

How has radio supported climate adaptation and peace in Somalia?

Context: A country on the frontlines of climate and conflict

In Somalia, climate change and conflict are intensifying pressure on already vulnerable communities. In recent years, Somalis have experienced repeated climate shocks, droughts, floods, rising temperatures, and unpredictable weather; all of which severely disrupt food security, health, and livelihoods increasing migration and fuelling conflict. In our recent research:

- 91% of respondents said droughts had increased, and 79% reported rising temperatures in the past decade.
- Nearly half said changing weather had a high impact on their ability to secure enough food to eat, work and earn and income, and stay healthy.
- Resource scarcity, especially grazing land and water, is fuelling tensions and conflict, particularly in rural and displaced communities.
- Women bear the responsibility of managing food insecurity and health risks but are often excluded from decision-making processes regarding climate adaptation and conflict resolution.

Our approach: Leveraging radio for change

To address these urgent challenges, we produced and broadcast a blend of factual magazine programming and drama storytelling, reaching people in both rural and urban areas across Somalia and Somaliland with content on how to adapt to climate change, conflict resolution, and women's inclusion: in partnership with radio stations in Hargeisa, Mogadishu, Dhusamareb, Baidoa, Kismayo and Beledweyne. BBC Media Action produced the drama and mentored the local radio stations to produce factual discussion programmes.

This approach:

- Informs through evidence-based, expert guidance.
- Engages through relatable, emotionally resonant drama.
- Showcases positive behaviours through local voices (experts and community leaders) and role models.

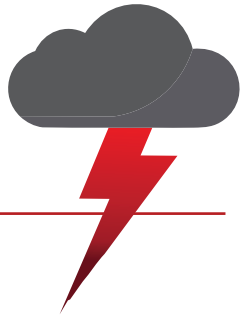
> **"My main concern is the climate situation. The heat is unbearable, and just yesterday, we experienced strong winds that destroyed many homes in the town."**
>
> Male, Dhusamareb, Pastoralist

Our reach: Highly engaged audiences

By April 2025:

- 47% of the population in three surveyed areas (approx. 340,000 people) had listened to at least one episode. In total, we estimate a reach of 755,000 adult Somalis.
- 92% of these were regular listeners, tuning in at least twice a month.
- Listeners found the programmes relevant, providing practical and useful information to help them make better decisions - for example, what crops to cultivate, how to conserve water and how to resolve conflict. They shared this information with peers, family and friends and encouraged them to tune in.

> **“The Himilo programme … directly speaks to us as IDPs. We are among the most vulnerable to heat, rain, and other harsh conditions, and this programme has been very helpful it feels like it was made specifically for us. When I first heard about climate change, I was surprised. I am 42 years old, and I had never fully understood climate change before.”**
>
> Female, Kismayo, IDP



Our impact: Building knowledge, confidence, and inclusion

The programming contributed to meaningful change across key areas:

1. Climate awareness and adaptation

- Regular listeners were more likely to report feeling informed about the impact of weather and environmental changes on people’s lives and livelihoods, compared to non-listeners.
- Regular listeners were more likely to feel at least somewhat prepared to cope with potential future extreme weather events. They were also more likely to show higher factual knowledge of practices that either mitigate or worsen environmental degradation and climate impacts, for example that cutting down trees near rivers can increase the risk of flooding or that planting trees helps prevent soil erosion.
- Regular listeners were significantly more likely to say they had made changes/ taken actions to deal with the impact of changing weather. Some, said that while the programmes increased their motivation to take adaptive action such as conserving water, storing food and managing natural resources effectively, structural barriers (like limited resources and persistent knowledge gaps regarding what to do) still limited what they could implement.
- There was greater belief among regular listeners that their individual and collective action can make a difference in addressing climate challenges, an essential foundation for lasting resilience.



> **“The programme encouraged me to do things differently. I took actions within my own home and family to prepare ahead of any harm that can be caused by changes in the climate.”**
>
> Female, Kismayo, Pastoralist

2. Conflict resolution and peacebuilding

- Listeners reported learning new strategies for resolving conflict, with a strong emphasis on early reporting, open and inclusive dialogue and youth and women’s role in resolving disputes.
- These were particularly valued in clan conflict, especially over scarce resources.

> **“We need local committees made up of elders, women, and IDPs to help solve disputes. The programme showed us that when decisions are made together, there is less conflict. We also learned that if we report small tensions early, they won’t turn into big fights.”**
>
> Female, Baidoa, IDP

3. Women's participation

- Female regular listeners were more likely to express confidence in their ability to take part in conflict resolution at the community level, than female non- listeners.
- Programming reinforced support for women's roles in conflict resolution, with regular listeners more likely to say that women should be involved in resolving clan conflict, and attribute women a leadership role or equal responsibility alongside men, than non-listeners.

> **"Elders usually manage conflicts and even youth are not given their chance, let alone women. The programme encouraged the community to give women their roles [addressing] the impact of climate change or clan conflicts."**

Male, Community Leader, Beledweyne

Using radio to address climate change adaptation works

This project demonstrated that radio, when designed with communities' needs in mind and delivered consistently, can support communities to adapt to climate change and resolve conflict peacefully.

Locally produced programming, rooted in the voices, languages, and lived experiences of Somali communities, resonates with audiences, and can contribute to raising awareness, boosting confidence and promoting positive actions.

Note on research methodology

Evaluative research was conducted in March and April 2025. It employed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the impact and reach of BBC Media Action's radio programming, focusing on changes in audience knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. A quantitative survey of 1,162 adults was conducted across three locations; Kismayo, Baidoa, and Hargeisa. The qualitative research comprised 12 focus group discussions and 5 in-depth interviews, both in urban and rural areas. Focus groups involved regular listeners of the programmes, including farmers, pastoralists, and internally displaced persons, and interviews were conducted with community influencers including leaders, youth and women's advocates.



This project was funded by the UK's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office and ran from 2023-2025.

For a copy of the full report or to discuss further please contact Lynn Morris, Country Director BBC Media Action, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda: lynn.morris@ke.bbcmediaaction.org +254701833167