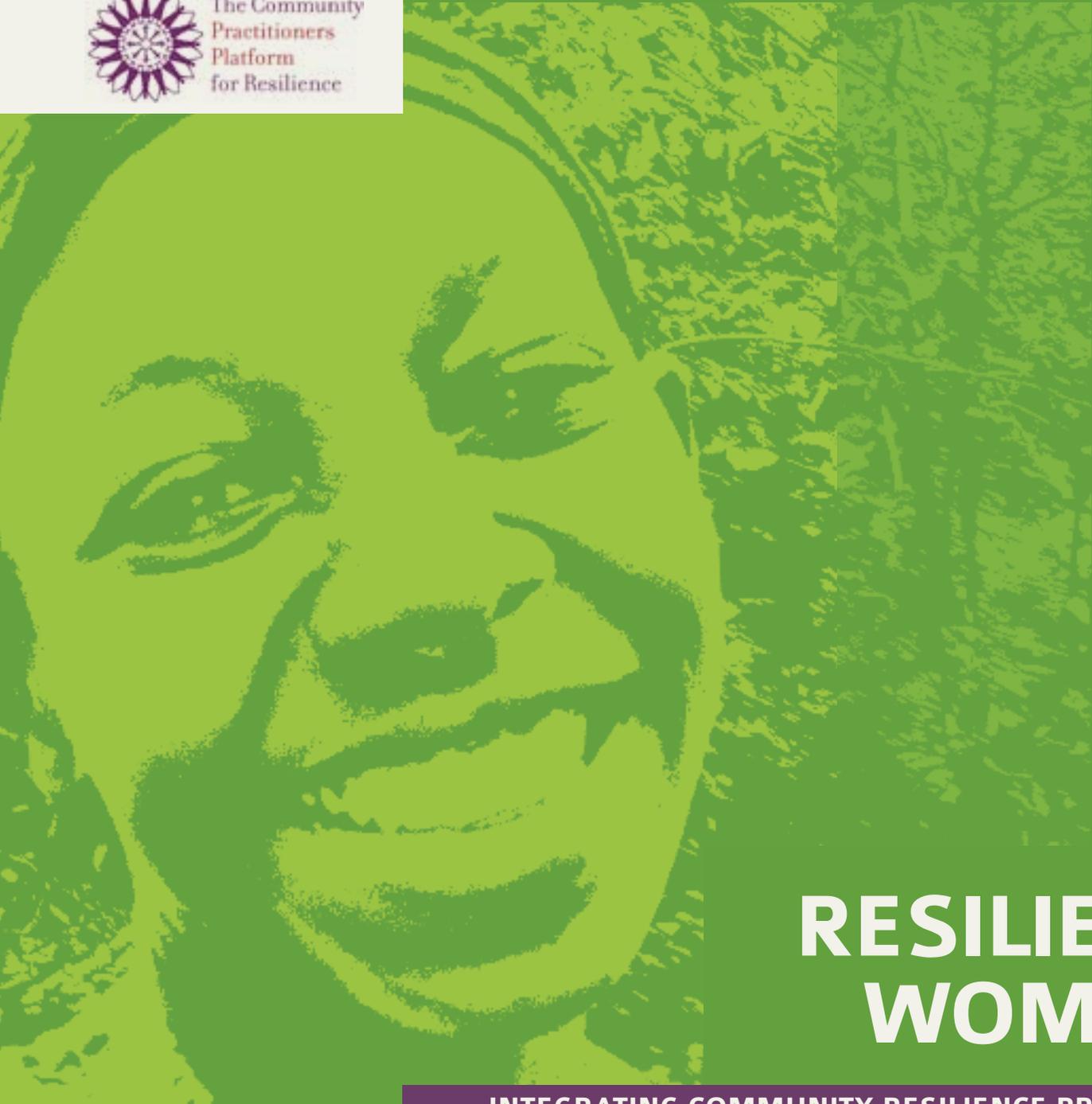




The Community
Practitioners
Platform
for Resilience



RESILIENT WOMEN

**INTEGRATING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PRIORITIES
IN POST-2015 AGENDA**

ACTION RESEARCH OF THE COMMUNITY
PRACTITIONERS PLATFORM FOR RESILIENCE
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



The Community
Practitioners
Platform
for Resilience



HUIROU COMMISSION
Women, Homes & Community

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FOREWORD

The Huairou Commission, with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Agency for Cooperation and Development, implemented a participatory action research in collaboration with the Community Practitioners Platform in Latin America and the Caribbean. Carried out in Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela by grassroots women facilitators, one of the goals for the initiative is that through the process, grassroots women strengthen their capacity to conduct participatory research and advocacy. They also reaffirmed their ongoing work in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, as well as organizing, networking, and leadership. The findings were systemized in such a way that participating groups are able to use the data in their own initiatives.

The resulting report, “Mujeres resilientes: Incluyendo las Prioridades de resiliencia comunitaria en la Agenda Post 2015 y el Marco de Acción de Hyogo: Perspectivas de América Latina y el Caribe,” was released on the occasion of UNISDR’s Fourth Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas in Guayaquil (May 27-29, 2014). In recognition of grassroots women’s efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean, we are pleased to release an English edition of the report for wider circulation.

The year 2015 will be a milestone when global processes such as World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan (March 14-18) would potentially reshape the resilience agenda, as well as United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. The Huairou Commission, along with local, national, and regional leaders of the Community Practitioners Platform urge all stakeholders that grassroots women play active roles in the planning, designing, monitoring and evaluation processes of disaster risk reduction.

Katia Araujo
Deputy Director of Programs
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Janice Peterson
Chair



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience (CPP) is an organizing and networking mechanism for community-based groups, grassroots women-led groups in particular, to reduce their vulnerability to disaster and climate risks in rural and urban areas. Aimed at building community-to-community support for advancing local development, CPP strategies include fostering exchanges of risk reduction and resilience building practices and establishing multi-community action plans that can be advanced with public officials and/or other stakeholders such as NGOs, donors, and research institutions.

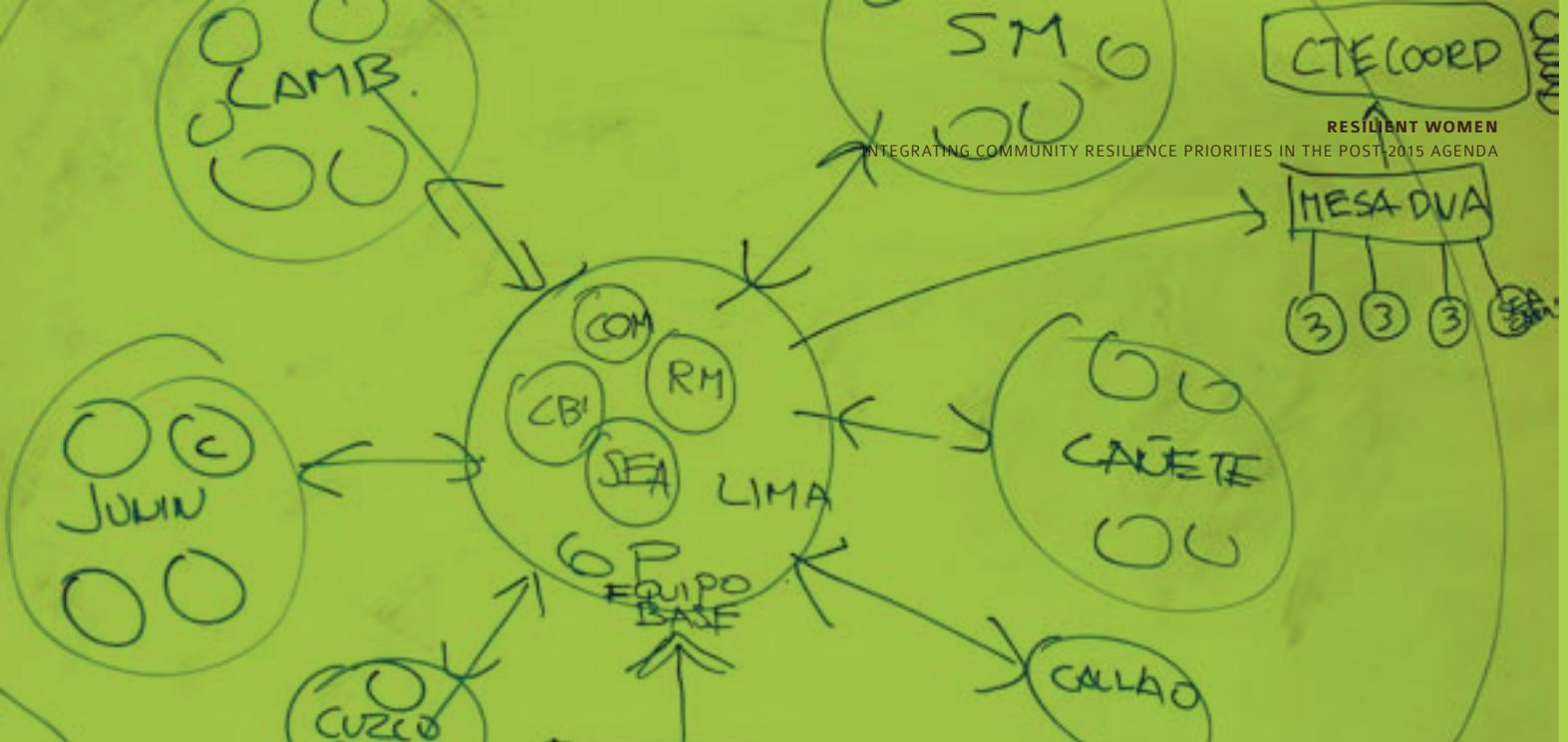
This action research spotlights the realities, actions, and gains of CPP's Latin American and Caribbean member organizations. The data was collected by grassroots women's community-based organizations. Instead of an external agency administering the research in an extractive fashion, these groups took ownership of the process. The research aims to build grassroots capacities to conduct primary research. We also encouraged the organizations involved to utilize the data they collected for their own purposes, such as advocacy and campaigning.

CPP's grassroots women's organization members from Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela conducted a total of 402 surveys and 18 focus group discussions. Our research coordinator also implemented in-depth case studies in Honduras and Peru. All information collected by the groups was organized and systematized by the Huairou Commission, Secretariat of the global campaign for community resilience.

The participatory action research sets out to understanding the following:

- Experiences of disasters and climate change by grassroots communities
- Risks faced by grassroots women in land and food security
- Community partners and allies' roles in resilience building
- Programs and public policies that advance resilience priorities

Respondents from both rural and urban communities identified predominant effects of disasters as: damage to crops and public infrastructure, scarcity of drinkable water, loss and damages to housing, and emotional and psychological stress. Those surveyed associate climate change with recurrent hazards they are facing, such



as droughts, unpredictable weather, changes in rainy and dry seasons, etc. This is especially the case in rural areas, where much of the population depends on natural resources and farming as sources of food and income.

In our resilience approach, secure tenure of land and housing is a pre-condition for grassroots women to gain a more equitable role economically, politically, and socially. Having access, control and ownership over land provides women the power to participate in decision-making processes, which affect their lives, their families and communities. Secure tenure is also linked to food security. In rural communities, people are highly dependent on agriculture for subsistence and livelihoods. In urban areas, decline in agricultural outputs in the rural areas usually translates to scarcity and rising food prices. Our findings show we have much work to do on this issue.

All the respondents acknowledge the importance of building partnerships to advance community resilience. These partnerships have supported grassroots organizations mainly through training in areas such as disaster risk reduction, sustainable agricultural techniques, natural resource management, food security, community organizing, and women’s leadership. Their main partners are NGOs, grassroots community organizations, national and international civil society organizations, and local governments. Grassroots groups also acknowledge the role of the private sector as key to new processes and a potential ally to amplify and diversify their emerging development work.

When asked about the biggest benefits of being part of an organized group, many respondents cite capacity building and training others in risk management as a major benefit. They noted how important it is for them to secure benefits for their community as a leader. Notably, many cite their personal development as women leaders as a major factor in their work with grassroots organizations. It is also clear to CPP members that working in resilience building have widen their reach by linking them to poverty reduction, socioeconomic enterprise development, and public policy formation.

Based on systemization of the survey and focus group findings, final reflections on grassroots women’s efforts in building community resilience in LAC show that work needs to continue in the following areas:



Resilience practices. Sustain existing disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation projects. Provide technical know-how in adaptive agricultural practices, sustainable natural resource management, food security, land tenure, social entrepreneurship, etc. Strengthen grassroots organizations that have projects and programs in action to avoid losing gains made.

Advocacy. Expand the Community Practitioners Platform as a mechanism to tend to the needs of marginalized communities. Direct attention to the community's needs implies working closely with local government, and establishing dialogue and participatory processes in which communities and organized women feel they are being listened to and supported.

Empowerment. Concentrate on grassroots women's training and empowerment as the foundation for the community's resilience and development processes. Financial and human resources must be directed to promote women's leadership and community organizing. Many of them regard serving the community and being recognized as someone who aids its development as a major benefit of being part of an organized group.

Recognition. Publicly recognize and consolidate grassroots women's development gains by sharing their practices and achievements so that women's experiences may be known and replicated in other communities. This would contribute to guaranteeing women's rights to be informed and participate in decision-making processes.

Networking mechanism such as Community Practitioners Platform is vital to influencing public policy processes at the local, national, regional and global levels. Networks allow community leaders to connect to other national and international institutions. The interviews held with national and local government representatives resulted in the acknowledgment of the role that grassroots women's organizations play with respect to organizing communities for collective action and advocacy. Even in situations where disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation policies and programs exist, grassroots communities have not received the potential gains due to marginalization from decision-making processes. In case after case around the world, grassroots actions have transformed communities from mere beneficiaries to active agents that initiate partnerships that made government policies and program more accountable and effective.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPRADE	Andean Regional Disaster Management Agency
CBO	Community-based organization
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CENEPRED	National Center for Disaster Assessment Prevention and Risk Reduction of Peru
CEPRENAC	Center for Coordination of Natural Disasters in Central America
CONAMOVIDI	National Confederation of Organized Women for Life and Integral Development
COPECO	Permanent Commission of Emergencies of Honduras
CPP	Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience
CRF	Community Resilience Fund
CSO	Civil society organization
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
HC	Huairou Commission
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
ICF	Forest Conservancy Institute
INDECI	National Disaster Management Authority of Peru
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SAG	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of Honduras
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	El Agustino Educational Services
SEPLAN	Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation of Honduras
SERNA	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
USAID-OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development



INTRODUCTION

BUILDING A CULTURE OF RESILIENCE

Latin American and Caribbean grassroots women's organizations joined Huairou Commission's Community Resilience campaign in 2008, after a three-day peer learning exchange entitled "The Role of Power in Grassroots Women's Groups and Indigenous People in the Reduction of Disaster Risk." Held in Guatemala City, it was hosted by Fundación Guatemala, organized by GROOTS International, and supported by Pro-Vention Consortium. More than 50 women leaders representing 25 grassroots organizations in the region shared practices and strategies and developed action plans to promote an integrated approach to disaster risk-reduction, climate change adaptation, poverty reduction, and to boost their role in public policy and decision-making bodies.

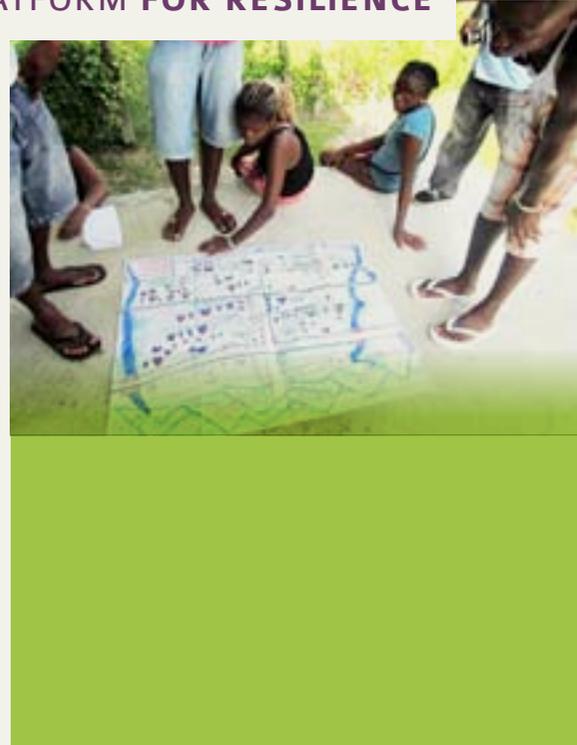
Two years later, in 2010, the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International created the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience (CPP) at the invitation of United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). CPP is a tool for organizing and network building, allowing grassroots groups to work across communities and formally cooperate with governments and other key actors to scale up local efforts to reduce disaster and climate risks and to foster long-term resilient development.

COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS PLATFORM FOR RESILIENCE

To build support among communities to advance local resilient development, CPP's strategies are to foster exchanges of good practices and action planning from various communities as the first steps in making policies more accountable to those who live and work in poor communities. The CPP is a space for advocacy, exchange, and dialogue led by grassroots women's organizations and communities invested in building resilience. The principles of building the CPP are:

- Advocacy and partnering between community-based organizations, local and national governments, and multilateral agencies;
- Networking between members to share, transfer and aggregate good practices and lessons for scaling up community-driven resilience;
- Financing community-driven resilient development

The CPP's creation presents a unique opportunity for grassroots women to play a key role in drafting agendas and influencing public policies, and connecting with global initiatives such as Hyogo Framework for Action. The platform works to enhance the visibility of innovations and partnerships built in communities to reduce the impact of disasters and climate change.



The **Huairou Commission** is a global coalition that empowers grassroots women's organizations to enhance their community development practice and exercise collective political power at the global level. Driven by grassroots women's organizations from around the world, the members and partners of the Huairou Commission (HC) believe it is in the best interest of local communities and grassroots women to expand their participation and leadership in community development work on the issues that affect their daily lives. They agree that grassroots women's participation in local to global decision-making is a reliable route to achieving gender equitable, pro-poor policies and investments.

The organization is structured as a global membership coalition of women's networks, NGOs and grassroots women's organizations in more than 50 countries. The majority of its work takes place through four campaigns: Community Resilience, AIDS, Governance, and Land and Housing. These campaigns were identified in a bottom-up way from the work and interest of grassroots women's organizations in its membership. Campaign members are grassroots groups, NGOs and other partners who use the HC's thematic campaigns as collective organizing spaces in which grassroots women can lead the demonstration and transfer of practices within and across countries and leverage their constituencies and robust practice base to negotiate with decision makers.

Member network **GROOTS International**, a global network of women-led grassroots organizations leads the campaign on Community Resilience. It began as a response to the growing needs and demands of grassroots women to support the leadership and work they had undertaken in their communities to rebuild in the wake of disasters such as the Maharashtra, India earthquake in 1993 and Hurricane Mitch, which hit Honduras in 1998.

The **Community Resilience Fund** is a unique mechanism that channels flexible funds directly to grassroots women’s organizations. It counters the predominantly top-down approach to disaster risk reduction, where priorities are pre-identified by national agencies and frequently not aligned with local priorities.

Developed by GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission, the fund puts resources directly in the hands of grassroots women’s organizations, thus enabling women to exercise public leadership, mobilize communities, nurture grassroots learning and innovation, transfer practices and build partnerships. It allows communities to leverage additional support from local or national governments, scale-up solutions and influence decision-making.

The Community Resilience Fund is currently being implemented in 18 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

A CPP consists of two main groups. The first is community-based organizations; particularly grassroots women’s groups that have scaled up their efforts, built partnerships with local and/or national authorities or linked their risk reduction work to development and poverty reduction programs. Participation in the CPP allows them to share their advanced practices and collectively advocate to scale up locally led initiatives.

The second group consists of representatives from governments, policy and donor agencies, and academia that share an interest and commitment to seeing community-based groups succeed. Their role is to provide advice, help identify programs, policies and resources that can scale up collaborative, community-driven risk and vulnerability reduction. The Platform’s activities include the following:

- Convene grassroots community experts in regional and national forums to share practices, lessons and identify advocacy priorities;
- Promote interface between community leaders and local authorities, national governments and other donors and policy makers;
- Facilitate community-led actions that demonstrate the capacities of grassroots women and communities to undertake public roles in resilience;
- Communicate and publicize lessons, insights and advocacy messages of the CPP.

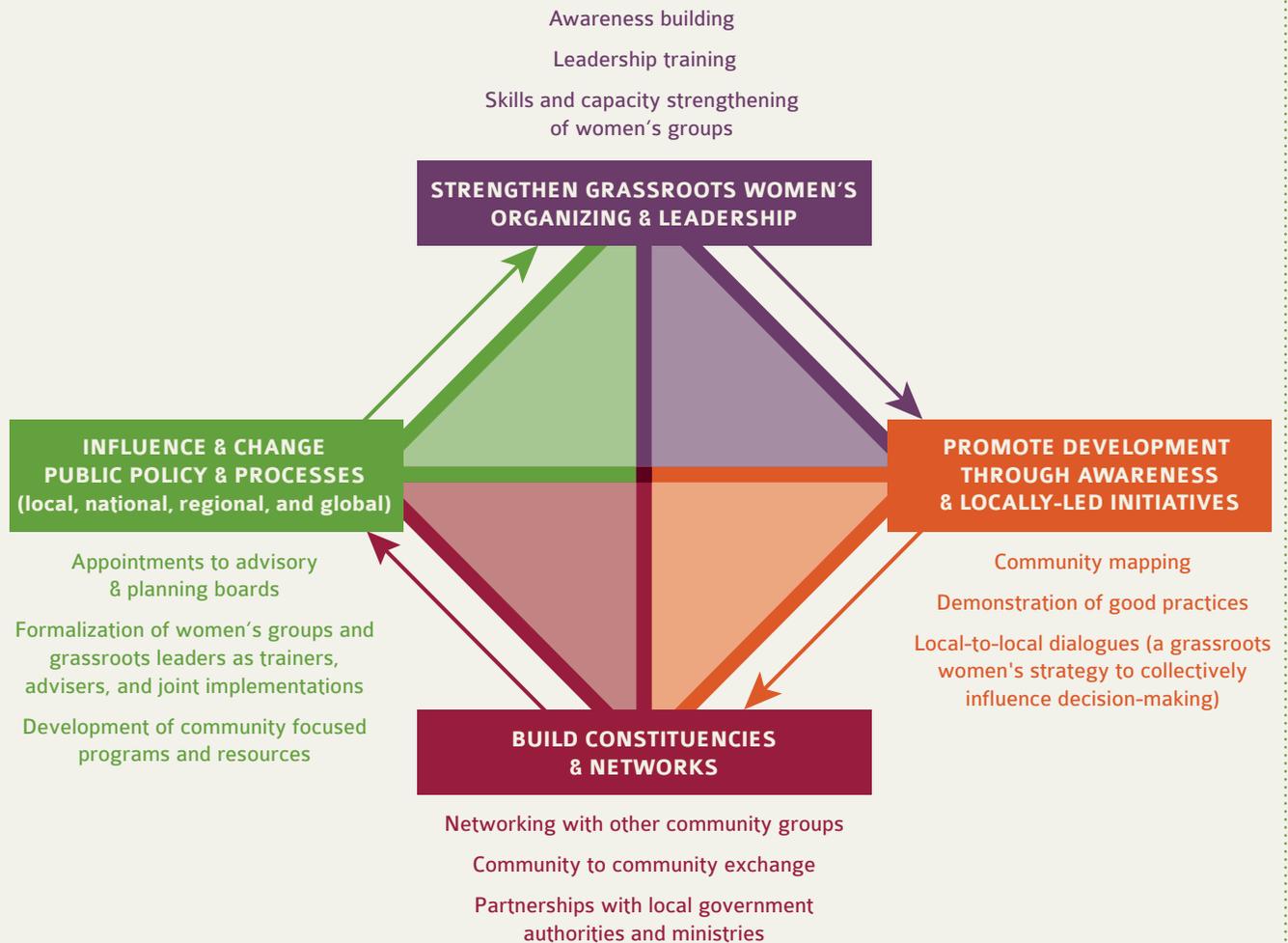
CORE GRASSROOTS WOMEN’S STRATEGIES

The core of Huairou Commission’s strategies in building resilience shares with other campaigns, such as AIDS, Governance, and Land and Housing in that it starts with women collectively analyzing their realities. In this case, women identify disaster and climate-related risks and vulnerabilities in the communities, then prioritize and put in place activities to protect lives, homes, assets, livelihoods, services and infrastructure. The Community Resilience campaign conceptualizes this as a four-point strategy, dubbed a ‘Resilience Diamond,’ to illustrate grassroots women’s interrelated strategies (Diagram 1).

Alluding to the geometric shape, the four points of the ‘diamond’ refer to four separate and distinct domains of activities. Not only are these cornerstones of interlocking strategies that build community capacities for resilience, the horizontal and vertical axes connecting the top-bottom and left-right domains are mutually reinforcing. On the vertical axis, the internally focused “strengthening women’s organizing and leadership” is bolstered by outwardly focused work of “building constituents and coalitions” with broader community, local authorities, government agencies, NGOs, private companies, and other development actors. On the horizontal axis, practice-focused work to “promote resilient development through awareness and locally-led initiatives” brings concrete benefits by providing technical capacity and resources to at-risk communities, and amplified by advocating for systemic change

through “influencing and change public policy processes.” In short, the Resilience Diamond is a map of dynamic interlocking pathways that are continuously being developed, refined, and expanded by grassroots women working collectively with community and with external partners.

Diagram 1. CORE STRATEGIES FOR GRASSROOTS WOMEN-LED RESILIENCE



Resilience is the community's ability to organize to be able to mitigate the impacts of hazards and climate change, protecting resources such as lives, homes, houses, material belongings, services and infrastructure. This includes the ability of the community to foster development processes, social media and institutional associations which strengthen their ability to anticipate, endure, resist and bounce back from a disaster (Fordham and Gupta, 2011).

LAND TENURE AS AN ENTRY POINT TO RESILIENCE

More than from physical hazards or environmental factors, the vulnerability of communities living in poverty to natural disasters often stems from unequal development processes such as social exclusion, economic marginalization, and lack of voice in policy formulation. Improving poor families' access to basic services, ensuring secure land tenure, housing, and livelihoods are integral to risk reduction. In urban areas, the threat of eviction prevents people from making improvements to their houses. In rural areas, access to land for agricultural purposes proves to be key to food security and livelihoods. Improvements in land tenure allow rural communities to implement sustainable agricultural practices in order to adapt to climate change.

Moreover, women without equal land rights have fewer opportunities to influence land use decisions or to claim equitable compensatory rights should their homes be damaged or destroyed during disasters. Therefore, resilience depends not only on a community's capacity to rebuild the physical fabric, but also on broadening and strengthening its asset and resource base. As such, the Huairou Commission and the Community Practitioners Platform advocate policies that provide grassroots women with secure and equal access to the use and control over land, opportunities to make land-related decisions, and resources for their autonomy, self-improvement, and economic well being as a foundation to resilience.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This participatory action research aims to consolidate and expand the role of the Community Practitioners Platform in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in order to give grassroots women greater role in global development agendas. By aggregating the knowledge, experiences, and practices of grassroots women, and by setting and organizing priorities in the LAC region, grassroots women organizations could use evidence-based documentation to leverage greater support from stakeholders such as governments, donor agencies, and other civil society actors at local, national, regional and global levels.

As a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action, participatory action research is essentially a tool to empower those who collect the data. Through the process, grassroots women take important skills and lessons that can be used and/or replicated in their work to strengthen their organizations, improve processes, and enhance advocacy. In planning this research during 2013, LAC member organizations felt the need to cover not only practices and definitions of community resilience, but also substantiate their participation and institutional partnerships as pathways to transformative change.



The current study has in its background a 13-country global action research carried out in 2009 in response to and in collaboration with Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction. Entitled “Women’s Views from the Frontline,” 23 grassroots women’s organizations and 1,181 local stakeholders participated from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.¹ Amongst a number of issues, grassroots women asked about their awareness of rights, entitlements and responsibilities with regard to disaster risk management programs in their countries; awareness of financial resources at the local level to address disaster risks; and the extent to which women community representatives have been involved in public decision making processes at the community level. Results from this 2009 research informed the direction of Huairou Commission’s global campaign for community resilience, which in turn, propelled momentum for policy advocacy at a number of international agencies such as UNISDR, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank. On the ground, the research also catalyzed actions from grassroots women to address existing gaps, evident by the fact that 7 of the 9 organizations that participated in the 2009 research are now leaders in the CPP in LAC.²

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN

The present research in LAC is modeled after one developed and implemented in Asia in 2012, in which 12 organizations surveyed 603 community leaders living and working in poor and disaster-prone communities in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.³ Similar to the action research in



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1 A condensed report of the findings is released as “Women’s Views from the Frontline.” The 4 key findings are: (1) women report they are excluded from emergency preparedness and response programs; (2) information gaps between national programs and grassroots women’s organizations; (3) DRR stakeholders lack a shared definition of effective risk reduction in poor, vulnerable communities; (4) organized constituencies of women with pro-poor DRR practices represent untapped potential.

2 LAC groups that participated in the 2009 action research were: Centro de Mujeres Candelarias/ Fundación Apachita (Bolivia); Rede Pintadas (Brazil); Comité de Emergencia Garífuna (Honduras); Construction Resource and Development Center (Jamaica); and CONAMOVIDI, Servicios Educativos El Agustino, Central de Bancos Comunales de El Agustino and Sta. Anita, Mujeres Unidas para un Pueblo Mejor (Peru).

3 Suranjana Gupta and Sangeetha Prushothaman, “What Communities Want: Putting Community Resilience Priorities on the Agenda for 2015,” New York: Huairou Commission, 2013. Best Practices Foundation trained community based organizations and local NGOs to administer the survey, as well as facilitated and documented focus group discussions. The Best Practices Foundation team also undertook two in-depth case studies on the basis of field visits to DAMPA in the Philippines and Lumanti Support Group for Shelter in Nepal in January 2013, where the team interviewed multiple stakeholders, including grassroots women leaders, community members, and local and national government officials.

Asia, this LAC one has three components: survey questionnaire, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews. The following are the eight groups that led the action research in LAC:



ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Espaço Feminista	Brazil
Luna Creciente	Ecuador
Fundación Guatemala	Guatemala
Wagucha	Honduras
GROOTS Jamaica	Jamaica
Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Las Brumas	Nicaragua
GROOTS Perú ⁴	Peru
Rosa de Montaña	Venezuela

These grassroots women’s organizations were selected based on their experience in building local capacity to respond to disasters and climate threats, and creating partnerships at the local, national, and regional levels, as well as influencing decision-making process and debates. In other words, their work embodies the interlocking strategies represented in the Resilience Diamond diagram.

The participatory action research aims to understand the following issues:

- Experiences of disasters and climate change by grassroots communities
- Risks faced by grassroots women in land and food security
- Community partners and allies’ roles in resilience building
- Programs and public policies that advance resilience priorities

During every stage of the research design, members of the grassroots women’s organization provided feedback on the concept and survey tools developed by the Huairou Commission’s technical team. As a result, there are more emphasis on land tenure, food security, partnership building, and the empowerment of women as they gain recognition in the community through their work. This participatory process enhanced grassroots leaders and facilitators’ capacity to analyze and reflect on key concepts, priorities, organizational history, political empowerment and advocacy.

⁴ GROOTS Peru is a network of four local and national level organizations: CONAMOVIDI, SEA, Central de Bancos Comunaes and Red de Mujeres Lima Este.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Selection of survey respondents was the sole responsibility of the eight leading organizations. Each organization was asked to conduct 50 surveys so there is equal number of respondents from each country. Between 2 to 5 facilitators from these organizations were trained on data collection methods. In addition to conference calls with Huairou Commission's technical team, a technical guide was developed so they become familiar with the concepts in the survey questionnaire. An additional guide was created to help facilitators conduct mind-mapping exercise during focus group discussions. All of them were also trained in ways to prepare participants to reflect on definitions of resilience and their priorities without influencing the respondents. Special attention was paid to ensure the facilitators understood the utility of these exercises so they could conduct similar exercises on the issues they consider pertinent in the future.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

The survey contains 38 questions with a mix of yes/no/don't know, multiple choice, and open-ended answers. A total of 402 surveys were received,⁵ which represents responses from 331 women and 71 men who work in grassroots women's groups or are community partners and allies in resilience. The questions are organized under the following categories (See Appendix for the entire questionnaire):

- Contextual information
- Experience of the impacts of natural hazards, disasters and climate change
- Secure land tenure – land and property ownership, and potentials of eviction
- Food security – household food production and adequate food intake
- External support and recommendations – training and support for disaster relief, risk reduction, security of land tenure.

FOCUS GROUPS

The facilitators conducted a total of 18 focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Focusing on highlighting grassroots women's voices, respondents participated in mind mapping exercises to capture the values and perceptions, as well as past and present experiences working in resilience building. The focus groups sought to:

- Understand the concept of resilience that grassroots women have developed during their community work, especially seeing resilience as an opportunity in the face of adversity, given that it aims to accelerate community development, built on the grassroots women and communities' leadership, knowledge and experiences.



.....
⁵ Fifty-three surveys were received from Nicaragua, and 49 were received from Guatemala.

- Reflect on the transformative qualities of women’s leadership and the promotion of social capital through building networks at the local, national, regional and global levels.
- Analyze the surrounding socio-environmental reality as a complex system, with risks and opportunities created by the sustainable use of resources.
- Identify which activities and resources are available for training, fundraising, human resources, partnerships and other key actions.

These sessions were not structured as formal sessions, but they helped expand the quantitative and qualitative survey results.

CASE STUDIES

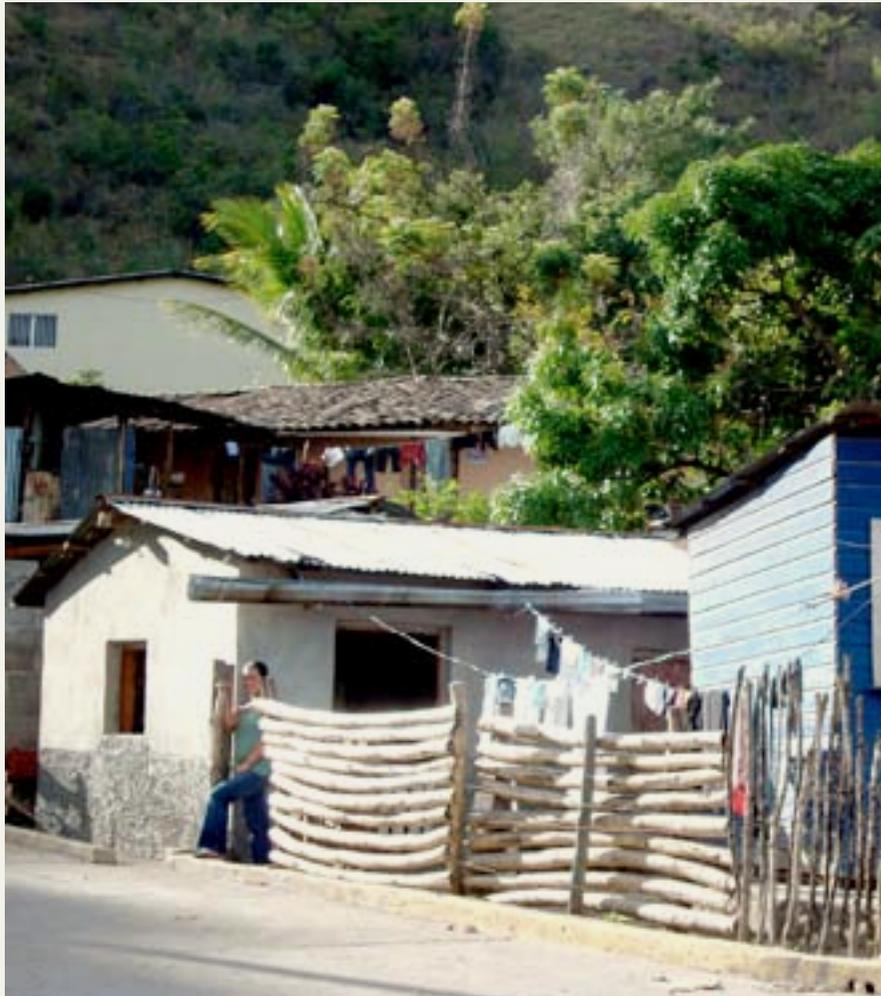
Our research coordinator conducted case studies during her field visits to Honduras and Peru organized by Wagucha and GROOTS Peru. Data was obtained through interviews with community groups and key informants, visiting projects-in-progress, and speaking to partners such as local and national public officers. These meetings were also used as a chance to share information with potential partners for future collaborations. They seek to understand the following:

- What is the role of public agencies that support communities affected by disasters and climate change? Is there a program or policy in place? Are they a part of regular programmatic efforts?
- Where is the funding for the programs coming from? How are funds being channeled? How do communities access these resources or programs?
- Does the institution have some kind of agreement or partnership to collaborate with communities on disaster risk reduction or climate change adaptation activities? Is there a formal agreement?
- What are the advantages and challenges of partnering with communities? Are there opportunities for the communities to participate in future government programs?
- What must happen so that programs and government policies could help disadvantaged communities more effectively to increase their resilience in the face of disasters and climate change?



LIMITATIONS IN THE METHODOLOGY

A participatory action research is foremost a tool to build capacity of the groups that implement the research, and to raise awareness of the topics relevant to the community. As such, this report provides valuable insights to the oft-untold stories of grassroots women's experiences and their efforts to build resilience in areas where they live and work. Since the survey sample is not random and all participants are affiliated with existing community-based organizations, the research should not be regarded as a formal survey of the impacts of disasters and climate change in LAC in general. It does not attempt to understand and explain how natural disasters and climate change affect grassroots women and men differently, nor compare rural and urban experiences, nor examine whether grassroots women's strategies are more effective than those from other institutions.



8

Countries

189

Analyses

11,511

Records

18

Focus groups

2

Case studies



GRASSROOTS VOICES ON DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In a study released by UNISDR of data from 1990–2011, an average of 24 intensive natural disasters took place annually in the 16 countries of LAC region.⁶ While less than 1% of disasters were manifestations of intensive risk (defined as 25 or more human lives loss and/or 300 or more house units destroyed in a political administrative unit), the remaining 99% disasters were classified as extensive risk. In other words, for every intensive disaster there were 155 extensive ones and that extensive risks were due to hydro-meteorological and climate phenomena, and these are becoming more and more frequent.⁷

While regional and even national level data are collected by a number of agencies, the current action research focuses on the experiences of grassroots women who have been actively building resilience for their communities. The eight lead organizations conducted a total of 402 surveys. Each questionnaire consists of 38 questions with some permitting multiple answers, a total of 11,511 responses were received. The data was systematized and integrated into 21 analyses per country into a unified regional data set. Below are the highlights of the findings.

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⁶ UNISDR and Corporación OSSO, “Impacto de los desastres en América Latina y el Caribe, 1990-2011 (Impact of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean 1990-2011: Trends and Statistics for 16 countries – Report,” 2013.

⁷ UNISDR, *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2011.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Out of 402 respondents, an overwhelming majority are women. As for geographic distribution, 53% of them live in rural areas and 47% of them live in urban and peri-urban areas. Respondents from Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Nicaragua tend to live in rural areas, while those in Honduras, Peru, and Venezuela tend to live in urban or peri-urban areas. Since the respondents were selected by participating grassroots organizations, 75% of them are members of or linked to an organized group working in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.



Chart 2. PERCENTAGE OF MEN/WOMEN IN THE RESEARCH

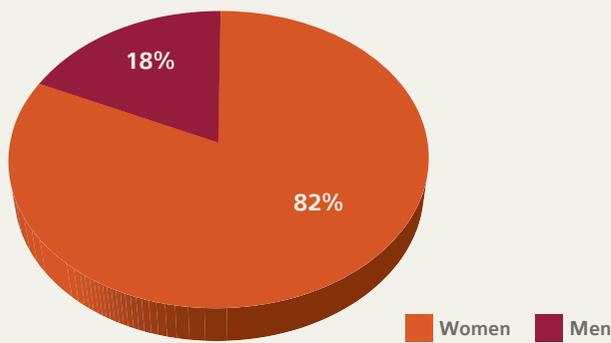


Chart 3. DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN/RURAL SETTING OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY COUNTRY

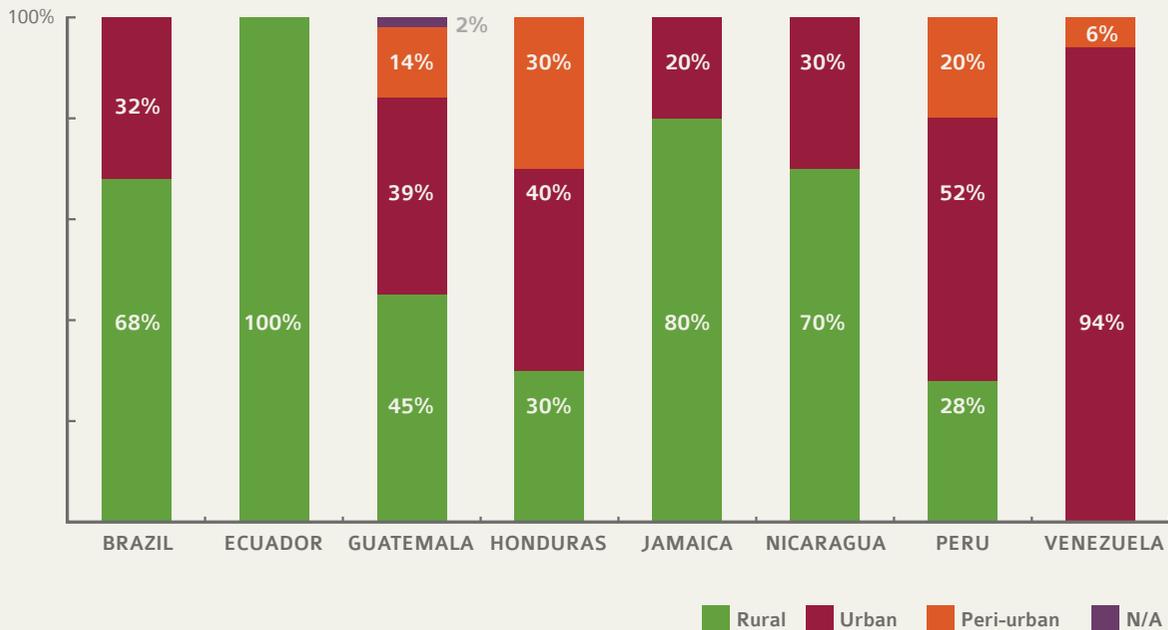
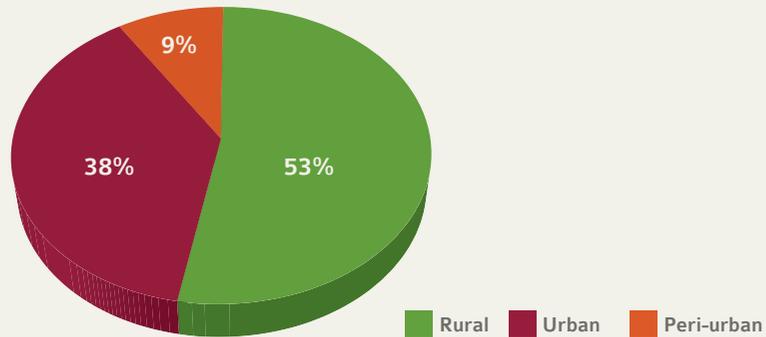


Chart 4. FOCUS OF RESPONDENTS' COMMUNITY GROUP ACTIVITIES



IMPACT OF DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

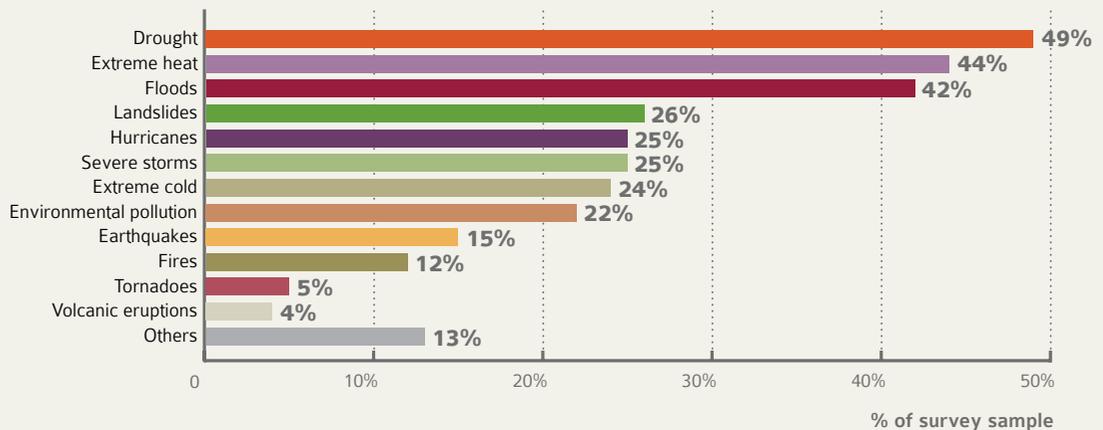


The lead grassroots women’s organizations were interested to find out the acknowledged impacts of natural hazards as experienced by their communities so the findings may determine their future strategies. In the survey, respondents were asked about their experience of disasters, impacts on their well-being, and awareness of climate change. The survey defines disasters as “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.”⁸ As for climate change, the survey’s definition is “the variation of the climate of the earth, due to natural and man-made causes and it is reflected in changes in different climate characteristics: temperature, amount of rainfall, cloudiness, etc.”

Many of the 402 respondents have been affected by at least 2 types of disasters or climate change impact, such as drought (49%), extreme heat (44%), and floods (42%).

Chart 5. HAZARDS EXPERIENCED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

(Received 1,229 answers. Total % exceeds 100 because respondents selected multiple answers.)



⁸ UNISDR Terminology, retrieved from <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/terminology#letter-d>

Chart 6. DISTRIBUTION OF HAZARDS EXPERIENCED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY COUNTRY

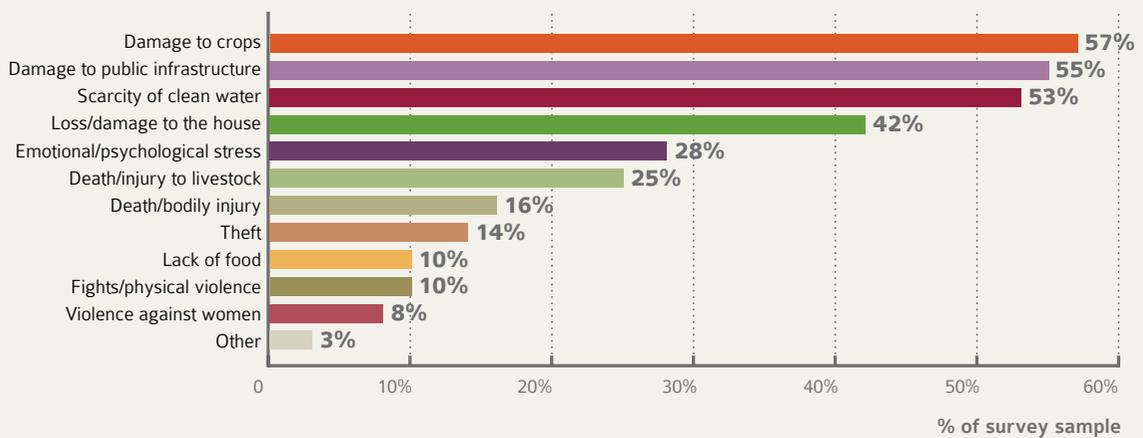


Chart 6 shows the breakdown by country. In the case of Central American and Caribbean countries (e.g. Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Jamaica), respondents report experiencing 3 to 5 types of natural disasters and climate change effects. Another country where respondents report experiencing at least 4 types of natural disasters and climate change is Ecuador. All of the respondents from these disaster-prone countries live in rural areas. In contrast, most of the respondents from Venezuela live in urban centers; they cite environmental pollution (68%) as a major issue.

Whereas quantitative data on disasters usually provide a big picture, the survey focuses on the experiences of people living and working in poor communities. Respondents were asked about the most significant impacts they suffered. The answers range from damage to crops (57%), damage to public infrastructure, such as roads, power stations, schools (55%), and scarcity of clean water (53%). Amongst the community organizations that work in rural areas, this population is highly dependent on what they harvest for food consumption and income generation. Moreover, participants are aware that disasters have greater impact on low-income areas such as those in which they live.

Chart 7. SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS OF DISASTERS BY COMMUNITIES

(Received 1,298 answers. Total % exceeds 100 because respondents selected multiple answers.)

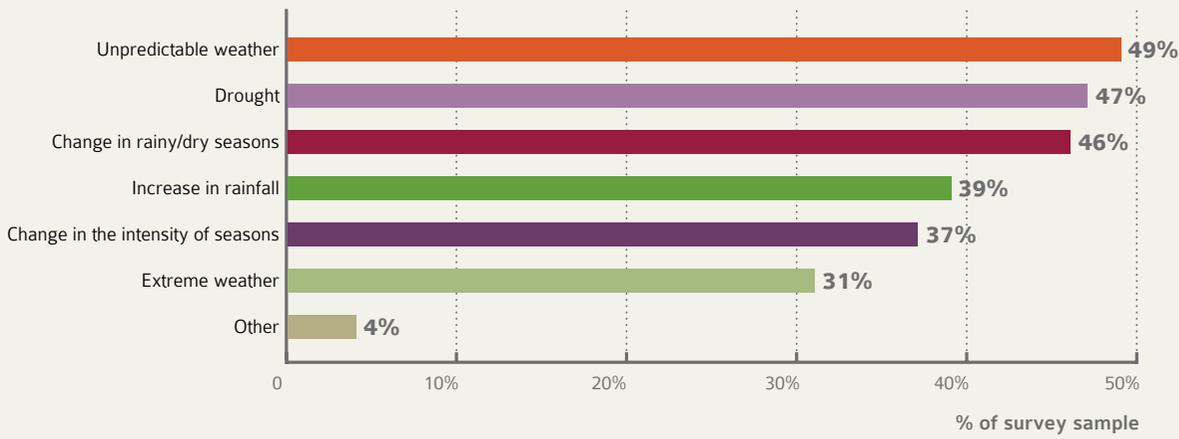


PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Of the survey participants, 92% gave positive responses to being affected by climate change in the last few years. Given there are only slight differences in percentages of various hydro-meteorological phenomena, it may be said that climate change is an imminent situation for inhabitants of both rural and urban areas. Above all, many refer to the shifts in the intensity of the seasons.

Chart 8. EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE BASED ON COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

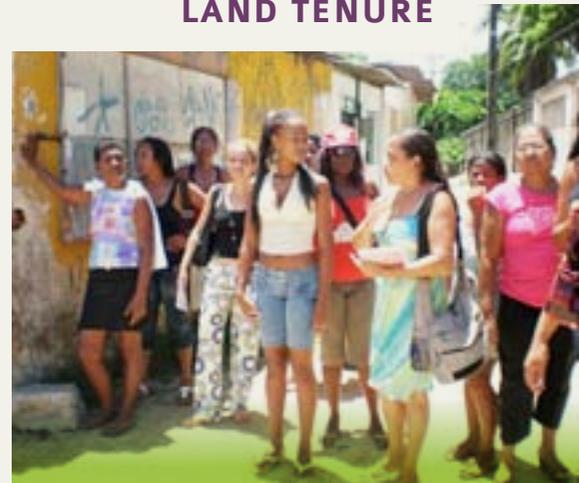
(Received 1,015 answers. Total % exceeds 100 because respondents selected multiple answers.)



LAND TENURE

Secure tenure of land or property in and of itself does not build resilience, but it does reduce a community’s vulnerability because access, use and control over land are necessary requisites for investment in sustainable development. Customary land administration systems often do not treat women fairly. As a result, many women who live in poverty do not have deeds in their names. Once disaster strikes, women without land titles or property are more adversely affected. Moreover, women’s ownership of land and housing is an important entry point to integrating food, housing, and economic security.⁹ Secure tenure would reduce vulnerabilities related to food insecurity, lack of basic services, threat of eviction, and community infrastructure.

The survey provided some surprising results. More respondents say that the female head of household (19%) owns the title or deed to the property they live in, as oppose to the male head of household (15%), while 23% reported joint titles or deeds. We also note that one-third of respondents have living situations that are something other than owning or renting. This high percentage hints at the informal situation in



⁹ Chaves, Patricia, Fati Al Hassan, Jacqueline Leavitt, and Birte Scholz, “Grassroots Women and Tenure Security: Key to Empowerment and Resilient Communities,” Paper presented at Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, Washington DC (April 2013).

which many women and men living in poverty find themselves in regards to land or property. The results show that further empirical research is needed. A follow up question about participants' perception of the probability of eviction reveals that only 14% admitted any chance of eviction (Chart 12), while the remaining 86% do not see it as a possibility or do not know.

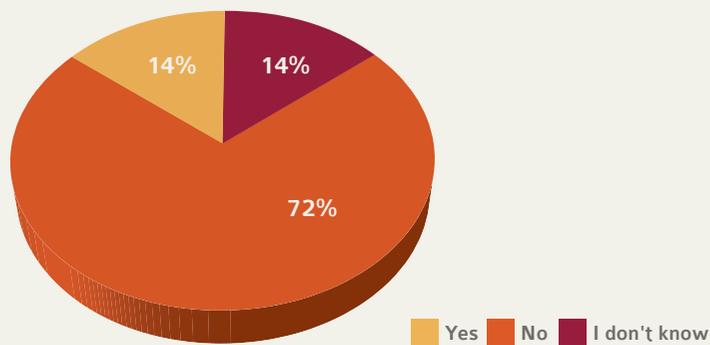
Chart 9. LAND TENURE STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN RESPONDENTS

(Received 388 answers on land/property ownership, and 384 answers on non-ownership status. Percentages are based on 402 survey participants.)



Chart 10. PERCEIVED PROBABILITY OF EVICTION

(Received 396 answers. Percentage reflects the number of respondents who answered the question.)



FOOD SECURITY

In advocating for resilience, grassroots women often link food security with agriculture and rearing livestock. An important factor in addressing rural poverty lies in small scale farming, which produces up to 70% of the basic food basket in the region.¹⁰ Moreover, rural agricultural production directly affects the entire population. For in the urban areas, this translates into food scarcity and elevated prices. Advocates pay attention not only to hunger, but also in terms of food intake that satisfies the needs of different types of people according to age, gender, health status, occupation, etc.¹¹

The survey shows that two-thirds of respondents grow food or raise livestock, or both. Out of which, 32% depend completely (13%) or mostly (19%) on their own food production (Chart 11). Disasters and climate change would likely have significant impact on those who depend on growing their own food. When asked whether they have ever felt they had not enough to eat, 62% replied yes (Chart 12). From this group, the majority cites financial problems (22%) and climate change (17%) as the top reasons for food insecurity (Chart 13).

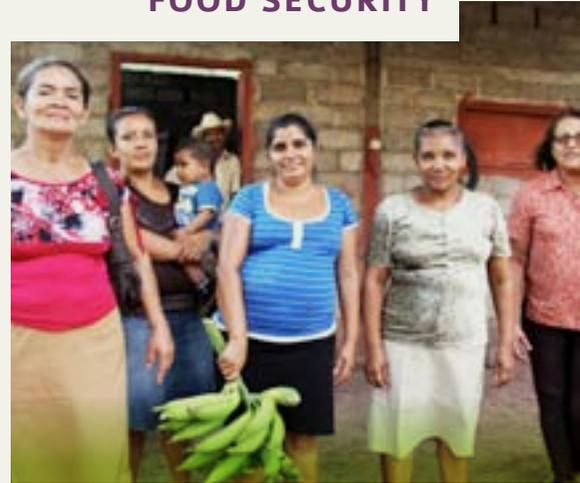
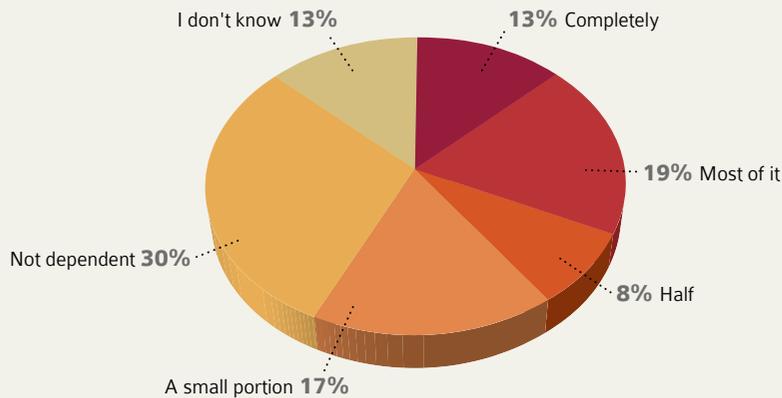


Chart 11. DEPENDENCY ON HOUSEHOLD FOOD PRODUCTION

(Received 310 answers. Percentages are based on 402 survey participants.)



¹⁰ FAO. "América Latina y el Caribe se prepara para el Año Internacional de la Agricultura Familiar 2014 (Latin America and the Caribbean is preparing for the International Year of Family Farming 2014)," FAO Press release, July 11, 2013.

¹¹ Asbjørn Eide, "The human right to adequate food and freedom from hunger," in *The Right to Food in Theory and Practice*, FAO, 1998.

Chart 12. HAVE YOU EVER HAD NOT ENOUGH TO EAT?

(Received 398 answers. Percentages are based on 402 survey participants.)

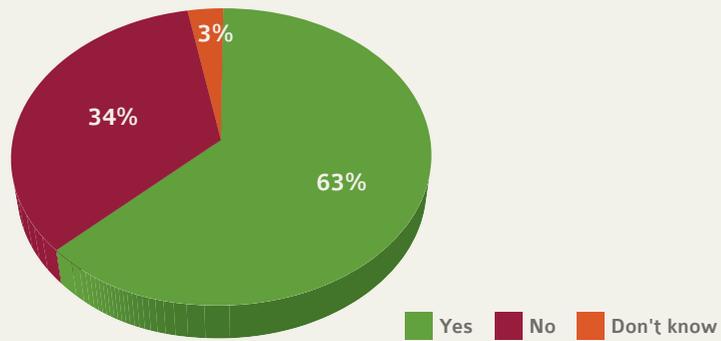
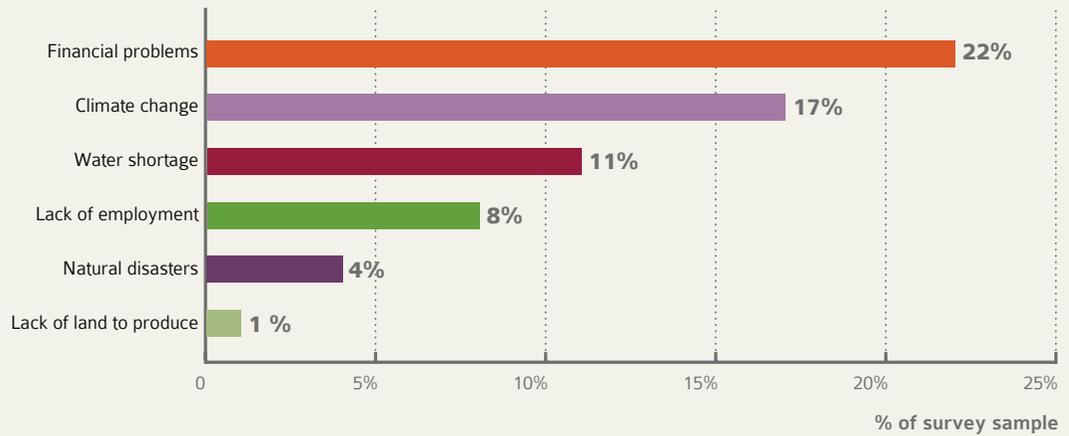


Chart 13. REASONS FOR FOOD INSECURITY

(Received 259 free-form answers. Percentages are based on 402 survey participants.)



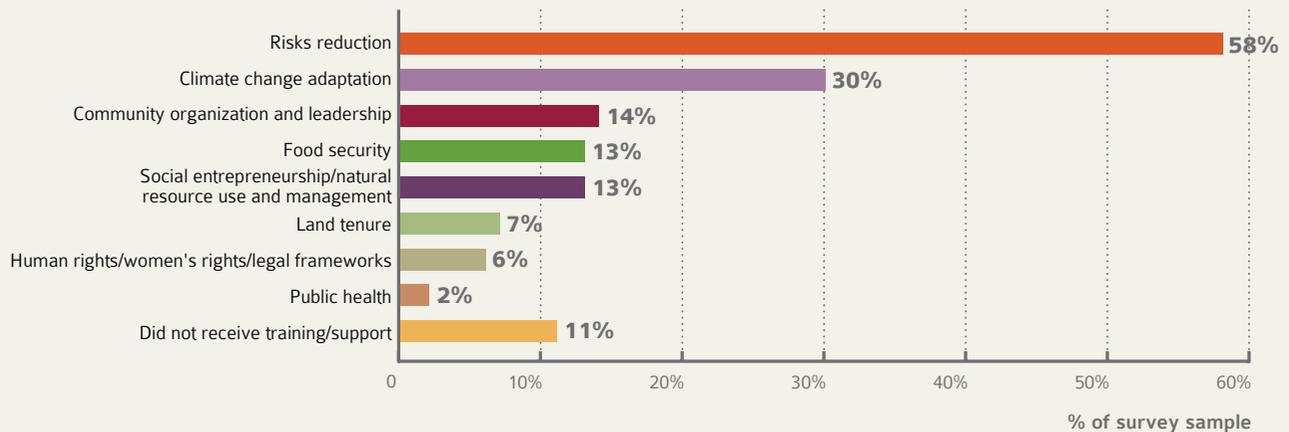
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Survey participants were asked an open-ended question about whether they received any kind of support, such as trainings in disaster relief, risk reduction, or land security. Fifty-eight percent of them reported receiving disaster risk reduction training and support, 30% have received training about climate change and sustainable agriculture; 14% received support for community organizing and leadership (Chart 14).



Chart 14. TYPES OF TRAINING AND SUPPORT RECEIVED

(Received 621 answers. The total % exceeds 100 because respondents selected multiple answers.)

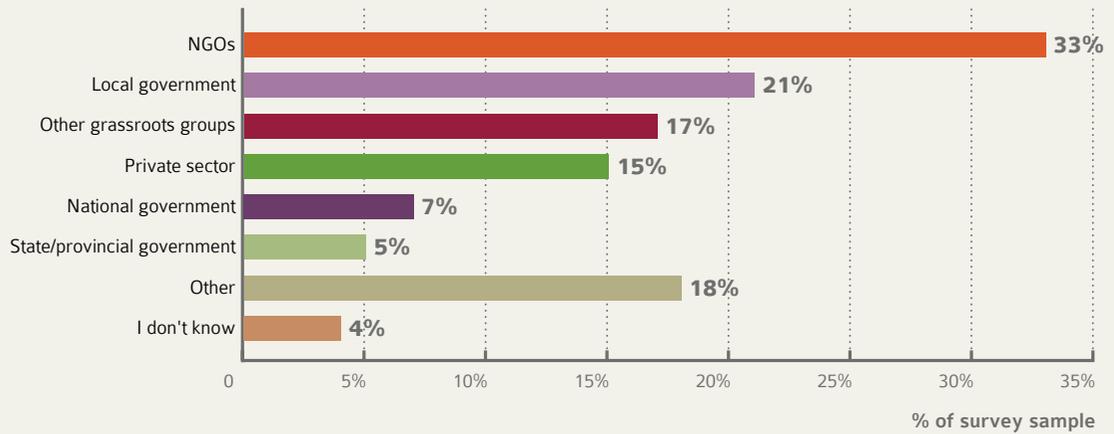


COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PARTNERS AND ALLIES

Amongst community resilience partners, respondents identify NGOs such as national and international civil society organizations as the ones providing the most training and support (33%). In the second place is local government (21%). This seems logical since local governments are the nearest political administrative units in communities. However, participants also note that local government budgets tend to address the needs of communities in locations where officials could receive the biggest political gains. Other grassroots organizations (17%) and other groups, such as churches (18%) are represented as equally supportive, which often occurred as exchange of knowledge and experiences (Chart 15).

Chart 15. INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS THAT PROVIDED TRAINING AND SUPPORT

(Received 483 answers. The total % exceeds 100 because respondents selected multiple answers.)



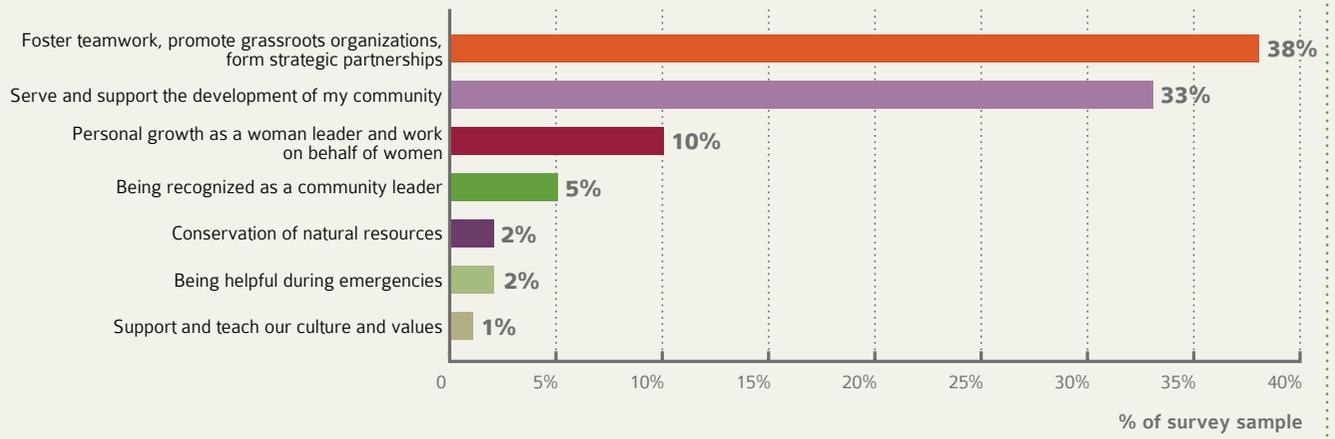
BENEFITS OF BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

Participants were asked an open-ended question about the most significant benefits of being part of a community-based organization (CBO). The survey defines a CBO as “a group of people that belong to a community that voluntarily gets together to reach collectively defined goals, such as access to basic services, access to credit or financial services, restoration of water bodies, reconstruction after disaster, etc.” The top three most frequently mentioned themes are: “Foster teamwork, promote grassroots organizations, form strategic partnerships (38%),” “serve and support the development of my community (33%),” and “personal growth as a woman leader and work on behalf of women (10%).” Many of the answers can be organized into the themes of service, leadership, and community. In essence, all three are connected (Chart 16).



Chart 16. **BENEFITS OF BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION**

(Received 369 free-form answers. Percentages are based on 402 survey participants.)





CASE STUDY

WAGUCHA, COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS PLATFORM FOR RESILIENCE IN HONDURAS

Honduras is highly vulnerable to natural hazards such as flooding, extreme heat, storms, droughts, hurricanes, landslides and earthquakes. Reducing disaster risks and adapting to climate change need to begin with understanding communities' complex socio-environmental reality. Building resilience needs to prioritize community empowerment in order to improve quality of life through sustainable development.

Wagucha was established in 2005. In the Garifuna language, *wagucha* means "our root." The organization uses culture as a point of reference to advance local sustainable development. Wagucha has its origins in the Comité de Emergencia Garífuna (Garifuna Emergency Committee), which supported the recovery of communities in the city of Trujillo in the aftermath of hurricane Mitch in 1998. The Comité focused on Garífuna community's ancestral right to the land, right to political spaces, and development in Trujillo.

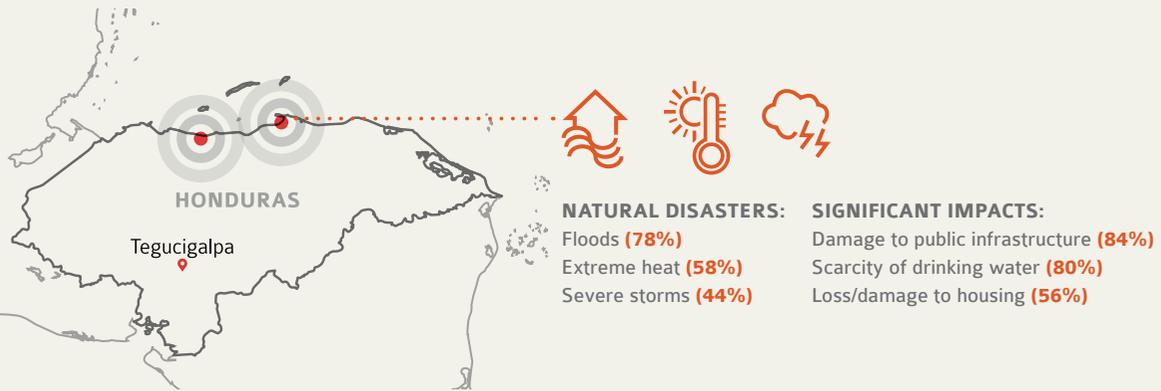


Chart 17. DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN/RURAL SETTLEMENTS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS IN HONDURAS

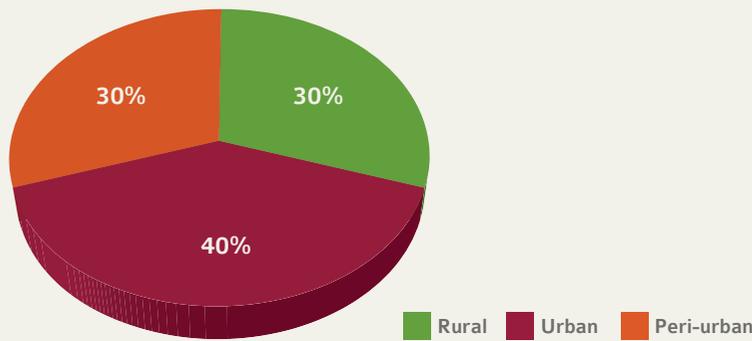
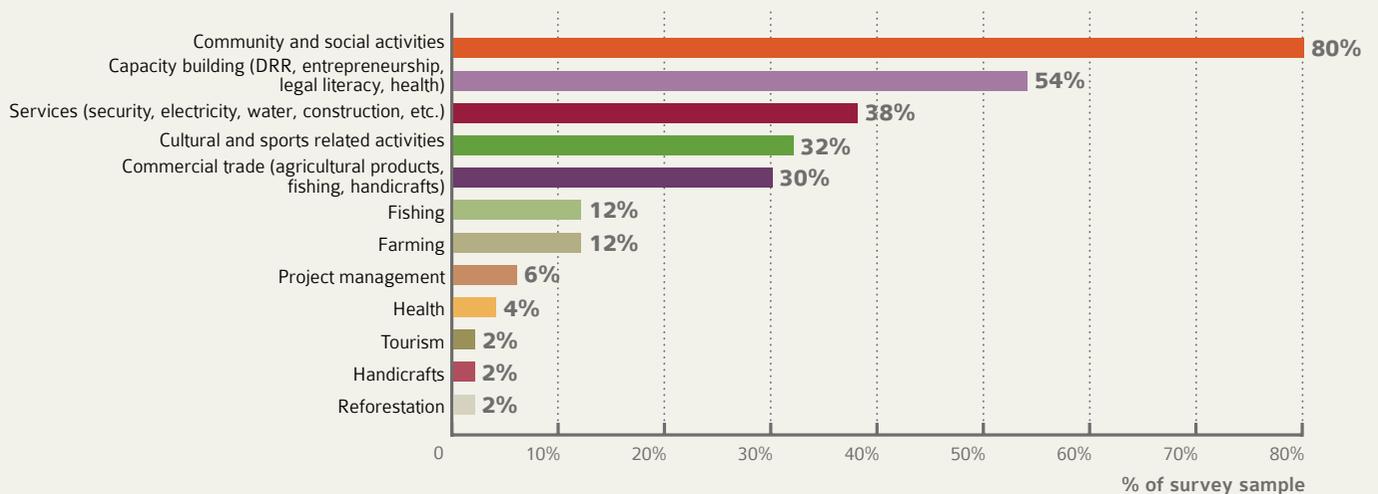


Chart 18. TYPES OF GROUP ACTIVITIES OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS IN HONDURAS

(Received 137 answers from 50 respondents. The total % exceeds 100 because respondents selected multiple answers.)





ORGANIZATIONAL TIMELINE

2005: Creation of grassroots women’s organization Wagucha, with focus on tending to women’s disaster risks and vulnerabilities. Local actions centered on training for disaster risk reduction, sustainable management of natural resource projects, and political advocacy with emphasis on women as leaders that have a direct impact on building communities’ resilience.

2006: Wagucha joined Huairou Commission and GROOTS International’s Community Practitioners Platform.

2010: Led the formation of Inter-agency Partnership for Community Resilience in Honduras to initiate active integration of local governments in resilience building. The Inter-Agency comprises of the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation (SEPLAN), the Permanent Commission of Emergencies (COPECO), the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (SAG).

2011: Expanded Community Practitioners Platform to encompass other municipalities in Atlántida, Colón, Francisco Morazán, and Choluteca. Initiated active projects in 10 communities in 7 municipalities across the country with the support of local governments and Inter-agency Partnership for Community Resilience in Honduras.

2013: Designed and launched “Metodología Cantarranas” (Cantarranas Methodology), which emphasizes on training of officials in resilience and empowering grassroots women. The methodology is endorsed and supported by local governments in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.

2014: Expanded the network to include more municipalities in Honduras and in the region. Growth of Wagucha with grassroots women as agents of their own development and the potential to leverage resources, manage projects, and have new spaces for public policy advocacy.

ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS

Wagucha’s actions are focused on disaster risk reduction, public policy advocacy, and the design and execution of sustainable natural resource management projects such as climate-smart agriculture, fishing and tourism, production of non-timber forest products (e.g. *moringa*), and social entrepreneurship. Wagucha’s strategy is to organize women to identify the challenges and collectively developing possible solutions. This allows local and national governmental bodies to be aware of communities’ needs and ways to address them.

Wagucha’s advocacy is amplified through regional connections in the Community Practitioners Platform, serving as a grassroots-led space to integrate and coordinate strategies at all levels. In 2010, Wagucha expanded the CPP to other municipalities in Honduras by creating Alianza Interinstitucional para la Resiliencia Comunitaria en Honduras (Inter-agency Partnership for Community Resilience in Honduras).

The partnership comprises of: SEPLAN, COPECO, SAG and Wagucha. This inter-agency, multidisciplinary, and multicultural team is united around CPP's goals and visions. They regard resilience as a process that begins with disaster risk reduction as the basis for development.

When the Inter-agency Partnership was consolidated, collaborations became a synergistic way for institutions to increase capabilities, capitalize on short-term results, and expand actions in the national and international spheres. The partnership platform plans, design and execute sustainable projects, and work directly with grassroots women and local governments to advocate public policies. In this process, organized communities become active agents in development by asserting their own voices, positioning their own needs, and contributing to possible solutions.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

Wagucha's grassroots women leaders reduce communities' vulnerabilities by drawing knowledge and practices from their culture in response to local ecologies. Their vision of adaptation to climate change includes local economic diversification, sustainable natural resource management, spirituality and ancient knowledge. The organization's programs reach several departments in Honduras, directly benefiting 3,200 people and indirectly benefiting another 16,000. These areas consists of:

- Atlántida, Francisco Morazán, Choluteca and Colón departments
- Municipalities of Trujillo, Santa Fe, Santa Rosa de Aguan, Limón, Balfate, and La Ceiba
- Communities of Barranco Blanco, Barrios Cristales, Rio Negro, and San Martín; Guadalupe, San Antonio, and Santa Fe; Santa Rosa de Aguan; Limón; Rio Esteban; Corozal and Sambo Creek
- Municipalities of Cantarranas, Marcovia and Distrito Central
- Communities of Cantarranas, Marcovia and Colonia Nueva Suyapa





CANTARRANAS METHODOLOGY

In 2013, after implementing seven successful training programs in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in 10 municipalities of Honduras, one of the most important milestones was the design of the Cantarranas Methodology.¹² It is a tool that gathers successful practices in community resilience by “teaching from the bottom-up” for local and national authorities. The goal of the methodology is to establish cooperative bonds between municipalities and local community groups under the framework of UNISDR Resilient Cities Campaign’s 10-points checklist. The main objectives are to:

- Obtain a risk evaluation for urban development plans and decisions. Ensure that this information is readily available to the public.
- Procure and allocate resources to invest and maintain critical infrastructure with the end goal of reducing risks.
- Install early alert systems and organize regular drills for public preparedness.
- Execute good resilience practices to activate communities, especially grassroots women.

Basis for the methodology is the exchange of experiences among peers, especially women, which makes it a very useful community training and empowerment approach. By transforming their roles as experts, grassroots women are setting the terms on which resilient cities are built.

The methodology has been successfully used in 10 municipalities in Honduras where Wagucha is active. In addition, it will be a public policy instrument presented at Honduras’ First Lady’s Office in the economic, ecological, and social enterprise proposal in urban and rural areas in Honduras’ municipalities in 2014.

With other two Central American members of Huairou Commission’s Community Resilience campaign, Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Las Brumas in Nicaragua and Fundación Guatemala in Guatemala, Wagucha and the Inter-agency Partnership for Community Resilience in Honduras secured extensive support from local governments in the three countries, which signed an agreement for long-term en-

¹² “The Cantarranas Methodology” is an outcome of the Community Practitioners Platform. The project coordinators were: Analucy Bengochea (WAGUCHA, GROOTS International) and Diana Fernandez Dubon (SEPLAN). The technical team consisted of: Analucy Bengochea, Evangelista García, Tatiana Solís, Diana Fernández, Anna Cecilia Kirkconnell, Jullyia Witty, María Teresa Rodríguez (Fundación Guatemala, Guatemala) and Haydee Rodríguez (Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Las Brumas, Nicaragua). Diana Fernandez Dubon systemized the methodology.

agement with grassroots women to advance bottom-up community resilience and increasing their public advocacy role.

Beyond its national and regional impact in Central America, Cantarranas Methodology is being adopted in future Latin American School of Sustainable Development and Resilience (ELADES) in partnership with COPECO, the Ministry of Environmental and Natural Resources (SERNA), the Commonwealth of Municipalities of the Fonseca Gulf and the Forest Conservancy Institute (ICF). This is enabled by Mancomunidad de Mancomunidades de América Latina y El Caribe (Federation of Associations of Latin America and the Caribbean), which comprises of associations, municipalities, academia, grassroots women's organizations, civil society, governments, and co-operatives that work to promote local, endogenous, and resilient development of the communities and ecosystems in the Latin American region.



INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

In the Inter-agency Partnership for Community Resilience in Honduras, every member organization has a clear role and shares in the vision that investing in resilience and training of communities means “saving lives and increasing the family’s support.” Each partner’s key roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- **Wagucha:** the partnership’s lead organization. The organization is in every community training, tending directly to the needs and projects championed by the communities themselves. Wagucha promotes community organizing and grassroots women’s empowerment.
- **SEPLAN:** implements plans and territorial zoning along with risk management at the regional level. In partnership with Wagucha, SEPLAN manages funds through the partnership that are directly applied to the most affected communities.
- **SAG:** trains and accompanies programs and projects related to socially productive sustainable enterprises. It distributes human and financial resources, making sure that they reach communities, focusing on engaging grassroots women.
- **COPECO:** trains volunteers to follow up on programs and projects that are executed in communities and are agreed upon within the CPP. As a legal duty, their mission is to train and support communities in emergencies and disaster risk reduction efforts. The Inter-agency Partnership enables COPECO to connect national and local levels. Currently, it has more than 3,000 volunteers, 80% of whom are grassroots women.
- **Local governments:** the governmental bodies closest to the communities. Participation in the Inter-agency Partnership strengthens their relationship with communities so it can mobilize human and financial resources to implement local development projects.



The Inter-agency Partnership for Community Resilience also welcomes involvement from the private sector, such as research institutions and social responsibility programs from local and national business. Other new actors are also joining the partnership, such as the SERNA and the ICF. Together, the partners are involving more municipalities across the country, and are leveraging funds to scale up projects and strategies.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

Recent accomplishments of Wagucha's work may be summed up as follows:

- Active projects in 10 Honduran municipalities in disaster risk reduction, resilience, and climate change adaptation.
- Economic diversification and climate change adaptation, such as:
 - Fishermen's network for the communities of Guadalupe, Rio Esteban, and Trujillo
 - Craftsmen's network for Santa Rosa de Aguan, Corozal, Sambo Creek, Limón, and Trujillo
 - Seed banks and production of cassava in Santa Rosa de Aguan, Barranco Blanco, San Antonio, Guadalupe, Rio Esteban, Santa Fe, and Limón
 - Training 300 volunteer youths as tourist guides
 - A sustainable seven-project portfolio for the resource leverage process
- Design of a "Disaster Risk Reduction Certificate Program" with local government support
- The Inter-agency Partnership of Community Resilience in Honduras that includes SEPLAN, COPECO, SAG, SERNA, ICF, and municipal governments
- Program development with DIPA-FHIS (Integral Development of Autonomous Peoples – Honduran Fund for Social Investment) on sustainable natural resource management. In Colón, nine programs have been developed in nine communities. In Atlántida, eight programs have developed in two communities
- Training of 3,000 COPECO volunteers (of whom 2,400 are grassroots women)
- The "Cantarranas Methodology" has been successfully applied in 10 municipalities of Honduras and 2 other Central American countries (Nicaragua and Guatemala), whose governments have given their full support and have signed an agreement to continue this process in the long-term.
- The training, building the capacity of and empowering of 32,000 direct beneficiaries, women and male leaders of grassroots organizations, and 16,000 indirect beneficiaries.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

The main lesson for national and local governments stemming from Wagucha's advocacy is the validation that when grassroots women receive proper training and are empowered, they can in turn create positive change in sustainable local development. Building networks through exchanges is grassroots women's way of multiplying their learning processes and involving new players who may want to invest their resources to strengthen communities. Grassroots women have also demonstrated their capacity to plan, design, and implement programs and development projects that advocate for poor communities directly, as well as managing human and financial resources with transparency and accountability.

The biggest challenges to the scaling-up of Wagucha's programs are related to obtaining sustained financial support and building capacity to communicate the accomplishments and results achieved in a way that has greater impact on public policies. This could be overcome by leveraging process for adequate funding at all levels, and a communications campaign that shows the process of community resilience building with grassroots women as leaders and conveying visions of the extent and impact of their movement.





CASE STUDY

GROOTS PERU, ENABLERS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

In Lima, earthquakes, floods and landslides contribute to the majority of recurrent natural disasters. These greatly affect impoverished communities living located on top of the hills, where soil conditions and steep slopes do not provide secured foundation for housing.

Established in 2008, GROOTS Peru is a national network comprising of 4 grassroots organizations or CBOs and one NGO with shared visions and strategic goals active in San Martín, Lambayeque, Cuzco, Cañete, Junín, Callao, and greater Lima. Its members are:

- Servicios Educativos del Agustino – SEA (Educational Services of El Agustino), the facilitating NGO
- Central de Bancos Comunales (Center of Community Banks)
- Red de Mujeres Lima Este (Network of Women of East Lima)
- Confederación Nacional de Mmujeres Organizadas por la Vida y el Desarrollo Integral National Confederation of Organized Women for Life and Integral Development (CONAMOVIDI)

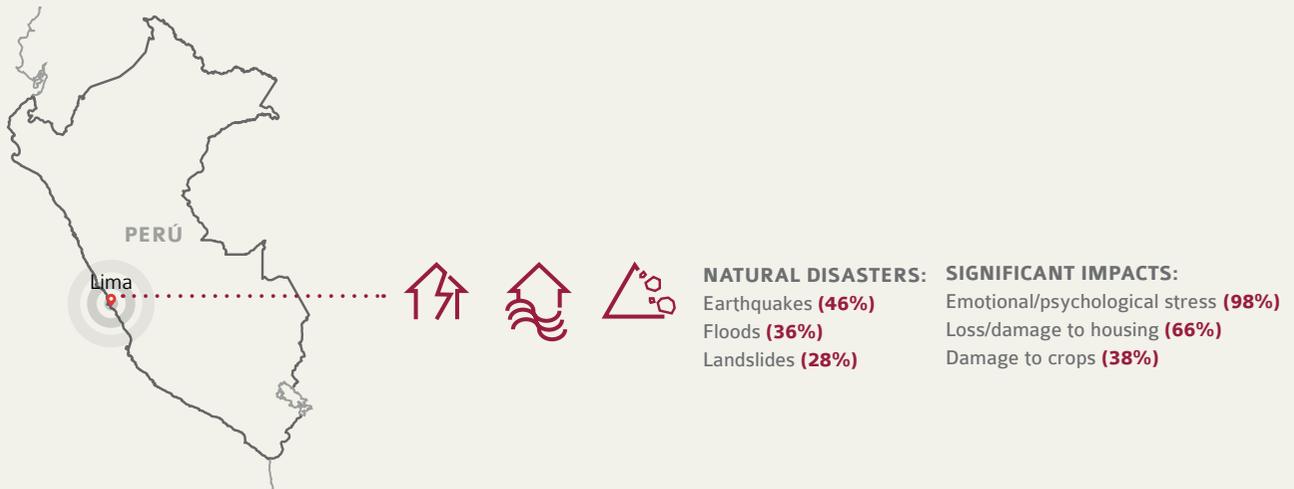


Chart 19. DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN/RURAL SETTLEMENT OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS IN PERU

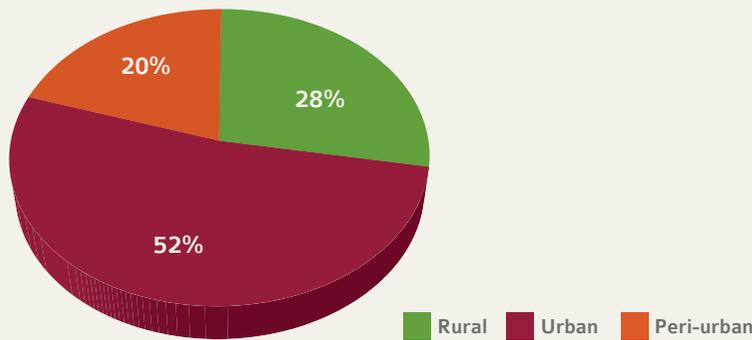
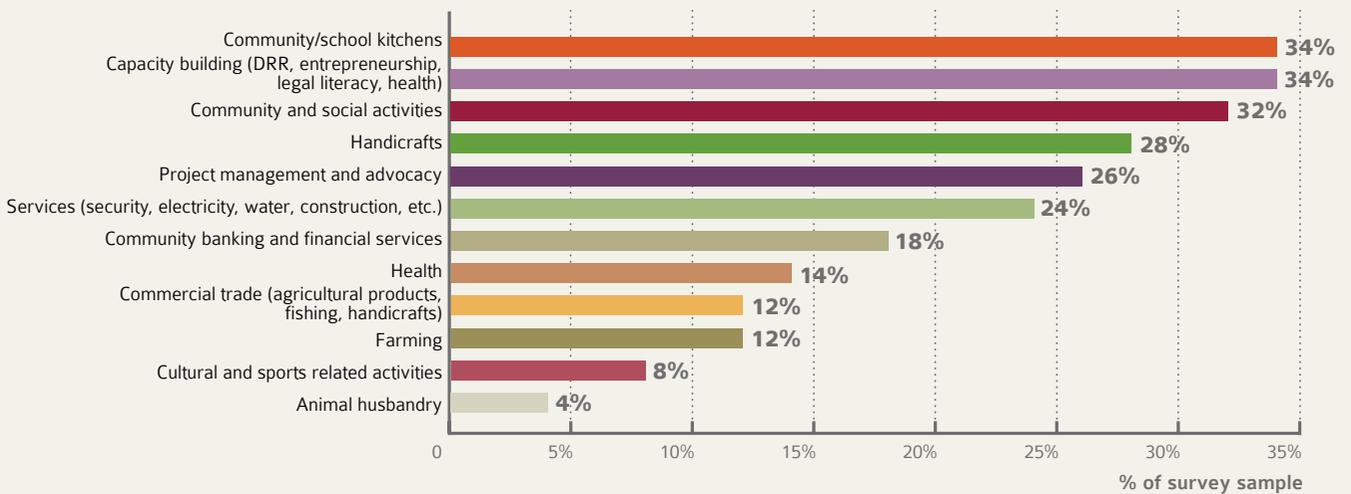


Chart 20. TYPES OF GROUP ACTIVITIES OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS IN PERU





GROOTS Peru seeks to empower grassroots women organizations at the local, national, regional, and global levels. It promotes women’s leadership, foregrounds knowledge and contributions of women, develops women’s capacities in advocacy and monitoring of public policies relating to their communities. Its work is based on principles of social justice, autonomy, self-determination, solidarity, democracy, and transparency. Acknowledging existing conditions of inequality of gender and socioeconomic status in Peru, it focuses on good governance, land and housing, resilience, economic empowerment, safe cities, HIV/AIDS, and food security.

ORGANIZATIONAL TIMELINE

2008: Founding of GROOTS Peru. Participated in peer exchange with indigenous women and DRR in Guatemala, Fourth Urban World Forum in China, DRR workshop in Honduras.

2009: Implemented first organizational strengthening project; participated in “Views From the Frontline” surveys; follow-up to the Hyogo Framework; implemented risk mapping across nine communities in four districts: Agustino, Santa Anita, San Juna de Lurigancho, and Ventanilla; participated in a Local-to-Local dialogue Grassroots Academy in Quito, Ecuador.

2010: Implemented Local-to-Local dialogue; participated in a Grassroots Women Academy in Rio de Janeiro at the Fifth World Urban Forum, land and housing academy in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and a disaster risks and vulnerable populations workshop; strengthening the identity of GROOTS Peru; disseminated survey results of “Views from the Frontline.”

2011: Participated in a leadership summit in the United States; organized resilience academy and community mappings in Lima; participated in second DRR summit, safe cities conference and food security workshop; manufacturing prefabricated materials for earthquake-resistant housing training; facilitated DRR in rural areas workshop; implemented DRR in ten communities in Lima; women’s participation and access to land and housing in 12 communities in Lima; strengthening women’s capabilities and organization’s advocacy in DRR and access to safe housing, safe cities project; launched the National Community Practitioners Platform, and “Gender and Climate Change” project.

2012: Implemented DRR project funded and implemented in ten communities in Lima and the districts of El Agustino, Comas and San Martin de Porras municipalities; co-organized Latin American safe cities project in Lima; implemented organizational strengthening project; participated in the Sixth World Urban Forum; and Third Regional Platform on DRR in Chile.

2013: Implemented DRR project funded by USAID-OFDA in Lima, Lambayeque, Junín, and San Martín; developed DRR project with CRF in Lima, Callao, Cañete, Lambayeque, Junín, and San Martín; organized a peer exchange with Asociación Rosa de Montaña of Chacao in Venezuela, training with Luna Creciente Women’s Movement, Ecuador; participated in an action research of the regional CPP; and won a “Safe Cities for Women” contest organized by Women Transforming Cities.

2014: GROOTS Peru’s activities took place in San Martín, Lambayeque, Cuzco, Cañete, Junín, Callao, and greater Lima.

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE STEP BY STEP

GROOTS Peru initiated a Community Resilience Facilitators training program in 2011. It aims to be a formative process for organized groups of women living in disaster-prone areas to identify partners in the participatory budgeting process in local governments and strengthening grassroots relationship with them. The training program’s goal is to:

Contribute to the building of community resilience and a culture of prevention through the development of specialized women as facilitators to promote the expansion of women’s leadership, planning processes and public advocacy in district, regional, national and international levels, based on concrete local experiences.

Community Resilience Facilitators are trained in global and national human rights frameworks; indicators and holistic focus of community resilience; principles, activities and participants of the CPP; global and national DRR and CCA frameworks and the Resilient Cities Campaign; disaster prevention and skills to train other communities; what is facilitation and the role of a facilitator, adult education; strategies for resilience development and practical actions; how to negotiate risk reduction initiatives; and methods of drafting reports. Currently there are 62 trained resilience facilitators.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

The capacity building program has been developed through the facilitation of SEA, whose role is to provide technical support to GROOTS Peru. In this process, the handbook “Building Community Resilience Step by Step” has been developed. The facilitation team composing of 56 women and 6 men has put the handbook into practice in its neighborhood intervention process.

The handbook begins with principles and values essential to community resilience. It localizes resilience building by introducing new community resilience facilitators to the following topics:





- Legal framework
- Disaster Risk Management
- History of the Community
- Community Mapping: Theory and Practice
- The Prevention Plan
- Participation Stages
- Negotiation and Public Advocacy
- Climate Change
- Popular Education
- Training and its timings
- The facilitator's role in Community Resilience

The following diagram illustrates GROOTS Peru's building community resilience step-by-step curriculum, used in the training of the Community Resilience Facilitators:



IMPACTS AND RESULTS

As a coalition of organizations with different capacities, strengths, and geographic reach, GROOTS Peru operates by coordinating delegates from each member organization. Since its formation, the network has developed a strategic plan, managed funding and projects at the national and international levels.

In sum, GROOTS Peru:

- Conducted over 40 community risk mappings with over 1,360 people in Lima and Callao, it is expanding this work to 5 regions in the country.
- Designed the Facilitators of Community Resilience Capacity Building Program, based on the “Diamond Approach for Building Community Resilience” and “Building Community Resilience Step by Step.”
- Training and developing a network of Community Resilience Facilitators in order to integrate the resilience approach and practices in projects implemented in communities. In this process, community representatives and local governments have been included to gain a national scope and level of influence.
- Building networks and coalitions with the National Center for Disaster Assessment Prevention and Risk Reduction (CENEPRED) and active participation in gender committees, local disaster risk management platforms, anti-poverty commissions, family violence prevention committees, environmental commissions at the district, municipal, and national levels.
- Participation in the formation of the “Lima Regional Concerted Development Regional Plan,” with direct advocacy in the East Lima zone.
- Participation and leveraging of funds for projects in the local and metropolitan participatory budgets in eight districts: El Agustino, Santa Anita, Ate, Chacalayo, Luringancho-Chosica, S.J. Luringacho, La Molina, Cieneguilla.
- Signing Agreements of Cooperation on Local Governance with the districts of El Agustino, Santa Anita, Ate, Chaclacayo.





COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PRIORITIES



During focus group discussions and follow up interviews, facilitators invited men and women leaders who have been working in a wide range of projects to discuss the degree they found themselves within a resilience framework. They conducted mind map exercises to expand on the information received from the 38-question survey. Below is a summary of values, principles, and goals guiding grassroots women's work:

- Resilience as a transformative process representing opportunity amidst adversity, which includes individual and community strengths and the formation of networks with women at the center;
- Acknowledgement of environmental surroundings as a complex system, with threats and risks, and with opportunities through sustainable resource use;
- Innovative solutions arise from organized groups of grassroots women framing resilience in their own terms;
- Within the community resilience framework, women can have roles as experts in their communities;
- Women as main promoters of development through a change process that starts within their families and communities;
- Grassroots women networks and partners work together to bring women's priorities and practices to the forefront locally, nationally, and internationally in order to reduce communities' vulnerability to disasters.

GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S VISIONS FOR RESILIENCE

A selection of grassroots voices and visions on resilience were collected between December 2013 and February 2014 are below:

Community resilience is a process that allows communities, especially women, to become empowered and have a voice, beginning with our participation, the support to our families and creating unity in our neighborhoods and communities.

Espaço Feminista, Recife, Brazil



Community resilience is to build our own capacities and being able to train others in disaster risk reduction, soil and water conservation, promoting community organization to achieve gains for our communities and other groups who want to work on their own development.

**Luna Creciente Women's Movement,
San José Ayora, Saquisilí, Pujilí, Lacatunga, Toacazo, Ecuador**



It is the way in which one lives after having suffered some catastrophe, looking for solutions to survive, join efforts with men and women neighbors, implement activities that help us to have housing, secure food, look for support so that people, at the time of being in danger, may know what to do. For example, store less perishable foods, build aerial terraces so that harvests do not suffer damages and secure our food, identify safe places for its storage, which includes knowing our community through mappings that allow us to know the underlying risks and threats in our community. Resilience also includes materializing management before each community's authorities to find solutions to neighbors' needs in their area or across the community at-large.

**Coordinación de Desarrollo Integral de Mujeres Mayas,
San Juan Comalapa, Chimaltenango, Guatemala**



It is understood as the ability of human beings to confront life's adversities, overcome them and be positively transformed by them. This is evident when communities create survival strategies, organizational schemes, commitment, unity and other experiences to establish new social and labor bonds, adapt, carry on with their lives and better them. Confronting problems, public advocacy, taking leadership roles. This is how communities are better prepared to face natural disasters; they are capable of responding to their effects, their consequences and obtain the support and recognition on behalf of the authorities.

WAGUCHA, Guadalupe, Honduras



Community resilience is the ability to rise up after a catastrophe and work as an organized community, to be prepared before other disasters, build our houses in safer locations, keep working on new projects and help others who need it so that we may all reach our development.

GROOTS Jamaica, Jamaica

Resilience helps us identify vulnerabilities, it's transforming weaknesses into strengths, let's learn to be independent from men. For us, women, resilience is when we turn a weak community into a strong one. With knowledge, we expose the problems and seek alternatives to satisfy the needs of an entire community.

Cooperativa de mujeres de base de Wiwili, Jinotega, Nicaragua



Ability of people in the communities to organize, to prepare, to face, prevent, bounce back, move forward in the face of difficult situations, disasters, or any type of event that happens in life.

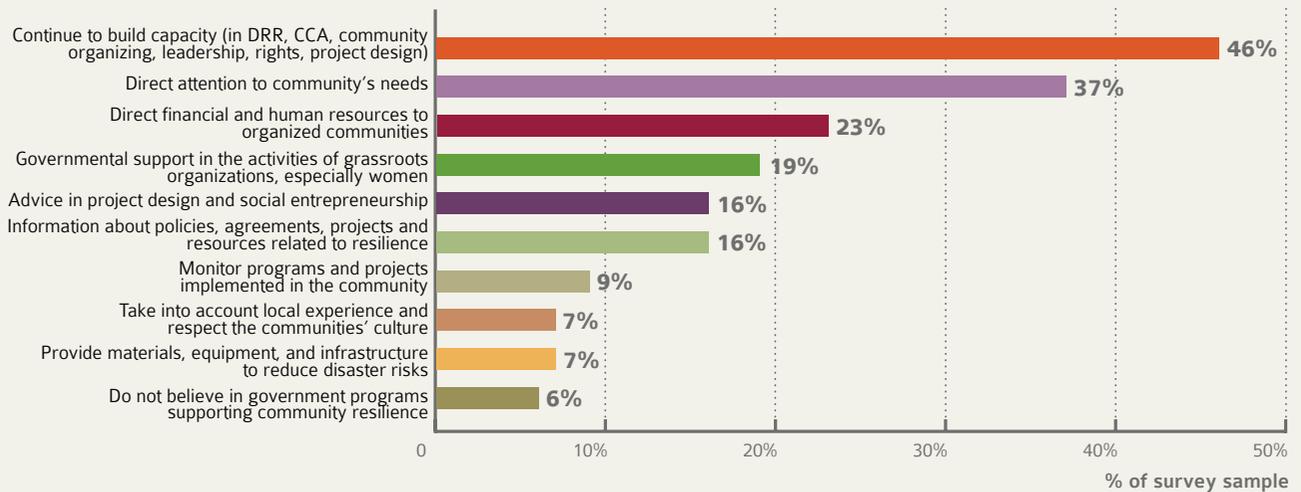
GROOTS Peru, Lima

Resilience is a process by which, us women, can feel good about ourselves, survive any type of personal or environmental event, rehabilitate and come out stronger through training, partnerships, linking with networks and readily available resources to promote our personal development and that of our community. It enables us to take part in political spaces to promote grassroots women's development.

Asociación Civil Rosa de Montaña, El Pedregal, Caracas, Venezuela

Chart 21. RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD MAKE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS MORE EFFECTIVE

(Received 747 free-form answers. The total % exceeds 100 because respondents gave more than one answers)



Based on systemization of the survey and focus group findings, final reflections on grassroots women's efforts in building community resilience in LAC shows that work needs to continue in the following areas:

Resilience practices. Sustain existing disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation projects. Provide technical know-how in adaptive agricultural practices, sustainable natural resource management, food security, land tenure, social entrepreneurship, etc. Strengthen grassroots organizations that have projects and programs in action to avoid losing gains made.

Advocacy. Expand the Community Practitioners Platform as a mechanism to tend to the needs of marginalized communities. Direct attention to the community's needs implies working closely with local government, and establishing dialogue and participatory processes in which communities and organized women feel they are being listened to and supported.

Empowerment. Concentrate on grassroots women's training and empowerment as the foundation for the community's resilience and development processes. Financial and human resources must be directed to promote women's leadership and community organizing. Many of them regard serving the community and being recognized as someone who aids its development as a major benefit of being part of an organized group.

Recognition. Publicly recognize and consolidate grassroots women's development gains by sharing their practices and achievements so that women's experiences may be known and replicated in other communities. This would contribute to guaranteeing women's rights to be informed and participate in decision-making processes.

FINAL REFLECTIONS



The Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean has achieved a number of milestones in empowering grassroots women in the region. This is apparent in the network's DRR and CCA activities in over 80 communities, encompassing food security, secure tenure of land and property, as well as partnerships and networks to ensure advocacy at local, national and global policy bodies.

Grassroots women's resilience building engages with systems that put poor communities at risk in the first place. The main challenges associated with transformational change are not technical, and often involve "the questioning of values, the challenging of assumptions, and the capacity to closely examine fixed beliefs, identities and stereotypes."¹³

Findings from this report validate years of dialogue and advocacy at local, national, regional, and global levels. The crosscutting theme of land tenure emerged that will inform the direction of the Community Resilience campaign in the future:

Land tenure is a key aspect of resilience. This theme crosscuts with food security, which has been seen as a separate issue by the international development community concerned with climate change adaptation. Grassroots women point out that in rural areas, food security is linked with land tenure. When farm production declines due to climate change, not only does it threaten food security and livelihoods of the rural population, urban dwellers are also affected because of price inflation due to food scarcity.

During the expert group meeting "Women's Security of Tenure" held in Recife, Brazil (September 2013) organized by the Huairou Commission and Espaço Feminista, a set of recommendation emerged on gender sensitive land analysis, legal frameworks, and support mechanisms. The articulation of this position is reaffirmed during Grassroots Women's Academy in the Sixth World Urban Forum in Medellín (April 2014). The following recommendations were presented to address secure land tenure and food security:

- Create spaces for dialogue and commitment between governments and women's grassroots organizations to improve the implementation of programs and policies related to secure land ownership and food security;
- Acknowledge and support innovative grassroots women's practices in the urban and rural spheres to make public spaces more sustainable;
- Finance and support the technical ability of grassroots women to allocate public lands;

¹³ Lauren Ravon, "Resilience in Times of Food Security: Reflecting on the experiences of women's organizations." Oxfam Canada, September 2014.

- Include grassroots women in the planning and implementation of development programs at the local and national levels;
- Enable direct access to the subsidies guaranteeing women’s economic stability in the communities.

Networks such as Community Practitioners Platform is vital to influencing public policy processes at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Networks allow community leaders to connect to other national and international institutions. The interviews held with national and local government representatives resulted in the acknowledgment of the role that grassroots women’s organizations play with respect to organizing communities for collective action and advocacy. Even in situations where disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation policies and programs exist, grassroots communities have not received the potential gains due to marginalization from decision-making processes. In case after case around the world, grassroots actions have transformed communities from mere beneficiary to active agents that initiate partnerships that made government policies and program more accountable and effective.



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APPENDIX

Each survey consists of 38 questions; a number of questions have more than one answer, or are open-ended questions.

A. Basic Information

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Village/City
5. Country
6. Type of settlement (urban/rural)

B. Group Information

7. Do you belong to an organized group in your community?
(Yes/No/Don't know)
8. If yes, what is the name of your group?
9. What are the main activities of your group? (Open-ended)
10. To what kind of communities are the activities of your group directed?
(Open-ended)
11. Is your group associated with a larger network of community-based groups/
organizations? (Yes/No/Don't know)
12. What is the name of the network(s)?

C. Disaster and Climate Change

13. Have you been impacted by any natural disaster in last 10 years?
(Yes/No/Don't know)
14. What are the types of disasters that have impacted you the most?
(Multiple choice)
15. What were the most significant impacts? (Multiple choice)
16. Have you noticed any change in climate that has affected your lives in
last few years? (Multiple choice)

D. Secure Land Tenure

17. The land you live in is used for: (Multiple choice)
18. Do you own the land that you live in? (Yes/No/Don't know)
19. If yes, do you have any document that supports the ownership of this land? (Yes/No/Don't know)
20. What kind of documents?
21. Under whose name are those documents? (Male/Female head of household/Both/Other: fill in the blanks)
22. If your part or all of the land were to be sold, who would make the decision? (Male/Female head of household/Both/Other)
23. If no, what kind of the relationship do you have with the land? (Rent/Other)
24. Is there a possibility of eviction? (Yes/No/Don't know)

E. Food Security

25. Do you grow food or raise animals for consumption? (Yes/No/Don't know)
26. If yes, how much of that food that you produce do you consume in your household? (Multiple choice)
27. What do you consider is the most important element in your daily food intake/nutrition? (Open-ended)
28. Have you ever had not enough food to eat? (Yes/No/Don't know)
29. If yes, how often does it happen? (Multiple choice)
30. What are/were the causes? (Open-ended)

F. External Support and Recommendation

31. Has your group received any kind of support (including trainings) in disaster relief, risk reduction and /or land security? (Yes/No/Don't know)
32. What kind of support? (Open-ended)
33. Who provided the trainings? (Multiple choice)
34. What recommendations do you have that would make the government programs more effective in resilience building with poor communities? (Open-ended)
35. In your experience, what has been the biggest benefit of being part of your group? (Open-ended)





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