



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Focus on: Climate Change and The Church

Climate change affects all people regardless of religious affiliation. This week's bulletin looks at climate change and the church.

The majority of Zambians happen to be Christians and the church can play an important role in the dissemination of climate change information.

The information on climate change spreads much faster through larger groups and churches are ideal.

One of the churches that has been active in this regard is the Catholic Church. This can be seen through the relief organizations that are part of the Catholic Church - such as Caritas Zambia.

Caritas is involved in the dissemination of climate change information and also promoting adaptation activities such as conservation farming and also they are promoting the planting of trees.

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

Communities Need More Info on Climate Change

Though there is a lot of climate change information that has been written it has not always reached the intended communities. This can be attributed mainly to the fact that many in the community aren't exposed to climate change issues – even though it affects their lives.

Community gatherings such as the area development committees are supposed to be held regularly to discuss problems that communities want to be addressed but in many cases even when these meetings are held they do not focus on climate change adaptation programmes. Instead, community members would rather talk about roads or clinics.

Area development committee meetings are supposed to feed ideas into the district development committee where these ideas are then delivered to the provincial and national committees.

In some cases, the people that do attend these meetings are not educated on the need to put forward climate change adaptation programmes such as conservation agriculture or the construction of irrigation canals. Most of the people that attend area development committee meetings mainly want basic things such as roads, mills or clinics.

The current programme on decentralization looks at how decisions made at the local level can be used to fit into the main national agenda. Therefore, the decentralization policy provides a platform for the people to be part of policy formulation and that can also include making climate change adaptation a priority during budget formulation and implementation.

In order for communities to fully understand how they can push the issue of climate change adaptation into the national policy agenda there is need to make them fully aware of what climate change is. Therefore there is need to build strong bonds between the church and communities.

Activities for Journalists

Faith-based organizations can play an important role in the dissemination of information – particularly climate change information. Organizations such as Caritas Zambia that work through the diocese have a greater impact on communities than other organizations. The structure of Caritas Zambia is organized in such a way that it is able to implement its programmes through the diocese.

The church is mostly composed of a variety of people from many different backgrounds and thus offers an important opportunity to share information – even on climate change. For instance, the Catholic Church through its dioceses, including Monze diocese, promotes climate change adaptation programmes such as conservation agriculture.

In addition to the Catholic Church, The Seventh Day Adventist Church has also been having activities related to climate change. The youth have been sharing and learning from each other on activities that focus on the causes of climate change and how these causes can be mitigated. The church also works through an organization called the Adventist Development Relief Agency. This organization is important in spreading the message of climate change adaptation for communities that are mostly affected with floods and long dry spells.

ADRA has mainly been involved in building food storage sites in the southern province. This is mainly due to the fact that the southern province is mainly affected with droughts. The food sites provide food security in that they act as store facilities for communities.

Kasisi Agricultural Training Center has also been involved in climate change education in the communities where it works. KATC has mainly been involved in the promotion of organic farming. Communities in Chongwe are benefitting from this work and have seen better crop yields. Kasisi has also translated climate change literature into local languages.

Are there organizations like KATC working in your community?

Are the churches in your community distributing information about climate change to their congregations? Do any of the churches offer programs on organic or conservation gardening?

Invite a clergy member to come and share how the church has been involved in the dissemination of climate change information and how effective it has been with their congregation. Have there been any noticeable changes?

Organize an activity with members of the community to visit a member of the community that is practicing conservation farming. Find out how s/he started and to highlight benefits he has seen.

Useful Link

Ms Bridget O'Connor. Kasisi agricultural training center, Cell: 0976958555

Mr Clarence Muzyamba. Seventh day Adventist church youth leader, Cell: 0966404322

Mr Chiluya Sampa. Caritas programmes officer. Cell: 0977424598

<http://www.adra.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=7045>