



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

Kembali ke Hutan (*Return to the Forest*)

Research evaluation summary

August 2022

The emerging evidence base in media and climate adaptation and mitigation indicates that media can engage people at scale on climate issues that affect them. It can motivate people to take individual or collective action and give voice to individuals across society, enabling them to express their views and hold decision-makers to account. This multi-method evaluation adds to this evidence by showing how branded media content in Indonesia has been effective in increasing young Indonesians' knowledge, their motivation and confidence to engage, take individual actions and discuss issues around deforestation and climate change.

The Government of Indonesia has made notable commitments to address climate change issues, including a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 29% to 41% by 2030 as part of its commitment to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (2021). At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2021, Indonesia further reiterated its commitment to foster low carbon growth and neutralise carbon emissions from deforestation. 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. This in turn is also affected by vested political and palm oil interests.

The Indonesian media landscape is cluttered, with over 47,000 outlets, owned by a small number of players. Despite this prolificacy, over the last few years, the overall revenue available for the media has been shrinking, leading to a lack of investment in programming. In addition, social impact programming, which addresses environmental issues and supports social and behavioural change, is in its infancy.

## The project

In this context, the **Kembali ke Hutan (KKH)** project, funded by the Norwegian Development Cooperation Agency (Norad) was launched by BBC Media Action Indonesia in 2019. It aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Indonesian urban youth aged 18-30, and their influencers, more engaged on issues of green growth and deforestation.
2. Indonesian media facilitates the public to question and hold stakeholders to account over policies and actions relating to deforestation and green growth.

To achieve these outcomes BBC Media Action co-produced a TV drama called **#CeritaKita (Our Story)** with an accompanying social media discussion series, **Ngobrolin #CeritaKita (Chatter – Our Story)**, and created the social media brand **AksiKita Indonesia (Our Action)**. We also partnered with media and civil society organizations to strengthen their capacity and engage with communities.



The project's target audience were young urban Indonesians who already had some engagement in governance issues. Engaging and educating them on environmental issues, including deforestation, was seen as the first step in building awareness amongst youth overall. However, further research showed that whilst this group were more engaged in participating in civil society and holding leaders to account, when it came to green growth and climate change they were still unsure.

## Project design informed by research

Formative research was conducted initially to better understand young urban Indonesians, their media habits and online behaviors, and what motivates them to engage with environmental issues. The findings informed the design of the project, specifically the target audience, honing the project's theory of change and supporting the development of content (TV drama, discussion programmes and social media).

A baseline survey of over 2,000 respondents and qualitative research with urban youth audiences was conducted by BBC Media Action in 2020. Findings highlighted that whilst urban youth were knowledgeable about issues affecting forests and wanted actionable solutions, **'deforestation' and 'forests' felt very distant to them, and they did not feel any urgency for action**. The data indicated that the project needed to show why environmental and deforestation issues were relevant to the lives of young people.

The research also showed that young urban Indonesians liked to really understand a topic and apply their new knowledge to their own life before they felt they could talk to others about it. This attitude is driven by the need to be 'authentic' in order to be taken seriously by their peer group. Research findings also indicated that focusing content on social drivers would appeal to this audience, such as showing that it was cool to take action and that people like them were engaging in these issues. Therefore, a way to engage these young people in deforestation and climate change issues is to break them down into these topics that are more relatable to them, such as the positive impact of reducing the amount of clothes that they buy, or cutting down on single-use plastic, or by holding leaders to account.

## Theory of Change

The project's theory of change articulated that our approach needed to start by increasing awareness and knowledge, to build engagement around key issues and then explain and show how people could take action. It was hypothesised this approach would help people take action in their own lives, leading to wider interest in participating in civic and policy debate around environmental issues.

To drive change, it is important to motivate young Indonesians to engage in deforestation and green growth issues by **building pride in Indonesia's natural environment**; generating empathy in the **negative effects that human actions have on the climate and deforestation** and showing the positive social/identity-related repercussions of being engaged.

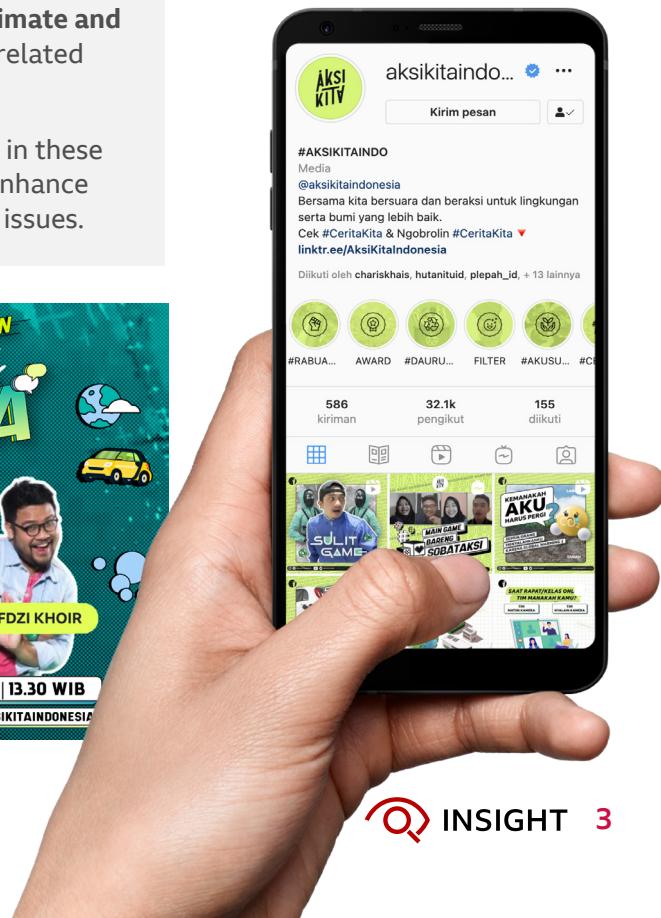
It was hypothesised that once people started to engage in these environmental and green growth issues then, it would enhance their self-identity and fuel further engagement in these issues.



A lot of our early content was about creating engagement and building understanding of climate change, and encouraging people to adopt simple actions, and to think about sustainability in their own lives. It wasn't at all about policy-level debate or accountability, we needed to get people thinking about their own lives before they were going to think about policy or governance around these issues.

### ANKUR GARG

BBC Media Action Country Director, Indonesia



# Impact evaluation methodology

The impact evaluation employed a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. It drew on six different sources of data including a representative survey of people living in the three main Indonesian islands – Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan and qualitative research with climate and forestry experts.

In order to isolate specifically whether being exposed to the project's content led to any impact on people's attitudes and behaviour, an experimental study was conducted in partnership with the University of Columbia. Regular viewers of SCTV (our partner broadcaster) who had not previously watched any episodes of **#CeritaKita** or engaged with **Ngobrolin #CeritaKita** online, were randomly assigned to a control or a treatment group. Participants in the treatment group watched a distillation of storylines from the drama series along with supporting content from the discussion programme. The control group watched a similar TV programme and discussion programme on a different subject.

Our impact evaluation methodology is summarized in the graphic below. Findings were triangulated across these different studies.

| GENERAL POPULATION  | METHOD  | STAKEHOLDERS   | METHOD  |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>01  Quantitative Survey</b><br>What is the reach, engagement, and impact of the KKH output?            | Reach - 5,000 survey interviews representative of 16-55 yr olds in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan. Impact (knowledge, attitudes, discussion, action)- 500 exposed and 500 unexposed.                    | <b>05  Expert Interviews</b><br>Has there been any systemic change?                                      | 17 in depth interviews with academics, civil society and media experts.                     |
| <b>02  Experiment</b><br>Randomly assigned to exposed and control groups causality - does it have impact? | 843 regular viewers of SCTV aged 18-30 living in urban areas not previously exposed to output, randomly assigned to exposed and control groups. Exposed group shown drama and discussion show output. | <b>06  Process Evaluation</b><br>How was the project actually implemented and what lessons were learned? | Desk review of project documentation.<br>Interviews with project team and project partners. |
| <b>03  Digital Evaluation</b><br>How well has the social media output performed?                          | Social media analytics of AksiKita Indonesia on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.  |  |   |
| <b>04  Qualitative Research</b><br>What drove engagement? How has the impact happened?                    | 6 focus groups with young people exposed to #CeritaKita and/or Ngobrolin #CeritaKita and/or #AksiKitaIndonesia.   |  |   |

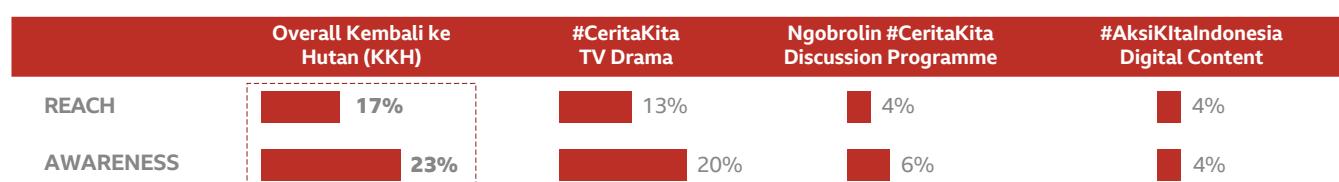
An experimental study was conducted in partnership with the University of Columbia.

## Reach of media content

### Content achieved strong reach:

**24.5 million people**<sup>1</sup> (17% of the adult population) viewed the programme output (TV drama **#CeritaKita**, discussion programme **Ngobrolin #CeritaKita** and social media content on AksiKita Indonesia). The drama was the most popular of the outputs, with 13% of the population watching it at least once. The drama was successful at reaching women, who represented 54% of the audience, in part due to the strong use of female characters e.g. Tuji, who was mentioned by 56% of viewers as their favourite character.

FIGURE 1 KKH Project's Reach and Awareness



<sup>1</sup> 17% of people aged 15+ living in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan)

## Regular social media monitoring led to a change in social media strategy:

The project's social media pages were monitored, and research was undertaken with social media users, to understand young people's platforms of choice. This changed with time, engagement with Facebook and Twitter was high in 2020, but then dropped off in 2021. As a result, the project started to focus almost entirely on Instagram (64,500 followers), and later also deployed YouTube Shorts to good affect (96,500 subscribers).

The social media content enabled young Indonesians to interact by commenting on posts, discussing issues online and sharing with others.

## The project created a strong brand and identity:

The survey showed that the project's brands were recalled by **35 million people**. Over 10 million people who had not watched the content were aware of the brands and the content. This shows there was high visibility of media outputs (good media planning and execution) and a strong understanding that these brands covered environmental issues, raising awareness of these topics amongst the public overall.

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Usually talk shows have heavy and boring conversation, but this discussion programme is entertaining.

Male, 18-23 years old, SEC C, Jakarta



## Content filled a gap in the Indonesian media market:

Almost nine in ten (87%) of endline survey respondents said they thought the Indonesian media provides poor coverage and space for people to discuss environmental issues. In this context, the drama **#CeritaKita** is the first Indonesian drama to bring the environment and related policy and governance issues to the screen. Both audiences and experts consulted in the qualitative research said that they had not seen a TV drama bringing environmental issues onto the screen. Pre-testing of the drama showed that people were eager to learn more about the environment and wanted more information about how to take action. The discussion programme **Ngobrolin #CeritaKita** was enjoyed as its style and tone was less 'serious' than other topical talk shows. It generated a strong reach of 4% compared to other discussion shows e.g. Zero Waste at 3%.



BBC Media Action Indonesia

## Engagement in the media content

Overall people engaged in the project's content and found it informative, entertaining and most importantly relatable to their everyday lives. Viewers and users of the content appreciated the way that broad issues of climate change and green growth were broken down into topics that they could relate to such as; causes of floods and forest fires, food waste, plastic and pollution. They offered potential solutions and ways to reduce these problems with simple actions they themselves could take.

**Six in 10 drama viewers (59%) were emotionally engaged with the drama2**

This emotional engagement was driven by storylines that were reflective of their own contexts and characters they could relate to easily and comfortably. People emotionally engaged with the drama were more likely to report feeling informed about the environment and factors affecting it, than those who were exposed to KKH content but were not emotionally engaged.

The project's discussion programme and social media content provided platforms for young people to interact with decision-makers and discuss environment issues. As with the drama, viewers liked the way the discussions broke down topics into issues that people could relate to.



## Findings: The impact of media content

Overall, research results show that the drama, discussion programme and social media content **increased awareness of the impacts of climate change and deforestation and prompted people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles** – taking new small actions, such as managing household waste, or participating in environmental groups. People exposed to this content also discussed these issues more than those who had not watched the content. Before exposure to this media content, people did not relate to these issues, and discussion around them was low.

Our **EXPERIMENT** showed that people who were randomly allocated to the treatment group and watched episodes of the drama had more knowledge (**26 percentage points more than the control**), were more motivated to participate in public discussion on climate change (**11 percentage points more**), were more supportive of media coverage on climate change (**9 percentage points more**) and government policy (**8 percentage points more**), and had more willingness to share environment-related content with influencers (**7 percentage points more**).

Our **SURVEY** through advanced statistical analysis showed that people exposed to project content knew more, took more individual action and discussed more than people who were not exposed to project content when controlling for demographic attributes.

## People had more knowledge of deforestation and climate change

The evaluative research (through qualitative and quantitative studies) and evidence (through the experimental study) shows that the project's media content influenced audiences' knowledge on the causes and impacts of deforestation and climate change.

**EXPERIMENT:** To assess whether the programme imparted information about the causes and consequences of deforestation and climate change, a series of questions were posed in the experimental research to assess respondents' knowledge, such as knowing that beef consumption leads to water shortages, deforestation is a cause of flooding and food waste can produce gas emissions.

The results show that people in the treatment group (exposed to project content) had a stronger understanding of the impact of deforestation and climate change than those in the control group (not exposed to project content).

**TABLE 1**  
**Knowledge about environmental impacts of deforestation and climate change**

| Theme                      | Exposed to programme<br>(Treatment group) | Un-exposed to programme<br>(Control group) |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Impact of beef consumption | 54%                                       | 28%  |
| Causes of floods           | 42%                                       | 30%  |
| Food waste                 | 51%                                       | 34%  |
| No correct answers         | 24%                                       | 40%  |
| All answers correct        | 18%                                       | 7%   |

The experiment also showed that exposure to **#CeritaKita** content resulted in higher knowledge about the impact that human's have on the environment.

**QUANTITATIVE SURVEY:** This showed that audiences of KKH media content were more likely to know how human activities affect our climate and know that it is important to reduce deforestation to reduce climate change, than those not exposed. 13% of those exposed to the project's media content in the survey reported knowledge about how human actions are affecting climate and contributing to climate change compared to only 7% of those not exposed to the content. Advanced statistical analysis (i.e. regression analysis) showed that the association between exposure and knowledge is significant. This also shows that there is still a long way to go in building comprehensive knowledge of how human actions are affecting the climate.

**Audiences were also more likely to be confident in their knowledge around deforestation, green growth and climate change, reporting that they had higher knowledge on these issues compared to those not exposed to project media content.** Respondents were asked for a series of topics to report the extent that they felt they knew about them. Linear regression found a significant association between exposure to any of the project media content and people's perception of knowledge on issues around deforestation, green growth, and climate change, when controlling for demographic attributes (sex, location, islands, SEC, education and urban youth), pro-environment attitudes and knowledge on climate change.

## People had more confidence and motivation to take action

The drama **#CeritaKita** helped to increase people's confidence to understand deforestation and take action – such as taking small actions to support the environment or discussing these issues more.

Our theory of change sought to encourage young Indonesians to think more about what kind of national development they want (including having empathy about the negative effects that human actions have on the climate and deforestation) and feel more motivated and able to engage on these issues

**EXPERIMENT: Exposure to #CeritaKita content resulted in higher confidence about the understanding of deforestation's effects and motivated people to participate in public discussion about climate change.**

The following significant differences were observed:

- 48% of people in the treatment groups said they felt very confident about their understanding of deforestation's effects compared to 41% in the control.
- 62% in treatment group said they feel motivated to participated in public discussion about climate change compared to 51% of the control group.
- 89% of people in the treatment group compared to 81% in the control group expressed willingness to share social media posts on these issues.

Furthermore, the treatment group showed increased support for the Indonesian government's pledge made at COP 26 in Glasgow to stop deforestation by 2030.

**SURVEY:** This showed that TV drama **#CeritaKita** viewers who were emotionally engaged with the content were more likely to feel motivated to affect environmental changes.

- Linear regression analysis showed that those who felt emotionally engaged with the TV drama **#CeritaKita** were more likely to feel motivated and feel able to affect environmental changes.

#### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:

Participants said that the content had motivated them to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. They said that after watching the programmes they realised that protecting the environment or adopting more sustainable lifestyles need not be expensive and complex and could be implemented in real life.

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Whenever my mother tells me to buy a motorcycle, I tell her that I don't want to buy it as it is going to add more pollution in our atmosphere.

Male, 18-23 y.o, SEC AB, Jakarta

providing them with support and encouragement to take simple, doable actions themselves on these issues (e.g. reducing the amount of clothes that they buy or cutting down on single-use plastic usage). To support this, KKH media content (particularly the digital content and TV drama) provided information and suggested actions young people could take to help protect the natural environment in Indonesia, such as reducing food waste, reusing clothes to cut down on 'fast fashion' and raising concerns about environmental issues in their local community. The content tried to tap into different 'motivators' for action, such as hearing the success stories of others and understanding the financial benefits of making changes.

#### SURVEY:

- 65% of all viewers** named environmental activities that they had taken as a result of seeing the content. This included searching for more information on managing household waste (**mentioned by 54%**), taking action to minimise food waste (**55%**) and participating in environmental groups (**10%**). They also reported being more likely to take these actions in the future, as a result of seeing the content.

#### People were more supportive of climate change policy

The experiment showed that people exposed to our content were more likely to support the Indonesian government's pledge at COP27 and follow social media influencers who speak out on social issues

#### EXPERIMENT

**Supporting influencers:** exposure to **#CeritaKita** content resulted in higher willingness to follow influencers who speak out on socially relevant issues (including the environment)

| Would you be more or less likely to "follow" the social media account of public figure if you knew that he recently spoke out on relevant issue? | Exposed to programme (Treatment group) | Un-exposed to programme (Control group) |
|--|--|---|
| More likely to follow Jerome Polin (education)   | 74%                                    | 65%                                     |
| More likely to follow Kevin Julio (environment)  | 72%                                    | 56%                                     |

- Supporting Indonesia's pledge:** It also showed that watching **#CeritaKita** increased support for Indonesia's pledge made at COP26 in Glasgow to stop deforestation by 2030
- Support for the media on these issues:** exposure to **#CeritaKita** content created more support (61%) for media coverage of climate and environmental issues than control stimulus (52%)

#### People were taking action

People exposed to our programming were more likely to take individual action and participate in environmental activities. 65% of people named actions they had taken as a result of viewing project content.

One of the objectives of the project's Theory of Change was to help young Indonesians feel more connected to, and 'authentic' in relation to issues around climate change, green growth and deforestation by

- Advanced statistical analysis (linear regression models) found that exposure to KKH media content was significantly associated with taking individual action. **It showed that those exposed to the project content were more likely to take an individual action to help protect the natural environment in Indonesia** than those not exposed when controlling for education, sex, islands, SEC, location and age.

**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:** Participants in focus group discussions said actions they had adopted after watching the programmes included; bringing their own shopping bags, carrying their own tumbler (to avoid using plastic cups), saving electricity and water, separating waste, stopping burning waste, planting more trees, keeping their environment clean, and using public transportation.

“

I like when they talk about hydroponics. I didn't know about it before, now I think I can make it at home

Male, 18-23 y.o, SEC AB, Medan

## EXPERIMENT:

The experimental research asked about interest in getting involved in local environmental action or the likelihood of following an Instagram account engaging on deforestation and climate change. **There was no significant difference between exposed and control groups.**

The experiment didn't ask about whether people had taken individual actions such as those mentioned in the survey (managing household waste, etc) as the questions were asked 3 days after they had been exposed to the content, so there wasn't time for them to take these actions.

## People exposed to media content were discussing deforestation and climate change issues more

Whether people discuss the media content or topics covered in the media content with others, is an important measure to consider. Discussion is an important way to reinforce information seen and also a crucial mechanism to digest how the information they have seen relates to their everyday lives.

In this, case the formative research showed that people would be unlikely to discuss environmental issues until they had taken some action themselves.

Whilst the rate of people reporting that they had taken some action was high, a much lower proportion stated they had discussed these issues with others. Nonetheless, **the research did show that the programme content was stimulating some discussion:**

**EXPERIMENT:** Showed that exposure to #CeritaKita content increased self-reported discussion of climate change and the environment.

- The treatment group was significantly more likely to report discussing climate change and the environment (79%) than the control group (73%). Recycling plastic, managing food waste, pollution, forest fires and conserving water consumption were among the issues audiences said they discussed after watching KKH content.

**SURVEY:** **Viewers of KKH content were more likely to say that they had discussed environmental issues in the last month than those who were not exposed to project's media content.**

- Whilst, nearly two-thirds (65%) of endline survey respondents reported not discussing any environmental issues in the last month, 39% did discuss issues. Regression analysis suggests that those who were exposed to KKH content were more likely to say that they had discussed environmental issues in the last month than those who were not exposed to project's media content.

## Understanding change: why people took action

The results show that despite low awareness of deforestation and environmental issues at the start of the project, **the project helped**

**to increase knowledge of the causes and impacts of deforestation, climate change and green growth issues; show how people can play a part and drive people to take action and become more involved in these issues.**

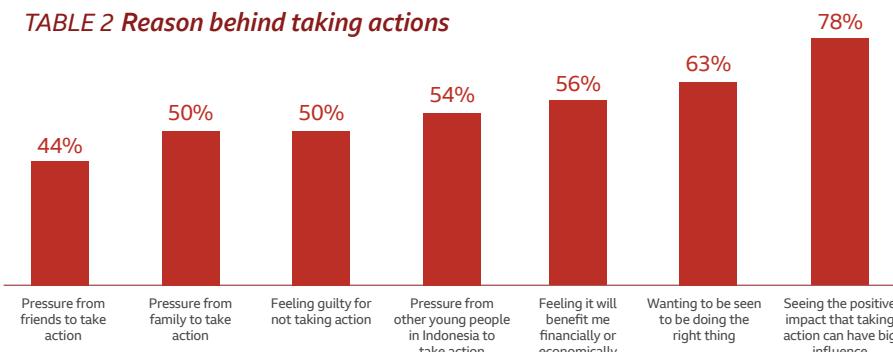
The research provides an indication of how this happened.

**People were driven to act by being provided with clear ideas about how they could play a part.** The KKH content demonstrated how people could make a difference and highlighted the financial benefits of participation or taking actions. People felt emotional attachment to the solutions covered in the drama and discussion programmes - such as composing organic waste, harvesting rainwater (collecting rainwater in bucket) and urban farming with hydroponics method - as they could see how they could enhance their lives.

**The media content helped to illustrate the need to act to be seen to do the right thing, building on the formative research findings that social motivations were crucial to drive action.**

**SURVEY:** Advanced analysis showed that impact stories, desire to be seen doing the right thing and guilt are significantly associated with peoples' participation in environmental activities

**TABLE 2 Reason behind taking actions**



Supporting findings in the formative research, our survey found that people were driven to act due to their need to be seen and validated by others, 63% were taking action due to wanting to be seen to be doing the right thing. In addition, understanding how action could have an influence was also cited as a key driver (78%).

## Key learnings

### Strong reach and impact

The TV drama **#CeritaKita** generated nearly two-thirds of the overall reach of the project, reaching 13% of the population. This shows that a social impact drama is a key vehicle to generate awareness and engagement in environment and issues, as well as having the potential to achieve high reach ratings, and therefore advertising for broadcasters. The awareness and reach of the **Ngobrolin #CeritaKita** and **#AksiKita Indonesia** brands were high too.

As well as achieving strong reach and engagement, this programming influenced viewer's knowledge, encouraged them to take individual actions to protect the environment and motivated them to publicly discuss environmental issues. Therefore, continuing to leverage these formats, brand and broadcast partnerships would help to continue to increase awareness and engagement in environmental issues.



Rosiana Eko | BBC Media Action Indonesia

### Role of media in addressing environment and climate issues

These findings show that the use of traditional media platforms (e.g. TV) are still very important in Indonesia to ensure large-scale reach and influence young people's reference networks. Almost nine in ten (87%) of endline survey respondents said they think the Indonesian media provides poor coverage and little space for people to discuss environmental issues on media. Our experimental research showed that exposure to **#CeritaKita** content created more support (61%) for media coverage of climate and environmental issues than was found among our control group (52%). Our survey showed that 75% of people who weren't taking action did not feel they had enough information about the issue, and 44% felt that the issues did not interest them. Therefore, there is a huge opportunity to the media industry in Indonesia to create programming to present information and build awareness and engagement amongst audiences with little interest.

In this project we provided 'on the job' training to SCTV our partner broadcaster, working with their production team to support them on carrying out productions in a sustainable way; on safeguarding and on developing editorial content.

### Making content specific and relevant

The topics of 'climate change', 'green growth' and 'deforestation' are vast and can be hard for audiences to relate to. The evaluation shows that the programming engaged audiences by showing how they could take solutions in a way that resonated with their lives, and they could see would be useful and sustainable. There is scope to showcase more solutions, particularly those that can benefit people's livelihoods directly or enable them to adapt to changes in climate and environment that they are experiencing.

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In partnership with BBC Media Action, KKI Warsi [media partner supported by project] learned to share knowledge better, manager social media content and strengthen communication skills for advocacy.

**EMMY THAN | KKI Warsi Programme Manager**

## Go further and encourage collective action too

KKH media content had an impact on people's knowledge and motivated them to participate in individual environmental activities, with a high proportion of people naming that they had taken action after watching the show. A next phase of the project could also illustrate the benefits of participating in (or initiating/co-ordinating) collective actions related to limiting climate change, reducing deforestation and protecting the environment.

## Understand more about how change happens

Whilst the research showed that people who were more inclined to participate in civic life and want to hold leaders to account were more likely to engage in issues around green growth and climate change. However, more research is required to really understand the drivers of participation in environmental issues and how people can be motivated to engage more

## Influence risk perception and increase perceived relevance and immediacy of deforestation

The literature of risk perception states that people are more likely to perceive risks threatening others, especially distant others, and less likely to see the same risks threatening them.

On the potential harm of deforestation to Indonesian people, we found a modest difference indicating that #CeritaKita increased the likelihood to acknowledge climate change risks and potential harm to their fellow citizens – yet this difference was not statistically significant. Overall whilst people exposed did understand the link between deforestation and floods, there is more work to be done in this area, to show and illustrate how deforestation can have a direct impact on the lives of young Indonesians to drive them to action.

## Conclusions

In sum, this evaluation provides evidence that the Kembali ke Hutan (Return to the forest) project through drama, discussion show, and social media output can engage young Indonesians in topics that they previously were not interested in by breaking down the issues of deforestation in climate change into tangible topics that they can relate to. By connecting with young people, the media content has been able to increase their knowledge, motivate them to be involved and encourage them to take simple actions. Whilst this phase, has also driven more discursive dialogue in these issues, the results show that there is more scope to increase participation in these issues, stimulate discussion and increase people's risk perception that these issues need to be taken seriously as they will impact their lives.

