WORKSHOP REPORT

INTRODUCTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION

For MEECC staff – 2nd October, 2018, CAMS Meeting Room, MEECC

Compiled by Michele Martin for the GCCA+ Component A and the MEECC.

BACKGROUND

As a small island developing state, Seychelles is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, salt water intrusion, heavy rains and flooding, coral bleaching and droughts. It is critical that the population of Seychelles as well as decision-makers become more aware and pro-active in terms of how we can better prepare for present and future impacts of climate change.

The GCCA+ project recently completed a Capacity Needs Assessment exercise to determining existing capacity among government stakeholders to engage in climate action, as well as capacity gaps. Many government agencies reported that their knowledge of climate change and how it relates to their sector is limited. MEECC respondents reported that they find it challenging to communicate the urgency of climate change to other government sectors as well as the public. The MEECC asked for training in climate change communication, to explore more effective strategies for engaging both the public and policymakers in climate action.

The GCCA+ project organised this short introductory workshop on climate change communication for MEECC staff to provide an overview of the factors involved in effective communication. It targeted individuals who have to engage in climate change communication as part of their work, but have not had any formal training in the subject.

It should be noted that in April, 2018 the GCCA+ project collaborated with the EBA project to host a workshop for journalists on covering climate change issues in the media. Further in-depth training in climate change communication will be held in 2019 as a follow up to these two introductory workshops

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

This half day workshop aimed to:

1) Familiarize participants with the basics of effective climate change communication
2) Help participants identify appropriate communication strategies for different audiences
3) Inspire participants to apply what they have learned in their work

PARTICIPANTS

The workshop was attended by 16 people, mainly from the Department of Energy and Climate Change, although we also had a representative from the Ministry of Education. The registration list can be found in Annex A. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Michele Martin, the capacity building specialist for GCCA+ Seychelles.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Time	Agenda Item
8:30	Introduction and ice-breaker
9:00	Basics of good communication / short exercise
9:30	Basics of effective climate change communication
10:00	Break
10:30	Groupwork and presentations
11:45	Wrap up and evaluation
12:00	Conclusion

WORKSHOP EXPENSES AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERS

- The venue was provided by the MEECC Climate Change Division.
- The GCCA+ covered the cost of refreshments for tea break and printing copies of the CRED guide to the Psychology of Climate Change Communication, as well as the consultant's time for planning/facilitation of the workshop.
- The EBA project donated copies of the S4S Citizen's Guide to Climate Change for all participants.
- Photocopies were made by S4S as part of backstopping. S4S staff Sophie Morel attended to assist with photos and registration.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The workshop started with an icebreaker that required participants to move around the room, find a partner, and talk to them for 1minute sharing good or bad experiences trying to communicate something. Following this activity, participants were invited to share some of these stories, as well as to introduce themselves.

This was followed by a presentation about the basics of good communication in human societies, which was accompanied by several short exercises to think about the different ways that humans have communicated over time, and categories and theories that can be used to describe these different forms of communication. Participants worked in short groups to think about the communication strategy they would use to convince people to change their behaviour about littering (which causes blockages of drains and rivers, exacerbating flooding in times of heavy rainfall). The groups developed a number of strategies, including targeting schoolchildren and their parents, using fines, and asking decision-makers to change policies (like banning non-biodegradable packaging).

After viewing several short videos and other examples of climate change communication strategies, participants reviewed some of the key factors to consider when communicating about climate change issues. We used the CRED guide to the Psychology of Climate Change Communication to guide a groupwork exercise to focus on a climate change issue they were finding challenging to communicate to a particular audience. Three groups worked on different topics:

1. Convincing planners to develop an enforce a law requiring the 25meter setback from the high tide mark
2. Convincing fishermen that a climate change policy will be useful and to share their knowledge and contribute their ideas to its' development.
3. Convincing homeowners living adjacent to wetlands to stop illegally reclaiming land into the wetland.

The workshop concluded after groups shared their ideas. The facilitator emphasized that this was just a short introduction to the topic of climate change communication. Learning how to communicate well, and particularly about such a critical issue as climate change, is a long term process that require trial and error and practice. She encouraged participants to attend the longer workshop which will be planned for 2019 by the GCCA+ program in collaboration with MEECC.

A copy of the CRED guide was given to each different department/section represented – 7 in all.

The workshop slides are shared in attachment. Workshop photos can be found in Annex B.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Participants were invited to fill in an evaluation form. Some participants had excused themselves early due to other commitments – only 11 forms were submitted and the findings are summarized in the table below.

Workshop evaluation responses – summary from 11 participants.

1. Please tell us at least one new thing you learned	**2. What did you enjoy about the workshop?**
• Different audiences and importance of using different information/tactics for each (4) • How to communicate better (3) • How climate change is really affecting us (3) • Need better education • Using films with strong imagery • New ways to communicate climate change • Importance of mixture of participants	• The group activity and short films/videos (3) • Interaction/activities (3) • Good facilitation/ Presentation method/using multi media/various communication techniques (3) • Sharing ideas with others (2) • It was informative and beneficial, especially the groupwork looking at policies • Information on how to communicate
3. What didn't you like?	
• Blank / nothing (5) • Liked everything (3) • Too short • No lunch ☹	
4.How can you apply what you learned in your work?	
• Apply in the development of the climate policy/current projects for Seychelles (2) • How to approach/communicate effectively with different audiences (2) • How to communicate effectively to address climate change • Share what I learned with other people who don't know about climate change • Share with others who didn't attend • Apply ideas in life as well as work • Different ways of communicating with the public when responding to complaints • Being more careful when communicating • Taking action at home to address climate change • Gained new ideas on how to communicate with challenging stakeholders (e.g. fishers, farmers)	

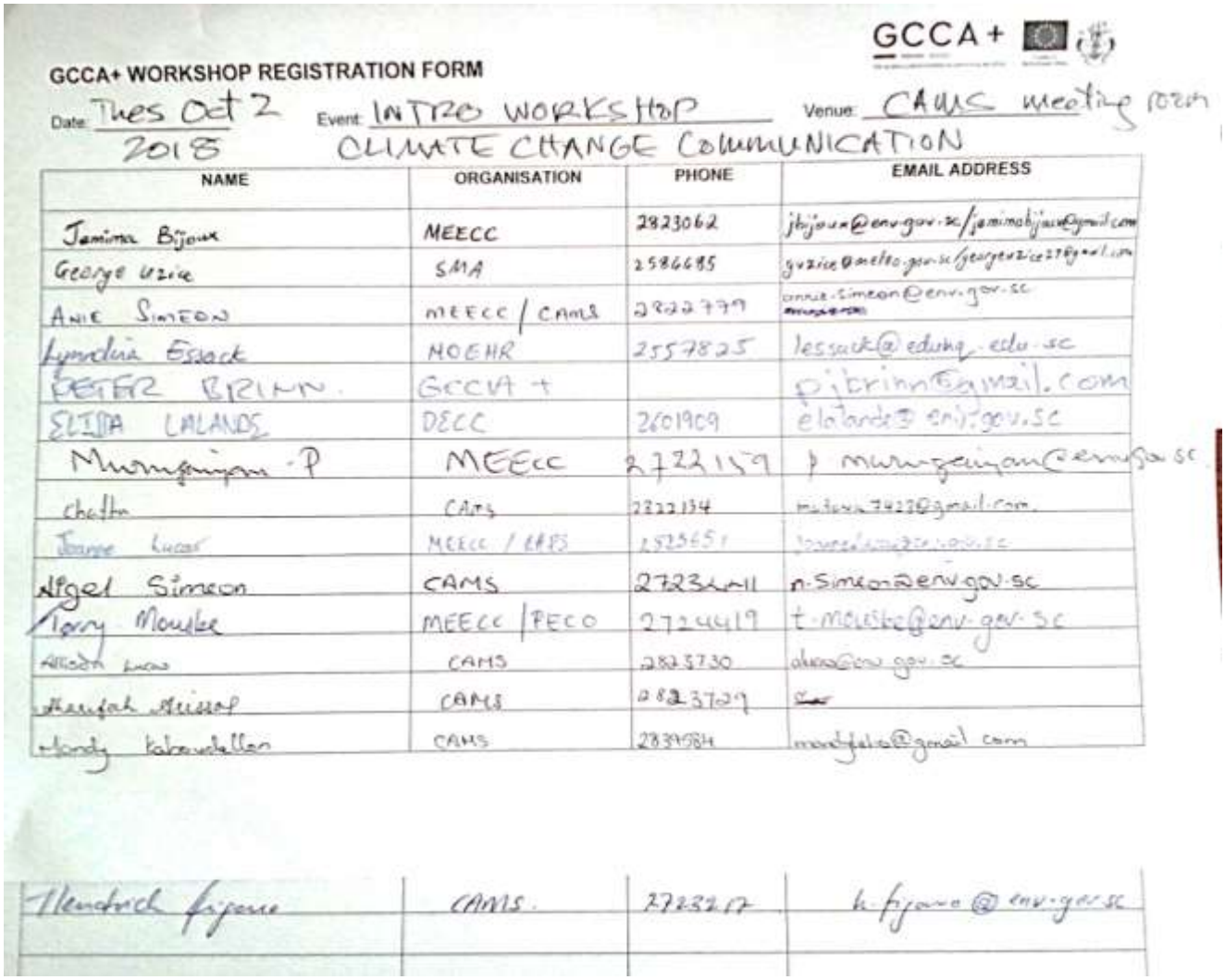
Numbers indicate how many participants wrote a similar response.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the workshop evaluations indicate that the workshop was useful as an introductory exercise to the science/art of the basics of effective communication, and the trickier issue of communicating climate change. It targeted MEECC staff who did not have formal training in communication, but who were required to communicate about climate change as part of their work. As participants noted, it was interesting to have participants from a mix of backgrounds in the room. The approach used for facilitation catered to the varied backgrounds and learning styles of the participants, such that everyone seemed to have benefited from this short training.

It is recommended that a follow up short course be held in mid 2019, targeting individuals from the MEECC as well as other government organisations who are involved in climate change communication as a substantive part of their work. This course should also be opened up to members of the media, and representatives from civil society who are engaged in climate change education and communication.

ANNEX A – WORKSHOP REGISTRATION



GCCA+

GCCA+ WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

Date: Thes Oct 2 2018 Event: INTRO WORKSHOP CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION Venue: CAMS meeting room

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ANNEX B – WORKSHOP PHOTOS

Top: Participants were mainly from the Department of Energy and Climate Change. Bottom: Facilitator Michele Martin introducing the workshop

Top: Participants putting communication forms in order of evolution. Bottom: group work using the CRED guide to the psychology of climate change communication.