Uganda Talks Climate

The public understanding of climate change

www.africatalksclimate.com
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The BBC World Service Trust (BBC WST) is grateful to the British Council Uganda for their support throughout this project, particularly Anne Babina, Julian Baker and Lilian Nyachung. Thanks also go to Kit Vaughan and Suzanne Moser, and our Uganda advisory group – Savio Carvalho, Nick Hegworth, Richard Kibwana, Aker Muhwezi and Christine Nantongo – for their guidance prior to fieldwork and their feedback on reporting. Fieldwork was conducted by Synovate and the BBC WST. Many thanks to Jeff Kaguna, Leslie Kasapla, Pamela Kenyangi, Shruti Malhotra, Elizabeth Namaganda, Mary Ojile and Ezekiel Olaya. Analysis and reporting was conducted by the BBC WST’s Research and Learning Group. The research was funded by the British Council. We also gratefully acknowledge the support of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to the BBC WST’s policy and research programmes.

Synovate and the BBC WST. Many thanks to Jeff Kaguna, Leslie Kasapla, Pamela Kenyangi, Shruti Malhotra, Elizabeth Namaganda, Mary Ojile and Ezekiel Olaya. Analysis and reporting was conducted by the BBC WST’s Research and Learning Group. The research was funded by the British Council. We also gratefully acknowledge the support of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to the BBC WST’s policy and research programmes.

CREDITS

This report was compiled by Lucy Neville, David Mustine and Allan Onila Alana with contributions from Miriam Burton, Anna Godfrey and Emily LeRoux-Rutledge. The authors welcome feedback on the findings. This and all Africa Talks Climate publications are available from www.africatalksclimate.com.

Editor: Louise Daniel. Sub-editor: Rob Kingston. Designer: Lance Bellers
Series Production: Grace Davies (Africa Talks Climate Communications Manager) Series Editors: Anna Godfrey (Africa Talks Climate Research Manager) and Emily Le Roux-Rutledge.
Readers are encouraged to quote or reproduce material from the Africa Talks Climate initiative, but as copyright holders, the BBC World Service Trust requests due acknowledgment and a copy of the publication. This report has been produced for the BBC World Service Trust independently from the BBC and BBC World Service and should not be taken to reflect official BBC policy, or that of any of the project’s funders. Any mistakes are those of the authors.

© BBC World Service Trust 2010

OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (UK) – 2010

UK DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ABC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Dedicated to the exchange of knowledge and ideas, the British Council works in the arts, education, science, sport and governance in over 100 countries, last year reaching more than 128 million people. For more information, please visit www.britishcouncil.org

BRITISH COUNCIL

The BBC World Service Trust is the BBC’s international development charity. It aims to reduce poverty and promote human rights. The Research and Learning Group (R&L) specialises in the design and delivery of research that provides insights into the role of media and communications around development issues.

Registered charity number: 1076425

BBC World Service Trust, Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7357 2662
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7379 1622
Email: wsttrust@bbc.co.uk
Web: bbcworldservicetrust.org

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

Photography

Cattle carcasses in Ethiopia AP PHOTO/Sayyid Azim, 2000 (pages 11,12); Traffic jam, Lusaka courtesy of Chris Lock, 2008 (pages 11,14); ‘Open sewer playground’, Freetown, Sierra Leone courtesy of Adam Cohn, 2009 (pages 11,14); Crop failure, Somalia BBC, 1992 (pages 11,12); Deforestation courtesy of Zianan Celikow, 2008 (pages 11,12); Bush burning, Ghana courtesy of Greve Howard, 2009 (pages 11,12); Floods in Nairobi AP Photo/Khalil Senosi, 1998 (pages 11,14); Gully erosion Imo State, Nigeria BBCWST, 2008 (pages 11,13).

What responses do Ugandan citizens have to climate change?

What do Ugandan opinion leaders know and understand about climate change and what are their views on Uganda’s response to climate change?

Understanding climate change

Where does responsibility lie?

Who is affected by climate change?

Do the worst affected understand climate change?

Translation and terminology

What response is required?

Acronyms used in this report

What do Ugandan opinion leaders know and understand about climate change and what are their views on Uganda’s response to climate change?

What responses do Ugandan citizens have to climate change?

Understanding climate change

Where does responsibility lie?

Who is affected by climate change?

Do the worst affected understand climate change?

Translation and terminology

What response is required?
Climate change is one of the most important issues on the global political and economic agenda, yet it has taken at least 20 years to become an international priority. In many ways, this is because climate change was originally communicated as a scientific problem. Complex, confusing, and at times contested scientific information resulted in a slow public and political response to the climate crisis. The climate change debate has also taken place in industrialised nations, among a public largely safe from its worst effects. For many, climate change is an abstract concept.

In Africa, climate change is far from abstract – it is already determining the course of people’s lives. Extreme weather events and greater unpredictability in weather patterns are having serious consequences for people who rely on land, lakes and seas to feed themselves and to earn a living. As a result, Africa’s engagement with the issue is evolving rapidly, presenting an opportunity to leapfrog the slow evolution of western public opinion and political action.

African citizens’ response to climate change is hampered by a fundamental shortage of relevant, useful information for African audiences. The intensive media coverage and public awareness campaigns prevalent in much of the industrialised world have been largely absent in Africa, particularly outside major urban centres. Too often, African voices are absent from the international climate debate.

Africa’s response to climate change will be dictated by how well it is understood by its people. Opinion leaders acknowledge the belief that those worst affected by the issue have the right to be better informed, in order to understand and respond effectively to their changing climate. Providing people with the information they need will therefore be crucial. Unfortunately, little is known about how climate change is currently perceived and understood by Africans. Africa Talks Climate seeks to address this. It is the most extensive research ever conducted on the public understanding of climate change in Africa. The research teams held discussions with more than 1,000 citizens from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. They also carried out interviews with nearly 200 opinion leaders, including policymakers, religious and community leaders, business people, and media and NGO representatives.

The overall objective of Africa Talks Climate is to assess public understanding of climate change and identify how communication and media could best support Africans’ response to climate change. The research asked four main questions:

1. What changes have African citizens experienced in their climate and environment over time?
2. How do African citizens explain and respond to these changes?
3. What do African citizens know and understand about global climate change?
4. What do African opinion leaders know and understand about climate change and what are their views on their country’s response to climate change?

Only when governments, NGOs and the media are comfortable talking about climate change can they communicate it effectively to citizens. Only when citizens are clear about climate change and its implications for their lives can they respond effectively to it. Equipped with the knowledge that weather patterns are changing and that extreme weather events are more likely to occur, people will be able to debate the issues with their families, communities and governments, and discuss the risks and possible courses of action. This will enable them to prepare more effectively for the future.

Africa Talks Climate is the first step in developing long-term strategies for sharing information about climate change. It aims to support all those charged with communicating on climate change, whether they be international organisations, governments, the media, NGOs or community leaders.

Providing people with relevant information so that they can effectively address the issues that affect them most is at the heart of the work of the BBC World Service Trust. This is why, with its network of researchers across Africa, the Trust is uniquely positioned to support Africa’s response to climate change by sharing its expertise in understanding and communicating with audiences.

For further information, including the latest policy briefings, reports and publications from the Africa Talks Climate project, visit www.africatalksclimate.com.

**Key findings**

- While most Ugandans do not understand the science of climate change, they have noticed changes in the weather and seasons, and accept the idea that these changes are linked to human activity. They tell of excessive heat, increasing seasonal variability and reduced rainfall. Most people, however, do not connect these with global climate change.

- Changes in climate are not noticed by Ugandans in isolation from broader environmental changes. People in Uganda are keenly aware of environmental degradation and natural resource depletion. They often make little distinction between environmental degradation and climate change. Drought and food scarcity are causing frustration and despair across Kenya. Farmers, fishermen and pastoralists do not know how they would cope if these problems became worse.

- Concerns about food security are causing frustration and despair. Farmers and pastoralists do not have a sense of how they would cope if the problems became worse. Other issues that people are worried about include bush fires, deforestation, flooding, water pollution and air pollution. Opinion leaders are particularly concerned for rural communities and the urban poor:
  - There is a strong tendency for Ugandans to hold themselves individually and collectively responsible for local changes in the environment and the weather. They believe their own activities, such as deforestation and draining swampland, have brought about these changes. There is little awareness that climate change is a global problem – now or in the future – are likely to have causes that extend beyond Uganda.
  - Opinion leaders recognise that climate change is a global problem, and that industrialised countries are most responsible for causing it. As such, they feel far more needs to be done by industrialised countries to help Uganda adapt to the potentially devastating effects of climate change on its people.
  - Among the Ugandan public, there is limited awareness of the concepts of climate change and global warming. Many understand climate change to mean changes in the weather or seasons. Climate change terminology is poorly understood and does not have standard translations in Luganda, Runyoro and Ateso. The language of climate change is not accessible to most Ugandans, and this prevents people from having a voice on the issue. Opinion leaders agree that climate change terminology is a barrier that prevents public engagement.
  - The media in Uganda, together with schools, are people’s main source of information on climate change; and opinion leaders agree that the media has an important role to play in raising public awareness around the issue. However, journalists feel that it is difficult to get editorial buy-in for stories on climate change.
  - Ugandans draw on existing knowledge and beliefs to explain the effects of climate change. For example, many think that deforestation in their area reduces local rainfall, and some incorrectly believe that smoke from cars and factories damages the ozone layer, which makes it hotter. Many Ugandans link their country’s growing population to climate change; both in terms of the strain it places on natural resources and the creation of ambient heat through higher population density. Some also believe that changes in the weather are the will of God. This view is particularly prevalent among women and rural populations.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The information and communication needs of Ugandan citizens need to be at the heart of any national response to climate change; the ability of Ugandans to respond effectively to climate change will be determined by the accessibility and quality of the information available to them. Increased public understanding of climate change will enable citizens and communities to discuss the issue, adapt to its effects and make more informed long-term choices about their future.

Opinion leaders agree that the information and communication needs of Ugandans must be determined by the accessibility and quality of the information available to them. Increased public understanding of climate change will enable citizens and communities to discuss the issue, adapt to its effects and make more informed long-term choices about their future.

Leaders from the government, local communities and religious institutions have unrivalled access to communities, and are in a position to communicate climate change and inspire citizens to take action. They can play a crucial role in communicating with the public, educating citizens about climate change and providing them with the information they need to understand and respond to the issue.

Accessible and relevant public debate will also be critical to increasing public understanding of climate change. It will provide a
to provide information on the impacts of climate change, adaptation efforts, and potential solutions.

Policy and public debate:
- Build capacity of news and non-news media to support effective climate change communication.
- Provide public spaces, for example through TV talk shows, radio calls, and other interactive media platforms, to exchange ideas and information, foster understanding and plan for action. These spaces could also facilitate better cross-sector communication between government, NGOs, the private sector, the media, and local leaders, as well as with international actors.
- Draw on a range of Ugandan voices and experiences in discussions and debates: engage citizens, local interest groups, civil society actors, religious leaders and policy makers from all levels of government.

Incentives and targets for climate change mitigation and adaptation:
- Build a sense of immediacy and encourage the sharing of current examples of adaptation to climate change. Harness Ugandans’ understanding and experience of their changing weather and environment to create a relevant discourse that promotes citizen engagement in Uganda’s response to climate change.

Perceptions and coverage of climate change:
- The media clearly have an important role to play in responding to climate change, and supporting others to communicate about climate change, including governments, national and international NGOs, scientists, faith-based leaders and community leaders. Three specific recommendations for all those charged with communicating on climate change follow:

Communicate in ways that are locally relevant to people, using a variety of news and non-news platforms (such as public service announcements, radio dramas).
- Provide local leaders with access to information on climate change, bearing in mind that local adaptation strategies need to take into account local leaders’ understanding of the issue.
- Use schools and the media to better provide information about climate change to the Ugandan public.
- Facilitate policy and public debate: build the capacity of news and non-news media to support more effective public debate on climate change in Uganda.
- Provide “public spaces”, for example through TV talk shows, radio calls and other interactive media platforms, to exchange ideas and information, foster understanding and plan for action. Such spaces could also facilitate better cross-sector communication between government, NGOs, the private sector, the media, and local leaders, as well as with international actors.
- Draw on a range of Ugandan voices and experiences in discussions and debates: engage citizens, local interest groups, civil society actors, religious leaders and policy makers from all levels of government.
- Build a sense of immediacy and encourage the sharing of current examples of adaptation to climate change. Harness Ugandans’ understanding and experience of their changing weather and environment to create a relevant discourse that promotes citizen engagement in Uganda’s response to climate change.

Encourage accountability:
- Develop mechanisms which enable Ugandan citizens and their representatives to move climate change on to the political agenda, and to exert pressure on their own governments with respect to climate change policies, adaptation funding, technology transfer, emissions reduction and other response strategies. Such mechanisms will also help Ugandan citizens and their representatives to communicate their own perspectives and demands to the rest of the world.

Weaker regions of the world are more vulnerable to climate change. The fact that Africa is one of the least industrialized continents makes it especially vulnerable. The continent will experience more rainfall, which will increase the risk of flooding and erosion. The impact of climate change on food production is a significant concern. The increase in temperature and changes in rainfall patterns will affect crop yields and food production. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change on food production and food security.

Uganda’s climate offers a great potential for food production, but the impacts of climate change could be severe. Increased rainfall and temperature could lead to soil erosion and reduced crop yields. The increase in temperature could also lead to the spread of diseases, such as malaria, which could have a significant impact on the health of the population.

Conclusion:
- Climate change is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach. It is important to develop strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change on food production and food security.
- The need for a comprehensive approach is highlighted by the fact that Africa is one of the least industrialized continents and is therefore more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- It is crucial to develop strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change on food production and food security in order to ensure that future generations have access to food and a secure future.
Agriculture is the most important sector of the Ugandan economy, employing over 80% of the work force and contributing around 43% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with coffee accounting for the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues. A 2°C temperature rise would probably wipe out most of Uganda’s coffee production, to the bulk (60%) of export revenues.
3 Citizen focus group discussion findings

There are different ways to know about climate change. One is to understand the science; that human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels for energy, are increasing the amount of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere, which warms the earth and affects its climate system. Another is to experience it first hand: to witness over a lifetime changes in rainfall patterns that affect the harvest; to suffer from increased droughts, floods and other climatic disasters that can wipe out homes and crops; or to be at the receiving end of the spread of vector-borne diseases, such as malaria.

The findings from this research suggest that although most Ugandans do not know about climate change in the scientific sense, they have certainly experienced it. Observable changes in the weather and the seasons constitute most Ugandans’ knowledge of climate change; they live with the impacts of the changing climate in their day-to-day lives.

The research also shows that changes in climate are not noticed by Ugandans in isolation from broader environmental changes. People in Uganda are keenly aware of environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources. They mention, for example, deforestation, pollution and human reclamation of swampland. Indeed, the research reveals that many Ugandans appear to make little distinction between environmental degradation and climate change; changes in the weather and seasons form part of the broader changes people have observed over the course of their lifetimes.

Given that climate change is viewed in the wider context of environmental changes, it is important to understand how Ugandans perceive these changes. This report, while focusing on climate change, recognises the complexity of the relationship between climate change and environmental degradation: It begins with an overview of the environmental changes that Ugandan citizens have experienced, and then focuses on five key issues which people say directly impact their lives. It moves on to examine people’s understanding of climate terminology and concepts, and finally concludes with recommendations.

What changes have Ugandan citizens experienced in their climate and environment over time?

Ugandans are very aware that their environment is changing, although the word “climate” is rarely used. As well as excessive heat and seasonal variability, they have noticed reduced agricultural productivity and corresponding changes in the availability and quality of food, a loss of forests and wetlands and an increase in human and depletion of natural resources. They mention, for example, deforestation, pollution and human reclamation of swampland.

People in Uganda are keenly aware of environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources. They mention, for example, deforestation, pollution and human reclamation of swampland. Indeed, the research reveals that many Ugandans appear to make little distinction between environmental degradation and climate change; changes in the weather and seasons form part of the broader changes people have observed over the course of their lifetimes.

Primarily as a result of these changes in heat and rainfall, Ugandans note a marked reduction in agricultural productivity. “Crops that I used to grow in the 1990s, when I grow them these days they don’t give enough yield,” states a farmer from Fort Portal. Low agricultural yields have led to hunger and poverty and a corresponding decline in the availability and quality of food. Many urban Ugandans note that they now rely heavily on tinned food instead of produce from their gardens, or from neighbouring rural areas. As well as not tasting good, they feel this change in diet has had negative impacts on their health. “The food we eat [has changed],” explains a young woman from Kampala. “These days we have artificial matooke [steamed plantain], juice, even chicken. I [now] eat tinned fish and it brings me constipation... they put chemicals in it to preserve it, and these chemicals are not natural.”

Ugandans have also observed an increase in the spread of human diseases such as malaria, hypertension, and ulcers, as well as high levels of crop and livestock diseases. “These days human beings are so weak compared to the olden days,” says a man from Fort Portal. “Diseases have increased.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also

“...there were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Urban Ugandans have also mentioned the desertification of natural swamps. “There were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also

“...there were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Urban Ugandans have also mentioned the desertification of natural swamps. “There were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also

“...there were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Urban Ugandans have also mentioned the desertification of natural swamps. “There were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also

“...there were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Urban Ugandans have also mentioned the desertification of natural swamps. “There were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also

“...there were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Urban Ugandans have also mentioned the desertification of natural swamps. “There were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also

“...there were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Urban Ugandans have also mentioned the desertification of natural swamps. “There were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also

“...there were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Urban Ugandans have also mentioned the desertification of natural swamps. “There were always places on the shores of Lake Victoria that were known for being like deserts,” explains a man from Kampala, “...but these days the desert-like environment is almost all over.”

Finally, over the years, Ugandans have observed an increase in human reclamation of wetlands and destruction of forests for agriculture, industry, and housing. They note the corresponding effects this has had on their surroundings. “You find that swamps that used to attract low temperatures and store water no longer exist,” says an older woman from Fort Portal. “People lack water because most swamps have been turned into farms.” Urban Ugandans have also
Poverty is the thing that pushes a person to go and cut trees for charcoal... [they] sell it to get some help.

WOMAN FROM SOROTI

Drought, crop failure and livestock loss

Most Ugandans feel that drought, crop failure and livestock loss come about as a result of deforestation. A few believe that the weather is entirely controlled by God. Most Ugandans’ responses appear to be reactive; they lack options and resources to respond to the problem.

Drought

Many Ugandans think that crop failure and the death of animals, which were discussed in Soroti and Fort Portal, are caused by “the dryness of the land”, which comes about as a result of “lack of rainfall” and “too much sunshine”. Many attribute this to deforestation and the reclamation of the wetlands. “There are no trees [any more]; it’s just bare land and when the sun shines the rivers dry very fast and the animals die because there is no water or swamp,” says an older woman from Soroti. “When people continue to reclaim the swamp, which assists the rains to fall, it becomes very hot because evaporation is increased and the land dries, so the animals die.” People often make an explicit link between deforestation, changes in weather patterns and crop failure: “Cutting down trees leads to changes in the seasons, and when the seasons change we receive too much sunshine, leading to crop failure,” explains a woman from Fort Portal.

Ugandans also feel that land has been strained by population growth. “Land which used to be for one man is now for 50 people,” explains an older woman from Soroti. She goes on to explain that the land has been “over-campaered with”, making it barren.

Finally, some believe that weather is the domain of God and do not feel that human actions can influence it. “Some problems are God-made because he is the one who gives [rain]... man cannot do anything about it,” states a woman from Soroti.

Ugandans point out that crop failure and animal deaths lead to a shortage of food, causing hunger and disease. “Diseases come up because there is no food and a lot of starvation... children get sick with kwashiorkor [an acute form of childhood protein-energy malnutrition]... [you get] ulcers, headaches,” says a woman from Soroti. It also leads to a reduction in income because people have no produce to sell, and this increases poverty. “As farmers, [too much] sunshine reduces our income,” explains a man from Fort Portal. An older woman from Soroti agrees: “Animals assist us in milk, meat, skin, ploughing, we even get money by selling them... [their death] brings poverty because they help in ploughing, and so when they die there is no way you can do the work [on the farm].”

In addition, people point out that in times of drought, not only do their harvests fall, but the price of food goes up in the shops. They blame the government for being a major impediment to this. “The forest officials are here in Soroti, and they wait at the roadblocks to catch the vehicles that carry charcoal,” explains a woman from Soroti. “But when they are bribed, they give up.” Several people also feel that Ugandans should regulate their own activities in order to save some of the environment.

Ugandans think that crop failure and the death of animals, which were discussed in Soroti and Fort Portal, are caused by “the dryness of the land”, which comes about as a result of “lack of rainfall” and “too much sunshine”. Many attribute this to deforestation and the reclamation of the wetlands. “There are no trees [any more]; it’s just bare land and when the sun shines the rivers dry very fast and the animals die because there is no water or swamp,” says an older woman from Soroti. “When people continue to reclaim the swamp, which assists the rains to fall, it becomes very hot because evaporation is increased and the land dries, so the animals die.” People often make an explicit link between deforestation, changes in weather patterns and crop failure: “Cutting down trees leads to changes in the seasons, and when the seasons change we receive too much sunshine, leading to crop failure,” explains a woman from Fort Portal.

Ugandans also feel that land has been strained by population growth. “Land which used to be for one man is now for 50 people,” explains an older woman from Soroti. She goes on to explain that the land has been “over-campaered with”, making it barren.

Finally, some believe that weather is the domain of God and do not feel that human actions can influence it. “Some problems are God-made because he is the one who gives [rain]... man cannot do anything about it,” states a woman from Soroti.

Ugandans point out that crop failure and animal deaths lead to a shortage of food, causing hunger and disease. “Diseases come up because there is no food and a lot of starvation... children get sick with kwashiorkor [an acute form of childhood protein-energy malnutrition]... [you get] ulcers, headaches,” says a woman from Soroti. It also leads to a reduction in income because people have no produce to sell, and this increases poverty. “As farmers, [too much] sunshine reduces our income,” explains a man from Fort Portal. An older woman from Soroti agrees: “Animals assist us in milk, meat, skin, ploughing, we even get money by selling them... [their death] brings poverty because they help in ploughing, and so when they die there is no way you can do the work [on the farm].”

In addition, people point out that in times of drought, not only do their harvests fall, but the price of food goes up in the shops. They blame the government for being a major impediment to this. “The forest officials are here in Soroti, and they wait at the roadblocks to catch the vehicles that carry charcoal,” explains a woman from Soroti. “But when they are bribed, they give up.” Several people also feel that Ugandans should regulate their own activities in order to save some of the environment.
Flooding

Ugandans feel that the government needs to take much stronger action to prevent people from building on wetlands, which they believe causes widespread flooding. People appear to lack proactive strategies to deal with floods, in terms of disaster preparedness and prevention.

Flooding is a concern to people in the urban centre of Kampala and its suburbs. Urban dwellers in Fort Portal also discussed this issue. As well as acknowledging an increase in heavy rain and storms, urban inhabitants tend to blame floods on poor town planning, blocked drains and a lack of infrastructure. They stress the impact that urban flooding has on their lives. “Eventually water has nowhere else to go,” explains a woman from Kampala. Many blame the level of wetland development on inefficiency and corruption in organisations such as the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). “NEMA is inefficient,” states a young woman from Kampala. “Some people are stopped [from building on wetlands], others are left to build, there is so much corruption.”

As well as leading to direct loss of life, flooding destroys infrastructure such as buildings and roads. Loss of income is mentioned by a number of people from regions affected by floods.

In terms of waste disposal, urban Ugandans feel that the government and municipalities do not do enough in terms of programming events to safely dispose of rubbish. They also feel that overcrowding has exacerbated the problem, both in terms of litter and of emissions. “People get congested in one area and the resources available to cater for the number of people in that area are inadequate,” states a man from Kampala. Several people mention a link between polythene bags and changes in the environment, but again cannot explain what the link is.

People appear to lack proactive strategies to deal with floods, in terms of disaster preparedness and prevention.

Pollution and poor sanitation

Ugandans make little distinction between pollution from emissions and inadequate waste disposal. They tend to feel that only government action can address these problems.

Pollution, be it from poor garbage disposal or from emissions, is seen as having a major impact on health. “We have so many diseases lately,” says an older woman from Kampala, “and we believe that these have come as a result of rubbish, and the pollution that is brought about by rubbish and stoves and cars. The sewage as well.” Others say that inhaling fumes gives them headaches and that poor sanitation and waste disposal leads to diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid, and malaria (as it provides a breeding ground for mosquitoes). “It puts people’s lives in danger,” says a young man from Fort Portal. “The water system is also a breeding place for mosquitoes and a lot of flies which bring a lot of diseases.” There is also a perception that pollution causes “limited rainfall,” although again the mechanisms behind this process are not fully understood.

Many Ugandans feel there is little they can do when faced with issues of pollution. Instead they learn to “adapt to it” – we live with it because there is nothing we can do”, as a woman from Kampala explains. They feel the government should be more proactive in dealing with issues of pollution and sanitation. “These issues can’t be solved without government intervention,” states a man from Kampala. For example, people feel the government should prevent old cars from being imported into the country, as well as introducing “environmentally friendly cars and [more] railways”.

However, while they feel that the government needs to take the lead on acting on this issue, people accept that citizens have a role to play in “agitating” government bodies to take action. They also accept that they are not completely responsible for cleaning up their immediate environment and not “just dumping” rubbish. A woman from Kampala argues: “We don’t care about ourselves, this is what we do and we can’t really blame it on government.” In the meantime, the people feel the best solution to this problem is to “move away – find another place where it is less congested and a bit airier”.

Awareness of responses to environmental issues

Ugandans lack information on how the government, religious organisations, NGOs, communities or individuals are responding to environmental and climate change challenges. They also doubt the effectiveness of their own actions as individuals. It is only through group responses that they feel they can have an impact on the environmental problems they face. Ugandans feel the government is unlikely to deal with environmental issues.

In urban areas, Ugandans feel there isn’t a great deal they can do to deal with climate change, instead they feel there is a need for a response at a national/community level. “I don’t think these things can be solved by one person,” says a woman from Kampala. “There is a need for community mobilisation, because so many people [are involved].”

In rural areas, citizens are more ready to offer ways they personally can help if the challenges presented by climate change are planted more trees and using new farming methods. However, these changes are largely short term and reactive. All Ugandans agree that in the long term the government needs to take a bigger role in educating people about climate change and enforcing environmental protection laws. Many note that the government has already attempted to sensitize people about the importance of trees and construct drains to improve a healthy climate system. “They [government officials] are telling us to stop farming in the wetlands, and the forestry officials are also telling us to stop cutting down trees, and then plant more trees,” says a woman from Soroti.

However, in general people are not aware of government or NGO responses to environmental issues. Many people criticise government at all levels for a lack of proactive action on the environment, and regard government officials as “corrupt,” stating that they will not prosecute people for deforestation or illegal development if they stand to profit from doing so. Additionally, there is a belief that national and local government frequently siphons funds that are meant to be spent on environmental issues. A young woman from Kampala explains that “corruption” is a barrier to the government taking action on climate change: “When officials are given money to sort out these [environmental] issues, they divert the money.” Ugandans also feel that international aid helping them to care for the environment, there is little they can do. “People want to plant trees and if you listen to the media they say [the] World Bank has put [aside] money for people to plant trees.”

“However, we do not get this money, and [we all] agree [that buying] seedlings [yourself] is very expensive.” There is also a perception that the government is whole of this is reluctant to take strong action on climate change. “The government is so reluctant; they come up with laws and then fail to implement them,” says a young man from Kampala.

What do Ugandans know and understand about global climate change?

Despite articulating local challenges and recognising different futures, we found that few Ugandans link such changes to the global phenomenon of climate change. Not only does climate change terminology not resonate with people, they also generally do not have a clear and accurate understanding of climate change concepts.

In this context, Uganda Talks Climate explores how people make sense of climate change terminology and react to information about climate change. It emerges that five key themes are shaping people’s understanding of climate change, and affecting the way in which they explain its effects.

Terminology

Despite recognising the impact of their changing weather, people have a low awareness of climate change, as both a term and a concept. Most people tend to understand the term to refer to seasonal change and accompanying weather. A man from Kampala is typical in describing climate change as “a change from rainy to dry season”. Very few Ugandans understand climate change as a global phenomenon that has causes outside their own environment.
Frames of reference
In the absence of a solid scientific understanding of climate change, people reach for explanations that build on their existing knowledge. The discussions of the falsag and concepts of climate change and global warming revealed five important themes that influence participants’ understanding:
1. Emphasis on trees
2. The will of God
3. Ozone confusion
4. Air pollution
5. Overpopulation and localised heat

Such pre-existing concepts are often referred to as “frames of reference.” These are critical, because they shape people’s understanding of, and reactions to, new information. When exposed to new information, people often use existing beliefs, knowledge, and values to help them process it. The likelihood that people accept or reject new information depends heavily on what they already know and believe.

Crucially, people are more likely to reject new facts and information than they are to dissemble their own existing frames of reference. If new information contradicts a person’s beliefs, it is likely to be rejected. However, if that information is delivered in a way that complements people’s knowledge and values, people are more likely to accept it.

In this way, the five themes—or frames of reference—can function as barriers or as facilitators to effective communication on climate change. Understanding them can help communicators in Uganda make their content relevant to their audiences. It is essential to understand how existing knowledge and concepts are triggered when communicating about climate change.

Emphasis on trees

Ugandans’ understanding of the concept of climate change is shaped by the importance they place on trees. Many people have a keen awareness of trees and their effect at a micro-climatic level, with all growth – whether trees or crops – dependent on the rainfall that the sunshine “coaxes” out of the atmosphere. The result is a higher concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The implication of this is that if we reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, we reduce the amount of sunlight that the atmosphere can trap, which leads to a decrease in the earth’s surface temperature and a decrease in the rate of climate change.

Comprehensive understanding
Deforestation prevents trees from storing carbon, and releases the carbon they have stored back into the atmosphere. The result is a higher concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which in turn has a heat-trapping effect (the greenhouse effect). This leads to warming and other climate changes, including less rainfall in certain parts of the world.

Recommendations for communicators

Build on people’s existing knowledge of trees to help create wider understanding of the role of deforestation in global climate change. Try to do so without removing people’s sense that their local actions matter. Help people move beyond the idea that tree planting is a cure for all environmental and climate problems. Emphasize to other mitigation and adaptation options.

Figure 1
- Understanding how trees can affect rain
- Leads to
- Less rain
- Leads to
- Climate change
- Can lead to
- Fewer trees in a specific location directly affects local rainfall. (In addition, many people relate loss of trees to an increase in local temperature and a decrease in soil quality.)

Recommendations for communicators

Be sensitive to people’s faith when communicating climate change. Involve faith leaders in climate change communication. Where possible, facilitate climate change discussions that complement ideas of environmental stewardship present in some religions.

Ozone confusion

Many Ugandans appear to confuse climate change and/or global warming with ozone depletion. People are aware that human activities have created holes in the ozone layer, and often believe that these holes directly cause rising temperatures by allowing more sun to reach the earth. “Fumes that come from the industries, cars, and fridges tend to penetrate the ozone layer and in the process they create holes in it and thus the heat coming down to earth and creating the excess heat,” explains a man from Kampala.

As a result, people may think that ozone depletion is the cause of climate change, or that climate change is triggered when communicating about the earth’s surface, which damages human skin, they do not themselves cause an increase in the earth’s temperature.

Such confusion is also noted in perception studies conducted in developed countries. It may arise because climate change and ozone depletion are both caused by gases emitted as a result of human activity which is also what some Ugandans believe: “For example, a place with industries or factories—that smoke goes up there into the atmosphere—and there is that ozone layer which is destroyed…” says a woman from Soroti. “You find that these trees which would help bring down the temperature, [are] destroyed—man cannot do anything about it.”

He further explains that ozone holes do not affect the sun’s rays, whereas climate change affects the earth’s surface, which damages human skin, they do not themselves cause an increase in the earth’s temperature.

The implications of this are both positive and negative. On the one hand, people may be motivated to plant and preserve trees, which is good from a climate change perspective, and from an environmental perspective. On the other hand, their understanding could provide a false sense that climate problems, such as drought, can be solved at a local level through tree planting.

Recommendations for communicators

Build on people’s existing knowledge of trees to help create wider understanding of the role of deforestation in global climate change. Try to do so without removing people’s sense that their local actions matter. Help people move beyond the idea that tree planting is a cure for all environmental and climate problems. Emphasize to other mitigation and adaptation options.

The will of God

Uganda is a mainly Christian country and some people, particularly women living in rural areas, relate discussion of weather and climate to their faith. Some people feel that the weather is entirely in the will of God and that only he can influence weather events, particularly the occurrence of rain. “God is the one who plans that this year it shall rain like this and it shall rain like that,” says a woman from Soroti. A previously mentioned comment from a Ugandan woman back up this view: “Some problems are God-made because he is the one who gives [rain]… like there was a time we got floods due to too much rain and all the crops got destroyed—man cannot do anything about it.”

Others feel that changes in the climate are brought about by a combination of human activities and God’s will. In some cases this is because human activities are seen as a direct affront to God, which he has encouraged.” Says a man from Kampala in response to the picture of urban flooding. In most cases though, people feel extreme weather events can come about as a result of man’s activities (degradation) and God’s control over the weather. “We cut down trees and so the heat increases,” explains a woman from Soroti, “and God says, ‘help me to help you’ [if we] preserve the trees then the rain will come more.” Another woman adds, “It is two-way traffic, in that there are [changes] that man causes and there are those that God decides.”

Thus belief in God and his ultimate control over the weather does not necessarily preclude acceptance of the role that human beings play in climate change.

Recommendations for communicators

Be sensitive to people’s faith when communicating climate change. Involve faith leaders in climate change communication. Where possible, facilitate climate change discussions that complement ideas of environmental stewardship present in some religions.

Further information on deforestation was largely addressed by regulation in the late 1980s, while the human activities that cause climate change are ongoing.

Recommendations for communicators

Make people aware of the possible link between ozone depletion and climate change, while correcting misconceptions. Emphasise which human activities produce the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Explain the science of climate change in a visual way that resonates with people, as ozone holes do.

---

1. The Africa Talks Climate pilot study was conducted in Uganda. See Appendix 3.
2. These statements were explored before the terms “climate change” and “global warming” were introduced. See Appendix 3.
Increase in temperature

Smoke and visible air pollution, as well as bad smells, influence how Ugandans understand climate change. Many Ugandans associate visible smoke with changes in weather patterns. “Smoke spoils the clouds which bring in the rains, that is why you find that the rains delay to come,” says a woman from Kampala.

However, there is a tendency amongst Ugandans to associate all visible smoke with changes in weather and temperature. As well as cars and factories, people frequently cite people smoking cigarettes as a primary cause of global warming. “When we smoke we send bad air to [to] the environment; this leads to global warming,” states a young man from Kampala.

Air pollution

Smoke and visible air pollution, as well as bad smells, influence how Ugandans understand climate change. Many Ugandans associate visible smoke with changes in weather patterns. “Smoke spoils the clouds which bring in the rains, that is why you find that the rains delay to come,” says a woman from Kampala.

However, there is a tendency amongst Ugandans to associate all visible smoke with changes in weather and temperature. As well as cars and factories, people frequently cite people smoking cigarettes as a primary cause of global warming. “When we smoke we send bad air to [to] the environment; this leads to global warming,” states a young man from Kampala.

When asked to explain the link between smoke and climate change, many Ugandans speak of how smoke damages the ozone layer, increasing the sun’s heat and bringing about changes in temperature and weather. “Fumes that come from the industries, cars and fridges tend to penetrate the ozone layer and in the process they create holes in it, and thus [cause] heat to come down to earth, creating the excess heat,” explains a man from Kampala.

As well as visual cues such as smoke, many Ugandans take the stench of pollution as a sign that their environment is being degraded. “In the olden days we would wake up in the morning and smell the fresh air of the natural environment, but these days it’s sewage, bad fumes from passing vehicles,” says an older woman from Kampala. “That can’t be good for you.”

Recommending for communicators

Recommending for communicators

Build on people’s understanding of smoke to broaden their understanding of the global effect of greenhouse gases. Use health concerns connected with smoke to engage people and inform them about the causes of climate change.

Overpopulation and localised heat

In all locations, Ugandans mention overpopulation as both a primary and secondary cause of global warming. Some Ugandans see the relationship between population growth and climate change as an indirect one, with many stating that as populations grow, they will exhaust available resources leading to famine, hunger and environmental degradation. “Following the increase of the world’s population, the earth is becoming smaller, so people are cutting down trees, and even mountains are being cleared to accommodate people. The end result of this is drought, which has brought [with it] other things such as diseases and fevers,” says a man from Soroti.

Others see the relationship between overpopulation and global warming more literally, with some people feeling that higher population density leads to greater ambient heat. “Take an example of this house, can it accommodate [10] people? If it is so hot it will result in too much heat,” explains a man from Fort Portal.

Recommendations for communicators

Recommendations for communicators

Draw on people’s understanding of the immediate relationship between humans and the environment to explain climate change at a global level.

These five themes can function as barriers or as facilitators to effective climate change communication, but it is essential for communicators to understand and take them into account when designing communication strategies.

In addition, it should be noted that Ugandans are also very aware of the conflict between preservation of the environment and the fact that many people rely on the exploitation of Uganda’s natural resources to make a living. Many state that even if people were more aware of the wider effects of actions such as deforestation, it is unlikely they would change their behaviour. “The problem is as a result of poverty. If I don’t have enough land to survive then I need to encroach on the wetlands,” explains a man from Fort Portal. An older man from Soroti agrees: “The problem is there are limited jobs for people. You can’t tell a carpenter not to cut down trees – he needs the wood. The problem is there are limited jobs for people.”

What do Ugandan opinion leaders know and understand about climate change and what are their views on Uganda’s response to climate change?

4 Interviews with opinion leaders

4 Interviews with opinion leaders

This research draws on 18 interviews with opinion leaders across six sectors:

Government

• Climate change focal point for Uganda (Ministry of Water and Environment)
• Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
• National Agricultural Research Organisation
• Ministry of Health
• Local councillors from Fort Portal and Soroti

Media

• Print media
• Radio
• Television

Private sector

• Coffee processing company
• Sugar producing company
• National bank

NGO, religious, associations

• NGO with a climate change focus
• Uganda Joint Christian Council
• Local religious leader, Fort Portal
• Farming association, Soroti
• Tooro Botanical Gardens, Fort Portal
• United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

What do Ugandan opinion leaders know and understand about climate change and what are their views on Uganda’s response to climate change?

Opinion leaders in Uganda are aware that climate change is likely to have a severe impact on their country. While they may not always be well informed about the science of climate change, they are clear about its current and projected effects on Uganda.

Although this research relies on relatively few interviews with opinion leaders, those interviewed are fairly knowledgeable about climate change, although they tend to frame their definitions in terms of effects rather than causes, describing it as an “alteration of the climate” which means that “seasons no longer fit exactly as they used to” and leads to widespread crop failure and increasing poverty. Whilst opinion leaders are not always well informed about climate change science, there is widespread awareness that Uganda is especially vulnerable to climate change.

“We believe climate change is long-term changes in weather patterns, which are affecting Africa more than any other part of the world.”

Ms Rose Hogan, poverty and environment office, UNDP and UNEP

We also have bad agricultural practices which remove forests, such that there is [no] natural absorption of carbon dioxide.

Head of Environmental Health, Ministry of Health

While their definitions of climate change are often very impact oriented, most opinion leaders, especially those in government and the private sector, also have a clear understanding of the causes of climate change, discussing the role of greenhouse gas emissions and rapid deforestation.

“Climate change is probably due to greenhouse gases: we also have bad agricultural practices which remove forests. Deforestation, where forests have been cut down without planning [new trees], such that there is [no] natural absorption of carbon dioxide... [means] the environment gets distorted from the natural form. So greenhouse gases from factories, then failure to manage forests and other natural phenomena that are taking place, like manufacturing.”

Mr Paul Luyma, head of environmental health, Ministry of Health

Not all interviewees are familiar with climate change “jargon”, but they are often able to effectively explain climate change processes even if they do not use specific terms such as “the greenhouse effect” and “greenhouse gases”. “Emissions, especially of carbon dioxide, in the air cause some kind of layer,” explains Mr Charles Aben.

Opinion leaders universally uphold that climate change is already having an impact on Uganda, which is likely to increase in the future, and that there is a growing need for the citizens of Uganda to adapt to these changes.

“[Climate change is] the change in climate factors from what is called ‘normal’ to what we are not used to, and which we have to cope with.”

Mr Dennis Kyetere Tumwesigye, director general, National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO)
If the bridges are broken down, people are disconnected from city infrastructures, and this connects the people. There is also an impact on the marketing of products. “Ben Tuminoguha (climate change programme manager, Oxfam)

If you go to our market now, food prices are soaring. When there is a shortage of food the prices go up, and that is when people are affected,” comments Bright Nasur (chairman, Soroti Provincial Government), adding that migration has intensified as farming conditions have got worse. However, rural–urban migration places huge strain on municipal infrastructures and exacerbates existing drainage and sanitation problems.

“People living in Kampala... experience floods. People who live in informal settlements, slum areas and outlying areas experience flooding. We already have traditional problems of lack of proper drainage, lack of proper sewage systems. Now, with people migrating to the cities, climate change adds onto the already-existing problems and challenges,” Mr. Paul Luyima, head of environmental health, Ministry of Health

Where does responsibility lie?

Most opinion leaders focus on mitigation as a goal that can be achieved by everyone; however, some seem to blame climate change on individual actions. However, they also recognise that core responsibility for climate change lies with industrialised countries, and that without their involvement, mitigation is not possible.

Opinion leaders are unanimous in viewing the primary causes of climate change as a combination of emissions from industry, especially from developed countries, and a lack of conservation from within Uganda.

“I think there are two [causes of climate change]. One is of course industrial gases; their control is not up to the industrial standard. But the main one is deforestation of the country. The rural population mainly relies on trees for their cooking. [Electricity has] not yet reached the villages, and where it has reached, it is hardly any people who can afford the current rates, so you find that in one way or the other the person is relying on the forests. And those living near the forest can also encourage deforestation, but I think it is mainly where they are making their livelihood, so this causes deforestation and hence the climate being affected.”

Mr. Paul Luyama, vice-chair, Climate Change Implementation Authority, Uganda

Ugandan opinion leaders feel that everyone will be affected by climate change, but that the poorest Ugandans will endure the worst of its impacts, particularly those who rely directly or indirectly on the climate for a living. Bright Rwamirama estimates that 70%–80% of Ugandans are in agricultural and forestry sectors; they are more affected by climate change than other sectors because their incomes are directly linked to its social and economic impacts on Ugandans.

Who is affected by climate change?

Opinion leaders are very concerned about the potential effects of climate change on their country’s population and economy. They are particularly concerned for those in rural areas and the urban poor.

You can still access the content in the image by providing the text directly. If you need any further assistance, feel free to ask. Would you like to continue with the next section or explore a different aspect of the topic?
The greatest consensus amongst opinion leaders in Uganda is that the public do not fully understand the phenomenon. “Only 10% of Ugandans would understand climate change,” says Godfrey Ruyonga of the Ministry of Water and Environment. However, although opinion leaders feel that most people do not fully understand the science and mechanisms of climate change, they think people are aware of its effects. “If you asked a man on the street, ‘what is climate change?’ you would say ‘coffee’ or ‘rain’,” says Patrick Dhikusooako. “They don’t know what it means, but they can tell you what it means to them.” However, while Ugandans may not fully understand the concept of climate change, they think people are aware of its effects. “It is not easy for a lay person to differentiate between climate change and the environment.”

According to Patrick Misaba, one of the barriers to fully understanding the issue is the way that issues are presented to the public to differentiate between climate change and the environment. “Many people therefore find the concept of climate change difficult and confusing.”

There is a strong feeling among opinion leaders that Ugandan citizens have so many other pressing concerns such as food, health, and employment, that even when they do understand climate change, it is still not “top of their agenda”.

“I think it [climate change] is understood by some people. I think that the majority of [Ugandans] are probably not aware of the full extent of the impacts of climate change on their lives. Maybe they will say there are floods and droughts and the changing of the seasons and what have you… I guess they are probably aware of these changes, but I would not say that it is on top of their agenda. Their [biggest] concern is where they get their school fees and food to eat.”

Mr Robert Whitman, chief finance officer, Kyanginya Coffee Ltd.

A number of opinion leaders are also aware that some Ugandan attribute changes in the weather to the will of God or other supernatural causes. Godfrey Ruyonga explains, “People are aware of their culture, they pray to the gods on the mountains… so they believe that the climate can go back to how it was, if [they try to] appease the gods.”

Opinion leaders point out that the difficulty is that the concept of climate change is “definitional,” stating that Ugandan’s understanding of climate change will vary depending on the definitions that are given to them. “English is not my mother tongue,” he says. “If it was in our local language, it would be more comfortable. With this imposed language, we are limited in one way or another.”

The symptoms are already there, this is what I think, but Africa may not have understood.

Several interviewees also talk about the language of climate change. Mr. Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

“In Karamoja I interacted with a group of people where they were planting trees and they said their gods live under trees and because they have not got a God down earth they can shift it to Teso land. So these guys are now planting trees hoping to make peace with God so that he can come back to their land. But if you were to explain this scientifically, it comes back to the issue of cutting trees and realising the importance of planting more.”

Mr Gerald Tenywa, environmental reporter, The New Vision.

By way of a solution, it is suggested that climate change be explained to people using a range of points of reference, mostly to do with elements of weather such as temperature. “The linguistic and conceptual challenges of climate change identified by opinion leaders are consistent with the findings from the public, and indeed with the researchers’ own challenges in designing the research.”

Several opinion leaders point out that a way to do this is to tap into peoples’ existing knowledge about what they have witnessed and already had to adapt to.

“They [Ugandans] may not say the way they understand climate change, but the challenges they face can actually tell us [that] there is climate change. So it is actually a matter of looking at indigenous knowledge, people’s understanding of the way they live, and trying to connect their experience of weather changes and climate change. Because climate change is a new term, of course you have to interpret this word ‘climate change’ into the local reality or people’s understanding of seasonal changes.”

Mr Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Several interviewees also talk about the language of climate change. Mr. Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Many developed countries think that financing or funding climate change activities is donation. It is not donation, it is paying for pollution… That is what we are asking our friends the Americans to do. They have ‘popped’ in the air and we are asking them to mop it up, and to mop it up in such a way that it can be used to help developing countries to pay for the cost to clean up.”

Mr Gerald Tenywa, environmental reporter, The New Vision.

Government response

The Ugandan government has been making attempts to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects. However, it is perceived as being hampered by corruption, lack of cohesion and resources and inadequate finances.

Government representatives in Uganda say that the government is beginning to address the causes of climate change and educate the public about adapting to its impacts, but is facing a number of challenges. Bright Rwamara says his ministry has been focusing on messages of environmental conservation. “Among other programmes in our poverty alleviation [strategy] we are telling our farmers to make sure that they don’t plant in wet and flood water.”

Mr Paul Luyima, head of environmental health.

As with other developing countries, Uganda already has traditional challenges like lack of water, lack of sanitation, failure to collect meaningful data, and an emerging problem of failure to manage health care. With all these traditional problems, climate change is also now adding (an) additional (burden).”

Mr Paul Luyima, head of environmental health.

By way of a solution, it is suggested that climate change be explained to people using a range of points of reference, mostly to do with elements of weather such as temperature. “The linguistic and conceptual challenges of climate change identified by opinion leaders are consistent with the findings from the public, and indeed with the researchers’ own challenges in designing the research.”

Several opinion leaders also point out that a way to do this is to tap into peoples’ existing knowledge about what they have witnessed and already had to adapt to.

“They [Ugandans] may not say the way they understand climate change, but the challenges they face can actually tell us [that] there is climate change. So it is actually a matter of looking at indigenous knowledge, people’s understanding of the way they live, and trying to connect their experience of weather changes and climate change. Because climate change is a new term, of course you have to interpret this word ‘climate change’ into the local reality or people’s understanding of seasonal changes.”

Mr Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Several interviewees also talk about the language of climate change. Mr. Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Many developed countries think that financing or funding climate change activities is donation. It is not donation, it is paying for pollution… That is what we are asking our friends the Americans to do. They have ‘popped’ in the air and we are asking them to mop it up, and to mop it up in such a way that it can be used to help developing countries to pay for the cost to clean up.”

Mr Gerald Tenywa, environmental reporter, The New Vision.

By way of a solution, it is suggested that climate change be explained to people using a range of points of reference, mostly to do with elements of weather such as temperature. “The linguistic and conceptual challenges of climate change identified by opinion leaders are consistent with the findings from the public, and indeed with the researchers’ own challenges in designing the research.”

Several opinion leaders also point out that a way to do this is to tap into peoples’ existing knowledge about what they have witnessed and already had to adapt to.

“They [Ugandans] may not say the way they understand climate change, but the challenges they face can actually tell us [that] there is climate change. So it is actually a matter of looking at indigenous knowledge, people’s understanding of the way they live, and trying to connect their experience of weather changes and climate change. Because climate change is a new term, of course you have to interpret this word ‘climate change’ into the local reality or people’s understanding of seasonal changes.”

Mr Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Several interviewees also talk about the language of climate change. Mr. Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Many developed countries think that financing or funding climate change activities is donation. It is not donation, it is paying for pollution… That is what we are asking our friends the Americans to do. They have ‘popped’ in the air and we are asking them to mop it up, and to mop it up in such a way that it can be used to help developing countries to pay for the cost to clean up.”

Mr Gerald Tenywa, environmental reporter, The New Vision.

By way of a solution, it is suggested that climate change be explained to people using a range of points of reference, mostly to do with elements of weather such as temperature. “The linguistic and conceptual challenges of climate change identified by opinion leaders are consistent with the findings from the public, and indeed with the researchers’ own challenges in designing the research.”

Several opinion leaders also point out that a way to do this is to tap into peoples’ existing knowledge about what they have witnessed and already had to adapt to.

“They [Ugandans] may not say the way they understand climate change, but the challenges they face can actually tell us [that] there is climate change. So it is actually a matter of looking at indigenous knowledge, people’s understanding of the way they live, and trying to connect their experience of weather changes and climate change. Because climate change is a new term, of course you have to interpret this word ‘climate change’ into the local reality or people’s understanding of seasonal changes.”

Mr Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Several interviewees also talk about the language of climate change. Mr. Ben Tumwesigye, climate change programme manager, Oxfam.

Many developed countries think that financing or funding climate change activities is donation. It is not donation, it is paying for pollution… That is what we are asking our friends the Americans to do. They have ‘popped’ in the air and we are asking them to mop it up, and to mop it up in such a way that it can be used to help developing countries to pay for the cost to clean up.”

Mr Gerald Tenywa, environmental reporter, The New Vision.
When Uganda had a problem with HIV and Aids, the government came up with a big plan where there were people on radio stations, talk shows and the president moving around mobilising people against HIV and Aids. Climate change is [an] even bigger threat [yet] we have not seen a similar approach. Without [more] political will these issues just remain news briefly really to the media. 

Mr Andrew Mugyera, environmental journalist, NTV

Those outside government do agree, however, that financial constraints mean that it is difficult for NGOs in power to tackle climate change as effectively as they would like. “[The] government…created a climate change co-ordination unit,” says Ben Tsemwoluga of Oxfam, “but it is facing challenges…poor countries are not easily able to adopt to climate change because we do not have [the] resources – finance, human resources and knowledge, among other problems.” Gerald Tonyywa agrees: “The resources of this country are so small. It is like a blanket, if you have to cover children with a small piece of blanket each child is going to pull in an opposite direction. So at the end of the day you find that there are some sectors that are going to be left out in resource allocation – like climate change.”

In terms of mitigation, there is general agreement that the government, through the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and the National Forestry Authority (NFA), is trying to address the problem of climate change through policy on deforestation and wetlands, but sometimes has trouble enforcing the laws.

“Politically these laws are there but [they are] not insisted, the government’s work is to make policies and they have their agents like NFA and many others concerned with the environment. Despite this implementation is the problem. The government should implement its policies and not just make them and [then] just watch things go wrong. Then after a long time [when things have reached] a peak, maybe after ten years, [that is when] the government comes in. But it is better to avoid something as nasty as the soya pesa, prevention is better than cure.”

Mr Mohamed Nasur, chairman, Uganda National Congress Government

There is also a feeling among opinion leaders that the government often does not enforce strict environmental laws if it stands to benefit financially from turning a blind eye, a sentiment mirrored by the general public. “[The] government is not strict [and] instead connives with people cutting forests, people encroaching on wetlands,” says Daniel Nsambbi. Mohamed Nasur agrees: “The big people in government, the law does not get to them, but you are a small person, when you cut down the trees, they get you.”

Several opinion leaders mention the furor surrounding the cabinet’s decision to clear a third of the Mabira Forest (about 70 sq km) for sugar-cane plantations. “When it comes to deforestation, the government has been in reverse,” says Godfrey Ruyongu (Tooro Botanical Gardens). “It was appreciated [at]…they note the recent creation of a climate change focal point within the Ministry of Environment, and the development of a climate unit. However, more action is needed. The government response to climate change is seen to be reactive (giving aid to people after landslides) rather than proactive (“educating the public on what to do to avoid this happening!”), and not enough has been done to raise awareness of climate change among the population.

“When Uganda had a problem with HIV and Aids, the government came up with a big plan where there were people on radio stations, talk shows and the president moving around mobilising people against HIV and Aids. Climate change is [an] even bigger threat [yet] we have not seen a similar approach.”

When it comes to agreement: “wetlands, with people cutting forests, people encroaching on strict environmental laws if it stands to benefit the laws. However, despite misgivings about the government’s ability or intention to enforce environmental laws, several opinion leaders maintain that the situation is improving, especially in and around Mabira. Some people do have a problem – such as poverty and health, above climate change, without seeing that these issues are intricately linked.

“The challenging thing is that climate change is a fashionable issue at the moment but actually environment isn’t. So the challenge we have is [how] to interpret the environment and poverty issues, and [therefore work out] who is the most vulnerable to climate change.”

Rose Hagan, poverty and environment officer, UNDP and UNEP

NGOs have been active in campaigning to raise awareness of climate change in Uganda. However, there is some doubt as to how effective NGOs can be without the support of national and local government.

There is awareness amongst opinion leaders that NGOs have been active in campaigning to raise awareness of climate change in Uganda, as well as spearheading numerous forestation and adaptation programmes and strengthening Uganda’s international position in securing funding for adaptation. However, there is some doubt as to how effective NGOs can be without the support of national and local government. “NGOs are doing a great job, especially in the conservation of wetlands,” says Mohamed Nasur. However, he feels that it is difficult for NGOs to “mobilise” people and help them have their voices heard, as the government views civil demonstrations with suspicion. “Like the time NGOs demonstrated on Mabira and the government came in and intervened. So there is no way in which NGOs can come and gang up with people to try and maybe demonstrate peacefully on the issue.” There is therefore a call for better communication between NGOs and government institutions working on climate change.

There is also a feeling both inside and outside the NGO community, that both governments and civil society often prioritise other development needs, such as poverty and health, above climate change, without seeing that these issues are intricately linked.

“The challenging thing is that climate change is a fashionable issue at the moment but actually environment isn’t. So the challenge we have is [how] to interpret the environment and poverty issues, and [therefore work out] who is the most vulnerable to climate change.”

Rose Hagan, poverty and environment officer, UNDP and UNEP

NGOs have also conducted some local research on peoples understanding of climate change impacts. “Oxfam did a study on climate change and poverty, especially looking at adaptation, looking at [how] climate change impacts Uganda,” says Ben Tsemwoluga of that organisation. “[Without this research] we wouldn’t have been aware of the intensity of [the] climate change problem.”

Private-sector response

The private sector in Uganda is aware that climate change could have a severe impact on their businesses. However, they also feel there is a need to balance environmental concerns with economic growth.

All three representatives from the Ugandan private sector express concern about the impacts of climate change on their businesses. Patrick Dhikusooka explains how his company, SCOUL, will be affected by climate change: “95% of our cane depends on rainfall, so if rainfall goes down because of climate change, it means we will have to irrigate, so that means additional costs.” Even companies not directly affected by climate change might have serious impacts on their profits. “Our business is affected by liquidity, liquidity in the pockets of our customers. So if strong measures are not put in place to mitigate the negative effects of climate change, then maybe in the long run it will affect the liquidity of our customers, and maybe [then] our business will be affected.”

Mr Daniel Nsambbi, communications manager, Stanbic Bank

As a result of these projected impacts, people from within the private sector claim that the majority of businesses within Uganda now run “environmentally friendly” operations, using their resources responsibly and keeping waste to a minimum. However, as Robert Whitman points out, both finances and finding staff who understand the issue make taking definite action on climate change difficult. There is also a strong sense that any climate change initiatives should not adversely affect Uganda’s economic growth. According to Patrick Dhikusooka, “proper planning and investment” is needed in order to reconcile economic growth with environmental concerns. However, there is awareness that an emerging demand for sustainable products from the export market means that businesses are in a position to invest in improving the sustainability of their industrial processes.

[Addressing climate change and promoting economic growth at the same time is possible] because the Western world are

The consumers of the coffee and they want to be seen promoting better environmental practices and therefore decreasing the impacts on [the] environment. So if you [are] hecho, you need to be really flexible in your practices, there is a lot of growth in that segment. And people are willing to pay a premium to buy this sustainability and willing to pay the farmer premiums and a bonus as well. So yes, there is a possibility of development.”

Mr Robert Whitman, chief finance officer, Kyagalanyi Coffee Ltd

There is also a feeling that developed countries should help Uganda shoulder the costs of adapting to its industries, as they have a vested interest in helping Africa cope with climate change challenges.

“Uganda depends on agriculture, and once the climate is affected, in whatever way… that will have a big impact on our economy. And that will make us more dependent on [developed countries], which we don’t like to [be] because we would like to be economically independent, [yet] we shall be suffering because of their actions.”

Mr Patrick M Dhikusooka, general manager (administration and personnel), SCOUL

Media response

Media coverage of climate change tends to be reactive, often only occurring in response to events. Journalists feel that it is difficult to get editorial buy-in for stories on climate change, but believe the media have an important role to play in raising public awareness of the issue.

Amongst opinion leaders from both inside and outside the Ugandan media sector, there was agreement that the media does report on climate change, but “not enough”. Coverage tends to occur in response to disasters or crises – floods, droughts, chemical leaks from factories; and is rarely aimed at actually raising awareness amongst readers, listeners or viewers. Additionally, all three media representatives agree that climate change can be difficult to report on, because of the level of technical knowledge required to make sense of it as a phenomenon. “Climate change is a fashionable issue at the moment but without seeing that these issues are intrinsically linked.”

Several media representatives point out that it can also be difficult to get editorial buy-in for climate related stories. Such stories can be expensive to cover, and are not always regarded as being particularly critical.

[Climate change stories] are also expensive to cover. For example, in Karamoja real stories are coming out on climate change, but because it is kind of a deserted area, it is not very easy to get access to the area and then pack up [the story so all these factors combine and make it very difficult]. Now once you have packaged a story, you have tried your best, you have gone to [the area], they have facilitated you, then the editorial decision is to get you good space.”

Mr Gerald Tonyywa, environmental reporter, The New Vision
"Not many editors understand science and... most people prefer to go to parliament where there are [politicians] abusing each other and all that. Such stories take precedence whilst people could be starving up country, in the villages, because they have no food. These are good stories, but sometimes [they] are hidden. It demoralises [you] when you know exactly what you are talking about but sometimes editors do not want to give these issues priority.”

Mr Andrew Mugyema, environmental journalist, NTV

All media interviewees were keen to emphasise the important role they feel media can play in educating people about the causes of climate change, and how to adapt to its impacts.

“Even our members of parliament... do not understand science. I have been to the committee of natural resources and environment and these people clearly just sign whatever comes their way. So the ignorance is [apparent] top to bottom and bottom to top. There is a lot that the people can learn from the media and this will increase their understanding of climate change and the way they live or adapt to it.”

Mr Andrew Mugyema, environmental journalist, NTV

It will be important for the media to develop their understanding of climate change, and how to adapt to its impacts.

“Even our members of parliament... do not understand science. I have been to the committee of natural resources and environment and these people clearly just sign whatever comes their way. So the ignorance is [apparent] top to bottom and bottom to top. There is a lot that the people can learn from the media and this will increase their understanding of climate change and the way they live or adapt to it.”

Mr Andrew Mugyema, environmental journalist, NTV

The Church is also actively involved in encouraging people to take better care of nature. “We actually have a campaign to plant trees,” says Mr Robert Tumase (Diocese of Riverazori, Anglican Church). “So far we have covered 80 hectares. And we are also encouraging Christians to plant trees.”

The farming association and the botanical gardens say that their organisations are involved in local livelihoods programmes, such as educating farmers in better farming practices and reforestation, but rarely link these actions explicitly to climate change.

The three main elements that opinion leaders feel are lacking from Ugandan society are: firstly, clear and comprehensive education campaigns directed at the general public; secondly, support from industrialised countries; and thirdly, better communication between government and non-government agents acting on climate change.

Charles Aken points out that there is a need to capitalise on the current interest in climate change issues to engage the Ugandan public. “This climate change issue is becoming more real than it was and it is important to take advantage of this current awareness to put programmes [out on the] ground.” There is a worry that if this does not happen, climate change will simply become another stress factor that Ugandans accommodate into their often already difficult lives.

The Church is also actively involved in encouraging people to take better care of nature. “We actually have a campaign to plant trees,” says Mr Robert Tumase (Diocese of Riverazori, Anglican Church). “So far we have covered 80 hectares. And we are also encouraging Christians to plant trees.”

The farming association and the botanical gardens say that their organisations are involved in local livelihoods programmes, such as educating farmers in better farming practices and reforestation, but rarely link these actions explicitly to climate change.

The three main elements that opinion leaders feel are lacking from Ugandan society are: firstly, clear and comprehensive education campaigns directed at the general public; secondly, support from industrialised countries; and thirdly, better communication between government and non-government agents acting on climate change.

Charles Aken points out that there is a need to capitalise on the current interest in climate change issues to engage the Ugandan public. “This climate change issue is becoming more real than it was and it is important to take advantage of this current awareness to put programmes [out on the] ground.” There is a worry that if this does not happen, climate change will simply become another stress factor that Ugandans accommodate into their often already difficult lives.

5 Conclusion

This research has shown that public awareness and understanding of global climate change is low in Uganda. Climate change terminology is poorly understood and its translation in local languages does not convey its global causes or context. Most Ugandans recognise that their climate is changing than are aware of the term “climate change”. Climate change is often literally interpreted to mean “changes in weather”.

In this context, many Ugandans have their own ways of explaining why their weather patterns and environment have changed. They draw on existing knowledge and beliefs, both to explain the changes they have witnessed and to process new information on climate change. While most Ugandans see a link between human activity and changes in climate, this is very localised. Many link individual human activities, such as tree-felling and pollution, to degradation of the local environment and changes in weather patterns, yet most are not aware that pollution from outside their locality increases levels of greenhouse gases and has contributed to the changes they have experienced.

Ugandan opinion leaders are very aware that climate change presents a significant challenge to their country. However, there is little communication on the topic between government bodies and between the government and NGOs, the private sector and the media. Although the media and schools, are the main source of information on climate change for the general public, there is evidence to suggest that people working in the media lack the resources and leadership to effectively inform audiences about climate change and facilitate public discussion.

It is clear that communication and information provision are going to be central to Uganda’s response to these challenges. Many opinion leaders spontaneously mention the need for better communication on climate change, and all agree that the general public needs more information. Although this research sets out to present the perceptions of the Ugandan public on climate change, and not to detail a climate change communication strategy, various communication implications can be drawn from it:

Provide information

Firstly, the media have a critical role to play in providing information on climate change and supporting others to do so, including governments, national and international NGOs, scientists, religious leaders and community leaders. Ugandan citizens have a fundamental right to access information on an issue that affects their lives. Increased awareness and understanding of global climate change will enable and equip citizens and communities to discuss the problem, adapt to the effects of climate change and make informed long-term choices about their future.

Efforts to improve climate change communication need to confirm to people that weather patterns are changing and that extreme weather events are more likely to occur. They also need to raise awareness of global climate change and the ways in which it relates to people’s lives and livelihoods. People need information on ways to adapt to climate change and prepare for extreme weather events.

Communication efforts should also help people to build simple, correct mental models of how climate change works, being mindful of people’s existing understanding. In order to do this, appropriate climate change terminology should be developed and tested in local languages. Evidence and facts need to be communicated in a way that is locally relevant using a variety of news and non-news platforms.

Facilitate policy and public debate

Secondly, the media need to facilitate accessible public debate. Uganda is being affected by climate change. Internally driven, relevant debate on the issue is essential. The news and non-news media will shape and mediate that debate to a very substantial extent. For that reason, building the capacity of the media and providing support for “public spaces” which enable discussion on climate change that draws on Ugandan voices and experiences, engaging citizens, local interest groups, civil society actors, religious leaders and policymakers from all levels of government, will be crucial. These spaces, which can be created through talk shows, call-ins and other popular interactive platforms, can be forums to exchange information, create understanding and plans for action. They can also serve to facilitate better cross-sector communication between government, NGOs, the private sector, the media, and local and community leaders.

Encourage accountability

Thirdly, debate can increase accountability, enabling citizens to exert pressure on their own governments with respect to climate change policies: adaptation funding, technology transfer, emissions reduction and other response strategies. Only when Ugandan citizens are fully informed about, and able to debate, climate change, will they begin to influence the national and international climate change policies and processes which affect their lives.

www.africatalksclimate.com

www.africatalksclimate.com


3. Declining crop yields, especially in Africa, are likely to leave hundreds of millions without the ability to produce or purchase sufficient food: Stern, Lord N., & Review: The Economics of Climate Change (2006), <www.fantasy.g Activism and Content/extern_report.html>

4. A 2007 survey of southern Africa found that farmers saw a lack of information on climate change effects and potential adaptation strategies as significant barriers to adaptation. See Micro-Level Analysis of Farmers’ Adaptation in Climate Change in Southern Africa, by C Nhlangano and R Hassan (2007), <www.fantasy.org/journals/04/07/043f.pdf>

References


3. Declining crop yields, especially in Africa, are likely to leave hundreds of millions without the ability to produce or purchase sufficient food: Stern, Lord N., & Review: The Economics of Climate Change (2006), <www.fantasy.g Activism and Content/extern_report.html>

4. A 2007 survey of southern Africa found that farmers saw a lack of information on climate change effects and potential adaptation strategies as significant barriers to adaptation. See Micro-Level Analysis of Farmers’ Adaptation in Climate Change in Southern Africa, by C Nhlangano and R Hassan (2007), <www.fantasy.org/journals/04/07/043f.pdf>

Appendix 1

Leader names and titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and title</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Bright Twijumwa</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries</td>
<td>National government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Doreen Kyetume</td>
<td>National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO)</td>
<td>National government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Paul Lugima</td>
<td>Department of Ministry of Health</td>
<td>National government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Philip Gwage</td>
<td>Department of Ministry of Water and Environment</td>
<td>National government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Christopher Kasaja</td>
<td>Kabale Parish, Fort Portal</td>
<td>Local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Mohamed Nasir</td>
<td>Soroti Provincial Government</td>
<td>Local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Andrew Muggema</td>
<td>National Television (NTV)</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gerald Toti</td>
<td>The New Vision</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Wilma Masaba</td>
<td>Open Gate FM Radio</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Daniel Nsibambi</td>
<td>Stanbic Bank</td>
<td>Private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Patrick Dhokondo</td>
<td>Sugar Corporation of Uganda Ltd (SCUL)</td>
<td>Private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert Thompson</td>
<td>Kyalagij National Coffee Company</td>
<td>Private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert Tusono</td>
<td>Jango Church</td>
<td>Religious institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Joseph Christian</td>
<td>Anglican Church</td>
<td>Religious institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Charles Aber</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</td>
<td>Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Godfrey Ruyonga</td>
<td>Tooro Botanical Gardens</td>
<td>Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ben Tumushiga</td>
<td>National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)</td>
<td>Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Moses K. Olo</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)</td>
<td>NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Rose Hogan</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</td>
<td>Multilateral development agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2

Adaptation umbrella group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Savio Carvalho</td>
<td>Oxfam</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Nick Hepworth</td>
<td>LTS International</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Richard Kimbowa</td>
<td>Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Alex Muwehezi</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Christine Nantongo</td>
<td>Environmental Alert</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus group discussions

Focus groups were convened with farmers and pastoralists, market traders and business people, women and men, rich and poor, rural and urban. Given the implications of climate change for certain livelihoods in Uganda, individuals working in farming (Fort Portal, Soroti) and pastoralists (Soroti) were purposefully targeted.

Of the 12 focus groups, 4 were convened in each location: 2 in an urban area of town, and 2 in a rural area. The focus groups were single sex with approximately 8 participants who fell within a similar age range. These were selected based on desk research and consultation with the local advisory group and local researchers.

Opinion leaders were selected from six different sectors, according to a quota. The sectors were: government, the private sector, religious institutions, local and national associations (for example, farming associations) and NGOs and academic institutions.

The next section of the discussion guide introduced the concepts of climate change and global warming, without actually introducing the terms. Two statements were read out to participants.

Statement 1: Scientists are saying that human beings are causing weather patterns over time to change around the world.

Statement 2: Scientists are saying that human beings are causing the temperature of the earth to increase.

Participants’ reactions to these statements were discussed. Finally, the terms “climate change” and “global warming” were explored. These terms were intentionally introduced relatively late in the discussion guide based on experience from the pilot study in Nigeria, which suggested that most participants would not be familiar with the terms.

The subsequent sections of the guide explored responses to climate change, barriers and facilitators to environmental stewardship, rural-urban migration and the potential role of media.

With the exception of Nigeria, the discussion guide was the same for all Africa Talks Climate countries. It was translated into local languages through a consultation process with local researchers and moderators who spoke those languages.

In-depth interviews

The research team conducted 18 in-depth interviews with opinion leaders to elicit the views of policymakers and opinion formers on the issue of climate change. These opinion formers were individuals with a particular interest in climate change, or an informed opinion from a certain field, region or subject area within the country. These were selected based on desk research and consultation with the local advisory group and local researchers.

Opinion leaders were selected from six different sectors, according to a quota. The sectors were: government, the media, the private sector, religious institutions, local and national associations (for example, farming associations) and NGOs and academic institutions.

Fort Portal and Soroti were interviewed. In the media sector, representatives were sought from radio, television and print media. Both private and public media were represented, and both national and local media.

In the private sector, a coffee processing company, a sugar producing company and a national/regional bank were represented.

The two religious leaders who were consulted were a reverend from the Uganda Joint Christian Council and a local religious leader from Fort Portal.

The two associations/groups represented were a farming association in Soroti, and the director of Tooro Botanical Gardens in Fort Portal.

Finally, a representative from an NGO with a climate change focus was interviewed as well as a representative from UNDP/UNEP.

All the opinion leaders interviewed gave permission for their reflections and opinions to be used in Africa Talks Climate reports.

Analysis and reporting

All focus group discussions and interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were produced in both the original language of discussion and in English. For focus groups held in Kampala, English and Luganda transcripts were produced by the moderators, while for Fort Portal and Soroti, Rutooro and Ateso transcripts were produced respectively. English transcripts were then generated from the Luganda, Rutooro and Ateso transcripts by a team of translators in Uganda. These translators first read through the vernacular transcripts for inconsistencies and anomalies which, if found, were raised with the researchers in Uganda. The researchers in Uganda then returned to the original vernacular transcripts and, if necessary, the audio recordings, to clarify the issues raised.

In-depth interviews were conducted in English and transcripts were systematically coded by a team of researchers, using a common list of codes. This list was generated through a detailed consultation process that began with open coding. Inter-coder reliability ultimately averaged 0.92. Coding enabled the researchers to group the data according to emerging themes. Each code was then analysed to pull out the insights and findings.

Guiding principles

Africa Talks Climate endeavoured to adhere to the following guidelines:

• This research initiative will be led by BBC WST’s Research and Learning Group (R&L) researchers working across Africa.
• R&L London will coordinate the research and provide support for research design, analysis and reporting.
• Informal advisory networks will be established at a strategic and country level to guide research approach, delivery and reporting.
• Thematic training will draw on local academic or other institutions with expertise and local knowledge such as the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
• All moderators and interviewers undertaking fieldwork will receive intensive skills-based and thematic training on climate change.
• Any research agency employed to help deliver fieldwork will employ local researchers/moderators and their work will be quality controlled by R&L.

In Uganda, as in all Africa Talks Climate countries, every effort was made to speak to the climate change focal point at the national government level. The remaining ministries were selected according to the ways in which climate change played out in the country. In Uganda, representatives were chosen from the Ministry of Water and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, NARO and the Ministry of Health.

At the local government level, local council representatives from vernacular transcripts were refined several times before being translated into English, to ensure accuracy in the creation of the English transcripts.

In-depth interviews were conducted in English and transcripts produced in the same language.

The focus group transcripts and interview transcripts were systematically coded by a team of researchers, using a common list of codes. This list was generated through a detailed consultation process that began with open coding. Inter-coder reliability ultimately averaged 0.92. Coding enabled the researchers to group the data according to emerging themes. Each code was then analysed to pull out the insights and findings.

Appendix 3: Methodology overview

Uganda Talks Climate employs a qualitative research design. Qualitative approaches – which generate non-numeric data – are particularly useful for exploratory research on topics for which there is little previous research. Through focus group and in-depth interviews, Uganda Talks Climate investigates the meaning that people attach to climate change, and explores how they experience climate-related issues and impacts.

A total of 12 focus groups with citizens and 18 in-depth interviews with opinion leaders were carried out across the three locations in Uganda in May 2009.

The three fieldwork locations were selected based on desk research and consultation with the Uganda advisory group. The environmental challenges represented in these areas have already been linked to climate change, to some extent, or could be further exacerbated by climate change in the future. Selection also sought to ensure suitable geographic, ethnic, linguistic and urban/rural diversity. The locations selected for research were as follows:

- Kampala, Fort Portal and Soroti.
- Kampala
- Soroti
- Fort Portal

Languages

The term “language” here refers to the variety of a language which had the greatest impact on their lives. A discussion of the uses of language and the languages through a consultation process with local researchers and moderators who spoke those languages.

Appendix C: Quota achieved in Uganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Quota</th>
<th>Achieved in Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National government</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 national, 2 local)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local associations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(such as farming associations)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs, academics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Uganda, the quota was achieved for each sector, with an additional interview carried out at the national government level in order to include National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO).

In Uganda, the quota was achieved for each sector, with an additional interview carried out at the national government level in order to include National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO).

* In Uganda, the quota was achieved for each sector, with an additional interview carried out at the national government level in order to include National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO).
BRITISH COUNCIL
The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Dedicated to the exchange of knowledge and ideas, the British Council works in the arts, education, science, sport and governance in over 100 countries, last year reaching more than 128 million people. For more information, please visit www.britishcouncil.org.

BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST
The BBC World Service Trust is the BBC’s international development charity. It aims to reduce poverty and promote human rights. The Research and Learning Group (R&L) specialises in the design and delivery of research that provides insights into the role of media and communications around development issues.

Registered charity number: 1076235

BBC World Service Trust, Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH, UK
Tel +44 (0) 20 7557 2462
Fax +44 (0) 20 7397 1622
Email ws.trust@bbc.co.uk
Web bbcworldservicetrust.org

www.britishcouncil.org/africa
www.britishcouncil.org/climatechange