

# Times are changing: using the power of the media to increase accountability and resilience in Tanzania

The radio magazine and discussion programme *Nyakati Zinabadilika* (Times are Changing) aimed to empower individuals and communities to adapt to changing weather patterns. Research suggests that the programme helped people to address climate-related issues in three main ways. First, it improved skills, confidence and motivation. Second, it encouraged collective action. Third, it increased their awareness of the role of key stakeholders such as governments, the private sector and civil society organisations.

## The project

BBC Media Action partnered with three local radio stations in the Dodoma and Morogoro regions to produce the weekly magazine and discussion programme *Nyakati Zinabadilika* (Times are Changing). In addition, BBC Media Action partnered with twelve civil society organisations that facilitated 25 listening groups. *Haba na Haba* (Little by Little), BBC Media Action's nationally broadcast governance

discussion programme, also produced seven episodes with a focus on resilience issues. Together these initiatives formed the Radio for Resilience project, which aimed to empower individuals and communities to improve their resilience to changing weather, including taking part in critical conversations that contribute to local government accountability.

## Research approach

The impact of the project was assessed using a mixed methods approach; this included a quantitative survey of 2,285 respondents, representative of the adult population in Dodoma and Morogoro. Qualitative methods included focus group discussions with audiences, in-depth interviews with local leaders and radio station trainees, feedback forms from listening groups, and audience feedback via Facebook and SMS.

“Times are really changing. The people in Ulanga are also changing: as a result of this programme even those who were not working have now started to work.”

SMS sent to Ulanga FM

## Key findings

- The programmes reached 31% of the population aged 15 and above in Dodoma and Morogoro.

- 70% of listeners reported increased knowledge of how to address climate-related resilience issues as a result of the programme.
- 86% agreed that the programme had **inspired** them by showing them how others were coping in similar situations
- Almost a third (31%) of radio audiences report having **adopted a new practice** as a result of the programme, such as applying a new farming technique or learning a new skill. This also included **demanding better governance** from local leaders.
- Of those who reported taking action, 54% said that they had either established or joined a community group as a result of listening to the programme. Listening groups provided several examples of **collective change**: a group of pastoralists from Kilosa who had depended solely on livestock, for example, successfully cultivated cassava and sweet potatoes which provided them with security in times of drought.
- Audiences valued receiving expert and trusted information combined with the testimonials of people “like them” who had tried some of the new practices.
- 60% of audience members reported that the programmes played a role in holding government to account, although they were not always satisfied with the answers that some government officials provided in the programmes.

## Project context

Across Tanzania there is widespread acknowledgement that weather patterns have changed over the last few decades. Formative research showed that people had noticed changes in the weather and highlighted that they were already feeling the impact of such changes. However, both local knowledge of how to adapt and people’s ability to do so are limited.

## Implications and impact

The ways in which the Radio for Resilience project successfully encouraged people to change their behaviour can provide useful lessons for future programming. This can be summarised as: improving peoples’ knowledge through practical and relevant information; the use of “role models” combined with expert advice; and connecting audiences to stakeholders through appearing on discussion programmes that increased their understanding of the topic and how to access resources.

There is scope for future programming to build on the project’s success to date and to address the barriers highlighted in the research. For instance, the project was successful in reaching women and helped to increase their resilience. However, since women face greater obstacles, it is more difficult for them to take the action outlined in the programmes. There is, therefore, potential for shaping the content to address some of these obstacles, including attitudes towards women and the social norms that prevent them taking action.

The research also highlights that lack of access to markets, loans, financial capital and infrastructure remain key barriers to improving resilience across audiences. There is scope for programming that puts more emphasis on addressing these structural barriers.

“[This programme] has changed me in such a way that I decided to grow crops that I never imagined before could be grown in Ulanga – and I succeeded.”

Man, Morogoro

For more information about our research, please see [www.bbcmmediaaction.org](http://www.bbcmmediaaction.org)

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