



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

FOCUS: Climate change and Weather information

Climate change is not just about the weather. It refers to seasonal changes over a long period.

These climate patterns play a fundamental role in the management of natural resources and in providing for human survival.

Erratic weather patterns with changes in temperature and rainfall are already affecting the ecosystem, biodiversity and people. For instance, during the 2014/15 rainy season in Zambia, we experienced erratic rains and drought. The impact of the erratic rains is currently affecting hydropower generation because of low water levels in the Kariba dam. This is an impact at a national level but impact at community levels is also happening.

Knowledge about what is causing these changes in climate is very important for adaptation.

The Weekly Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

Problem: Limited Indigenous Knowledge for Climate Change

The adverse effects of climate change continue to be a major threat to national development, rural livelihood and social economic activities. The impact of erratic weather has resulted in prolonged drought leading to drying up of water sources, poor crop yields and livestock losses. All these factors can lead to food shortages at the household level.

The use of local/traditional knowledge in forecasting erratic weather has been used by local communities for generations; however, this knowledge is being ignored. Yet, the traditional warning system can be of great help toward adaptation to the impact of climate change.

Indigenous knowledge, which

is based on observation and experience, provides useful information to local people on adapting to climate change. This is critical for local communities that depend on natural resources for survival.

For instance, we have heard of traditional knowledge being linked to certain plants and animals to indicate weather patterns.

Certain birds and the flowering of certain trees have been used by rural communities for generations to predict good or bad seasons. This knowledge helps farmers to determine which types of crops to plant. Integrating indigenous and scientific knowledge in weather forecasting can help farmers plan well for the season.

Solutions: Activities for Journalists

Ask radio listeners what traditional knowledge they use to predict a good or bad rainy season.

The behavior of certain mammals especially ants and birds have been known to predict the season, ask listeners if they use this kind of information.

Find out from listeners about any other traditional methods they use for predicting weather.

What is the general behavior of some animals and plants in our areas when weather is changing?

Bird migration is the movement between the seasons by some birds while others mainly migrate because of habitat destruction and availability of food. Birds are very important in predicting variations in weather, climate changes and even wildfires.

Ask listeners the names of birds that can be used to indicate changing weather?

Indigenous people were able to read and interpret the signs predicted by nature. For instance, high wind meant changing pressure which is accompanied by changing weather.

Find out from listeners how they interpret the direction of wind and its movement?

Can you engage with the elders about how they predict changes in weather – and how they use this knowledge when planting crops?

Modern science has improved collection of weather information. Ask listeners how often they are able to hear the weather report on their radio station. Ask listeners what are the main sources of weather information in their areas? Ask how they use weather information for farming activities or any other livelihoods activity?

Does your community radio station provide weather forecasts on a regular basis? How many times a day?

Useful Links

Information about farming and the environment: Makweti Sishekanu, National Farmers Union Zambia: +260-211-252-649 or +260-965-098-360. Email: makwetiskanu@yahoo.com

Mr. Reidner Mumbi, Department of Metrology
[0979313499](tel:0979313499)

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, FAO Zambia; Email: vinceziba@yahoo.com. Phone: 0966-246-924

Good source of information; Mwape Sichilongo, WWF Conservation Manager. Email: msichilongo@wwfzam.org. Phone: +260 966442540