



Climate change: New evidence on how media can engage youth to take action

Indonesia is the world's third largest greenhouse gas producer with 60-85% of its emissions stemming from forest destruction and degradation. It has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 29% on its own and 41% with international support by 2030. Indonesia's success in reaching this target depends in part on large-scale public engagement in green growth issues and effective governance of its forests and natural resources. The ability to do this is also affected by vested political and palm oil interests.

In this context, BBC Media Action used media to reach and inspire Indonesians, particularly urban youth, to take action around issues of deforestation and green growth. A survey of over 2000 urban youth conducted by BBC Media Action in 2020 showed that while they are knowledgeable about issues affecting forests and want actionable solutions, '**deforestation**' and '**forests**' feel very distant to them, and **they do not feel any urgency for action**.

With funding from the Norwegian Development Cooperation Agency (NORAD), in 2019 BBC Media Action co-produced a TV drama in Bahasa Indonesian called *Our Story* (#CeritaKita) with a companion social media discussion series *Chatter – Our Story* (Ngobrolin #CeritaKita) and created a social media brand *Our Action* (AksiKita). These media outputs generated a strong reach, with 24.5 million people (17% of the 15 years+ population living in target areas of Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan) viewing the TV show and social media content (e.g. Instagram with 64,500 followers, YouTube short films with 96,500 subscribers). The project's brands were **recalled by 35 million people** – with over 10 million people who had not watched the output being aware of it, suggesting high media visibility and ability of the content to generate discussion.

Watching *Ngobrolin #CeritaKita* (the project's social media):

“...it's hard to miss because discussion is light and not talking about big issues such as global warming but on topics we can understand and gain knowledge about environment. ”

Female youth, Jakarta



The topics of climate change, green growth and deforestation can be hard for people to relate to. The evaluation validated that BBC Media Action's content showed how people can take action in ways that resonate with their lives. The results demonstrate the case for media's role in stimulating greater knowledge and action and also point to areas to build on. Specifically, media can be used to showcase actions that individuals and communities can take, particularly those that benefit livelihoods directly or enable them to adapt to changes they are experiencing.

The project was **rigorously evaluated** using a mixed method approach. This included a randomized control trial conducted by Columbia University to isolate specifically whether being exposed to project content led to impact on public attitudes and behaviour, a representative survey, qualitative research, social media analytics and interviews with climate and forestry experts.

The evaluation showed that **exposure to the project's media content resulted in increased understanding of deforestation's effects on the country and prompted people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles**. The experiment demonstrated that **people who watched the drama were more knowledgeable and more likely to share environmental content with others** compared to those in the unexposed control group. Advanced statistical analysis using data from the representative survey found that those exposed to the content were **more likely than those unexposed to know how human activities affect climate and know that it is important to reduce deforestation to address climate change**.

The evaluation also found that people exposed to project content were significantly **more likely to take individual action to help protect the natural environment** than those unexposed, when controlling for education, gender, socio-economic status and location. For example, 65% of people named actions they had taken as a result of viewing project content, which included searching for more information on managing household waste (mentioned by 54%), minimising food waste (55%) and participating in environmental groups (10%).

