BRACED: Developing and Communicating Information that Can Support Climate Resilience: Learning from Zaman Lebidi, Burkina Faso

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Aim of the project

The BRACED project aims to enhance the resilience of people at risk of climate shocks and stresses within four provinces across East, Centre North and North of Burkina Faso. One component focused on the development and delivery of accessible, timely, relevant climate information.

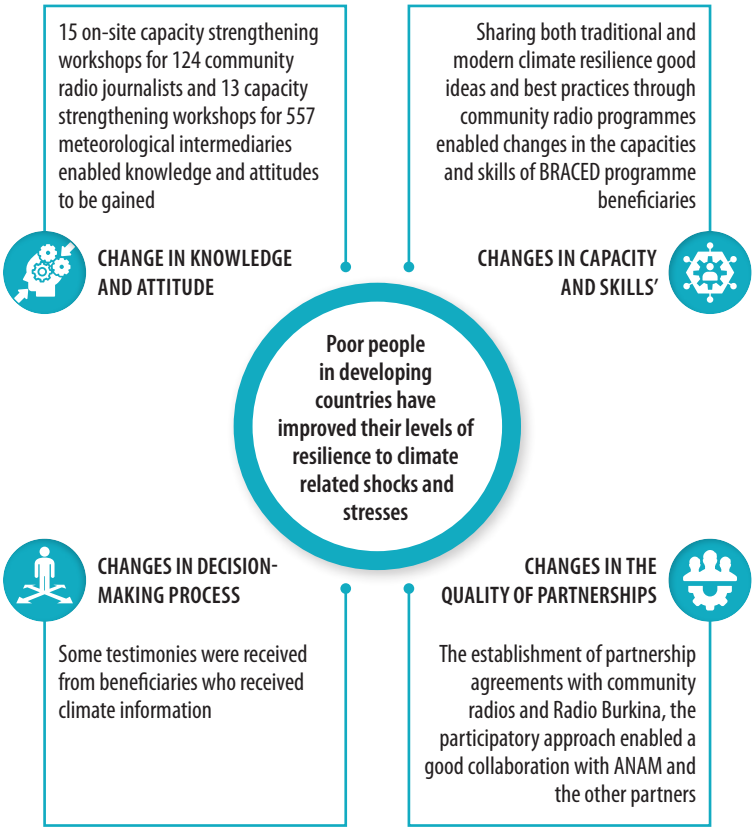
Dates

January–August 2014 (project development phase): January 2015–March 2018 (main project)

Countries

Burkina Faso

AREAS OF CHANGE



Domains of change resulting through Zaman Lebidi. *(Adapted from: Silva Villaneuva et al., 2016)*

Aim of co-production:

Co-production related to climate services included the following:

- Strengthening the technical and communication capacities of national meteorological services to enable partners to jointly develop forecasts tailored to support agro-pastoralists.
- Developing the technical and journalistic capacities of local community radio stations to address climate risks within ongoing programming and engagement with listening groups.
- The joint development of a Lexicon of Words and Weather Terms in three local languages.
- Reinforcing the integration of climate information within local early warning decision-making bodies and processes.
- Supporting opportunities for ongoing learning between the providers and users of climate services.

Context:

Bringing together partners operating at local, national and international scales, Zaman Lebidi worked at village level with local governance structures and community organisations. With particular focus on women and children, the project targeted 1.3 million people living in areas where the principal livelihoods are farming and livestock. Prior to the project, among the partners and at-risk people in the areas where project activities were undertaken, access to, and use of climate information, was low. Products of the Burkina Faso National Meteorological Agency/*Agence National de la Météorologie* (ANAM) were considered unreliable, overly technical and inaccessible.

Who was involved and what were their roles?

Coordinated by Christian Aid, the BRACED Zaman Lebidi consortium brought together NGOs working in water infrastructure, health, agriculture, gender and communications, the national meteorological agency ANAM, the Met Office, *Radiodiffusion Télévision du Burkina* (RTB), Internews, King's College London (KCL) and national academic institutions. KCL developed a learning framework and coordinated a series of learning events on communicating climate information, integrating climate information within local government decision-making and co-production related to resilience building. The Met Office provided training, including post-event analysis, forecasting and verification, and ANAM and the UK Met agency shared differing climatological datasets and climate information needs. Project partners, with ANAM, jointly developed climate information tailored to support agro-pastoralists in the zones of project focus. Internews trained and provided mentoring to radio producers and technicians to enable the broadcast of this information. They also coordinated the co-production of a Lexicon of Weather Terms, bringing together the expertise of a wide range of actors.

How was co-production done?

Identify key actors and build partnerships; build common ground; co-explore need

Recognising the complexity of factors that impact on the climate resilience of rural households in Burkina Faso, the Zaman Lebidi consortium brought together multiple actors with diverse expertise working across scales. Time was required to build a common understanding, with some partners having no prior experience of working with national meteorological services and others no operational experience in Burkina Faso. There were language constraints between Anglophone and Francophone partners and populations speaking different local languages. There was also a need to translate between the sector-specific, technical terminologies of meteorology, climate science, humanitarian

What was co-produced?

- **A suite of decision-relevant, non-technical climate information services**: These included seasonal forecasts, weather warnings and resilient farming practices tailored to support agro-pastoralists and provided through a range of languages and channels, including email, community radio and SMS/IVT platform via mobile phone.
- **A Lexicon of Words and Weather Terms**: This provided definitions in three local languages (Moore, Gurmencéma and Fulfuldé), French and English, and included a guide to the abbreviations employed within the project-initiated SMS climate services.
- **A series of learning papers**

Benefits of the co-production approach

- Co-production and communication of relevant climate information via accessible channels increased access to, and use of, climate information. Farmers used the forecasts to decide where, when and what to plant and how to protect their assets from severe weather events, disease and pests.
- Among project partners, there were notable changes in the knowledge and attitudes, capacities and skills, and the quality of partnership (see image).
- Many partners felt that working in a consortium with multiple, diverse organisations was a major strength in developing integrated approaches to resilience building.
- Learning workshops and joint village-level assessments created spaces for sharing information and building trust. Having an academic partner with a learning remit supported the ring-fencing of resources for learning.
- Actors recognised the need to ensure continuation of climate services post-project. ANAM and CONASUR budgeted for the continued communication of climate services and training of focal weather intermediaries. Local radio stations agreed to continue transmitting climate services. The project supported ANAM's development of a Climate Information Communications Strategy.

aid, disaster risk reduction, development and resilience-building programming and academic research. During the Project Development Phase, KCL developed a framework and principles to support agreement about ways of working and to promote internal and wider learning.

A workshop in 2016 provided a first opportunity for the national meteorological service to directly discuss with humanitarian and development partners the climate information which they produce. This provided a foundation from which to develop a common understanding about the processes required to produce and deliver decision-relevant climate information. Partners recognised the importance of engaging with local knowledge in building the trust, cultural appropriateness and livelihood relevance of national meteorological service's forecasts.

Co-develop solutions

Partners jointly developed climate information tailored to support agro-pastoralists in the zones where BRACED partners were operating. Uncertainty over long-term responsibility for translating climate information into contextualised advice on livelihood approaches highlighted the need for ensuring engagement with extension services.

Internews worked with radio stations which, prior to the project, had mostly not been broadcasting weather or climate information. They provided production and communication training, emphasising the importance of bringing together local and scientific knowledge and ensuring inclusion of diverse perspectives. Joint research among the focus at-risk populations enabled the identification of appropriate ways and terms for communicating climate information, as well as existing good practices for addressing climate risks.

Internews also coordinated the co-production of a Lexicon of Weather Words and Terms that sought to reduce misunderstandings between meteorological experts, journalists and decision-makers. Bringing together farmers, journalists from local radio stations, community leaders and meteorological agency officials over two days, the group identified 517 key terms that required definitions in non-technical language. The development of the definitions took nine months and involved meteorological experts from ANAM and the Met Office, journalists, researchers from the National Centre for Scientific and Technological Research/*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique* (CNRST), the National Council for Emergency Assistance and Rehabilitation/*Conseil National de Secours d'Urgence et de Réhabilitation* (CONASUR), farmers, linguists, translators, sociologists, engineers, forecasters and community leaders.

Co-deliver solutions

RTB broadcast ANAM forecasts in local languages, which were then relayed, by local radios, to rural people, listeners' groups, municipal councillors and village councils for development, and early warning, committees. The Radio Listening Committee, comprising Internews and journalists specialising in national languages, monitored the quality of radio programmes.

Forecasts were simultaneously broadcast via Digital solutions for agriculture (ESOKO's) EcoData platform via mobile phone to 1 200 intermediaries. The platform made it possible to both directly reach targeted groups and collect instantaneous feedback.

Ongoing learning

To enable learning to inform ongoing work, KCL facilitated a series of learning events. Learning was synthesised in a series of policy briefs and discussed in the project's Steering and Technical Committee meetings, as well as being shared widely.

Lessons to learn from:

- **Ensuring the involvement of the national meteorological services from the project design phase**: Insufficient resource allocation at project outset, and meeting national contracting regulations, led to difficulties in engaging ANAM as a full project partner. The evolving situation also highlighted how engagement may be affected by changes in political leadership and policy priorities.
- **Investing sufficient time:** Time is needed to build a shared understanding of, and common approach to, the steps in the process of developing decision-relevant climate services.
- **Clarifying roles and responsibilities:** Each step in the co-production process should be clear on roles and ensure that these are sufficiently resourced.
- **Flexible programming**: Building resilience to climate risks requires flexible programming and extended time frames. Given the short project time frame, partners felt obliged to deliver climate information to meet programme time frames rather than as required by seasonally-based livelihood activities.
- **Promoting sustainability by working through existing channels and networks:** Strengthen the capacities of local government and consider the benefits of using existing channels and networks alongside the constraints related to mobile coverage, energy supply and the sustainability of project-initiated channels, such as SMS.
- **Resourcing ongoing individual, organisational and wider learning**: Partners preferred face-to-face collaboration and practical approaches, such as training. Partners particularly highlighted the importance of exploring new ways of conducting local research and learning.
- **Develop institutional incentives:** Value the respective engagement of researchers, technicians, practitioners and decision-makers in the co-production process.
- **Inclusion**: There were unresolved challenges in reaching women due to the timing of radio broadcasts and women's preference for word-of-mouth communication. Investing in building capacities for co-production as close as possible to those people whom a climate service is seeking to support is critical. There is a need to move co-production from a set of project-level activities towards an integrated institutional and professional pathway for learning-based action at local, national, regional and international levels.

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