

# Climate Talk Talk; Rethinking Our Future

**act:onaid**

Global Unification  
The Gambia



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## Project Completion Report

# CLIMATE CHANGE RADIO ADVOCACY; RETHINKING OUR FUTURE

Submitted By



To

**act:onaid**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Global Unification The Gambia (GU) is a youth-led, community-based, research and development organisation. We work with young people and local communities in the Gambia, supporting their efforts to move out of poverty, access quality health care services and adapt to the impact of climate change.

Over the past 3 years we have redirected our efforts towards creating awareness on environmental protection and climate change solution. We developed a five year strategy (2009-2013) that is dedicated to climate change actions and biodiversity conservation. From 2006 to date, we continue to design and implement pro-poor projects that are community-driven with direct impact on local communities themselves. Being a youth-led organisation, we also provide career counselling , non-formal and informal education to youth on issues affecting them.

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<b>Project Fact Sheet</b>			
<b>Project Title:</b>	Climate Change Radio Advocacy; Rethinking Our Future	<b>Implemented by:</b>	Global Unification The Gambia
<b>Donor</b>	Actionaid The Gambia	<b>Period Covered:</b>	August 2010 to August 2011
<b>Project Category</b>	Climate Change education	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	General public
<b>Project manager</b>	Ebrima S. Dem	<b>Project officers</b>	Madiba Sillah, Jalika keita and Alieu Jallow

## Executive summary

The Gambia is one of the many countries where climate change education is a new concept. Despite the fact climate change is posing a major threat to the livelihood security of most local communities, majority of Gambians have little or no understanding about how to adapt or mitigate this problem. Thus, the *climate talk, a radio advocacy program* was intended to raise awareness, promote public participation and access to information on climate change issues. The project, carried on the theme *rethinking the future* was successfully implemented. It helped paved the way for concrete debate on climate issues and its impact in the country.

Within a period of 12 months, the project was able to carry out 22 panel discussions involving stakeholders from policy level, NGOs to local communities. We also carried interviews for 200 people including local farmers, fishermen, taxi drivers, university students and lecturers, enabling them to share their knowledge, understanding or in some cases their coping mechanism of the effect of climate change. The project paid a particular emphasis on local communities' adaptation efforts and knowledge on climate change adaptation, which for far too long was under-utilised or not considered in climate change policy formulation at the national level.

The project also carried 8 quiz and 4 debates competition for school children. We received 614 phone-calls. 75% of which were from women, many whom small scales farmers.

The project though successfully implemented has had some constrains and challenges. This however, did not alter the original project plan. Key challenges we faced was getting right the people to come and speak on air, low level of knowledge on climate change issues for some of the project coordinating team members and difficulty of local communities to understand the scientific terminologies of climate change etc.

## Background Overview

The Gambia being a country located in the Sahel, a region characterised by recurrent droughts, loss of vegetative cover and rapid environmental degradation the country has high risk to climate change effects. In fact, the country in the past few years had experienced serious flood, rise in sea level and lost of vegetation. The country also has one of the highest population densities in Sub-Saharan Africa with an annual growth rate of 4.2%.

This is a country where majority of its population live in the rural areas and agriculture represents the major employer. Between 75% - 85% of the population are engaged in subsistence and cash crops farming. This sector is, perhaps more than any other affected most by climate change. Recently, the Gambia has suffered from a shift in extreme weather patterns, with strong spatiotemporal variability in its precipitation schedule of wet and dry seasons. Inappropriate waste disposal and uncontrolled bush fires are some of the hazards that affect the country's environmental quality and productivity.

At this trend it is estimated that, by 2025, climate change will cause a considerable decrease in the production of groundnut, rice and other agricultural produce. These effects will exacerbate the problems of poverty and will lead to the decrease of available food resources and also the vulnerability of soils.

Despite the growing problems cause by climate change mainly on poor communities, climate change education programs in country does not generally reach down to the grass root. As result, local people, who are both victims and contributing factors, are often unaware how to reduce their vulnerability or adapt to the effects of the changing climate.

*The project; **Climate Change Radio Advocacy; Rethinking our future***, therefore, was designed to create awareness among the general populace and policy makers themselves on climate change effects in the country. The project highlighted barriers to adaptation and proposed strategies for sustain solution. The project, after one year of active advocacy and education has help to reduce the information gap between policy makers and general public as well as enhancing more public participation and engagement in climate change discourse in the country.

## Project Logical Framework

<b>Objective I</b>	To raise awareness, enhance public participation and access to information on climate change issues
<b>Activities</b>	<p>1.1: Panel discussion</p> <p>We search for panellists from diverse expertise on environment; climate change and disaster risk reduction and invite them to come to the radio to share their knowledge. They were selected based on gender balance, or government departments, NGOs, embassies and bilateral or multilateral organisations. Community leaders, faith leaders and local farmers were also invited. The panellists were encouraged as best as possible to speak in local languages to ensure better communication.</p> <p>1.2: Phone calls</p> <p>During the radio program, members of the public were encouraged to call-in and ask questions, make recommendations or share their experience.</p> <p>1.3: Public interviews</p> <p>The coordinating team visited local communities and discussed with them about climate change adaptation issues. Most of the local communities were happy to share their experience. Our staff visited Brikama, kartong, kembuje, brufut, Gunjur to name just a few. They also interviewed university students, lecturers, taxi drivers, local market women, factory owners, government officials and NGOs leaders to share their understanding and knowledge with the general public.</p>
<b>Outcome</b>	Improved the level of public awareness and public participation on climate change issues in the country.
<b>Achievements</b>	<p>a. We carried out 22 panel discussions with a total of 59 panellists from diverse fields of experience; 14 invitees were from government departments, notably Agriculture, water resources, forestry, disaster management, 12 from Non-Governmental Organisations, (NGOs), 7 from bilateral organisations, 4 from community leaders, 4 from media houses, 6 from the university of the Gambia, 8 from youth leaders and 4 from women groups.</p> <p>b. We also received 614 phone calls. 75 % of which were women, mainly small scale farmers at the villages. Through these calls, the public were able to ask questions, make suggestion or voice out their experiences and the challenges of the change climate they faces.</p> <p>c. Overall, we were able interviewed 200 people. These include university students and lecturer, taxi drivers, market women, farmers and fishermen.</p>

	<p>d. The project help provoked some students at the university to take up research projects on climate change for their thesis. Taxi drivers, become more aware about the need to reduce emission and pollution cause by their cars. The Gambia licencing department include pollution level testing as part of criteria for renewing and getting car licence.</p>
<b>Objective II</b>	To closely engage the media in the dissemination of information regarding climate change, climate change impact and adaptation strategies.
<b>Activities</b>	<p>2.1 Printed Education leaflets and posters</p> <p>We printed climate education leaflets and posters that were distributed to some media houses. These leaflets were also given to school that are participating in our Green School Initiatives project</p> <p>2.3. Invitation of media personal to the radio</p> <p>We invited some journalists to the radio to also share their knowledge on climate change education. During the program, we tried as best as possible to encourage journalists to call and contribute in the discussion.</p>
<b>Outcome</b>	Improve understand of local journalists on climate change issues, its effects on local communities.
<b>Achievements</b>	a. 4 journalists were invited to the radio to share understanding of climate change information and the role of the media.
<b>Objective III</b>	To engage young people on climate change actions, enabling them to share their ideas and learn new skills on sustainable management of environmental resources.
<b>Activities</b>	<p>3.1 Poster making and distribution</p> <p>Some of the students participating in our project made posters on climate change and environmental protection. These were distributed to some schools. We also awarded consolation prizes to the students that submitted their work.</p> <p>3.2: Quiz and Debates Competition</p> <p>School children were invited to participate in debates and quiz on environmental issues. The debates were done at the GU office, recorded and then aired at the radio. Some of the quiz was done at the radio station.</p>



	<p>3.3: Drama and Theatre</p> <p>The children developed a play on environmental protection and climate change at the GU 2010 summer school. This drama was aired at the radio during interlude and music break.</p>
<b>Outcome</b>	Improved in children's understanding and interest on climate change and environmental protection issues.
<b>Achievements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 100 posters were printed and distributed to schools and some media houses.</li> <li>b. A total of 8 quiz competitions were carried out for school children.</li> <li>c. The radio program help increased the number of participants to this year GU summer Academy.</li> <li>d. Many schools in greater Banjul now have vibrant Eco clubs, many of which were inspired by the radio program.</li> </ul>

### Coordination

The project had a coordinating team who were responsible for moderating the radio program, scouting for speakers, visiting communities for the interview etc. The team was headed by Jaliika keita and Alieu Jallow and also involved number of other field volunteers.

### Constrains

The Climate change radio advocacy project ( Climate Talk; Rethinking the Future) was successfully implimented without any changes in original plan. However we had encountered some challanges.

1. Some of the people ( mainly local farmers) were afraid or not willing to talk to us. Many of them were reluctant to voice out their problems.
2. Many of our invitees could not show up. They were either too busy, not inform in advance or simply do not want to talk on air.
3. Climate change information about The Gambia was not readily available: In many cases, we could not get information or data about climate change we wanted, work done in pasts, or impact assessment reports for the Gambia. We had to relay, in some cases, on work done in neighbouring countries or local people stories.
4. Some of the invitees could not express certain climate change terms in local languages.

5. The radio station did not have enough material such as recorders and laptops..Lack of these equipment slowed down the process especially the public interview, were we needed to go out to meet the people in their homes and farms.
6. Public participation and interest in the program was low during the first few months of the start of the program. This probably was because climate change education is still a new concept to them or partly because, the language of communication, then at the radio was in english.
7. The level of knoweldge on climate change issues and the operation of radio equipment by our moderators themselfe was low. Many of them had not strong understanding of the issues that needed to be discuss or how to use the radio equipment properly.

### **Overall achievements**

The main aim of the project was to raise awareness on climate change issues and to provoke public participation in climate change debate in the country. The project was not only able to realised this but also help bridge the information gap between policy makers and local communities. The general public now has a clearer understanding of climate change unlike before, where it was seen as too difficult and too scientific. With our efforts, people have understood that climate change is an everyday issue, and that everybody (including communities themselves) can bring about solution.

### **Good Practices and lesson Learnt**

In the course of the project, we had learnt good practices that helped us better carry out the project. For instance was the shift from speaking English to local languages in at the radio. This proved efficient and enhanced more public participation since most people in the Gambia don't speak English.

We also provided day training for the project coordinating team to improve their knowledge on the climate change. They were also trained on how to use the radio equipment by DJ. Lipsy. This helped improve their performance as they we will able to ask relevant question to the panellists and use the radio equipment properly.

The moderators of the radio program were encouraged to make research on the climate change issues. They selected number of climate change terms and find out there correct or near correct meaning in local languages. This helps the general public to understand many of the scientific concepts of climate change in their local languages.

We provided questionairs in advance to all invited speakers. In this way, they had the questions to be asked and prepared well before coming to the radio. This motivated some of them to turn up to our invitation since they were sure what was to be ask to them.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Though the project was successfully carried out, the problem associated with climate in the country is not over. More education, sensitisation and sharing information are required to bring about behavioural change. Thus, we want to recommend the continuation of the project at least for another year. We are also recommending doing the program at GRTS TV or other radio stations that have wider coverage.