



SYNTHESIS REPORT

ADAPTATION
KNOWLEDGE
PLATFORM

FIFTH SHARING & LEARNING SEMINAR Reaching the Masses: Building Critical Public Awareness of Climate Change

Wednesday, 27 April 2011, 09:00 - 13:00 Hrs
Bangkok, Thailand





The fifth bi-monthly Sharing and Learning seminar of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform for Asia (Adaptation Knowledge Platform) and the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) was organised in collaboration with The Media Alliance and the Sida/Swedish Environmental Secretariat for Asia (SENSA) on the theme of how the media, entertainment and creative industries can raise public awareness of climate change and the need for adaptation. The seminar brought together people from these industries with international development organisations, NGOs, academia, government and UN agencies working on adaptation to climate change.

Among the intended outputs of the seminar were greater collaboration towards public awareness and behaviour change in relation to climate change; better understanding of the concepts, strategies and tools that can be employed in building mass audience awareness; and further realisation of the need for public participation in decision making around adaptation.

The seminar focused attention on existing market research and strategies that could be adopted for adaptation. This report provides a synthesis of presenters' discussion points and suggestions from participants' breakout groups.

REMARKS AND FACILITATION

The Adaptation Knowledge Platform's Senior Knowledge Management Officer, Roopa Rakshit, described the background and purpose of the seminar series, which is aimed at strengthening existing communities of practice around adaptation.

Rakshit noted that communities of practice provide research insights, advocate for the sharing and exchange of information, and also collaborate and network to deliver new information and knowledge products. Rakshit said that communities of practice around adaptation were maturing.



Stuart Ward, Information and Communication Officer of SENA, facilitated the seminar and introduced the speakers of the day. He said that Sida, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and The Media Alliance view the seminar as a building block in the ongoing process of developing their climate change campaign, adding a hope that the engagement of media and creative people in this endeavour will become a continuing practice at a broad level.

Ward requested a show of hands from participants to indicate if they were from the public or private sector, academia, international NGOs or multilateral bodies. The results showed mixed representation of all sectors. Guests then seated themselves to ensure mixed representation at each table. An ice-breaker exercise helped people become familiar with the names of others at their table.

At the close of the meeting, rapporteur Delia Paul provided a summary of the main points covered by speakers, while Ward thanked participants for their valuable input.



PUBLIC AWARENESS LEVELS, STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Keynote address

Todd Miller, former Executive Vice-President, Networks, Asia-Pacific of Sony Pictures Television Asia-Pacific and board member of the Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia, delivered the keynote address.

Miller highlighted the awareness gap in Asia regarding climate change. A 2008 Gallup study on attitudes to climate change suggested that just 53 per cent of people in Asia were aware of the issue. In the US last year, media coverage slipped to a level last seen in 2005, although it was a year of many climate-related disasters.

He cited a number of barriers to raising awareness on climate change, including the science-based nature of the message, and the tendency to view climate change as an impersonal issue unrelated to personal responsibility.

In getting the message out, Miller said, “We must appeal to people’s hearts, not their brains,” emphasising that messages must be personal, emphasising accountability and including a call to action.

To do so, Miller said that the issue of climate change must go beyond “the 30-second spot” in news and factual environments, and be embedded in popular entertainment. He recommended collaborating with the creative industries in order to weave the



topic of climate change into talk shows, music and storylines of television dramas. Miller cited the example of US public health authorities' collaboration with Hollywood filmmakers to create the notion of a "designated driver" as a socially acceptable and responsible form of behaviour that eventually successfully reduced drink driving in the US. Other examples included the World Food Programme's collaboration with Sony, using animation from the film *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* for a clip promoting its work, and the advertising agency Dentsu's rapid fundraising response for recent Japan disaster relief, using volunteer work by employees and air time donated by broadcasters.



Miller called on guests to "think youth, think platform, think open possibilities". He ended with a quote by Confucius: "Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I'll remember. Involve me and I'll understand."



Public participation in decision making on climate change adaptation

Steve Garton, Executive Chairman of Synovate, a market research company, spoke about recent research on climate awareness, globally and in Asia.

Garton presented in detail on various aspects of climate awareness, including consumer attitudes towards environmentally-friendly products, comparisons of national attitudes towards climate change, and public expectations of the private sector and the role of the media in addressing climate change.



In a 2010 global study in 28 countries with over 22,000 people, 30 per cent said they were “very concerned” about climate change, while 39 were “somewhat concerned”. However, there was also an increase from previous years in the number of people who were not at all concerned, believing that climate change is a natural cycle of events (from four per cent in 2008 to nine per cent in 2010).



Among other findings of Synovate's research were that:

- The vast majority of those surveyed (88 per cent) felt that companies have a responsibility to help reduce climate change. This was highest in China (98 per cent) and France (94 per cent).
- A majority thought that companies should do this by saving energy and reducing waste (70 per cent) and ensuring that materials are green and ethically sourced (58 per cent).
- Most people believed the main danger of climate change is extreme weather (31 per cent). Far fewer identified, for example, the spread of disease (9 per cent), impact on farming (5 per cent) or loss of wildlife (3 per cent).
- The most popular activity that people reported having undertaken as individuals was saving power (76 per cent).
- Almost half of all those surveyed said they would be willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products.

Desarack Teso, Corporate Affairs Director for Microsoft in South East Asian emerging markets, spoke about IT as a key tool for addressing environmental challenges. Since 1998, Microsoft has formed a 5-year partnership with the European Environment Agency to develop technological solutions for public awareness and behaviour change. Two applications built on Microsoft technologies were demonstrated.

The Eye on Earth application (<http://www.eyeonearth.eu/>) enables viewing and comparison of air and water quality in 32 European Union states; residents may add their own ratings if they disagree with the quality levels shown. Another application, Bend the Trend (www.BendtheTrend.net), allows individuals to make personal pledges such as going without meat for a week, replacing long-haul flights with working online,



taking shorter showers and preferring a laptop over a desktop. The application calculates the offset value in reduced carbon emissions for each activity chosen. Similar initiatives are being discussed with partners in Asia.

Somrudee Nicro, Senior Director of the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), reported on outcomes of a civil society dialogue held in Chiang Rai last year to share perspectives, ideas and experiences of adaptation, and to build a regional network of civil society organisations involved in adaptation to climate change. Organisations from Yunnan province in China, and from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam took part in the dialogue.

Key messages from the dialogue were that vulnerability can be reduced in many ways - by reducing risk, increasing coping capacity or reducing exposure and sensitivity to hazards; there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Adaptation is not a stand-alone issue, and local knowledge systems are crucial in coping with flood and drought events. Furthermore, local knowledge and adaptive efforts need to be supported at the policy level, focusing not only on cash income and market demand, but also taking into account people's well-being. The dialogue made several recommendations:

1. Understand vulnerable communities - their history and reasons for vulnerability - and evaluate local capacity before developing action plans, which must be implementable.
2. Localise action plans - community action plans should give priority to local risks and needs. Young people in many communities look forward to migrating away from their communities; this new generation needs support in terms of knowledge and awareness building. Access to resources is needed in



order to develop and implement plans to address needs. Cooperation among local government, NGOs and the private sector will be necessary in order for plans to become effective.

3. Share knowledge among government agencies, academia, civil society organisations and local communities. Academics could provide evidence-based research on topics such as the “sufficiency economy”, an idea initiated by the King of Thailand. Public consultation forums can be a good communication tool if they are respectful of local resource-use practices.
4. Bring together knowledge and good practice on adaptation by government agencies, researchers and civil society organisations. Academic research could be disseminated in appropriate formats and languages so that it is accessible for local people. Civil society groups could act as linkage points with academia in this endeavour.



Q&A session

In response to a question about the most powerful communication tools for keeping up community interest after dialogues have taken place, Somrudee commented that face-to-face communication is most effective in this region. She said that even in the peri-urban area of Map Ta Phut, one of the challenges in working with local people is to reduce the gap of knowledge between themselves, the private sector and the government. TEI has been teaching community people to access online information, an initiative that was seen as unrealistic by some others. However, much important public information, such as from

the Mekong River Commission, is only available online; other options for information dissemination are costly and still do not guarantee that everyone will have access, so strengthening the capacity of local people to use the internet is useful.

In response to a question about which media are most influential, Steve Garton responded that television ranks first, followed by websites.

Roles and responsibilities of the media, entertainment and creative industries for adaptation to climate change

Andrew Thomas, Regional Managing Director for Southeast Asia, Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, highlighted the gap between reported actions and actual consumption behaviour. For example, in an early survey of consumers in China, fifty-five per cent of people claimed to use energy-efficient appliances in their home, even though such appliances were not available in China at the time – a phenomenon he called the “sustainability gap”: consumers want to be perceived as environmentally responsible, even when their choices are otherwise. Thomas said that the sustainability gap should be addressed in China and the US, where most materials are being manufactured and consumed.

He emphasised that in today’s world, we are all linked via social media, and that peer pressure can be harnessed for behaviour change objectives. The creation of environmental “champions” in the media is counter-productive, by implying that responsible behaviour is special – not what ordinary people do. He concluded that “Green needs to be easier, more common, and fun.”

The Hopenhagen campaign was presented as an example. The global reach of the campaign, which deployed rallies, flash mobs, and mixed sponsorship to target government delegates in the run-up to the 2009 climate conference in Copenhagen, showed that collective action could create a palpable sense of hope and popular pressure towards the achievement of climate targets.

Emphasising that “People need more than ice caps and polar bears”, Thomas proposed five points for bringing change:



1. Mainstream, not model – for example, not just Prius cars, but energy-efficiency in all cars
2. Products, not policy – for example, switching from halogen lights to LED
3. Every day - not just Earth Day or Hour
4. Personal, not planets – encouraging personal responsibility and accountability for individual actions
5. Dialogue - bringing consumers into the conversation

Petri Lunden, Executive Chairman of Hagenburg Management, Sweden, and Chair of the Board of the International Music Managers' Forum, spoke about the pervasive influence of popular music and its possibilities as a force for change. He emphasised that such connections often occur spontaneously rather than by design, for example when Jerry Diamond of The Specials band wrote "Free Nelson Mandela", which then became an anthem for the anti-apartheid movement. Music engages the listener on a scale unparalleled by any other media, as songs by stars such as Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber achieve over a billion hits on Youtube.



He cautioned that while musicians have enormous access to young people, "they are not all Bonos" who are able to speak persuasively about issues of poverty and the environment. Nevertheless, he emphasised, popular music is the cheapest, easiest and best tool that we have for mass influence.

Matt Love, Campaign Director of the MTV Exit, Thailand, presented an introduction to a campaign against human trafficking and the ways in which music and entertainment is used. MTV Exit has used artiste acts, concerts and digital media, in addition to television programming, to communicate messages about human trafficking.

Love described the background to the MTV Exit campaign, which began in Europe with the support of Sida, and since coming to Asia has been supported by the United

States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) as well. He said that an important aspect of such campaigns as Hopenhagen, Live Aid and MTV Exit is to have a strategy

for lasting impact. He described MTV's role as working on prevention of the sex trade, whereas governments work on lawmaking, prosecution and other public policy initiatives. MTV invites young people to produce their own content through video and photography competitions, not just watch content produced by others. "The success of our campaign is its longevity, filling the gap where the skill of governments isn't in producing that content," he said.

Regarding engagement with local audiences, he said that all of MTV Exit's programmes are rights-free, so



they can be screened on local television, and some of the content is also adapted for radio. They rely on community-based organisations to take MTV material and use it in road shows, training activities and workshops, so as to reach grassroots people who may not even have electricity. It was suggested that the principles of the MTV Exit model could be applied to awareness raising around climate change.

Craig Hobbes, Chief Executive Officer of The Media Alliance, spoke about corporate social responsibility in relation to climate change. He observed that less than one per cent of the global advertising budget of USD 450 billion is spent on environmental advertising, although advertising drives consumption, contributes to climate change and erodes environmental sustainability. He advocated multi-sectoral engagement to address climate change, that would gain the participation of the media and creative industries through commitment to donate unsold advertising space, provide public service announcements, and integrate climate change messages into entertainment content, news and information vignettes, documentaries, music and popular culture. The work of the Dentsu Institute, an offshoot of the Japanese advertising industry, is an example of what can be done in terms of encouraging companies' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts in this area.

He described approaches such as MTV Exit as being "win-win" for both people and media companies, recommending that international development agencies make use of advertising and public relations agencies because they understand best how to bring audiences to a critical mass.



Hobbes commended the American Advertising Council's approach, in which campaigns are sustained for many years. In presenting a video from their seatbelt campaign, "Even Dummies Wear Seatbelts", he reported that the campaign increased seatbelt usage from 14 pc in 1985 to 79 pc in 1999.

Other examples presented included the BBC World Service Trust, which successfully overcome social taboos around discussion of HIV through the creation of a drama series with Doordarshan. When a popular lead character in the series was revealed to be HIV+, it had a measurable effect on opening up dialogue on HIV in India.

Hobbes summed up several challenges for the media and creative industries in a series of questions: whether these industries demonstrate responsibility in their current values and work practice relating to sustainability and adaptation to climate change, how international organisations may work with them to promote those objectives, whether the corporate sector is willing to be used in this way, and the value of subjective versus objective approaches in popularising the issue.

Presenters' Powerpoint presentations can be viewed here: <http://www.climateadapt.asia/events/seminars/view/16>



Practitioners' and partners' perspectives

Participants divided into eight breakout groups to discuss how the power of the media and the entertainment and creative industries can be harnessed to address climate change. They provided the following recommendations:

Creating messages

- On matters of adaptation, there should be a process of developing the key public messages. Right now there are many possible options and the scientific community is not in agreement.
- There should be a shift from raising awareness to changing behaviour.
- Messages should address responsibility for personal actions.
- Make specific calls to action, that say what people can do to make a contribution.
- Tailor messages for different target groups. For example, there could be separate messaging for rural people, vulnerable people, and wasteful consumer groups.
- Climate change is a complex issue. Create media content that is appropriate in the facts and concepts relating to climate change.
- Build the capacity of local media to report on climate change issues.
- Workers in carbon-heavy sunset industries will be disproportionately affected by obligations for carbon reduction – awareness raising among employers and workers will be needed to prepare for this shift.

Marketing and distribution

- Develop a global brand that will unite the campaign across different platforms, from television, internet and radio to collateral such as t-shirts and matchboxes.
- Popularise the issue through television, including 'lightweight' programming such as comedies and cartoons.

Working with government

- The Thai government should address climate change through clear and proactive policies and practice that address long-term issues.
- The government sector should play a role in developing messages for the public about climate change.
- Work towards a just transition for workers in carbon-heavy sunset industries, through cooperating with employers and workers; encourage 'Green Jobs' such as those being developed through International Labour Organization (ILO)'s AusAID-funded programme.

Working with the private sector

- The private sector's CSR campaigns could become a basis for action on climate change.
- Ask for industry pledges as part of a campaign for climate adaptation.
- The media can influence what companies do, by changing the opinions of its shareholders.

Working with local communities

- Create and access networks that are linked to the local level; they enable consultation, access and influence.
- Identify people who will champion the cause in local communities.
- Use celebrities; they are influential in moving people to take action.
- The media can influence consumer practice by depicting responsible environmental behaviour as the norm.
- Target urban areas primarily.



TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

1. There is a major “awareness gap” in Asia, in which almost half of all Asians are not aware of the problem. Among those who are, some believe that climate change is part of the natural cycle and do not acknowledge the human-induced impacts on climate. Because climate change is a complex issue, calls to action must have an emotional rather than an intellectual appeal.
2. Generating a mass movement will depend on truly involving people in choices and actions - not only telling them what to do. Some corporate initiatives are encouraging individuals to limit their consumption and to find sustainable alternatives to consumption, in some cases encouraging them to select from a menu of actions and pledges.
3. Environmentally responsible behaviour must become the norm – to make this happen, the power of peer pressure through popular entertainment and social media should be harnessed, and the desired behaviours should be packaged in a way that they are seen as easy and fun.
4. Local and indigenous knowledge systems should be tapped in the quest to reduce vulnerability to extreme events. Action plans must be localised and not delivered in a top-down manner.
5. The Hopenhagen campaign was viewed as a successful example of a campaign that developed a life of its own, targeting government delegates and individuals to make climate-friendly choices. Despite the failure of the Copenhagen conference in adopting climate targets, the campaign was seen as garnering popular support from the bottom up.
6. The power of music to persuade and popularise key messages was emphasised.
7. The MTV Exit campaign was seen as a good model of communication which has been able to address the broad issue of human trafficking and reach people at all levels through a variety of appropriate media, also tailoring campaign approaches to meet the specific needs of the different government strategies in the region.

FURTHER READING

SustainAbility, UNEP and Ketchum (2002), “Good news and bad: The media, CSR, and sustainable development.”

<http://www.grainesdechangement.com/docs/medias/Good-News-and-Bad.pdf>

Oxfam Novib (2008), “Pop Culture with a purpose: Using edutainment media for social change”

http://www.climateadapt.asia/upload/events/files/4def32d8c716dPop_Culture_with_a_Purpose_Oxfam_Novib_KIC_2008.pdf

SustainAbility and WWF-UK (2004), “Sustainability through the looking glass: Corporate Responsibility in the Media and Entertainment Sector”

<http://www.grainesdechangement.com/docs/medias/Through%20the%20Looking%20Glass.pdf>

MediaCSRforum (2008), “Mapping the landscape: CSR issues for the media sector 2008.”

http://mediacsrforum.org/_media/documents/mediacsrforum_map_08.pdf

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
SENSA	Swedish Environment Secretariat In Asia
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TEI	Thailand Environment Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development





Secretariat

Adaptation Knowledge Platform

AIT-UNEP Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific
 Outreach Building, P.O. Box 4, Klong Luang
 Pathumthani 12120, Thailand
 Tel: 662 524 5386/5384
 Email: info@climateadapt.asia
 Website: <http://www.climateadapt.asia>



JUNE 2011
 Photo credits
 Cover: SEI
 Back: Shirley Kai