



Case Study

Civic engagement and participatory governance in climate action

City of Dakar

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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The range of vulnerabilities confronting the City of Dakar make climate change a tangible reality for its population. The City has strived through its Climate and Energy Action Plan to create a new paradigm of civic engagement and participatory governance.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Like many developing countries, Senegal is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The economic hub of Senegal, the City of Dakar, is also a pioneer in West Africa in the battle against climate change, evidenced now by its Climate and Energy Action Plan (PCET) process.

However, one of the major challenges facing Dakar, as in many cities – especially African cities – is sustaining civic participation and engagement is questions related to climate change. In particular:

- There is a recurring problem of competing priorities. Citizens often prefer to engage exclusively with the questions of development and economic growth, seeing climate change as a low priority issue;
- The public is disengaged from the process of participatory governance. This disengagement can be due to previous experiences with local government, which have led to discontent or a lack of trust, among other issues;

- Linguistic, technological and cultural barriers make it difficult to reach certain groups; in particular, groups regularly and systematically excluded from traditional engagement techniques around climate mitigation and adaptation practices.

The city of Dakar has taken proactive measures to make the climate action planning process inclusive. These measures are broken down into the following areas: institutional support for PCET activities, innovative means of communicating climate issues, and broad public consultations.

These consultations and civic awareness campaigns have been opportunities to exchange, debate, and surface solutions to the current problems surrounding climate and energy in the Dakar area and its hinterland. The many forums have identified key climate risks, such as: coastal erosion, flooding, air pollution, and problems related to solid waste management and wastewater. For this range of vulnerabilities, local actors identified solutions and levers to raise awareness and encourage local ownership of climate issues, tailored to the dynamics of each community.

In the short term, these joint efforts have led the public to adopt eco-citizen actions such as voluntarily cleaning beaches, collecting garbage in the streets, or creating briquettes from recycled plastic waste to construct public park benches. Above all, the efforts have helped to roadmap and mobilize support for PCET's priority activities.

The success of this civic engagement has been possible thanks to purpose-built institutions and services, such as the Citizens Dialogue Service and the “Dakar is Acting for the Climate” platform, known as DAKCLIM. This platform is a citizen's parliament, with more than a hundred members representing the environmental, energy and waste sectors, as well as neighbourhood groups (youth, women, sports, etc).





Figure 1. Civic consultation with a women's group – HLM Commune

1.2 CONTEXT

The City of Dakar is situated on the coast at the furthest West point of Senegal. It extends further into the Atlantic Ocean than any other point in the country, and covers a surface of 82.2 km², or 14.9% of the region from which it takes its name.

Throughout the last few years, the high rate of urbanisation in Senegal has been driven mainly by major urban centres, and especially Dakar – the capital city and national economic engine. Indeed, 65% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Senegal is produced in urban hubs, of which 55% are in the region of Dakar.

Occupying only 0.04% of the national landmass, the City of Dakar is nonetheless responsible for an estimated 34% of the national greenhouse gas emissions (2016), with higher contributions for specific sectors such as 50% of national transport emissions (Senegal Country Report, 2019). In addition, the City of Dakar displays one of the strongest urban demographic growth rates in Senegal, at around 3.4%. This rate of long-term population growth has contributed to poorly controlled spatial development and a proliferation of informal settlements.

This situation, combined with the effects of climate change, the degradation of the natural environment, a carbon-intensive economy, exacerbated social problems and insufficient infrastructure, leads to the City of Dakar being one of the most vulnerable cities to climate hazards in the region.

Consequently, the residual flooding of 2008, accentuated by that of 2009, was a powerful wake up call on the problem of integrating civic engagement

with climate planning. As such, in 2011 the Municipal Council decided to create the Department of Planning and Sustainable Development (DPDD) to take charge of sustainable development, environmental planning, local development, and statistics.

Climate action planning has since gained momentum, notably with the publication of the Dakar Region's Integrated Territorial Climate Plan (PCTI) at the end of 2012. It was followed by the development of the Environmental Action Plan (P.ACT.E) in 2013, a directory of at-risk zones in 2014, the City of Dakar's Resilience Strategy in 2016, and most recently the Urban Master Plan of Dakar and its Surrounding Areas, coined Master Plan Horizon 2035 (see figure 2). Nonetheless, a critical review of these policies and programmes have displayed shortcomings, namely a lack of public ownership and a failure to implement identified policies, projects and actions. There is additionally a lack of tools to support the implementation and monitoring of actions, alongside other issues.



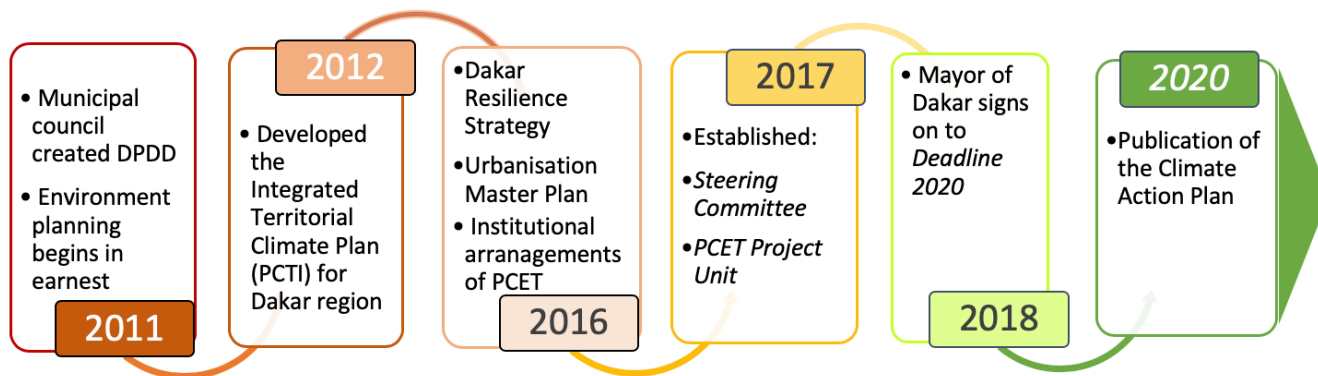


Figure 2. Integrated Climate Planning in the City of Dakar

Climate and Energy Planning

With these insights, the City of Dakar decided in 2016 to develop a Territorial Climate and Energy Action Plan (PCET). The city intended to mobilise a critical mass of citizens around energy and climate challenges through an exchange and learning platform, “Dakar is Acting for the Climate” or DAKCLIM. These civic consultations followed various formats and methodological frameworks including community focus groups, public debates on climate change, radio broadcasts, and ecological and recreational activities (see table 1).

The City defined this stage as a decisive turning point in reimagining climate and energy planning as a participatory and inclusive process, and more specifically, integrating civic engagement and participatory governance into climate action. The involvement of grassroots actors, technical specialists and local elected officials promoted awareness of and willingness to tackle climate change. This engagement further helped build the basis of public ownership of the climate plan, with more widespread acceptance of implementing ambitious actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make Dakar a climate resilient city.

Table 1. Civic consultation methodology (Source : City of Dakar)

<p>Baseline condition:</p> <p>The PCET is poorly understood, lack of up-to-date qualitative data on climate-energy aspects; weak momentum around climate-energy issues</p>	<p>Management processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institutional arrangements ○ Strategic validation ○ Secretariat support for meetings 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PCET is well known, supported by qualitative data on climate and energy; the momentum around climate and energy issues is increased 2. Results are validated through participatory workshops Summary of the elements mentioned and restitution during a workshop
	<p>Implementation processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community focus groups ○ Key person interviews ○ Neighbourhood public debates ○ Radio broadcasts ○ Workshops to present results 	
	<p>Support processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training-the-trainers ○ Monitoring implementation ○ Management of skills and resources ○ Presentation of the results ○ Technical support for management and production processes ○ Oversee communication of meeting outcomes 	

2. APPROACH AND SOLUTIONS

Following interviews with city stakeholders, three strategic starting points were identified as essential levers for civic outreach and mobilisation.

In order to meet the challenge of mobilising citizens around energy and climate, the City of Dakar defined strategic starting points to inform all outreach activities. These strategic points included: institutional support, communication of climate issues, and consultation and discussion meetings on climate-relevant topics.

The strategic starting points can be broken down into three types of civic outreach:

- Targeting the main stakeholders in the city and identifying representatives or “green ambassadors” with whom engagement strategies were co-developed to establish public confidence and understanding. These focal points included key members of institutions, the *Badienou Gokh*, artists, and rappers;
- Mass outreach efforts through a green parade, school environmental competitions, and dedicated radio programmes about the climate;
- Facilitating collective understanding and ownership of climate issues and responses.

Outreach for the Climate and Energy Action Plan

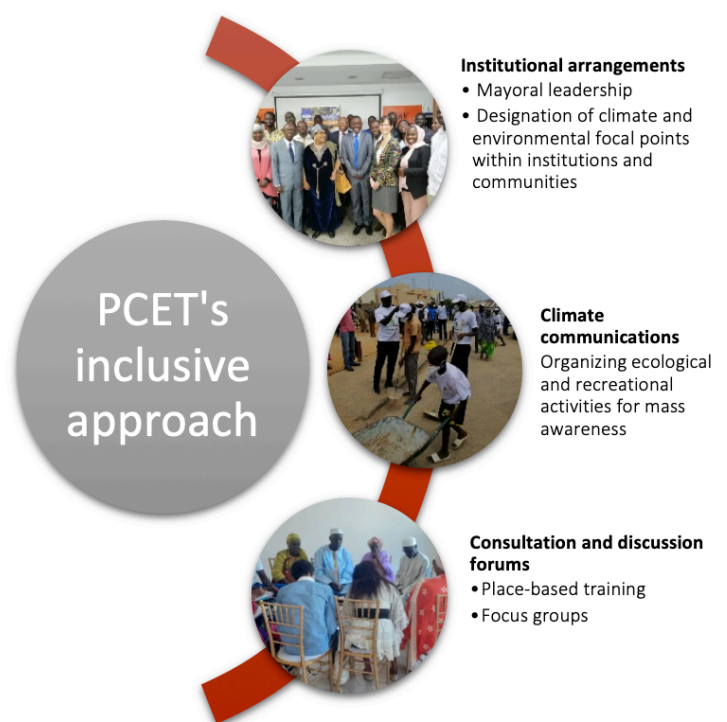


Figure 3. Strategic entry points for inclusive climate action planning





2.1 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Institutional support for the project was achieved by creating a governance framework for the planning process that integrated climate change into development plans and priorities. This was made possible by identifying representatives within the various technical departments of the city administration.

Leadership by the Mayor of Dakar

The PCET project was launched in 2017 by a decision of the Municipal Council (approved by the Prefect of Dakar). This decision authorised the Mayor to sign the Covenant of Mayors of Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) and to accept a grant from the European Union for the development of the climate plan. The same year, the City of Dakar, through the Mayor's Office, became a member of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership network, thus committing itself to the *Deadline 2020* programme. *Deadline 2020* aims to help cities to develop and implement climate action plans compatible with the Paris Agreement, providing targeted technical assistance along the journey.

Mayoral presidency of the steering committee and the identification of Green Ambassadors

Since the project's inception, the Steering Committee has been chaired by the Mayor of the City of Dakar. This committee has played a key role not only in stimulating political awareness of climate change, but also in ensuring that technical representatives from across the city services can supervise the planning process.

To this end, the PCET coordination unit identified Green Ambassadors within the various City technical services. This approach was reinforced by the involvement of commune Mayors, who participated in civic consultation activities taking place in their respective zones. The involvement of local government leadership sent a strong message to the public, encouraging greater civic participation.



2.2 COMMUNICATING CLIMATE ISSUES

Good communication is essential for the success and effective implementation of any strategy, plan or policy.

Social and psychological barriers make climate change a problem of great magnitude. As such, communicating climate change is crucial and central to the PCET.

Throughout the PCET process, as a means of community engagement, the City of Dakar held awareness-raising forums and hosted recreational ecological activities. These events were designed to communicate the realities of climate change to as wide an audience as possible, including very often excluded groups such as women and young people.

Community representative case study: the *Badienou Gokh*

Generally used as intermediaries between family units and health centres, the *Badienou Gokh* are neighbourhood godmothers: trusted women who give advice and guidance on sexual and reproductive matters. To educate citizens at a more local level (particularly women and young girls with a low level of education), the City of Dakar has sought to partner with these influential women by designating them as Green Ambassadors. This partnership has made it possible to carry the message of climate issues to even the most disadvantaged segments of the population. Contact with these women was made through climate focal representatives in local government, thus enabling their collaboration with the City of Dakar.

Doing very important grassroots work, the *Badienou Gokh*, given the connection they have with the public, are better equipped to use language that resonates with their audiences. This collaboration makes possible the breaking down of moral and cultural barriers, with communication tailored to local and individual contexts.

Environmental Hip Hop

The concept of Environmental Hip-Hop was created to send a strong message, this time to young people in urban communities. Through this concept, the PCET project unit fostered a close working relationship with opinion leaders, including a rap artist, during the Environmental Hip-Hop event organised in 2018. This activity took place in several communes (Hann Bel Air, Médina, Pikine and Guédiawaye) to support them in the fight against unsanitary conditions. It aimed to clean up the neighbourhoods alongside community organisations, and to use street art to raise awareness.

Environmental Hip-Hop aims to transcend social barriers, particularly descriptive norms related to certain types of behaviour and opinion. Descriptive norms can be an obstacle in fighting climate change, when a majority of the population adopts a hostile position towards the environment. For example, despite the benefits of better domestic waste management, many Dakarais continue to use illegal dumps as a means of disposing solid household waste – thus creating a potential descriptive norm under which illegal dumpsites are the normal means of waste management.

School Environmental Competition

Under the mass awareness campaign, a school competition with an environmental theme was organised in partnership with the European Union and Pikine's PICEP project promoting awareness among students. From 1 July 2019 onwards, thirty-two middle and high schools in the neighboring cities of Dakar, Pikine and Guédiawaye, met together. These gatherings invited the students to take part in a competition responding to questions on the environment, climate change causes and impacts, and common knowledge, in order to raise awareness of climate issues. At the end of the competition, the winning school received a solar photovoltaic (PV) installation to contribute to the roll-out of renewable energy.



Green Parade

Organised by the Association for Environmental Protection, in partnership with the PCET and the Association of Young Christians of Senegal, this parade had the goal of raising public awareness and focusing civic conscience on environmental preservation. The parade, on an 8km route, helped the city engage the public and spread positive values around environmental management. This activity gave information on eco-activities for eco-citizens, shared both directly from specialists and by slogans carried by the marchers. Awareness-raising skits were also presented along the route. To demonstrate good practice, plastic waste was gathered by the marchers and given to a national association specialising in the treatment and recycling of solid waste. At the end of the march, a presentation was given on the experience of developing Dakar's energy-climate plan.

Ecological Garden

To promote behavioural change, a substantial amount of effort was spent on raising awareness and mobilising actors at more local scales. To this end, the climate plan coordination unit organised an activity called *72 hours in Grand Yoff commune*. This activity helped to raise public awareness of environmental health issues. It allowed the public to take part in actions to improve the environment through sustainable waste management and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

To this end, young people were sensitized in plastic waste sorting techniques, and in the processes involved in making ecological briquettes from recycled plastic to construct park benches. Also included were activities rewilding and setting up a community garden for public enjoyment.

2.3 CONSULTATIONS AND EXCHANGES ON CLIMATE ISSUES AND RESPONSES

With a view to developing collective understanding and ownership of climate issues and responses, the City of Dakar organised consultation and exchange meetings with community groups, with the aim of better understanding local environmental and human dynamics.

PCET Hearings and Focus Groups in the Communes

Since the project launch date in September 2017, there have been a total of 18 civic consultations also known as *PCET Hearings*, one in each of the 18 communes within the City of Dakar. These hearings were organised as focus groups in the communes, each taking on average 2 hours 30 minutes.

These hearings brought together the public, civil society organisations, and all other local actors to discuss their perception of climate change and consider solutions to current environmental problems. These hearings led to the identification of the climate risks described in the introduction: coastal erosion, flooding, and problems related to atmospheric pollution and the management of solid waste and waste water.

For these different vulnerabilities, local actors identified solutions and levers to raise awareness and encourage local ownership of the issue, all specific to

local community dynamics. These exchanges also generated a portfolio of community actions to tackle climate change, useful in the development of the climate action plan.

Local Coaching

The Citizen Dialogue service was created by the City of Dakar to more effectively involve citizens in development projects and programmes. Through the « Local Coaching » project, the knowledge acquired through this service was used to make sure that the inventory of the environmental and human dynamics of the area was carried out inclusively. A total of 57 focus groups were carried out, alongside stakeholder interviews, mobilising more than 500 key actors to take part in 150 hours of debates, the results of which were shared with municipal councilors.

3. CAPITALISATION AND REPLICABILITY

The positive results of civic engagement on climate change in Dakar covers four main areas: institutional support, stakeholder engagement, the role of local representatives and targeted communications.

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY PLANNING

A key factor in driving civic mobilisation on climate was the continued support of successive city Mayors, who both made climate action a priority for their mandate. This can be seen particularly in the involvement of the Mayor of Dakar as President of the climate planning Steering Committee; such involvement made it possible to target the plan accurately to local needs. This dynamic was reinforced by the involvement and participation of commune Mayors in the civic consultation activities taking place in their areas, sending a strong message to the public of the need for greater civic participation.

Though in 2018 the deliberables seemed to be in competition with each other,

This institutional leadership further enabled Dakar to successfully integrate multiple sources of external technical support, from the Covenant of Mayor in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) and C40 Cities programmes, enabling a joint climate action planning process.

Institutional Lessons Learned

Political engagement from municipal authorities is an essential factor to ensure upstream adoption of a climate plan. Indeed, obtaining the cooperation, enthusiasm and especially engagement of those with decision-making power to direct the process can be the difference between having good plans in theory, and actually including the community in the development of these plans, leading to local authority ownership of the implementation phase.

3.2 TARGETED STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Through the structures recently put in place such as the DAKCLIM platform, various key actors (civil society organisation, NGOs, universities and various state technical service institutions) have worked together to ensure ownership and acceptability of the climate plan and the actions to be implemented. This was possible through an extensive mapping of key actors, taking into account their degree of interest and/or influence. In this way, internal and external actors were identified, then engaged in the process of constructing the climate plan.

Lessons Learned from Stakeholder Engagement

An important lesson learned by the City of Dakar is the necessity of involving stakeholders during the development of climate actions, plans and policies. The participation and support of a broad range of actors can make the difference between simply having plans, structures and processes in place, and the effective implementation of these priorities.



CAPITALISATION POUR UNE RÉPLICABILITÉ DE L'ENGAGEMENT CITOYEN DANS LE CADRE DE L'ÉLABORATION DU PLAN D'ACTION CLIMAT DE LA VILLE DE DAKAR

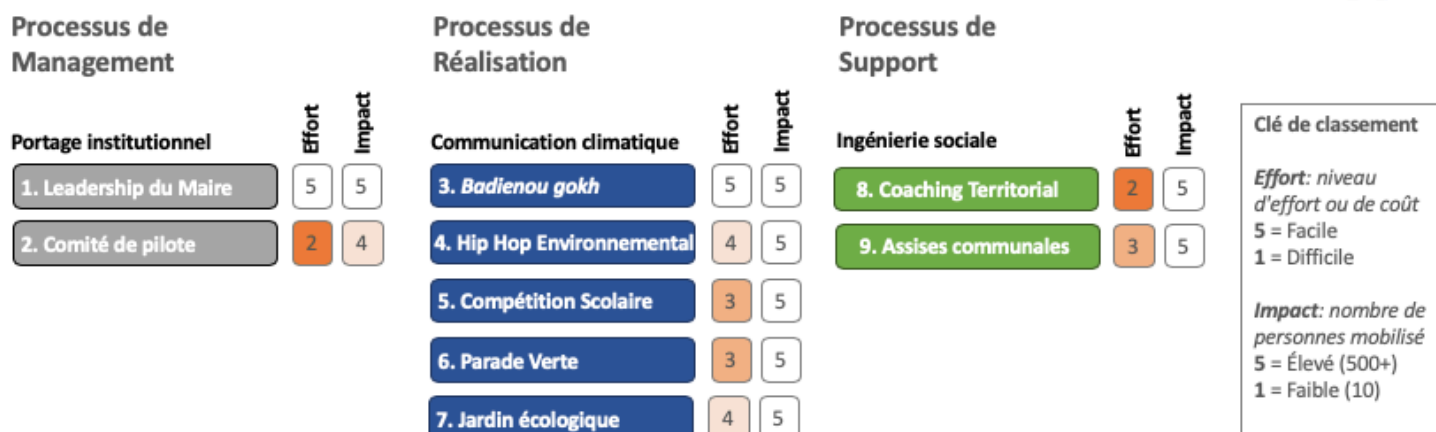


Figure 4. Capitalising on previous work to replicate civic engagement

3.3 APPOINTING REPRESENTATIVES AND “GREEN AMBASSADORS”

A further contributor to the success of the climate plan was institutional support, in particular in identifying focal points in each structure and Green Ambassadors in the City of Dakar’s technical departments and services. These influential people were able to bring messages to otherwise hard-to-reach communes (for example, the *Badienou Gokh* women, environmental advisers and managers, among others). The involvement of the *Badienou Gokh* was particularly helpful, because they allowed stronger consideration of the gender aspects of climate action.

Lessons Learned from Green Ambassadors

Working with passionate focal points in the communes, and strengthening the capacity of locally empowered leaders such as the *Badienou Gokh*, may be essential to spread a participatory and inclusive climate-energy planning process. Beyond their own specific technical expertise in the sector, climate change leaders or champions often need soft skills, and people with both are not always easy to find; we can thus see the need to put a structured training plan in place.

3.4 COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate communication is an essential subject for social change. However, it can be challenging to communicate such a complex issue. Social barriers make climate change a problem of great magnitude. As a result of this observation, the City of Dakar aimed to strengthen the DAKCLIM platform’s technical capacities for environmental communication and local marketing, with the overarching aim of equipping them with the communication techniques necessary to launch awareness campaigns.

The City of Dakar has also innovatively used different communication channels depending on the target audience (for example, producing several radio broadcasts at local levels in the city of Dakar), forums, and environmental activities to spread awareness of climate change.

Lessons Learned from Communications

All methods of communication are important, but it is particularly valuable to identify diverse channels specific to each target audience. Working with communicators who are well-informed about climate change, especially those people that can relay crucial information and traverse social barriers to inform the public, can be vital to spreading collective awareness and demonstrate civic engagement.



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