



## ***A bold vision for systemic change: A multi-level, multi-stakeholder, transboundary approach to increasing climate resilience across West Africa***

### **Issue:**

West Africa's biodiversity supports the social, ecological, and economic resilience of the region, but complex forces that drive resource degradation, illegal and unsustainable logging, wildlife poaching and trafficking, poverty, and weak governance undermine the ability of human and natural systems to respond and adapt to climate change shocks and stresses. WA BiCC represents the largest investment in the environmental sector in West Africa to address direct and indirect drivers of natural resource degradation to improve livelihoods and natural ecosystems across the region.

### **Summary:**

Systemic and multi-faceted change is often required to tackle deep-rooted, widespread, and complex issues, such as vulnerability to climate change, coupled with poverty and poor governance. In West Africa, weak governance, ineffective policies, and natural resource degradation are threatening West Africans' ability to survive and thrive in the face of worsening climate change impacts. The West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change (WA BiCC) program represents the largest investment of development funding to-date in supporting climate-resilient economic growth across West Africa. The five-year program took a comprehensive, adaptive, and integrated approach to driving change in policies, capacities, and practices, epitomizing the theme of 'connecting the dots'. On all levels, WA BiCC SBCC activities helped to build institutional capacity, support policy development and revision, and improve inter- and intra-governmental collaboration and coordination. WA BiCC SBCC activities also engaged with local communities to promote sustainable practices and enlist their participation in co-designing the interventions. 'A Bold Vision for Systemic Change' will share lessons learned from the WA BiCC SBCC interventions, including using mass media and community-based media to reach remote communities, leading social and community mobilization campaigns, using digital and social media to disseminate information, and engaging decision makers in refining and designing policies that would increase the region's climate resilience.

### **INTERVENTION:**

WA BiCC worked with partners at the community, national, and regional levels to strengthen policies, systems, and practices that will improve natural resource management. WA BiCC SBCC

activities produced powerful radio dramas, films, success stories, social media, and community mobilization campaigns to promote sustainable practices, such as adapting alternative livelihoods, adopting less detrimental and resource-intensive farming practices, creating embankments to buffer coastal communities against storm surges, raising awareness about wildlife trafficking, and establishing protected areas. The design and selection of the appropriate intervention was informed by extensive formative research such as the ground-breaking Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) in Sierra Leone and highly participatory design workshops where stakeholders took part in co-creating communication objectives, messages, storylines, and distribution plans. A rigorous Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan was implemented to understand the degree of change that resulted from the Program's activities.

## **RESULTS:**

The radio shows proved to be a powerful tool in mobilizing communities and sharing information. WA BiCC SBCC activities produced and broadcasted nearly 70 audio-visual programs and has mobilized 43,000 people through community advocacy campaigns. A 24-episode serial radio drama and call-in show targeting coastal communities in Sierra Leone was broadcast in three languages on four radio stations (two community and two national radio stations), and reached a potential two million. A second 24-episode serial radio drama and call-in show targeting transboundary forest communities across the Mano River Union countries (Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone) was produced in seven languages. Through the collection of radio station monitoring data, we received responses from listeners that demonstrate an understanding of the importance of mangroves for fishery health and protection against climate change impacts, and the need for local regulations to protect mangroves.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD:**

While WA BiCC SBCC activities engaged with regional and national institutions and local communities, it also focused its interventions in specific areas based on extensive formative research and stakeholder consultation. Lessons learned were shared with practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders who then adapted and scaled up best practices. This dissemination - through community-based digital channels, mass media, social mobilization, and advocacy - was central to WA BiCC's approach. WA BiCC is an exceptional example of how tackling complex issues and bringing about lasting change requires a multi-faceted approach that engages actors on all levels.

## **About PCI Media:**

PCI Media is a Social and Behavior Change Communications nonprofit with expertise in using entertainment-education radio dramas, television shows, and media-based campaigns to accelerate global social change. Through powerful media and community activation, we engage communities in participatory dialogue to build knowledge and change attitudes and behaviors on issues that prevent all people from living a healthy, self-determined life. To learn more visit [pcimedia.org](http://pcimedia.org).

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