of climate change from occurring unless the international community takes swift action to reduce global emissions.

Given the limited scope for mitigation in Uganda, adaptation is the focus of most attention. It is critical that Uganda prepares for the climatic changes that are now inevitable, as well as the increasing risk of more dangerous impacts in the future. While tree planting is a method of mitigation at a global level, the maintenance of forest reserves is also likely to be an important method of localised adaptation in Uganda.

Trees and vegetation play a number of critical roles in Uganda, providing food, wind cover and contributing to local-level temperature regulation. Other potential adaptation methods include developing drought-resistant crop varieties, maintaining soil fertility, and diversification in agricultural methods.

Uganda's best defence against climate change will be developing a local environment that is as healthy and resilient as possible.

International financial assistance for adaptation to climate change, and the transfer of low-carbon technologies will be crucial. But money and technology are only part of the answer to climate change – engaging citizens at a personal level is absolutely vital.

Central to the challenge of climate change adaptation in Uganda is widespread and effective communication and public engagement.

At the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in Nairobi in 2010, it was noted that communicating about climate change is as complex as the issue itself – and that there was an urgent need to communicate clearly to African citizens and mobilize mass support for policies to tackle climate change.¹²

But perhaps the single most dangerous feature of climate change is the fact that it does not lend itself to detection until it is too late. The very signs that alert you to the presence of climate change – an increase in deaths from extreme weather events, or a lengthening of drought periods – are the impacts you are trying to prevent. Droughts and floods are nothing new in Uganda - the effects of climate change blend all too easily into the existing problems that the country faces. This poses a major challenge for detecting and communicating the risks of climate change.

¹² African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (2010). *Consultative meeting on the draft communications strategy on climate change and the comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes.*

Nairobi, 23–26 August 2010.

It is a hidden heat - which makes it all the more dangerous.

The purpose of the current research was to begin to identify the challenges and opportunities for communication and public engagement on climate change in Uganda – to uncover ways of making the hidden heat of climate change visible and understandable. In the next section, we describe the methodology of the research project. Then, we present a review of the existing evidence on effectively communicating climate change in Uganda before describing the results of the *Hidden Heat* research.



Landslides in western Uganda.

Section 2 – Research Design

The *Hidden Heat* research project was designed to identify the challenges and opportunities of communicating climate change in Uganda, through a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews with key individuals involved in the communication of climate change.

The research was a joint undertaking between Dr Adam Corner of the Understanding Risk research group, School of Psychology, Cardiff University (UK), and Panos Eastern Africa (Uganda). Funding for the research was provided by a Leverhulme Trust award held by Professor Nick Pidgeon (Director of the Understanding Risk research group at Cardiff University). Practical and logistical support was provided by the staff at Panos Eastern Africa.

A total of 30 interviews were conducted during the period between January – April 2011. A full list of the interviewees is provided in the Appendix, but it included print and television journalists, newspaper editors, members of civil society (non-governmental) organisations, researchers/academics, members of the government and activists/campaigners on climate change and environmental issues more broadly.

All the interviews were conducted face-to-face by Adam Corner, and in accordance with the British Psychological Society (BPS) ‘Ethical principles for conducting research on human participants’. This means that all interviewees provided written consent before taking part in the research, were offered the opportunity to participate anonymously, and were given the choice of whether they wanted to represent themselves (as an individual) or their organisation (where appropriate).

With the prior consent of the participant, each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed by Adam Corner or professional transcribers procured through Panos Eastern Africa. An Information Sheet providing details about the purpose and nature of the research was provided to all participants before each interview, including contact details for Adam Corner and Panos Eastern Africa.

The interviews typically took between 30-60 minutes, and the interviewer used a set of 17 questions as prompts that covered a range of aspects of climate change communication, including:

Public awareness and engagement with climate change

Communication strategies

Uncertainty & ‘scepticism’ about climate change

The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using software for qualitative data analysis (*nVivo*).

Section 3 – Communicating climate change in Uganda: A review of the evidence

Communication is a critical – but often neglected – component of tackling climate change. Policy makers, activists and ordinary citizens need access to high quality, timely and up-to-date information about climate change, as they do about other important societal issues. Panos Eastern Africa has been at the forefront of developing and promoting public engagement around HIV/AIDs, and governance and globalisation. But until recently, there was very little in the way of systematic evidence about how to effectively communicate climate change in Uganda, or in the African context more generally.

There is still an enormous gap between what is known about how Europeans perceive climate change, and what is known about African attitudes on the subject. Although there have been a few surveys of international public opinion that have included African countries¹³, these have rarely involved Uganda. But there is some research that has focussed on the critical question of how much awareness ordinary citizens in Uganda have about climate change, and how public engagement can be increased.

The Gallup Social & Economic Analysis polling programme,¹⁴ which surveyed 1000 people in Uganda, found that the percentage of Ugandans who said they knew ‘something’ or ‘a great deal’ about climate change increased from 35% in 2007/8 to 61% in 2010. The proportion of Ugandans who reported viewing climate change as a ‘somewhat serious’ or ‘very serious’ threat also increased over this time period, from 30% to 45%. This is higher than the figure for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, which in 2010 was only 34%. But it is still much lower than most Asian and European nations, despite the fact that Uganda has been assessed as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to the effects of climate change.¹⁵

However – and this is a theme that we explore in detail using the findings of the current research – the fact that a relatively small proportion of Ugandans are knowledgeable (or concerned) about the term ‘climate change’ does not mean that changes in the climate have gone un-noticed. In fact, as more than 80% of the population of Uganda are involved in the agricultural sector – as farmers, foresters or pastoralists – most people have a very direct relationship with the land and the seasons, and are quick to identify recent changes in the climate of Uganda that are altering the way they live and work.

One important early attempt to document the views and perspectives of farmers living in the Teso and Rwenzori regions of Uganda was conducted by Oxfam GB in

13 E.g., BBC World Trust (2009). Climate concerns continue to increase. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/04_12_09climatepoll.pdf

14 See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147203/Fewer-Americans-Europeans-View-Global-Warming-Threat.aspx#2>

15 Hepworth & Goulden (2008), see footnote 7.

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2008.¹⁶ In a series of interviews with farmers and pastoralists, people were given the opportunity to reflect on whether the climate was changing, and how these changes were affecting their lives. Most were in no doubt that the climate had changed over the past two decades – citing a range of examples including hotter temperatures, sporadic but heavier rains, and abrupt changes in crop yields as evidence. But while many interviewees knew the climate was changing, few were able to explain why. The report suggested that:

“Public awareness of the wider, international causes of global warming – carbon emissions from factories and transport, primarily in industrialised countries – seems to be extremely low”

Other studies of African public opinion have drawn similar conclusions – although awareness of climatic (and wider environmental) changes is high,¹⁷ there is only a limited awareness of what is causing these changes to occur (or what to do about them).¹⁸ When research has attempted to link African perceptions of climatic changes with actual meteorological evidence, people’s views about how the weather and seasons have changed are not always supported by temperature recordings and data on rainfall.¹⁹ In some cases, though, farmers’ perceptions of climatic changes are broadly accurate,²⁰ and there is increasing interest in the use of testimony and personal experience as a method of confirming predictions about climate change in regions where formal measurements are difficult to obtain.²¹

The question of knowledge and awareness is important, as it has direct implications for how people respond to climate change. Information is critical for effective adaptation – and increasing awareness is vital on an issue that will have such profound and far-reaching effects on Ugandan livelihoods (and in Africa more generally).

However, while it is important to understand that awareness and knowledge about the causes of climate change in Uganda is generally low, this is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to understanding public attitudes, and how to promote effective public engagement. It is essential to look beyond questions about technical

16 Oxfam (2008), see footnote 10.

17 Maddison, D. J. (2007). The perception of and adaptation to climate change in Africa. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4308*; Mertz, O., Mbow, C., Reenberg, A. & Diouf, A. (2009). *Farmers’ Perceptions of Climate Change and Agricultural Adaptation Strategies in Rural Sahel. Environmental Management* 43 (5) 804-

816.

18 <http://africatalksclimate.com/>; Magrath, J (2010). The injustice of climate change: voices from Africa. *Local Environment* 15 (9) 891– 901

19 Conway, D. (2011). Adapting climate research for development in Africa. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* DOI: 10.1002/wcc.115; Maddison, D. J. (2007). The perception of and adaptation to climate change in Africa. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4308*; Osbahr, H., Dorward, P., Stern, R. & Cooper, S. (2011). *Supporting agricultural innovation in Uganda to respond to climate risk: Linking climate change and variability with farmer perceptions. Expl Agric* 47 (2) 293–31.

20 Deressa, T.T., Hassan, R.M. & Ringler, C. (2011). Perception of and adaptation to climate change by farmers in the Nile basin of Ethiopia. *Journal of Agricultural Science* 149, 23–31; West CT, Roncoli C, Ouattara F. (2008). Local perceptions and regional climate trends on the central plateau of Burkina Faso. *Land Degradation & Development* 19, 289–304.

21 Chaudhary, P. & Bawa, K.S. (2011). Local perceptions of climate change validated by scientific evidence in the Himalayas. *Biology Letters* doi:10.1098/rsbl.2011.0269

understanding of the problem, and search for the ways in which climate change is already making itself felt in people's beliefs, values, behaviours and plans for the future.

A pioneering pan-African project called *Africa Talks Climate*²² provides the clearest evidence so far on African perspectives on climate change, and is the only work available that makes explicit recommendations about communicating climate change in Africa. During 2009, citizen focus groups and a series of expert interviews were conducted in ten African nations, including Uganda. The *Africa Talks Climate* findings provide an important insight into how climate change is understood and perceived in Africa. The Ugandan component of the research programme was called *Uganda Talks Climate*²³ and Figure 4 summarises the key findings of this groundbreaking piece of research.

Uganda Talks Climate

12 focus groups and 18 interviews with climate change 'opinion leaders' (from the government, private sector, media and community organisations) were conducted.

Ugandans have noticed changes in the climate, but the terms 'climate change' and 'global warming' are not consistently recognised or used by ordinary Ugandans.

Awareness and concern about environmental degradation and increasing pollution from industrialisation is very high, and many people do not routinely distinguish climate change from the broader environmental changes that are taking place, including deforestation and air pollution.

Developing effective responses to climate change is hampered by a fundamental shortage of relevant, useful information for African audiences. Climate change terminology does not have standard translations in many local languages – this is a significant barrier to public engagement. Efforts should be made to develop and test appropriate climate change terminology in local languages.

The media are an important source of information on climate change, but journalists find it difficult to get editorial 'buy-in' for stories on climate change. There is little 'cross-sector' (i.e. civil society, government, private sector) co-ordination and communication on climate change.

Trees are a central to the public understanding of climate change and the environment in Uganda, and tree planting strategies have met with some success. But there is a need to move beyond the idea that tree planting is a 'cure-all' for all environmental and climate ills.

²² See footnote 18

²³ Neville, L., Musiime, D. & Alana, A.O. (2010). *Uganda Talks Climate – The public understanding of climate change*. BBC World Service Trust.

Figure 4: Key findings from Uganda Talks Climate.

Africa Talks Climate won an award from the Centre for Climate Change Communication in the US, for the rigour and originality of the research²⁴. It has provided African researchers, civil society and policy makers with crucial information about African awareness of climate change. *Africa Talks Climate* was a central and important influence on the research described in this report, and encouragingly, there are several conclusions from the *Uganda Talks Climate* research that we reinforce and expand upon in our own findings.

Other than the *Africa Talks Climate* research programme, there is very little formal evidence available on how to communicate climate change effectively in Uganda. Even the little evidence that does exist is often not readily available to community activists and communicators – academic journals charge fees that are beyond the means of most community organisations. This means that a lot of valuable knowledge stays locked up in universities, and never reaches the people who need it the most. However, in the knowledge and practices and experience of Uganda's climate change communicators, there is a great deal that is already known about how to communicate climate change

The purpose of the current research was to tap into that knowledge and experience, and to document it: to amplify the voices of the people who know the most about the challenges and opportunities of communicating climate change in Uganda.

24 <http://africatalksclimate.com/news/africa-talks-climate-honoured-climate-change-communicator-year>

Section 4 – Key findings

In this section we identify and explore the key findings²⁵ of the *Hidden Heat* research. After discussing each key finding, we make recommendations for improving climate change communication and public engagement. The key findings are drawn exclusively from the responses provided by the *Hidden Heat* participants – and so the recommendations reflect their views, not the opinions of the author.

4.1 Co-ordination & Leadership

Climate change is not just an environmental problem in Uganda. A changing climate impacts on all areas of life, from the economy (e.g. a reduction in coffee exports), to health services (e.g. more victims of floods and droughts) to poverty reduction strategies (e.g. decreased food security). But this means that *co-ordinating* and *leading* a national response to climate change (of which effective communication is a central component) is a formidable challenge – and one that many participants in the *Hidden Heat* research felt strongly was not being met. There are now a large number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) doing work on climate change. But there is a lack of co-ordination in terms of the information being provided to both the public and the media. Catherine Mwesigwa, Deputy Editor of the *New Vision* newspaper, made the point clearly:

“I’m an editor but I don’t know who is in charge of climate change in Uganda. If I were to do the field of climate change, who do I have to talk to? I don’t know. I know about the people who deal with environment in general I will go and talk to NEMA (National Environmental Management Authority). I know who the activists are, I know the Ministry of Environment, but who is directly in charge of informing us about climate change issues and impacts? There’s no one.”

In fact, there *is* a section of the national government (the Climate Change Unit - CCU) that is responsible for informing the media and society more broadly about climate change issues and impacts, but the problem is that it has an extremely low profile . The CCU was established with the mandate of co-ordinating Uganda’s response to climate change, but it is poorly funded, under-staffed, and spends a great deal of its time engaging in the complex reporting procedures required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), instead of raising awareness about climate change within the country. The CCU has produced a series of policy briefings (for politicians) that contain accurate technical information, but has so far not produced any materials that fulfil a similar role for members of the public.

Bernard Nassanga, of the NGO *Climate Change Concern* suggests that:

²⁵ The interview process produced a huge amount of data and information. Not all of it is included in this report, as our aim was to focus on the most important factors arising from the interviews.

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“(The Climate Change Unit) still has limited capacity. It’s a complex thing because you have first to build the capacity of that unit to be able to co-ordinate initiatives like this effectively...it’s not simple”

There are other groups that also claim to be playing a role in co-ordinating Ugandan responses to climate change, but who are similarly low-profile. *Climate Action Network Uganda* (CAN-U – part of the global network of CAN groups) is currently operating from the Oxfam GB offices in Kampala, and is a coalition of over 200 civil society organisations that are initiating activities related to climate change. Kizza Wandira of CAN-U, says:

“We are already co-ordinators of civil societies in Uganda... We are now establishing a working group that will co-ordinate everyone to do with climate change in Uganda. This should be the work of the government CCU, but the government CCU is still under-staffed, it is not funded very well, so we want to chip in”

CAN-U is still a very new organisation – it was only established after the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009. However, many *Hidden Heat* participants felt that it is not yet equipped to fulfil the role of co-ordinating civil society activity on climate change in Uganda. With no website, no active mailing list or communication system, only one permanent member of staff and an extremely low profile, it is currently no more able to lead or co-ordinate responses to climate change than the CCU.

Like so many other important issues in Uganda, the problem is partly a matter of funding. But even with a fully financed body co-ordinating actions and activities in Uganda, there would still be a major issue regarding the consistency of information and quality of communication around climate change. One of the key conclusions from the *Africa Talks Climate* research was that African citizens’ response to climate change is hampered by a fundamental shortage of relevant, useful information for African audiences. It certainly seems as if that is the case in Uganda – a problem that several organisations trying to improve communication on climate change have come across.

As Devs Bamanya, Head of Seasonal Forecasting, Department of Meteorology, Government of Uganda, points out, co-ordination is not simply just a matter of spending more money – it means getting the message right.

“Mostly what we need to do, what we are lacking and what we should do, is we should establish training materials on climate change. The Climate Change Unit, the department of Meteorology and other institutions should come together. We speak the same language. If we are to go and speak about climate change, let us first have the same information, then we go out and preach about climate change. But if we leave everyone to go and talk we don’t have standards, we don’t know what we are doing, we waste a lot of money and we confuse the message.”

There are a range of documents now available in Uganda that attempt to explain climate change to different audiences. It is inevitable – and appropriate – that these documents will emphasise different parts of the problem. But the quality of the information contained in them varies considerably, and some contain errors

that are likely to confuse the wider public if not corrected (e.g. confusion between the two separate problems of CFCs damaging the ozone layer, and greenhouse gases causing climate change). There is a need for standardised information and resources that climate change communicators in Uganda can use – and that the media can access.

Probably the single most effective attempt at producing written materials that accurately and clearly communicate climate change to Ugandan citizens is the *Climate Sense* publication, produced by the *Uganda Carbon Bureau* (UCB)²⁶ and partners. *Climate Sense* is envisaged as a regular and ongoing series, although so far only one has been produced. It is simple, but factually accurate, and explains climate change in a way that relates to life in Uganda. The first edition of *Climate Sense* was distributed in copies of two national daily newspapers, and to politicians.

Recommendations

1. Lobbying for a coherent national framework that provides funding for a national co-ordinating body but also promotes engagement with other actors

Neither the CCU nor CAN-U are currently providing the necessary leadership or co-ordination of climate change activities in Uganda. Both suffer from a very low profile. The CCU does not have protected government funding. If the CCU is to fulfil its role of acting as a national focal point for climate change it must have the resources it needs. Without a dedicated focus from central government, other initiatives are likely to fail. It is therefore in the interests of activists and civil society to lobby for a coherent national framework that provides funding for a co-ordinating body that can lead, but also engage with and provide space for non-governmental organisations to operate. The body co-ordinating climate change communication in Uganda must develop a physical presence, build strong relationships with civil society organisations, relevant government departments, the media, donors and researchers, and act as a central dissemination point for best-quality information

2. Produce a standard document that sets out the science of climate change as it applies to East Africa and Uganda, and the implications for the region.

The *Climate Sense* newspapers provide an excellent model of accurate but simple climate change information. But as a series of publications, they cannot act as a 'standard' document for other NGOs and activists to use when designing their own programmes of communication. If a document could be produced that was detailed enough (and rigorously referenced enough) to act as a standard reference point for climate change communication in Uganda, this would be a critical resource.

26 <http://www.ugandacarbon.org/>

4.2 The role of the media

In Uganda there are many daily newspapers, several local and national TV stations, and hundreds of FM radio stations – some broadcasting to the entire country, others to a single district. Although the local FM radio stations reach by far the largest number of people (many Ugandans are not able to read well, and do not have consistent access to electricity or televisions), the newspapers – especially the Daily Monitor and the New Vision – carry significant influence. It is important, therefore, to understand how climate change is reported across different mediums. Figure 5 provides more information about the different forms of media available in Uganda.

There are a number of media development issues in Uganda. Media houses face a level of harassment and government interference, journalists generally have some theoretical training, but most have not had the support to put this training into practice. Radio stations suffer from many of the problems common in the East African region: a very weak financial base and poor journalism capacity. Each of these factors plays a role in the capacity of the media to communicate effectively on critical issues like climate change.

The media landscape in Uganda

Radio

Radio is the most important source of information for Ugandans. According to the latest African Media Barometer report, in 2009 89% of households owned a radio set, radio signal reportedly covered 80% of Uganda's territory and there are private FM stations in almost every region, usually broadcasting in local languages. The state-owned Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) is the only radio outlet to broadcast nationally, and has six radio channels in total, including Star FM, which broadcasts exclusively in Luganda.

A 2008 survey of nearly 6,000 adults found that 95% of respondents from rural areas listened to the radio on a regular basis, compared to 97% of urban respondents. A national survey conducted in the same year found that 83% of respondents had household access to a radio. The difference in the figures regarding listenership and ownership can be explained by the fact that many people listen to the radio in public places or in other people's homes.

Television

TV signal covers 60% of Uganda's territory. The country had 40 television stations licensed in June 2009, compared to 26 only one year earlier, mostly based in the central region. However, the high prices of TV sets, weak broadcast signals and a lack of access to electricity are still major obstacles for the poor and rural population. A 2008 survey of nearly 6,000 adults found that only 24% of respondents from rural areas watched television on a regular basis, compared to 63% of urban respondents.

Print media

Ugandan newspapers are generally considered an urban medium, with little distribution, even of vernacular newspapers, outside the major towns. But AudienceScapes describes print media as “the most vibrant political news medium” in Uganda, and points to a degree of rural uptake: a 2008 survey of nearly 6,000 adults found that 27% of respondents from rural areas read newspapers on a regular basis, compared to 56% of urban respondents.

The partly state-owned New Vision and the privately owned Daily Monitor (often critical of the government) are the two major English-language daily newspapers, with a combined circulation of up to 70,000 copies a day. It is estimated that each copy is read by between five and ten people. There are three other dailies: The Red Pepper (a tabloid), its sister paper Kamunye, a Luganda-language publication, and Bukedde, a sister paper of The New Vision which also publishes in Luganda. Weekly papers include The East African, The Weekly Message, The East African Business Week, The Sunrise, Etop, Orumuri, Rupiny, The Independent, and two others affiliated with the Buganda Kingdom – Ggwanga (meaning ‘nation’), and Eddoboozi (meaning ‘the voice’) – and The Observer.

Even if their readership is limited, newspapers play an extremely important agenda-setting role: they are read by the urban, educated elite of policymakers, politicians, business people and academics, and they strongly influence which stories are taken up by radio and television. All print media outlets have potential or actual reach to elites and opinion-formers and are thus valuable media to convey the views and voices of poor and marginalised people.

The Internet

According to a Uganda Communications Commission review, in June 2009 there were 12 Internet and data service providers in Uganda. However, Uganda’s limited fibre-optic network still restricts Internet use to urban areas, and a widespread lack of ICT infrastructure means that the vast majority of urban users rely on Internet cafés to get online.

A general concern that journalists from all media formats had in the *Hidden Heat* interviews was the lack of readily available, easy to understand Afro-centric information on climate change. This links directly to the findings in the previous section – there is an urgent need for standard resources that the public and journalists can access and understand on climate change in Uganda.

But while making accurate information available is vital, most media require constantly updated and ‘new’ information in order to create a story. Several *Hidden Heat* participants suggested that the government and civil society could be much more pro-active in providing content for media coverage, in terms of press releases

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that make explicit links between current events and climate change. Too often, potentially climate-related events pass without any mention of climate change.

A good recent example was the unusually long dry season, which lasted from November 2010 – March 2011. The national government took out full-page advertisements in national newspapers, and sent an SMS to all mobile users, warning of the threat of drought.²⁷ However, neither the government nor campaigning organisations took the opportunity to use the national conversation about drought to raise awareness about climate change. Droughts are expected to become more frequent and more extreme as the climate changes – yet very little coverage of the long dry season mentioned climate change.

If climate change is to become a more important issue for the media, then more efforts must be made to attract their attention. The problem with climate change is that the very signs that alert you to the presence of climate change – an increase in deaths from extreme weather events, or a lengthening of drought periods – are the impacts you are trying to prevent. As Daniel Kalinaki, Managing Editor of the *Daily Monitor* newspaper, says:

“Stories on the environment for instance, and to a lesser extent public health, by the time they grab your attention, really its too late. If it’s the outbreak of an epidemic, if you’re reporting the outbreak of an epidemic then you are several months, several years too late. And we have seen that here in terms of the HIV/AIDS epidemic... if you wait for the dry season to last 9 months instead of 6 months, the consequences are going to be very bad. It’s going to be too late. And by that time, you can’t reverse it...”

Print Media

For print media, there was a general sense among *Hidden Heat* participants that things had improved somewhat over the past five years. Partly through training provided by organisations such as Panos Eastern Africa and the Rural Development Media Centre (RUDMEC),²⁸ reporting of environmental issues in general has increased in quality. However, there is still a lack of knowledge about climate change among journalists, suggesting that journalist training remains an important priority in Uganda. As Esther Nakkazi, one of Uganda’s leading science journalists, says:

“There are some organisations who are coming up to train and make people understand including journalists but overall I think there is very limited knowledge about climate change”

Francis Mugerwa, an environmental journalist identified both the *Daily Monitor* and the *New Vision* as examples of print media that have begun to take environmental issues more seriously:

“The national print media houses have started allocating specific pages of the environmental reporting in their papers weekly. At least once a week, there

²⁷ Subsequently, a major regional drought took hold in the East African region, claiming thousands of lives, although the drought was felt hardest in the countries surrounding Uganda.

²⁸ <http://www.rudmec.org/index.html>

is a pullout on the environment in both the Monitor and Vision and some other papers.”

However, Daniel Kalinaki, the Managing Editor of the *Daily Monitor* newspaper was far less positive about the way in which climate change was being covered by the African media. While the quality of reporting on climate change may have improved, he argued that the *quantity* was still far too low:

“I think climate change is the biggest under-reported, or unreported story of our times... and yet if you look around, then the critical evidence suggests that not only are the effects of climate change already being felt, they are (worsening) within the next few years” ...”

Kalinaki’s suggestion that the media is currently not proactive enough on climate change was echoed by several other participants. Typically, climate change receives attention when a disaster strikes – extreme weather or a landslide – but is not reported on regularly and consistently. This observation resonates with a recent briefing report by the International Institute for Environment and Development, which argued that the fight against climate change could be won or lost on the pages of newspapers, in TV and radio broadcasts and on the internet and mobile phones.²⁹

Catherine Mwesigwa, the Deputy Editor of the *New Vision* suggested that the problem lies not with a lack of journalistic enthusiasm for climate change, but with the editors themselves:

“Most of us in the newsroom come from completely Arts backgrounds, so the science of climate change, for most of us...we don’t know....committing resources to training, that is key. I think in development journalism training, the biggest loophole has been that most people who give that training focus on the journalists, and forget the editors. And yet the editors make the day to day decisions...if the editors are left in the dark, how are they going to get it?”

Daniel Kalinaki (*Daily Monitor*) agreed.

“We need to learn about the issues, and when I say ‘we’ I mean not just the journalists that cover climate change, the media houses right from the editors down. We need to understand what climate change is...”

These comments point to an important – and currently unaddressed – gap in climate change communication in Uganda: editors need training, as well as journalists.

Radio

Panos London and Panos Eastern Africa conducted audience research in southern Uganda in 2007 to understand listeners’ use of radio.³⁰ Focus group respondents’ comments make it clear that radio is a fundamental part of their daily lives, one that connects them not only to their communities but also to the outside world. They

²⁹ <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03119.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.panosea.org/index.php?page=publications&i=7>

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prefer radio above all other media for its interactivity, and clearly see it as a means of communication, not just a means to gather information.

Radios are a crucial resource for communicating with people about climate change in Uganda. Local FM radios reach the largest number of people –and crucially, they usually do so in local languages that are more widely understood than English. However, partly because there are so many local radio stations, and so many broadcasters, it is difficult to reach these journalists with training programmes. For many local communities, the concept of climate change is not something that is connected to the changes in rainfall or crop yields that they are experiencing. As Esther Nakkazi, a science journalist, says:

“Everything is very abstract...when you go out into the villages the guys who work in the community radio, the knowledge is very minimal.”

This suggests that the journalist training programmes that have tended to focus on print journalists should be extended to radio broadcasters. David Musiime, of the BBC World Trust and author of the Uganda Talks Climate report, says that their research has led them to focus on community radio stations as a critical mode of communication:

“Currently we are running a number of trainings at radio stations, and we are looking at issues that are affecting people in the community, because the research that we conducted before showed us that people are interested in issues that are affecting them....our trainers now have been using the findings from the research to train the local journalists at the rural stations on how best they can communicate these issues. “

Training local radio journalists, and developing climate change information that appeals to local radio audiences, is very important. One very practical problem that several *Hidden Heat* participants suggested that local radios could help to solve is the provision of accurate and up-to-date weather forecasts from the Government Department of Meteorology. Of course, that would require the Department of Meteorology to provide this information to local radio stations. But local radios provide the obvious mechanism of disseminating localised weather information to farmers and communities.

Training for local radio journalists could involve the establishment of links between the Department of Meteorology and local FM stations – this would benefit the government by providing a network of outlets for local weather information, and the radio stations by giving them a practical role in communicating climate-rated information.

Recommendations:

1. Media training

There are a range of possible options for improving media engagement on climate change. Training, the development of media climate change fellowships, and linking the media to researchers and civil society organisations would all be extremely beneficial ways of raising the profile of climate change in the Ugandan media. There are well-tested methodologies for engaging the media on other important issues (e.g. HIV/AIDs), and these should be reviewed and applied to climate change. There are also examples of previous climate change-related initiatives that have proven successful, and should be built on. For example, ‘Learning Groups’ (collaborations between NGOs, scientific institutions, government agencies and journalists) have been found to be an effective way of promoting effective communication around forest governance in Uganda.³¹

Funding journalists to attend international meetings, commissioning media houses to run a series of features on a particular aspect of climate change, and promoting debate on climate change through radio, newspapers, blogs and social media are some possible methods for achieving greater media engagement. Newspaper editors are in a uniquely powerful position to influence the news agenda, yet (by their own admission) editorial knowledge about climate change is lacking. **Media training should be directed not only at journalists but at editors too. The challenge is to find a model of editor-engagement that attracts their interest.**

2. Creating news

Campaigners and civil society must be more pro-active in turning climate related information into ‘news’ that the media can report. Climate change campaigners need to seize the initiative and *create* news stories about climate change that don’t require major disasters to happen to attract attention. Awareness and engagement must cascade down from the newspaper-reading urban elite to the radio programmes on local FM radios (who often take their news directly from the printed press). It is up to civil society and climate change campaigners to create ‘news’ content for the media on climate change – to make the link between climate change and health, development issues, or the economy. The information must be packaged in a media-friendly and accessible way. Only when climate change takes its rightful place on the front pages of Ugandan newspapers, will the rest of society catch on.

3. Local radio stations can disseminate weather information

Radios reach many millions of people, yet awareness of climate change is very limited among local broadcasters. **A practical role for local radios to play would be to disseminate information from the Department of Meteorology.**

31 <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03119.pdf>

4. Consistency in funding

Donors who have funded communications projects/media training on climate change previously should refund initiatives with the same participants. **Consistency in funding is critical for ensuring that improvements in communication strategies are maintained and developed.**

4.3 Local languages & local government

Local languages

An obvious but important barrier to the communication of climate change is the number of local languages in Uganda. 'Climate change' and other technical terms do not translate well into most languages. The issue of local languages and terminology was something that the *Uganda Talks Climate* research explored in depth. The report concluded that climate change terminology did not have standard translations in many local languages – and this was a significant barrier to public engagement. The report recommended that efforts should be made to develop and test appropriate climate change terminology in local languages. The issue of local languages was also something that many *Hidden Heat* participants identified as important. As Harriet B, from the NGO *Greenwatch*, put it:

“If you go and start speaking in English in a community where people only understand their local dialogue, you are wasting your time. If you use technical jargon and you do not tailor your language to suit the needs of the people there you are wasting even more time.”

Given that there are over 50 local languages in Uganda, however, it is likely to prove a significant challenge to translate the many scientific concepts involved in climate change. David Musiime, one of the *Uganda Talks Climate* authors, suggested that while the concepts of climate change and global warming were not well understood, this might have more to do with the way they were typically presented than the concepts themselves:

“If you want to talk about climate change, nobody is going to listen to you, nobody is getting interested, but talk about climate change and relate it to lack of water, talk about climate change and relate it to drought, then people get interested because these issues are affecting them, they want the information, they want to survive, so I think it is just an issue of how it is being communicated.”

The advantage of this approach is that climate change is explained through concepts that are familiar in all local languages – water, drought, trees and crops. Using local examples overcomes many of the problems associated with technical terminology – if climate change can be explained through practical examples and impacts (rather than as an abstract concept full of scientific terminology), more people are likely to understand and engage with it.

Alan Kalangi, of the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), is clear about the benefit of using local examples:

“You do not go directly and talk about climate change. Our communities need to learn through seeing”.

One successful approach that combined a local language with local examples to sensitise people to an environmental problem (although not climate change) was developed by the National Environmental Management Authority. Everest Mugambwa explains:

“Recently we produced a two minute, dramatised skit, discouraging people from buying wetland, because they are not supposed to buy the wetlands, these wetlands are supposed to be protected by agencies such as NEMA on behalf of all Ugandans. So we put it in English and Luganda, and we first ran the Luganda version on Bukedde TV for one and half months. And you know what, radio stations, other TV stations, the common people have been flocking to NEMA offices here, saying ‘please, can’t we put this message in audio, reduce it to one minute and we’ll put it on the radio!’ And we ask them why, why do you want that message, they say ‘this message has worked.’”

Local government

An issue that was raised by both activists and members of the Climate Change Unit of the government was that although local government is very influential, knowledge about climate change is low. Kizza Wandira, of CAN-U suggests that:

“(Local politicians) know, it is something inherent within them, I think they even know more than the central government. On the ground in the villages they know very well that the seasons are not the same, that the drought is taking longer than it used to, and that food is going down, and that all is not well...but as to whether they call it climate change...”

In much the same way that local communities do not relate the concept of climate change to the changes in rainfall and crop yields that they see around them, local government has not yet been sensitised about climate change. Although the national government has developed a National Adaptation Programme of Action, and at a regional level there is an East African strategy on climate change, at the level of local government there are some serious gaps. As Robert Bakiika, of the Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement, puts it:

“At local government level, most efforts aimed at addressing climate change are still silent...”

Bob Natifu, of the Climate Change Unit of the national government, agrees, and identifies local politicians as a key group yet to be reached by the Unit’s attempts at raising awareness of climate change:

“We have not even gone lower than the local government, we stop at local government level...OK, some NGOs are trying, but the place is big...”

Local politicians are influential, but typically not well informed about climate change. This means that a valuable communication pathway is not being utilised.

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One Ugandan NGO – *Climate Change Concern* – has been focussing on local government leaders in an attempt to address this. Bernard Nassanga, of *Climate Change Concern*, explains:

“We’ve been actively engaging the local government leaders, because we recognise that...the development will take place at the local level, and in order to get to these people who are already impacted we need to engage the local government leaders because they are the people who directly interact with the local population...we conducted a training for local government planners...but that did not cover the whole country, so we want to expand the programme...without bringing them on board, you are likely not to sell your message...first of all it was a sensitisation kind of thing, on the basics of what you need to understand, what the problem is and what needs to be done at the local level, particularly with respect to adaptation, because this is the biggest concern at the local government level...”

Recommendations:

1. Use terms that people already understand in local languages

Although developing translations for technical climate change terms in Uganda’s local languages is important, there are so many local languages that this is likely to be impractical. More promising is to **use local examples of environmental problems to illustrate climate change (e.g. tree cutting, droughts) for which local terms already exist.**

2. Focus on local government structures

Local government leaders are highly influential, but typically have low levels of knowledge about climate change. Deliberately targeting local government structures as outlets for climate change messages, and offering them appropriate skills, information and training will act as a catalyst for climate change communication, **because they have much more direct interaction with ordinary citizens than national politicians.**

3. Use innovative communication methods

Innovative communication methodologies – such as the radio ‘skit’ developed by NEMA – can be very effective ways of reaching audiences who are otherwise difficult to engage. Unusual and entertaining approaches may be much more valuable than an information campaign in the newspapers or on the television.

4.4 A vision for sustainable development

In the polluting nations – the US, Australia, and Europe, for example – one of the major challenges for public engagement on climate change is that people perceive tackling climate change to involve *sacrifice*. Using a bus instead of a private car usually means a journey will be longer; saving energy at home means making an effort to change personal behaviour and habits. It has been a struggle to interest people in climate change because campaigners spend a lot of time telling people what they shouldn’t do – but much less time telling people what they *should* do

instead. If people only ever hear negative messages, they are not motivated to respond, and often ignore them.

In Uganda, there is a similar challenge to overcome. Most environmental messages tell people what they should not do – cutting trees, dumping litter in the streets, or building on wetlands. Most people do not *want* to act in a way that is environmentally destructive, but they often have very limited choices.

Tree cutting for charcoal is an important example. With most of the country lacking piped gas and reliable electricity, charcoal provides crucial cooking fuel for most communities. People also sell charcoal to earn money, and so burning charcoal is literally keeping people alive in Uganda. But the rate of deforestation is depleting wood stocks at an unprecedented pace, and charcoal is a dirty fuel. So burning charcoal is also ensuring that future Ugandan generations will not have access to this vital source of energy, while also contributing to climate change.

In the absence of other suitable sources of energy, it is not reasonable to expect people not to chop down their forests to help feed themselves. This is the brutal interaction between poverty and climate change laid bare. Those without the means of accessing clean energy must use polluting fuels – yet the greenhouse gases created by burning them will impact disproportionately on economically vulnerable countries like Uganda.

The problem for most people is that there is no obvious alternative: there is no vision for sustainable development.

As Ronald Musoke, an environmental journalist, explains:

“It is a very big challenge, this thing called sustainable development, because with more than 80% of our population directly dependent on the environment for their basic survival, telling them about conservation is going to be a challenge if you are not giving them options. If you tell somebody not to cultivate a wetland because it has repercussions for their environment, he will need an alternative, but where is that alternative land for him to cultivate?”

Communicating practical alternative is a major challenge, because for most people, their options are genuinely very limited. But slowly, alternatives are beginning to be developed. Energy-efficient cooking stoves are being distributed more widely, solar panels are now available (although they are expensive) and (more controversially), schemes that pay people to keep trees standing rather than chop them down are starting to emerge. As Susan Nanduddu, of the civil society umbrella organisation DENIVA says:

“People want to contribute positively, but the options are limited. It is important to give them a picture of alternatives. What can they do even with their limited alternatives, to work in a more sustainable manner? If you communicate that, maybe they will start doing something about it.”

So what does sustainable development in Uganda mean? Is the future for Uganda one that looks like industrialised countries, but with giant solar farms and hydro-

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electric dams instead of coal power stations? Or is there a different model for Uganda, one that sticks with agriculture but improves the capacity of it to generate value, by not just selling raw materials but making more processed foods?

Linda Nassanga, from the Mass Communication department at Makerere University, suggests that Uganda cannot simply copy the model of industrialisation that worked for the West:

“The rich countries are rich because they industrialized but they had an advantage in that which we don’t. We have advantages but we don’t use them because of the mentality that agriculture is something low class. We don’t realize the potential that it can have to boost the whole economy. So that is still missing because although we want to industrialize, the industries are not there. And who is going to buy the things?”

This point was echoed by several other *Hidden Heat* participants – Uganda has many strengths, but these lie in agriculture, not in industrial production. But while few would dispute that Uganda is blessed with fertile land and the perfect climate for agriculture, young people in Uganda are increasingly moving away from farming as a ‘traditional’ way of life. As Susan Nanduddu explains:

“Today’s youths tend not to relate so much to tradition...the American Dream is here already. So people want to relate with America, not so much with tradition.”

But several interviewees suggested that the ‘American Dream’ of an urbanised, wealthy population has not yet delivered prosperity in Uganda. Professor Oweyegha Afunaduula, of the National Association of Professional Environmentalists, outlined the problem:

“In our poor countries what is happening is that villages are being transplanted in to the cities... people are coming for higher standards, but you won’t find them there. And these people who have migrated are the ones who populate the streets. Poverty moves around like a snake: during the day it moves into the city centre, during the night it goes back to the periphery where you will find 80% of the people don’t have latrines, 80% of the people don’t have clean water, 80% of people are children are not attending school”

People clearly have the right to develop their livelihoods from subsistence farming and to access standards of living that many other nations enjoy. But Professor Afunaduula’s argument is that a higher standard of living will not be achieved by the rural poor flocking to the cities. So what form will development take – should farming be abandoned altogether as a ‘low status’ occupation, or should the agricultural sector drive development in Uganda? Can Uganda’s fertile lands feed the rest of Africa?

These are big questions, but it is critical that they are not simply left for policymakers to consider. Ownership over Uganda’s future and sustainable development is something that every citizen should have a stake in. One new initiative – run by the National Association of Professional Environmentalists – is an ambitious attempt at involving citizens in environmental and sustainability issues. Named

‘Sustainability Schools’³² the programme is essentially a structured community empowerment scheme, aimed at promoting sustainable values and ethics through increasing public participation in decision making on issues like oil governance, water management and forest preservation.

The focus is as much on building social cohesion among communities, and ‘critical thinking’ as on specific sustainability issues. The logic of the Sustainability School is that only when a group of people know how to work together to hold government or industry to account, will any kind of progress on sustainability issues be achieved. In a sense, sustainable development issues are a side effect of the main focus of the programme, which is on building social capital. Initiatives like Sustainability Schools are crucial not just for promoting sustainability issues, but for providing a rare space for citizenship to flourish.

Recommendation:

1. Communicate a clear and positive vision for sustainable development

A resilient environment is Uganda’s best defence against climate change – but people are destroying it because they do not have any alternative. **Communicating a clear and positive vision of sustainable development is a critical task for climate change communicators.** In practical terms, implementing the policies that will produce sustainable development in Uganda is the role of the government. But communicating a vision for sustainable development – giving people an alternative to believe in – is an urgent task for climate change communicators. This means thinking beyond the facts and figures of climate change, and predictions about droughts and flooding. Without something better to believe in – and access to practical alternatives – people will continue cutting trees, building on wetlands and destroying the Ugandan natural environment.

4.5 Carbon trading: a potential benefit of climate change?

There is no doubt that the overall picture of climate change is bleak: for Uganda, a range of serious impacts are expected if global levels of greenhouse gases are not brought under control. But is there anything at all about climate change that might be seen as a ‘good thing’ for Uganda, or the East African region?

Many *Hidden Heat* participants were not able to identify any benefits of a changing climate in Uganda. As Ronald Musoke, a freelance environmental journalist put it:

“Maybe in the future, especially if we get serious and get on top of the issue and give it the attention it deserves, there may be opportunities that present themselves... (But) at the moment, I don’t see any light at the end of the tunnel as far as climate change is concerned.”

One possible way in which ordinary Ugandans *may* be able to benefit from climate

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<http://www.nape.or.ug/>

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change is through ‘carbon trading’. The logic of carbon trading is simple. Things that absorb carbon (like trees) or prevent it from being released into the atmosphere (like energy-efficient cooking stoves) can be assigned a carbon value. By putting a price on carbon, it can be traded on a market. And because nature doesn’t care where or how carbon is reduced, the market will deliver carbon cuts in the cheapest and most effective way. Plus, because carbon reductions are typically cheapest in developing countries, carbon trading offers a method of transferring wealth, and of encouraging sustainable development.

On the surface, it sounds like a promising method of tackling climate change whilst transferring wealth to developing countries like Uganda. But carbon trading was viewed with certain amount of scepticism by several *Hidden Heat* participants, because there are serious concerns about who will be the real beneficiaries of carbon trading. As Robert Bakiika, of the Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement says, there is a major risk in locking critical community resources like trees up in complex financing mechanisms:

“There is a very, very big danger in involving most of our developing countries in financial mechanisms because financial mechanisms are so tricky. And our counterparts the developed countries have designed the system. They have designed the system and we are just players in a system.”

Sarah Kisolo, from the NGO RUDMEC which promotes the understanding of sustainable development issues, sees it this way:

“There’s a lot of unfairness with carbon trading. Because you can’t say ‘let’s continue polluting without reducing the carbon and then you in Africa plant trees to protect us’...I mean that’s not fair.”

Other interviewees were more positive about the potential benefits of carbon trading – but only if a lot of work is put in to ensure that carbon trading systems work for Ugandans rather than financial speculators in Europe. As Bill Farmer, Chairman of the *Uganda Carbon Bureau*, put it:

“There is a general lack of knowledge about the carbon markets, and little experience in negotiating carbon sales contracts, means that there is a need to support local project developers to avoid being exploited in poor sales deals... (carbon trading headquarters) are in London, they are trying to feed these cheap low hanging African fruit carbon credits, and there are groups like us saying ‘no, that’s outrageous’. Those credits have a market value, and they belong to the people here”

One particular carbon trading scheme that has been gathering an increasing amount of momentum in the UNFCCC negotiations is REDD – a mechanism for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. REDD is supposed to allow developing countries with critical resources like rainforests (which absorb carbon, and are known as ‘carbon-sinks’) to receive payment from polluting nations in order to keep those forests intact, or to embark on programmes of tree planting to help absorb some of the world’s excess carbon.

The idea is that if they are valued appropriately, trees are worth more alive than they are dead. In theory, there are real, tangible benefits to be had from the ‘carbon-credits’ locked up in Uganda’s trees, as well as huge potential for increasing revenue by planting more. But a big concern is that REDD is a very knowledge-intensive field – with most of the technical expertise located far away from the communities who will be directly impacted by it. The danger is that government officials, lacking the technical capacity to identify risks in REDD programmes, will promote them to rural communities, and rural communities, eager to reap the financial reward from selling their carbon-credits, will sign away their carbon rights.

One important resource in helping ensure that REDD benefits not only the carbon-traders, but also the communities who depend on the forests, is a new initiative called REDD.net – an international network that seeks to champion the rights of the global south in the REDD debate.³³ Top of the REDD.net list of priorities is increasing the level of participation of community and civil society organisations from countries like Uganda in the policy discussions about REDD. Without a seat at the negotiating table, these critical stakeholders have no voice.

Opinion is divided about whether carbon trading is a potential benefit of climate change for Uganda, or a ‘false solution’. But the reality is that carbon trading is already here – and this means that there are important questions about how carbon markets function and who they benefit. While awareness of climate change might be growing, there are big information gaps when it comes to carbon trading, carbon markets, and schemes like REDD. The danger if these gaps are not closed is that one of the few potentially positive outcomes for Uganda from climate change will be dominated by powerful elites rather than distributed to the ordinary people.

Recommendation:

1. Demystify carbon trading

If carbon trading is to have any benefit to ordinary Ugandans, then it is critical that more people know about it. **Climate change communicators should start explaining the basic aspects of carbon trading to communities who could benefit from it.** This means that the language and jargon around carbon trading needs to be demystified, and the basic idea – that people can make money from making pro-environmental choices – explained and disseminated widely.

4.6 Indigenous knowledge: a barrier or a tool for communication?

Uganda is a deeply spiritual country. Almost everyone follows one of the formal religions – with about 90% of Ugandans identifying themselves as Christian. The formal religions are supplemented by older spiritual beliefs, and large numbers of people visit ‘witchdoctors’ and practitioners of herbal remedies. Many Ugandans prefer ‘alternative’ medicines to Western drugs and treatments (which are often not available or affordable). Science takes its place alongside indigenous knowledge as a method of understanding the world. So what does this mean for climate change communication?

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In one sense, indigenous knowledge in rural Uganda – built up over centuries of living in harmony with the natural environment, and often rooted in superstition and spirituality – is an ancient form of environmentalism. Traditional Ugandan cultural institutions that existed long before the Christian missionaries came to Africa treated the natural environment with a great deal of respect³⁴.

Ben Twinomugisha, a climate change activist who has previously worked for Oxfam GB, suggested that it is not necessarily a problem if people apply non-scientific explanations to climate change.

“They might not know that it is caused by industrialisation, because most people have not seen industries in their areas. So they say ‘we cut trees, and God is telling us not to destroy trees around us, so now that’s why we are suffering’. Indigenous knowledge comes from the history of the people from generation to generation. When I look at your societies, most people don’t have a history. Here, our communities have been together for centuries, so there is an oral tradition from one generation to the next. I can tell you a story of the last 10,000 years....it shapes my mind.”

That kind of historical view on the changes that are taking place in Uganda today is an aid, not a barrier, to communicating climate change in Uganda. People know their natural history, and can recall stories about climatic events. They understand that the environment must be cared for and respected if it is to serve its purpose for humans.

However, the science journalist Esther Nakkazi argues that while traditional beliefs and non-scientific understandings of climate should be treated with respect, there is danger in backing away from formal science altogether:

“Politicians come out and say ‘plant trees so there is no climate change’...the illiterate man at that level will take it that way. But I think there is a need for them to understand beyond planting trees. Because even if you are very illiterate, you get to a level where you want to know more. And it is upon us as people who know what the science is, that its not just about planting trees. I don’t believe in just saying ‘plant trees’ or ‘the rain is not coming’. It is not like we should treat them as if they will not understand it.”

One concern expressed by several *Hidden Heat* participants was that the ancient cultural institutions in Uganda that represent the nation’s environmental consciousness are being steadily eroded by the inevitable march towards industrialisation. Oweyegha Afunaduula, of the National Association of Professional Environmentalists, said:

“You cannot use just modern science, you know there’s what they call civic science which takes cultural and spiritual knowledge into account. There’s what we call spiritual ecology, there’s what we call cultural ecology. These ecologies are environmentally based and they are the basis for long term survival for the people, within their environment they know, for the survival of the environment itself”

34 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201101210135.html>

However, while spiritual ecology is important, it does not – on its own – provide a solid basis for tackling climate change. Susan Nanduddu, of DENIVA, used an interesting example to illustrate some of the contradictions of relying on traditional, spiritual belief systems as the basis for responding to climate change:

“Recently we looked at a very huge tree, which has been preserved, likely because of an understanding that the community has, the belief that there are Gods around it. Because of that, the tree has survived up to now. But unfortunately it is the only one...because it is a special one...all the others are cut down.”

The overall message from *Hidden Heat* participants was that both formal, scientific explanations and traditional, spiritual explanations are important in promoting responses to climate change. This is a conclusion that echoes the findings in the *Uganda Talks Climate* report, which suggested that climate change communicators should take advantage of traditional knowledge where it can enhance understanding (e.g. the natural tendency to respect the environment), but also make efforts to build an understanding of climate change based on its physical causes.

Rejecting formal science would be dangerous, but equally, importing ‘foreign’ knowledge without respecting local ways of knowing is problematic. The challenge for communicators is to strike a balance between accuracy and effectiveness. In the long term there is no benefit in misleading people about the causes of climate change, but there is also no need to expect ordinary citizens to develop a detailed technical understanding of climate change in order to respond to it.

Professor Afunaduula’s argument is that ‘civic science’ is as important as formal science in Uganda. Failing to make use of the centuries of accumulated knowledge that Ugandans have built up would be a mistake. Environmental resilience is Ugandan farmers’ strongest defence against climate change, and traditional ways of knowing are very much part of this resilience.

Climate change is not about predominantly about science in Uganda – it is about environmental stewardship. Whether that stewardship is motivated by rationalism or superstition, is not the most important thing. It is important to promote the general principle that today’s actions have environmental consequences in the future. If traditional and indigenous knowledge can be used to further this aim, then it is of great value in communicating climate change.

Recommendation

1. Build on indigenous knowledge & practices

Environmental resilience is Ugandan farmers’ strongest defence against climate change, and traditional ways of knowing are very much part of this resilience. **Climate change communicators must strike a balance between utilising the power of indigenous beliefs, and integrating scientific knowledge.** But there is no value in misleading people about the causes of climate change.

Forums between local communities and individuals with scientific or other climate-related science expertise would allow dialogue between these two groups to

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develop – the Sustainability School scheme run by the National Association of Professional Environmentalists is already exploring this idea, but much more could be done.

4.7 Politicising climate change

In Uganda the average carbon footprint is less than 1 tonne of CO₂ per year. In the US it is 20 tonnes. The *Uganda Talks Climate* research showed that ordinary Ugandans are quick to report that the climate has changed – that the rains are unpredictable, the droughts are longer, and the temperatures are hotter. It is not politically controversial. In the US, a growing number of people think that climate change is a gigantic conspiracy aimed at curtailing their consumption – it is a political hot potato.

Given these stark differences in who is causing – and who is taking responsibility for – climate change, then it would not be surprising to find that Ugandans were angry with the polluting nations for creating (and then denying responsibility for) a problem that Ugandans are now dealing with. But in fact, anger towards the industrialised countries is nowhere to be seen.

Why aren't people angry about the deep injustice of climate change? Part of the answer is that people do not fully understand the causes of climate change. David Musiime, from the *Uganda Talks Climate* team, said:

“People don't know about what's happening outside the country mostly, so they feel that they are responsible for what is happening because they have cut down their trees to survive”

Francis Mugerwa, an environmental journalist, confirmed that the Ugandan media do not tend to emphasise the international political angle on climate change:

“I've not directly reported on the effects from the Western world...there is a tendency to associate climate change to the geographical setting, that you know, we are suffering this because our neighbouring forests have been cut down...people tend to tie the climate change to the local factors.”

Instead of expressing anger towards the polluting nations, the national conversation in Uganda focuses on the ways in which Ugandans can make their environment as resilient as possible to the changes that are taking place. The stark reality is that Uganda has done little to cause climate change – but it will be forced to adapt to its effects.

It is certainly difficult to find many Ugandans who dispute that climate change is real (in the way that so many people do in the US and other industrialised nations). According to James Tumusiime, the Editor of the bi-weekly national newspaper *The Observer*, the debate in Uganda has not really reached an intellectual level of trying to dissect what climate change means. People are concerned with much more immediate concerns – like ensuring that their families are housed and fed. Of course, climate change will impact on precisely these day-to-day concerns – but its effects happen slowly.

But some *Hidden Heat* participants were concerned that a critical element of the climate change debate is missing in Uganda. Sarah Kissolo, of RUDMEC, argued that climate change *should* be more politicised, because if it is not, then people will never fully understand how important it is:

“People are not knowledgeable. They are not aware...If climate change was politicised, then it would generate a debate....then they would demonstrate, they would shout, and people can feel it.”

Susan Nanduddu, Programme Assistant for Climate Change with the civil society umbrella organisation DENIVA, suggested that powerful political forces are shaping the way that Uganda is able to respond to climate change – but these forces are invisible to the ordinary citizen, as they take place behind the closed doors of the UNFCCC climate change negotiations:

“The international community has an obligation to respond surely, to (financially) support these communities...(But) that ends up being a very sensitive issue. For example, the United States doesn't even want to hear that information. They just don't want to... The moment those around the table, the negotiating tables, turn around and they speak as donors, not as UNFCCC parties, then the language changes, unfortunately...”

Phillipa Kamyoka, also with DENIVA, was even more direct:

“It's the duty of the polluters to pay, to offset...because in economics, there is something called the 'polluter pays' principle... (But) we cannot negotiate...you know it is like for the negotiations on trade. EU's funding is assisting African leaders. So, I am being paid by EU. And they are sponsoring me. I go there...am I going to be at the same level as the other European, or other bigger nations? I am going there as a...as a beggar. So I think the power of nations plays a very big role...the problem of the positions of our political leaders, the problem of power relations. Whoever is funding you has the power to influence your decision...”

These fundamental restraints on the capacity of the Ugandan government to respond to climate change are not widely known in Uganda. Although many Ugandans have embraced the message of planting trees to absorb carbon dioxide, of switching to more drought-resilient crops, and of adapting to unpredictable rains, most have not grasped the injustice of climate change. Gerald Tenywa, environmental reporter for the *New Vision* newspaper suggested an explanation for this:

“There has been a lot of injustice, even beyond climate change, you find that most of the global resources have been consumed by people in the West, so climate change is one of the so many injustices they have suffered, and maybe they are powerless, they don't have enough power within their hands to say things should be this way or that way.”

Tenywa's perspective is a regrettable but realistic assessment of the political reality in Uganda – there are many serious problems facing the country, and climate change must compete for the public's political attention with many other critical issues (both national and international in nature). So perhaps it is not realistic to

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expect the average citizen to be politically engaged with climate change. But other *Hidden Heat* participants argued that exposing people to the stark political injustice of climate change might actually be counterproductive. Bernard Nassanga, of the NGO *Climate Change Concern*, commented:

“They might actually adopt the position that its not our problem, we should leave it to those people to sort out the mess. But then of course if they are sensitised they should also understand that although they didn’t cause the problem, the impacts, they are going to be impacted heavy, and that will not be stopped. So, it’s complex...”

The challenge for climate change communicators is to find the right combination of messages – that are politically realistic but not disempowering, that encourage Ugandans to take responsibility for their environmental impact, but without creating the impression that Uganda has caused climate change. In polluting countries, climate change communicators have been faced with a similar dilemma – research has shown that if you try to frighten people by presenting them with the ‘scary reality’ of future climate change, they may simply refuse to acknowledge it³⁵. More effective messages present solutions, as well as identifying problems – and the same is likely to be true in Uganda. Climate change communicators must find a way to maximise responsibility for personal action without making people feel helpless in the face of an enormous problem.

Recommendations:

1. Raise awareness of the international causes of climate change

At the moment, there is very low awareness in Uganda of the political injustice of climate change – many people perceive climate change to be a local issue. **Climate change communicators should aim to increase awareness of the fact that industrialised countries are responsible for causing climate change.** If this awareness does not increase, then there will never be any public pressure from within Uganda for international financing and technology transfer. Civic awareness can be created through media reports on the role of the industrialised nations in causing climate change. **However, communicators must take great care to ensure that raising this awareness does not encourage people to avoid taking responsibility for adapting to climate change.** Uganda may not have caused climate change, but it will face its effects.

2. Make climate change a national governance issue

Local and national leaders must be made accountable for taking action on climate change – it is not something that can be tackled without co-ordinated government programmes. A national media “Name and Shame” campaign could be initiated for failed government commitments or donors that do not support the needs and demands of developing countries in international climate summits.

³⁵ Hoog, N., Stroebe, W., & de Wit, J. B. F. (2005). The impact of Fear Appeals on processing and acceptance of action recommendations. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 31, 24–33.

Conclusions

Climate change is already a reality in Uganda – the consequences of not taking co-ordinated and coherent action will be severe. The research in this report has identified a number of important areas where inadequate climate change communication is acting as a barrier to successfully responding to climate change in Uganda.

There is a major lack of co-ordination in the communication of climate change information in Uganda. Although several governmental and non-governmental bodies are potentially in a position to act as a central hub for climate change information and engagement, currently they are poorly funded and have a low public profile. **Perhaps the most urgent priority for effective communication of climate change in Uganda is the development of a central co-ordinating body that can engage with all sectors of society**

The media is not fully engaged in covering climate change – certainly not to the extent warranted by the seriousness of the threat. **Training programmes to engage both journalists and editors are essential, but civil society organisations must also improve the way they engage with the media, packaging information in a clear and simple way and actively attracting the media’s attention.**

Local languages lack terms for many key concepts involved in climate change –including ‘climate change’ itself. **Communicators should attempt to explain climate change using terms that already exist, using graphic example of local environmental problems and innovative communication methods (e.g. dramatisation) to get the message across.**

At a national and international level, politicians are not being held to account for taking action on climate change – but this is partly because there is such little awareness of the international causes of climate change. **Raising awareness about the role of industrialised nations in causing climate change, and pressuring national politicians to make greater progress at international negotiations is critical.**

At the local level, politicians tend to be poorly informed about climate change, yet local government structures represent a crucial opportunity for reaching large numbers of ordinary citizens. **Sensitisation campaigns should focus on local politicians as a key constituency that can catalyse action on climate change.**

Indigenous knowledge about land management and the environment is incredibly valuable when trying to engage people on climate change – but it must be supplemented with scientific information about the causes and consequences of climate change. Climate change represents a significant challenge to indigenous ways of understanding the weather and farming – and so **people must be supported with additional knowledge and information wherever possible,**

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including the improved dissemination of meteorological information through local radio stations.

National politicians must develop a model of sustainable development that provides a higher standard of living for Ugandan citizens, but does not compromise the environment for future generations. This is a major challenge, but one in which as many different sectors of society as possible should be given a voice in. What does a sustainable Uganda look like? **Articulating a positive vision of sustainable development for Uganda will provide a major tool in effectively communicating the message of climate change – what is the alternative?**

Finally, awareness must be raised about the emerging carbon trading sector. There is the potential for carbon trading to deliver much-needed income to ordinary Ugandan citizens, but there are also major risks. **An honest and open dialogue about the risks and benefits of carbon trading for Uganda is an essential first step to accessing the financial advantages that carbon trading may bring.**

The *Hidden Heat* research makes clear that there is a pressing need for climate change to be communicated more effectively in Uganda; for more high-quality information to be made available; for more opportunities for citizen and media engagement with this critical issue, and for more coherent and co-ordinated political action at the local and national level. We hope that the findings in this report will help to achieve these aims.

Appendix – List of interview participants

Professor Oweyegha Afunaduula – Sustainability School Manager, National Association of Professional Environmentalists

Allan Alana – Research Officer, BBC World Service Trust

Lawrence Aribo - Senior Programme Officer, Climate Change Unit, Ministry of Water and Environment

Robert Bakiika – Deputy Director, Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement (Bwaise Facility)

Devs Bamanya - Head of Seasonal Forecasting, Meteorological Unit

Harriet Bibangambah – Research Officer, Greenwatch

Emma Casson – Carbon Adviser, Uganda Carbon Bureau

Bill Farmer – Chairman, Uganda Carbon Bureau

Deo Habimana – News Editor, UBC TV

Allan Kalangi – Project Officer, National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)

Daniel Kalinaki – Managing Editor, Daily Monitor

Phillipa Kamyoka - DENIVA (Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations)

Sarah Kisolo – Rural Development Media & Communication (RUDMEC)

Stuart Leckie – Project Manager, Uganda Carbon Bureau

Joseph Miti – Science and Environment Writer, Daily Monitor

Mugambwa Everest Kizito – Information, Education & Communication Officer, National Environment Management Authority

Francis Mugerwa – Journalist

David Musiime – Research Officer, BBC World Service Trust

Ronald Musoke – Environmental Journalist

Catherine Mwesigwa Kizza – Deputy Editor, New Vision

Esther Nakazzi – Science Journalist, The East African

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Bernard Namanya – Executive Director, Climate Change Concern

Susan Nanduddu – Programme Assistant, Climate Change, DENIVA
(Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations)

Dr. Nassanga Goretti Linda – Associate Professor, Department of Mass
Communication, Makerere University

Bob Natifu - Communications Officer, Climate Change Unit, Ministry of Water and
Environment

Gerald Tenywa – Environmental Journalist, New Vision

James Tumusiime – Managing Editor, Observer

Ben Twinomugisha – Independent Climate Change activist

Kizza Wandira – Advocacy Officer, Climate Action Network Uganda (CAN-U)

Joshua Zake – Senior Programme Officer, Environment & Natural Resources,
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