



Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience

CATALYZING COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

As a result of GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission's sustained advocacy to press for accountable measures that recognize and resource grassroots women roles in building resilience to disasters and climate change, both organizations were invited by UN ISDR in 2009 to design and build a Community Practitioners Platform. The Community Practitioners Platform on Resilience represents a unique opportunity for organized communities living and working in disaster prone urban and rural areas to play an active role in driving resilience agendas at local, national and global level. As the Platform is a grassroots networking and advocacy space formally endorsed by UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), it also enhances the visibility of community led innovations, particularly those which can be scaled up through partnerships with governments at local, national, regional levels. The initial phase of development of the Community Practitioners Platform has focused on defining what the Platform is, orienting and recruiting community practitioners, providing opportunities for community practitioners to link and learn from one another and gaining the endorsement of community led action from institutional actors operating at local, national, regional and global levels .



Community Practitioners @ the First Stakeholder Advisory Meeting

The First Stakeholder Advisory Meeting of the Community Practitioners Platform was held in October 2010 in Harnosand, Sweden with the support of SIDA. The twenty participants, representing grassroots organizations, NGOs, Government and multilateral agencies agreed that the goal of the Platform would be to facilitate community based organizations vulnerable to disasters and climate change, to influence policies and programs so that they advance pro-poor, resilient development. Stakeholders present collectively resolved to accomplish this goal by enabling community groups to demonstrate and transfer their practices and build alliances with governments and development institutions.



Objectives to be achieved over a 5 year period:

1. Ensuring that dedicated funds are earmarked for financing local, community led resilient development.
2. Facilitating grassroots-government partnerships that can increase investment in community led action for resilience.
3. Developing and operationalising a framework that integrates disaster risk reduction, climate change and development.

To achieve these, stakeholders committed to take the following actions

- Map and baseline community roles, partnerships, resources and capacities to advance resilience.
- Advocate for investments in community resilience funds.
- Build networks that connect community practitioners to decision makers.
- Develop and demonstrate effective, community-friendly policy and program frameworks that integrate DRR, adaptation and development.

The Community Practitioners Platform aims to operate at national level to build:

- A body of community practice and innovation
- A common platform for community practitioners to collectively develop advocacy agendas and engage policy makers.
- A network of institutional collaborators who are prepared to champion community-led action.



Community Practitioners @ the Practitioner - Policy Dialogue on Local Mechanisms for Climate Smart Development, India

The Community Practitioners Platform was launched in Asia at a Practitioner-Policy Dialogue on ‘Local Mechanisms for Climate Resilient Development held in New Delhi in September 2010 in partnership with the Alliance for Adaptation and Disaster Risk reduction, (AADRR) India. This meeting convened community based organizations and NGO practitioners from Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and five states of India with representatives of research organizations, district level government , National Disaster Management Authority of Government of India, UNDP, DFID, GTZ, SDC, and the World Bank. The dialogue workshop focused on innovative community-led practices around food security, sustainable agriculture, emergency response, water harvesting and alliance building with government. During the workshop, representatives from the World Bank announced the scaling-up of community innovations and practices piloted through the Community Resilience Fund in India and Central America through the South-South Program of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.



Community Practitioners @ COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico

During the COP 16 in Cancun, GROOTS International and Huairou Commission organized a small side event attended by 45 persons, the majority of whom were indigenous leaders, eager to join the Community Practitioners Platform. This meeting was also attended by representatives of the World Bank, UNDP Gender Team, Practical Action, Actionaid, Women, Environment and Development Organization and the government delegations of Ethiopia, Haiti, Guatemala and Honduras, who endorsed the Community Practitioners Platform. The meeting was facilitated by Analucy Bengochea, an indigenous grassroots woman leader from Comitè de Emergencia Garifuna, Honduras. She said, **“We don’t just want to be talked about as good practices. We want to connect with policy makers,”** said Analucy Bengochea. **“When you have**

a global space - a space for dialogue with national authorities - it makes a difference.” Harjeet Singh of Actionaid International captured the core principle of self representation of communities which is central to the Community Practitioners Platform when he said **“We (NGOs) speak on behalf of communities. But it is time for communities to be given platforms to speak on their own behalf. We must link communities together so that they can articulate their priorities and the policy changes they want to see.”** During this meeting, the Presidential Office for the Defender of Indigenous Women of Guatemala signed an MOU with GROOTS and Huairou Commission and Fundacion Guatemala to formalize its collaboration to scale up community led action to build resilience.



Community Practitioners @ the Grassroots Academy on Resilience, Peru

The Andean Grassroots Academy on Resilience in Peru in February 2011 convened over 50 participants from grassroots women's organizations in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Nicaragua, Chile and Brazil to share practices and identify common agendas for advocacy. Community practitioners were joined by Practical Action, Peru and institutional representatives from UN Habitat, local authorities from Peru, the Mexican Civil Protection Agency, CAPRADE (the Andean regional disaster management agency) and INDECI (the national disaster management agency of Peru) among other Peruvian national authorities. Acknowledging the absence of grassroots voices from civil society, national and global decision making platforms, CAPRADE officials expressed their willingness to partner with grassroots organizations and to

facilitate linkages between grassroots organizations in the Andean region to their respective national governments. In addition, municipal officials representing Canete, Lima, El Augustino, Chacacayo and Villa El Salvador made commitments to collaborate with women's groups on resilience building.



Community Practitioners @ the UN Commission on Status of Women, New York

Grassroots leaders spoke along side senior policy makers from Norway, Guatemala, India and the World Bank at an official side event at the 55th UN Commission on Status of Women hosted by Huairou Commission in partnership with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and UNDP. In her opening remarks Ingrid Friskaa, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway appreciated the efforts of Huairou Commission to position grassroots women as a critical constituency who are driving development. Presentations by grassroots women from Uganda, Philippines, Peru and India highlighted the new public roles that they are undertaking to advance resilience priorities. Lily Caravantes, Minister for Food Security and Nutrition, Guatemala highlighted the need

to bring grassroots women into public decision making processes through 'voice and vote'. However a major challenge confronting policy makers was highlighted by Prof. Vinod Menon, former **member of India's National Disaster Management Authority as he quoted from the World Disaster Report to make the point that "large development assistance agencies frequently do not know how to support community level organizations - indeed often they never talk to them."**

Community Practitioners @ Regional Platforms in the Americas and Asia

In March 2011, GROOTS International was invited by UN ISDR to run a panel on gender and DRR in the Regional Platform held in Nayarit, Mexico. The grassroots women practitioners and other civil society practitioners made a series of recommendations on the need to promote women's public roles in resilience- building and the need to build the Community Practitioners Platform as a strategy for advancing community driven resilience processes. These recommendations were annexed to the official ISDR communiqué on the outcomes of this Regional Platform. Reaffirming the Community Platform's principle of self-representation for communities, Assistant Secretary General, Margareta Wahlstrom stated at the Civil Society Dialogue during this forum, that communities are capable of representing their interests without intermediaries.

Similarly a small team from Indonesia, Philippines and India represented the Community Practitioners Platform at the ISDR Asia Partnership meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia in March 2011 where they presented successful examples of collaborative, pro-poor partnerships and resolved to work collectively with other Asian practitioners to influence the next Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR to be held In Yogyakarta to ensure greater Government accountability to disaster prone communities in the region.

10 partnership mechanisms that catalyze community action

1. Advancing policy mandates through ongoing engagement with grassroots organizations

In Central America CEPREDENAC, the inter-governmental body for disaster prevention and response has clear policy mandates that require it to address the needs of women and marginalized communities. Recognizing that grassroots women's organizations are strategic allies for the effective implementation of these policy mandates, CEPREDENAC has been convening national disaster management agencies, women's ministries, environment ministries and grassroots women's organizations to jointly develop DRR strategies. This has provided grassroots organizations in Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras opportunities to engage their respective national governments to leverage resources and technical support, and to undertake joint planning and training to implement the HFA.

2. Appointing communities as problems solvers

In Guatemala in response to the food crisis, National Ministry of Food Security and Nutrition (SESAN) has requested grassroots leaders from Fundacion Guatemala, Comite de Emergencia Garifuna, Honduras and Union de Cooperativas de Produccion Agrícola Las Brumas, Nicaragua to hold trainings for 57 communities. Among other things, the trainings will cover the development of seed banks, agricultural tool banks and community gardens, the preparation and use of organic fertilizer as well as strategic alliance-building with local government.

3. Multi-stakeholder planning mechanisms: Giving communities a seat at the table

In 2008, local governments in Bicol, Philippines signed an agreement naming people's organizations, informal businesses and producers groups as legitimate stakeholders in city planning. This has enabled urban poor federations in the Bicol Urban Poor Coordinating Council to participate in multi-stakeholder planning process called the Cities Sharing Mechanism to influence local government and NGOs.

In Jamaica, the Construction Resource and Development Centre in Jamaica has partnered with local government and the Ministry of Water and Housing to design and implement pilot projects for the Rural Water and Sanitation Program. CRDC was also appointed trainer and facilitator in the UNHabitat Participatory Slum Upgrading Program. In addition, CRDC worked with ODPEM, the national disaster management agency to retrofit houses and is currently partnering with the local authorities of St. Thomas and Portmore to develop and operationalize a framework for resilient cities.

4. Political contracts with local government: Making democracy work for the poor.

In Makassar, Indonesia, Komite Perjuangan Rakyat Miskin (KPRM), a network of urban poor from 14 sub-districts signed a 'political contract' with a mayoral candidate. In return for 70,000 votes from the urban poor, Ilham Arief Sirajuddin agreed to prevent forced evictions and find viable solutions for the housing, livelihoods and basic service needs of the urban poor. Since winning the election, Sirajuddin has been working with KPRM to secure housing tenure, education and health services through participatory city planning and budgeting processes to ensure that the concerns of squatters, street vendors and informal businesses are addressed. Since 2010, KPRM and the national network of Urban Poor Links has been working closely with the mayor to draw up disaster management guidelines for schools, incorporating disaster risk reduction in settlement planning and setting up the Makassar Community Alliance for Disaster Response.

5. Decentralized budget allocations in response to community priorities

In Nicaragua, Union de Cooperativas de Produccion Agrícola Las Brumas identified a list of priorities from their community risk mapping process. This list which included the need for safer housing structures, improving infrastructure, health services and livelihoods was presented to the local governments in 3 municipalities. Las Brumas persuaded the Municipality of Wiwili to sign a resolution earmarking 5% of its budget to address these priorities. In addition to providing 260 households with roofing from the Ministry of Housing, repairing a 30 km access road and providing seeds to develop seedbanks from the Environment Ministry, the local authority of Wiwili also created a gender desk to monitor resource allocations for women's priorities.

In Peru, as a result of negotiations between grassroots women's network GROOTS Peru and local authorities of El Augustino in Lima, the municipality was able to access approximately USD 43,000 from national funds in order to build an embankment to reduce flooding. Grassroots women will oversee the construction of this embankment.

6. Local to Local Dialogues: Setting new terms of engagement with local authorities

Local to Local Dialogue is a methodology that enables grassroots organizations to prioritize their needs and then negotiate with local authorities to address these. This methodology has been used by grassroots organizations in 22 countries. In Tanzania, Maasai Women's Development Organization developed their own women's platforms and used the Local to Local Dialogues to engage local leaders – both administrative officials and traditional chiefs - in Longido and Simanjiro districts, to utilize the Village Land Act of the National Government to claim land for women. As a result, 800 women have been granted access to land and land titles have been granted to 125 women along with a market space. Maasai women have traditionally been denied access to property. In the context of prolonged periods of droughts which impact food and livelihoods security, access and control over land is a strategic starting point for reducing vulnerability of these indigenous, pastoralist communities.

7. Formal recognition of community leaders as trainers: incentivizing community engagement

In Guatemala, impressed by Central American grassroots women's organizations that had conducted their own risk mapping, CONRED, the national disaster management agency asked grassroots women to train government officials responsible for advising local authorities. CONRED also agreed to include grassroots women in emergency preparedness and response training and formally certify them as trainers.

In Honduras the women-led grassroots group *Comite de Emergencia Garifuna*, SEPLAN (the Planning Ministry) and the municipalities of San Juan de Flores Cantarranas organized a two-day training for 25 municipal officials. Three grassroots leaders from Honduras and one from Nicaragua led the training with the support of the head of *Fundacion Guatemala*. Since this training, DIPECHO (disaster prevention program of the European Commission) has approached *Fundacion Guatemala* to replicate the same methodology used in Cantarranas to train municipal officials in Livingston.

8. Community research tools as the basis for engagement and action

Community Risk Mapping

In Metro Manila, Philippines DAMPA a network of more than 250 urban poor communities organized a community risk and vulnerability mapping process, involving more than 5,000 men and women in which water supply and secure housing were identified as priorities for engaging the national and local government authorities. PACOMNA a community group from Baranguay 275 organized a water cooperative and negotiated for water supply from the local government and Manila Water. In Navotas city, community leaders negotiated with the mayor to ensure that the urban poor were represented in resettlement planning meetings.

Community Resource Mapping

In Nagapattinam and Cuddalore districts of tsunami-hit Tamil Nadu, India women from *Arogyasakhis for Sanitation, Health, Awareness and Action (ASHAA)* identified risks, problems and costs related to community health and sanitation through a survey of 600 households. They found that settlements had poor sanitation and waste management systems, women were neglecting their health and that communities to use the more expensive private clinics rather than government health clinics, thus adding to the financial stress of poor households. These findings prompted them to mobilize communities on health and sanitation issues, negotiate for improved water and sanitation, organize health camps and partner with government-run clinics to improve the quality and costs of health services for poor communities. More than 800 women in the tsunami affected villages are active in these ASHAA groups.

Community assessments of global policy agreements

Supported by the Global Network of CSOs on Disaster Reduction, *Huirou Commission* facilitated 23 grassroots women's organizations from 13 countries organized focus groups and surveys as part of the action-research study, 'Women's Views from the Frontline' in 2009, involving close to 2,000 grassroots women, NGO organizers and local governments in an action-research assessing the local implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). The research was instrumental in introducing the HFA to grassroots women. As a result, *Lumanti Support Group for Shelter*, Nepal convened a multi-stakeholder training workshop in partnership with national and local government. DAMPA a federation of more than 250 communities in the Philippines started talking to their local government about collaborative action on DRR. In Bangladesh, the grassroots women linked to *Participatory Development and Action Program* followed up the survey by organizing meetings with local authorities to talk about problems and solutions for poor women living in cyclone and flood affected communities.

9. Community led local platforms to secure community assets

In Kenya, the community watchdogs groups were founded by home-based caregivers of HIV/AIDS affected communities to prevent evictions of widows and children. Land is a key asset that enables poor households to survive crises brought about by disasters and climate change. GROOTS Kenya facilitated the training of community watchdogs to act as community paralegals and linked them to elders, chiefs and councilors to monitor and prevent land grabbing and asset stripping. The watchdog groups have now been replicated in 16 communities across 4 regions of Kenya. To date 60 provincial administrators are working with 13 of the watchdog groups, which are also being replicated in Uganda, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria.

10. Community funding mechanisms

Community Resilience Fund

Launched in 2009, Community Resilience Fund initiated by GROOTS International and Huairou Commission is a decentralized mechanism to fast-track local community-driven resilience efforts. It provides flexible funds that are channeled directly to grassroots groups, enabling them to demonstrate innovative responses to local priorities in collaboration with local authorities. Currently delivering decentralized funds to community based organizations in 12 countries in Asia, Africa and LAC regions the Fund locates community resilience practices within a horizontal networking and organizing processes, while incentivizing collaboration with local and national government. Thus, the Fund is continually widening the scale and influence of community led actions for resilience. Using community risk and vulnerability mapping as an entry point, grassroots organizations have been negotiating with local and national authorities to address their livelihoods, sanitation, health, infrastructure and housing needs.

Community Health Mutual

In India, Arogyasakhis for Sanitation, Health, Awareness and Action (ASHAA) women's groups linked to NGO Swayam Shikshan Prayog launched a Community Based Health Fund in the western state of Maharashtra. This is essentially a community solidarity fund built through community contributions. The health mutual functions within a women's organizing process through which grassroots women hold private and public sector healthcare providers accountable to poor communities. ASHAA women have mobilized and educated 15,000 members take measures to prevent health crises, monitor and partner with government-run primary health centers and access low cost health services. Through peer exchanges this initiative is being replicated by in the tsunami – affected communities in the state of Tamil Nadu and by the home based-caregivers' networks in Kenya.

Community Practitioners @ the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011

The Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience calls upon national governments, multilateral agencies, local authorities and civil society networks to invest in community-led, pro-poor, gender equitable local action for resilient development by:

1. Earmarking resources that are channeled to organized communities to demonstrate practices and priorities in collaboration with local and national governments.
2. Requiring and rewarding national and local governments to formally partner with local community based organizations to plan, implement and monitor policies and programs for climate and disaster resilient development.
3. Ensuring that representatives of community based organizations and networks are active in setting resilience agendas for building disaster and climate resilience at local, sub-national, national, regional and global levels.



You should join the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience if you represent:

- A community based organization working on disaster and climate resilience and want to be part of a learning and advocacy network of peers.
- A national government organization, bilateral or multilateral agency with a strong commitment to engaging poor communities in government programs on DRR, climate change and poverty reduction.
- A civil society organization or network committed to facilitating the leadership of disaster prone communities to learn and advocate for their resilience priorities.

Core Stakeholder Group

Actionaid International
American Jewish World Service
CEPRENAC (Central American agency for disaster prevention and response)
Comite de Emergencia Garifuna, Honduras
Cordaid
Fundacion Guatemala
Gender Disaster Network
GROOTS International
GROOTS Kenya
GROOTS Peru
Huairou Commission
National Disaster Management Authority, India
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
Practical Action
SEPLAN (Ministry of Urban Planning and Cooperation) Honduras
SESAN (National Ministry of Food Security and Nutrition) Guatemala
Swedish International Development Agency
Swayam Shikshan Prayog, India
Union of Cooperatives Las Brumas, Nicaragua
UN HABITAT
UNISDR
World Bank

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