



HUIROU COMMISSION
Women, Homes & Community

Promoting Grassroots Women-Led Resilient Community Development in Post 2015 Policy Implementation

Sida Year 2 Report

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2017

April 2018



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Huairou Commission Building a Movement of Grassroots Women for Resilient Development: Report of Achievements in 2017

30 April 2018

Overview and Key Messages

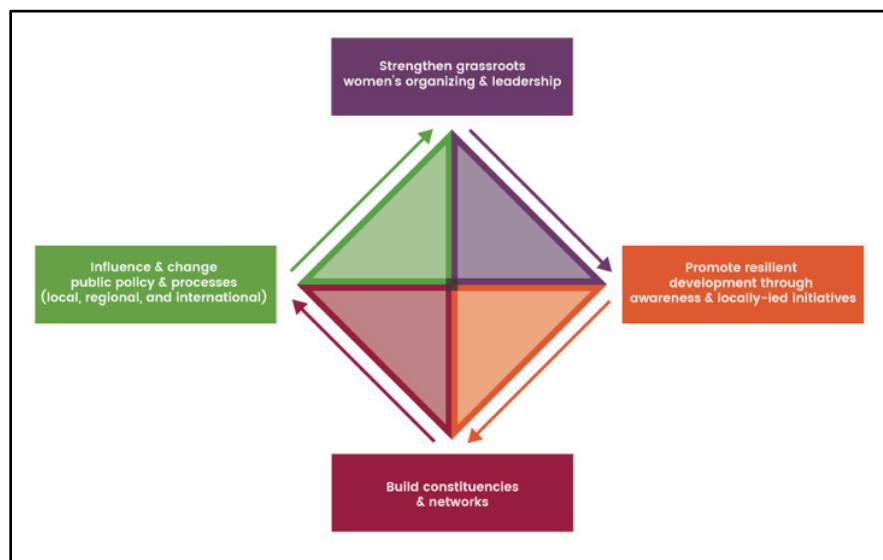
Huairou Commission is a movement-building organization and through our cooperation with Sida in 2017, the movement of grassroots women-led organizations and their allies took on new depth and momentum. Grassroots women demonstrated their capacities for leadership and innovation in delivering local solutions to global challenges: building resilience to disaster and climate risk and tackling the historic inequalities that have excluded women from decision-making and economic opportunities.

Partnership with Sida is anchored by a forty million Swedish Kronor signed in 2016, *Promoting Grassroots-led Resilient Community Development in Post-2015 Policy Implementation*. This report focuses on significant developments in 2017 aligned to the Huairou Commission's five-year Strategic Plan and four-point Resilience Diamond:

- Grassroots Women are Capacitated and Organized to Function as Agents of Change;
- Women-Led Resilient Community Development is Strengthened and Expanded;
- Public Awareness and Support of Grassroots Women's Knowledge and Development Agenda is Increased; and
- Grassroots Women are Recognized as Experts in all Phases of Development

A fifth element recognizes the institutional requirements to support, grow and sustain a global movement led by grassroots women:

- Governance, Organizational Structure and Operations of Huairou Commission Updated to Sustain Movement Building and Social Change Impact



In 2017, Huairou Commission's Board, membership of over 130 organizations in nearly 50 countries and Secretariat, demonstrated their commitment to consolidate a bottom-up global movement for gender just and equitable community development. This year has been especially significant for the Huairou Commission since the members have been in the final stages of transferring the decision-making power of the global network from NGO allies and partners to leaders of local grassroots women's organizations.

As compared to 2016, the achievements highlighted in this report therefore reflect a blended approach that demonstrates the resilience-building innovations and expertise of women living in poor, hazard-prone urban and rural communities while also fortifying the leadership practices and organizational changes that build a robust and sustainable movement of grassroots women.

Implementation of Community Resilience Funds, an instrument promoted by the Huairou Commission in over 20 countries over the past ten years anchored much of the work in this reporting period with progress made in all strategic objectives. These risk reduction efforts were further strengthened by complementary efforts to engage members in planning for the transition, including through the organization of regional assemblies and national dialogues which also helped to sharpen programmatic focus and implementation of the Community Resilience Funds.

Especially significant is how Huairou Commission members and founding leaders designed and cooperatively worked through a number of steps to transfer the decision-making power of the global network from NGO allies and partners to leaders of local grassroots women's organizations. The process and strategies they co-created illustrates bottom-up participatory planning and decision-making and embeds tools and methods that members and elected grassroots leaders can use moving forward.

Attention was also placed on strengthening the organization and management of the Huairou Commission Secretariat to support the needs of a grassroots women-led movement. This included review of legal status, enhancing management systems and updating the programmatic capacities to support movement-building.

The following section highlighting 2017 achievements is organized in alignment with the Results Framework agreed between Sida and the Huairou Commission.

1 Strengthening Leadership and Organization

In 2017, grassroots women's leadership abilities developed in multiple countries through member groups' initiatives to increase and deepen:

- women's understanding of governance and decision-making structures;
- confidence and skills in proposing priorities, plans and collaborations;
- capacities to apply tools relevant to consistently monitoring local plans and budgets; and
- influence and assurances that governments are implementing declared policies and targets.

In Kenya, for example, Shibuye Community Health Workers (SCHW) trained 60 grassroots women as policy advocates able to influence and track the implementation of county and national policies and budgets. These members, in turn, were resourced to convene three public forums where local government members explained government policies and the Kakamega County Integrated Plan to the wider community. In the new mining area of Roasterman, this process was replicated by training 54 additional

women leaders who held three forums with support from the County Government. As a result, SCHW now has new tools to help women's groups monitor policy implementation and partnerships with government officials and bodies and is on record for its work to ensure that devolved development programming and investments are undertaken with the knowledge and involvement of the communities they are intended to benefit. Polycom, a women-led community group in the slums of Kibera replicated a similar initiative, stipending four grassroots women leaders to map devolved funds and decision making who in turn worked with the larger group to convert their knowledge into community development opportunities.

In the Philippines, DAMPA assisted women leaders in 10 communities spanning Luzon (Metro Manila and Bulacan) and the Visayas (Tanauan, Leyte) in researching the updated mandates, policy priorities and plans of government structures (barangay to city/municipal levels) impacting their communities. Similarly to Shibuye, they aimed to apply this knowledge of government functioning to engage government officials in public dialogues intended to pinpoint how grassroots women's groups could access resources and collaborate with local government in an ongoing way at the barangay level.

These same groups also demonstrated how mapping disaster risk, a prerequisite for planning the implementation of CRF, has proven to a powerful tool for strengthening the leadership of grassroots women as well. Polycom identified and trained 40 women leaders to identify risks, create plans to address them, and strengthen their leadership to implement good practices and involved an additional 160 grassroots women in various forums to engage service providers and decision makers in committing resources to help. In Southeast Asia, the Life Center in Vietnam surveyed 100 grassroots women in the Hua Tien commune of Vi Thanh Town in Hau Giang Province to assess women's perceptions of climate change and resilience building efforts. This participatory research led to women holding group discussions with government officials in both communes to identify where available resources, capacities and strategies existed (or could be built) to address the adverse effects of climate change and disasters. In Peru, SEA worked in six communities to raise awareness in disaster risk reduction through risk mapping and collective construction of community action plans. Communities that were previously unaware of the global and national regulatory framework and disaster risk management concepts. All six communities were able to identify vulnerabilities including inadequate infrastructure, the use of adobe which collapses during heavy rains, clogged irrigation channels covered with excessive weeds and solid waste and fires from poorly installed electrical units.

Having gained a deeper understanding of government processes through leadership building initiatives, grassroots women played an active role in promoting accountability in 2017. For instance, in Nicaragua, 30 grassroots women trained by Las Brumas to monitor and evaluate municipal budgets used local town council meetings as opportunities to verify that budgets are being allocated for the major concerns raised by the community. In Kenya, Shibuye described how grassroots women reviewed the County Government Auditor General's Report on Kakamega County and then visited the auditor general's office to clarify points in the report. The community subsequently developed indicators used to track progress and public service delivery. In Ecuador, Luna Crescente reports how four provincial women's organizations are monitoring public policies from a perspective of women's social and economic rights and are tracking achievements and setbacks of advocacy proposals submitted to government.

2 Promoting Local Awareness, Skills and Good Practices

In 2017, Huairou Commission worked with 16 member-groups and their constituencies in 12 countries to achieve commonly agreed goals and targets. The Community Resilience Fund, a community fund focused on facilitating local leadership in reducing vulnerability to climate and disaster risks in poor rural and urban

communities anchored the delivery of this this strategic objective. It supported grassroots leaders to organize themselves to collectively identify their risks and vulnerabilities, make plans and implement practices that address community priorities, and importantly, teach other groups do the same. Thus, while building their capacities, community groups demonstrate strategies to advance community resilience.

Huairou Commission members live in some of the most hazard prone areas of the world where the floods, storms and drought that had already been persistent challenges are now becoming more frequent and intense as the climate changes. Women living in poor urban and rural communities in these regions are working to overcome social and economic inequalities that have made them more vulnerable to natural hazards. Hence Huairou Commission's resilience diamond methodology simultaneously demonstrates women's leadership and introduces practical measures that reduce exposure and vulnerability to locally prevalent disasters - including the high frequency, lower-impact events that repeatedly undermine family's efforts to pull themselves from poverty.

Using risk maps to inform their planning, grassroots women prioritized initiatives focused on reducing vulnerabilities through fortifying food, income and tenure security. Food security measures aimed to ensure food supply including through times of drought and were designed with consideration of local contexts and local knowledge. The introduction of storage facilities for harvested crops and seeds, for example, play an important role in securing food supply and ensuring the availability of pest-free seed varieties. The agricultural practices introduced by grassroots women used integrated farming practices that build resilience through protecting soil, using land and water efficiently, protecting forests (and the ecosystem services they provide), promoting biodiversity through planting and managing native seed varieties. For instance, in Ecuador, Luna Crescente focused on increasing the productivity by improving and diversifying their farming practices through the establishment of 200 agro-ecological farms.



Indian Community Resilience Mapping and Disaster Watch Committees Mexico & Peru

Grassroots women's initiatives to secure income focused on empowering group members to formulate adaptive, sustainable livelihood and asset accumulation strategies that reduce gender-based inequalities which compound their vulnerability to disasters. Securing land tenure through measuring and registering land in women's names, for instance, has proven vital in ensuring that women are able to claim, publicly register and manage productive assets in ways that reduce risk and build resilience. In Uganda, for instance, UCOBAC worked to secure land through applying tools such as STDM (Social Tenure Domain Model) and GEC (Gender Evaluation Criteria) models supported by Huairou Commission and Global Land Tools Network. Certificates were distributed to the women whose land was measured in Iwemba Parish of Bulugui sub county.

Other measures focused on strengthening women's livelihoods through introducing high yield/high value crops as was the case in Uganda where SWID's efforts to plant 1000 mangos and orange trees was so successful that the sub-county level government is scaling up this initiative by providing seedlings to households under the government's wealth creation initiative. Grassroots women also used Community

Resilience Funds to analyze markets to gauge the value of their products and identify new income-earning opportunities by applying value chain analysis and updating distribution and procurement opportunities. In Zimbabwe, grassroots women working with Ntengwe conducted market surveys in Hwange and Victoria Falls with restaurant owners, lodges hotels, district hospitals, supermarkets and tourism companies as potential opportunities to market organic farm produce and promote community-based tours. Other groups emphasized identified for organized groups of women to capture more value from their agricultural production by establishing collectively managed storage and processing facilities as was the case in Honduras where WAGUCHA, enhanced income generation through establishment of a cocoa collection and processing center for 124 smallholder cocoa farmers who cultivate over 100 acres of land in Trujillo. This center adds value by allowing farmers store cocoa and command better prices in the market for this higher quality product.

It is also important to note how these women-led resilience building strategies consciously create collective, cooperative vulnerability reduction approaches by building social - as well as economic and political capital. Increasingly, women's groups are using their social capital to reproduce and diversify good practices; and to form public constituency and advocacy groups that pressure government to adopt and strengthen collaborative local disaster and climate risk management initiatives and investments.¹

These measures have helped organized groups of women to reduce vulnerability to disasters and build resilience of their communities more broadly, particularly as their practices are seen and taken up by other communities and/or incentivized by government officials and agencies. To foster scaling, Huairou Commission members purposively promote their tools, techniques and achievements as part of building resilience - using public risk mapping exercises, demonstration plots, enterprise and market fairs, seed festivals, local community dialogues with government officials, and locally and nationally broadcast radio shows are some methods used to motivate other grassroots women leaders and communities to take similar action.

3 Strengthen networks and coalitions and increasing awareness and knowledge of grassroots approaches



In 2017, Community Resilience Funds supported actions designed to expand the number of partners and allies working to establish public, formal recognition of grassroots women's groups as agents of change and resilient development. Across Africa and within Asia, member groups reported, how they have

¹ Other sections of the report illustrate the impact of women increasing social capital in their account of how Huairou Commission resilience members are representing themselves to ensure the priorities and well-being of women and urban and rural poor communities are taken on board (via joint risk and vulnerability reduction initiatives as well as women's leadership in accountability monitoring).

expanded their constituencies by organizing new groups, expanding networks, federating into larger groups; as well as forging coalitions with like-minded allies.

Uganda members were particularly active—growing their network to include 12 women’s self-help groups (SHG). Working with the Community Development Officer of Butagaya Sub-county, SWID identified organized groups that were eager to implement the CRF, mentored them and enrolled them as network members. Similarly, Kenya based Shibuye encouraged three new savings groups to emerge in sugarcane growing areas Ilhelo and Bukura and the mining area of Roasterman. The groups received seed grants to start their savings and lending and established a social fund where every member saves for emergencies. Now, all three groups are linked to the Women Enterprise Fund and can access larger loans and support to sustain their group’s projects. In Zimbabwe, Ntengwe exhibited the most impressive growth by fostering 18 new SHGs (with 20 grassroots women in each group), two new cluster level associations and one federation. Women in the target wards took leadership immediately—taking charge of the election of four leaders to represent their interests in the wider federation. Harnessing the collective power of these SHGs through federating leaders produces economic and political attention quickly. Financial institutions can be tapped for external financial support and women quickly learn to spear head issue-based activities (community dialogues on SDGs, Climate Change Response Strategies, as well as Zimbabwe’s Gender Policy).

Alliance building activities were equally impressive. UCOBAC convened a Grassroots Academy and invited representatives from the ministries of water and environment, climate change department, and Kampala capital city authority to attend (as well as csos strong on climate change and disaster risk reduction and strong local leaders). After sharing good practices and common concerns, a sub group formed to work together to advocate for stronger action to combat the effects of climate change and disasters.

In Guatemala, FUNGUA expanded its Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience (CPPR) by recruiting allies from a network of women graduates of the Women’s Leadership School for Community Resilience. The women held an exchange in Livingston, Izabal, included field trips, thematic panels, presentations and group work. And, in the end 5 new groups from Mixico, Santa Catarina, Pinula, and Amaritlan – municipalities from the Commonwealth of Southern Guatemala were inaugurated as new members of the CPPR. Life Centre, Vietnam also consolidated its constituency in 2017 by organizing a local Women’s Resilience Network of Grassroots Women from existing Women’s Union members.

Following a country level grassroots women’s forum to exhibit and share their work around resilience, Shibuye established three thematic networks of grassroots women and linked these to key government institutions, one focused on forest conservation, another on food security and a third on women’s land rights. As a result of this collaboration, Shibuye and these network members have established relationships with key stakeholders including The Forester, Malava Sub County, Women Enterprise Fund in Shinyalu, Kakamega County Minister for Agriculture and The Minister for Trade and Industry who agreed to collaborate on building resilience. Shibuye also conducted 4 forums focused on land tenure issues where 150 grassroots women were given the opportunity to engage with local administration and county government on land tenure.

Many groups also reported on their success in establishing partnerships to deliver on specific initiatives and longer-term goals. The Zambia Homeless People’s Federation, for example, partnered with the University of Zambia (department of Geography and Natural Sciences) to hold a series of community dialogues in George settlement, focused on sustainable sanitation as a means of building community resilience to waterborne diseases (often exacerbated by climate change and natural hazards). The dialogues encouraged residents to invest in ecological sanitation toilets (promoted by the SDI network)

which are more environment-friendly as they do not contaminate ground water and waste is safely and hygienically harvested to make organic fertilizer. A demonstration ecosan toilet --with a bathroom as well as a rainwater harvesting mechanism-- was constructed at the George local council offices to showcase the technology.

UCOBAC has succeeded in signing a formal agreement with Bugiri District Local Government to collaborate on disaster risk reduction, environmental education and initiatives to insure grassroots women's priorities are considered in the budgeting process. To date, Bugiri District government has provided women with livelihoods support in the form of mango, avocado and orange tree seedlings and is committed to doing more.

As noted earlier, Shibuye has purposively focused their attention on finance and credit institutions (partnering with the Women's Enterprise fund, Equity Bank, Kenya Women's Finance Trust, and UWEZO government and others) To date, 117 grassroots women have gained access to credit from the Women's Enterprise Fund and grassroots women producers have been able to access and claim 13 stalls (out of a total of 22) in 2 public markets in Shinyalu and Malaya (enabling 70 women producers to access dependable space for marketing their farm produce).

In Honduras, Wagucha, created an informal agreement to partner with FECAHFOR – an agroforestry cooperative--to take its advocacy on these issues to a national level.

4 Increasing Influence and Changing Policy and Processes

Engagement in international fora, globally and regionally, are a core feature of Huairou Commission's work to build resilience to disaster risk and women's empowerment and a core strategy for movement building more broadly. Positioning grassroots women leaders in high profile speaking roles has played an instrumental role in strengthening leadership capacities through sharpening their skills in communicating grassroots women's achievements to senior policy makers. In following the consultations and implementation of international agreements, leaders of grassroots women's groups are better informed of the commitments their national governments have made to build resilience and are better equipped to advocate for accountability nationally and locally.

Participation in these fora also enable a broader exchange of ideas and good practices that grassroots women can adapt and apply to reduce disaster and climate risks locally. In addition to introducing the approaches and innovations of grassroots women to other stakeholders through formal sessions and side events, Huairou Commission takes advantage of these global gatherings to convene International Global Grassroots Academies and Caucuses where community practitioners are able to share their experiences and collectively plan common messages and outreach strategies that advance implementation of inclusive, bottom-up approaches to building resilience.

International fora also play an important role in movement building. In addition to the opportunities to meet and form relationships with new allies and partners in government, civil society and international organizations, engagement in these fora provides Huairou Commission and important entry point for mobilizing a larger constituency of community practitioners to press for and support governments commitments to community-led, inclusive disaster risk reduction. A key element of this strategy is to position the Huairou Commission as the official focal point for coordinating the engagement of community based and grassroots actors. These constituencies are now recognized in the Sendai Framework for

Disaster Risk Reduction as well as in the various mechanisms related to UN-Habitat as well as in “The Future We Want, Outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference”.

In 2017, international global fora, in general, placed a greater emphasis on implementation of governments commitments than on intergovernmental decisions per se. Accordingly, Huairou Commission tailored its approach and targeted key fora that could advance grassroots women’s public role in building resilience and achieving sustainable, equitable and inclusive development locally. Thus, engagement with multilateral development banks and regional intergovernmental organizations played an important role in 2017. The 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, as the first Global Platform since the adoption of the Sendai Framework, was especially important as space where issues of implementing disaster risk reduction were considered. As important decisions regarding the role of stakeholders in implementation of the New Urban Agenda, a vital instrument for building resilience in cities, were under consideration, Huairou Commission focused attention on consolidating the views and positions of grassroots women with regards to the governance of UN-Habitat. The Commission on the Status of Women remains an annual feature in the Huairou Commission’s calendar both for its role in mobilizing global leaders committed to advancing women’s empowerment and for the opportunity to turn the attention of the women’s movement to the importance of engaging and supporting grassroots women from poor urban and rural communities.

Activities undertaken nationally in 2017, led to agreements with governmental entities and formal engagement of grassroots women in a range of government mechanisms both of which are key indicators in the Results Framework agreed between Huairou Commission and Sida (attached). Further details on policy engagement around the SDG’s are provided in the subsequent section on national dialogues.



4.1 Advancing Policy Priorities and Collaborative Partnerships with the Development Banks

In 2017, experienced Huairou Commission staff and members leading disaster recovery and resilience efforts focused their attention on promoting institutional awareness of the network’s good practices, lessons learned and policy agenda with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction) and the member governments (and regional and multi-lateral agencies and development corporation) with whom they cooperate. The ADB (with support from the Canadian

government) financed Huairou Commission to implement a two-year collaborative resilience and documentation project in SE Asia that focused on grassroots women-led risk assessment processes, demonstrating how women's groups can manage and reduce vulnerability through social protection and community resilience funds and capturing the advocacy and gains emerging from engaging local decision makers and participating steadily in development planning and budgeting processes. In February 2017, a two-day regional workshop was held at ADB headquarters to disseminate the results of the initiative and foster discussion among community practitioner leaders from Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, ADB staff (social protection and other specialists) and recognized experts in community driven risk reduction on how these approaches could be brought to scale with government support.

Corazon Soliman, prior Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development responsible for Typhoon Haiyan relief and recovery, presented her experience of how successfully grassroots women had managed their responsibilities as the household member the government designated to receive and decide how social protection monies (in excess of 50 million USD) would be spent. Margaret Arnold added how World Bank Community Driven Development (CDD) funds have had similar impacts at scale (with a significant sum invested to date) and efforts are to ensure CDD can support climate and disaster risk reduction initiatives.

In Fall 2017, joint publications capturing the project's impact and tools entitled *Accelerating Sustainable Development: Investing in Community-Led Strategies for Climate and Disaster Resilience* and case study summaries featuring the impact of our members' project impact were released and disseminated through ADB's website.² ADB also sponsored resilience practitioner panels at an ADB meeting involving Huairou Commission staff, community leaders, and Asian governmental representatives to upstream results and messages. By year end, the Huairou Commission's Executive Director accepted an invitation to ADB's 2018 Annual Meeting to join a distinguished panel to continue to press and build support for financing community-led risk reduction.

Relatedly, In April 2017, Josephine Castillo, the National Coordinator of DAMPA—the Philippine network of informal settlement federations —was invited to the World Bank GFDRR Knowledge Partnership Meeting in Zurich (co-sponsored by SDC) to contribute to innovative strategies for advancing urban risk reduction and resilience. Her presentation, "Accelerating Urban Resilience: Lessons for Incentivizing Partnerships Between Grassroots People's Organizations and Local Authorities to Reduce Risk and Vulnerabilities" complemented that of Mayor Tecson of Tanauan, Leyte, with whom DAMPA had partnered to rebuild housing and community centers, (and who has one of the strongest records for effective recovery and reconstruction in communities devastated by Haiyan). Members of the GFDRR Consultative Group (e.g. Mexico, India) commented that the level of organization, capacities and partnerships of urban poor groups like DAMPA and SDI (represented in Zurich by Joel Boelnick) illustrated the importance of formalizing the roles grassroots movements can play in reducing underlying risks.

The 18th Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty held on 21-24 March 2017 in Washington, DC. took on the theme "Responsible Land Governance: Towards an Evidence-Based Approach," Huairou Commission staff and delegates representing Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC), GROOTS Kenya, and Espaço Feminista, joined more than 1,200 participants from over 130

² *Accelerating Sustainable Development: Investing in Community-Led Strategies for Climate and Disaster Resilience* can be obtained at: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/47228/47228-001-dpta-en_4.pdf with case studies and related publications available at -001-dpta-en_2.pdf; en_1.pdf; and n_5.pdf as well as dpta-2

countries, to help move the global land agenda forward. Huairou Commission focused its engagement during the pre-conference events on strengthening a number of gender-responsive land tools. During the conference itself, the Huairou delegation championed a grassroots perspective on land rights at various events including as co-chair of “Marshalling grassroots support to strengthen local rights” where panelists examined cases studies including gender-sensitive implementation and monitoring of the African Union’s framework and guidelines for land policy. Members of the Huairou Commission met with important partners to discuss new and ongoing collaborations, including with the Malagasy Land Administration and Land Observatory, ActionAid, Oxfam, the World Bank, and others. We also paired up with Landesa, Oxfam and GROOTS Kenya, and UN-Habitat GLTN to host a daily women’s caucus on land where which focused on gender strategy for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda and their specific indicators or sections on land, as well as grassroots women’s movements like the Kilimanjaro Initiative to reclaim land rights.



ADB Delegation



HC Booth Panama Regional DRR Conference

4.2 Grassroots Women at the United Nations

The **2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**, the first since the adoption of Sendai Framework, was an opportunity to assess implementation and identify measures to accelerate action in reducing risk. Twenty-three representatives of grassroots organizations and networks from 11 countries joined the 7,000 registered participants: the first time that community actors held formal space as a constituency since being recognized as stakeholder group in the Sendai Framework. Huairou Commission served as focal point and coordinator of the constituency under the banner of the Community Practitioner Platform (CPP), a networking mechanism to enable grassroots community groups working to protect urban and rural poor settlements and reduce risk and vulnerability, to link and represent their own experiences and priorities directly and to dialogue with government officials.

Over the course of the 5-day policy meeting, delegates led and participated in private meetings with key officials, pre-conference preparatory events and side events on mainstreaming grassroots women’s groups in SDFRR and 2030 Agenda implementation. Leaders of Grassroots women were invited to co-chairing prominent Working Sessions on SDG coherence and incorporating Indigenous knowledge. Two leaders of grassroots women’s organizations (Jhocas Castillo, DAMPA network of Filipino informal settlement organizations and Prema Gopalan, Swayam Shikshan Prayog partnering with networks of drought impacted women farmers in Maharashtra) were invited to two closed Ministerial Roundtables: one on Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into Overall Economic Planning and the second on Incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction Considerations into Sectorial Planning. The urgency of decentralizing DRR leadership and formalizing roles for organized rural and urban community groups in local implementation to tap their contributions and potentials in accelerating resilient development were officially recorded.

The CPP held a Grassroots Academy and Caucus which attracting over 90 people over the two days. Participants represented the diversity of community organizations and experiences in the CPP. Here grassroots leaders engaged in dialogue with government officials responsible for disaster risk management in their countries and regions. Particularly powerful were testimonials by government officials – including Roy Barboza Sequeira, Executive Secretary of CEPREDENAC, the Central American regional network of disaster management authorities, and Leonel Galan, Director of Integral Management for DRR for CONRED, the Guatemalan agency for disaster risk management – who described how working with grassroots leaders over a period of 5-7 years has transformed their ability to understand and facilitate the formal participation of women and their community organizations in effective risk reduction.

Although hailing from diverse political contexts and facing a range of different disaster risks, grassroots women enumerated common challenges, such as poverty and livelihood insecurity, lack of secure land tenure, food insecurity, and the loss of clean water sources, that increase their vulnerability to disasters and impacts of climate change. These impacts in turn make it more difficult for grassroots women to carry out agricultural production, informal economic activities, and the responsibilities of everyday life.

Earlier in 2017, working under the priority theme “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work,” thousands of women’s activists gathered in New York for the sixty-first session of the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61)**. The Huairou Commission welcomed leaders of grassroots women and allies from twelve countries of Africa, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean who entered the forum with the clear picture that the economic autonomy of women is a prerequisite for them to realize equal political, social and economic rights.



Commission on the Status of Women workshop



Making a Case for Women’s Funding

Autonomy depends on the ability to generate income and control assets and resources; this means upgrading the informal economy activities where women dominate in urban areas, and publicly investing in rural and indigenous women as environmentally-responsible farmers producing affordable, nutritious food. These themes cut across each Huairou event including a half-day event on “Locally Elected Women: Making the SDGs Happen,” organized by the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and in an event organized by UN-Habitat, “Women’s Role in the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda: Harnessing and strengthening sustainable urbanization using participatory methodologies for women and youth empowerment” where governments and donors were urged to invest in such processes that demonstrate how grassroots-led gender transformation ‘fuels’ urban transformation and motivates cities to mainstream people-centered approaches.

In “How to Make Cities Work for Women’s Economic Empowerment,” Huairou and partners discussed synergies between grassroots and elected women, and joint opportunities for creating implementable gender-responsive policies in cities. The Huairou Commission brought the issue of land to CSW with the

event “Secure Land Rights for Women: Essential Building Block for Economic Empowerment,” in conjunction with Landesa, the International Land Coalition, Oxfam, Rights and Resources Initiative, and Habitat for Humanity’s Solid Ground Campaign. Underscoring that women in rural areas commonly lack rights to the land on which their livelihoods, shelter, and identity depend, the panel called for shifting policy and gender norms to recognize women as legally entitled to access and control over land and natural resources. Focusing specifically on rural women, who constitute at least 45% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries, the Huairou side event in partnership with IFAD took on the theme, “Empowering Rural Women to Develop Resilient, Sustainable Livelihoods and Communities” where rural women leaders called attention to their critical role in ensuring food security and reducing rural poverty.

Huairou delegation entered the twenty-sixth session of the **UN-Habitat Governing Council** (8-12 May 2017) in full force. Grassroots women leaders from across the region interfaced with diplomats and policymakers with a mission to ensure the urban agency retains and expands its focus on gender and women’s empowerment. The Governing Council was an important follow up to the Habitat III Conference, one of the most open and participatory United Nations fora, where grassroots constituencies hold formal roles. Building on a long tradition, the Huairou Commission hosted a daily women’s caucus where Grassroots and professional women, civil society partners, and representatives of Member States joined forces to discuss key topics, strategy, and language for points on gender and women in the Governing Council resolution (later approved in negotiations).

Prompted by the outcomes of the Habitat III Conference, UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed in April a High-Level Panel to assess and enhance the effectiveness of UN- Habitat. The Panel welcomed members of SDI and the Huairou Commission during their meetings at GC26. Participants affirmed the value of UN-Habitat as a partner, maintaining that the agency should receive high marks on its interactions with real people on real issues, all conducted under a spirit of inclusivity. The High-Level Panel will continue to meet and receive input. The Huairou Commission also highlighted grassroots women’s urban initiatives in the side event “Taking Action to Implement the NUA Through Urban Thinkers Campuses (hosted by Arcadis Shelter Program & World Urban Campaign) where it noted that 15 Huairou member groups were organizing Urban Thinker Campuses in Africa, Asia and Africa; several of them have already been lauded by their governments for their leadership in raising local awareness of the NUA. In a second side event “Putting Safety at the Core of Local Government Development Agenda” (hosted by the Government of South Africa), Huairou Commission introduced its long history of supporting organized grassroots women working on safety issues. Along with Huairou network member, Women in Cities International (WICI), the groups have advocated the safety audit as a tool to assess community safety; the safety audit is now recognized as an important element and process in many Safer Cities program activities, including those that are implemented and operational in South Africa.

As the year came to an end, Huairou Commission board member Maite Rodriguez attended **COP 23 - UN Climate Change Conference** in Bonn with financing from UN Women to present Fundacion Guatemala’s examples of fostering urban resilience, applying the network’s Community Resilience Fund and Practitioner Platform strategies in a session focused on urban resilience designed UN Habitat and UN Women. Joined by the Huairou Commission director, the two advocates concentrated on Bonn sessions focused on devolving climate financing (including those anchored by IIED, African member states and others) to update opportunities and ways forward for the network.

4.3 Increasing Influence Nationally

Activities undertaken nationally in 2017, including through the use of the Community Resilience Funds led to agreements with governmental entities and formal engagement of grassroots women in a range of government mechanisms both of which are key indicators in the Results Framework agreed between Huairou Commission and Sida. Huairou Commission Member groups also accelerated their engagement with national governmental authorities related to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In Kenya, for instance, Shibuye secured agreements with local representatives of Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture to allocate resources ensuring that government subsidized farm inputs reach grassroots women in poor households. In Honduras, following training of local government officials on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Sendai Framework and Voluntary guidelines on responsible governance of land, fishing, sustainable agriculture, community based eco-tourism, WAGUCHA made agreements with these authorities to collaborate monitoring implementation in global policy agreements. Similarly, in Uganda, meetings between the grassroots women and local government authorities led to two MOUs being signed between two grassroots women groups and their respective district local government detailing a joint work plan with shared roles and responsibilities. In Guatemala, FUNGUA agreed with CEPREDENAC the Centre for Coordination of the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America, to a second phase of certification in which 25 leaders of grassroots women will be certified by CEPREDENAC at regional level as Integrated Development Managers in Disaster Risk Reduction.

In 2017 to grassroots women also assumed recognized roles in government planning and coordination mechanisms. In Uganda eight grassroots women joined local councils where they worked to secure for more jobs for women to expand their livelihoods options, as a result, grassroots women are being paid to maintain the drainage channels. In Honduras, 15 women are now officially part of national risk management desks. In Zimbabwe, grassroots women have been invited to participate in monthly coordination meetings of the District Administrative Office focused on addressing drought where they advocated for capacity building support rather than food hand-outs. In Kenya, PolyCom reports how the sub-county administrator has established a committee to ensure that women's voices are heard in every public forum on budgeting and planning processes: women are now actively engaged in the County Integrated Development Plan.



5 Strengthening the organizational structures and operations to Reflect Mission & Context

In 2017, Huairou Commission's Board, membership of 130 in over 50 countries and Secretariat, demonstrated their commitment to consolidate a bottom-up global movement for gender just and equitable community development. Especially significant is how HC members and founding leaders designed and cooperatively worked through a number of steps to transfer the decision-making power of the global network from NGO allies and partners to leaders of local grassroots women's organizations. The process and strategies they co-created illustrates bottom-up participatory planning and decision-making and embeds tools and methods that members and elected grassroots leaders can use moving forward.

Equally important, were the practical and consistent steps taken to maintain a functioning Secretariat, orient and strengthen regional staff to insure the organization applied its diamond methodology, grew the community resilience and other programs, and supported ongoing and new forms of policy engagement, alliance and institutional partnership building (reported on in earlier sections).

In this section, we provide highlights of the strategic and practical activities undertaken in 2017 to:

- energize and consolidate a diverse social movement of grassroots women's organizations,
- build engagement and decision-making processes that could ground new governance structures and power relationships, and
- strengthen secretariat and regional staffing processes relevant to insuring the success of ongoing and new work streams

Grassroots women leaders of the Huairou Commission are taking the achievement of the Sustainable Development 2030 Framework, and developing their leadership as key implementors of it, as seriously as any set of actors on the global stage. There was no better evidence of this than the National Dialogue Platforms (NDPs) piloted by 27 groups in 17 countries in 2017.

African grassroots leaders proposed the NDP strategy as part of a vision that the HC organizational transition needed to promote the same standards of shifting decision-making power to grassroots women living and working in poor communities (as frontline agents for transformative development) in local, national and decision-making arenas as we set out to do within our own global network. From the outset the National Dialogue Platforms were designed as an engagement strategy, with common elements and objectives, to help grassroots women's groups champion SDG principles and targets in their home communities, countries and regions.

The 2017 NDPs served as vehicles for HC members to unify, learn from each other and fortify their ongoing efforts to tackle persistent and challenging development problems, including local disaster and climate resilience, strategies to secure land and housing tenure and advancing sustainable livelihoods for urban and rural poor women and advance inclusive decentralized governance and financing. Closest to home, the NDPs facilitated grassroots women public leadership in explaining 2030 policy frameworks to their communities and government--building relationships with decision-makers across sectors—and demonstrated their abilities to monitor the SDGs. Overtime, members are optimistic that NDPs, can become an ongoing part of HC members' work enabling grassroots women's groups to contribute their insights and recommendations on public policies, programs and development practice in policy fora (local-global).

17 Countries Organized National Dialogue Pilots	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA and CARIBBEAN
<p style="text-align: center;">ASIA</p> <p>Bangladesh: Participatory Development Action Program India: Swayam Shiksan Prayog, Best Practice Foundation Indonesia: Yakkum Nepal: Lumanti, Himawanti Philippines: DAMPA</p>	<p>Kenya: Shibuye Community Health Workers, Polycom Development, Mathare Legal and Human Rights Advocacy, Rural Women's Initiative Nigeria: International Women's Communication Center Uganda: Ecological Christian Organization, Slum Women's Initiative for Development Zimbabwe: Ntengwe, Survivors in Action, Seke, Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association</p>	<p>Costa Rica: Asociacion Alianza de Mujeres Costaricense Bolivia: Centro de Mujeres Avamaras Candelaria Brazil: Rede Pintadas Guatemala: Fundacion Guatemala Jamaica: GROOTS Jamaica Honduras: WAGUCHA--Plataforma Comunitaria Comite y Redes de Honduras Nicaragua: Las Brumas Peru: GROOTS Peru</p>

Involving over 1,500 participants, the NDPs increased the leadership skills of implementing groups by supporting them to: map and convene their communities and members/partners, and help them identify the SDGs most relevant to their work and train other grassroots women and local authorities to organize themselves to impact of the SDGs. The NDP process also provided an opportunity to confirm the SDGs that HC members were most committed to achieved, namely: 1) zero hunger; 3) good health and wellbeing; 5) gender equality; 6) clean water and sanitation; 10) reduced inequalities; 11) sustainable cities and communities; and 13) climate action.

NDPs contributed to the overall movement building agenda of HC's members through:

- Strengthening Grassroots Women's Organizing and Leadership:** To implement national dialogues, members and their partners committed to a range of capacity-building agendas in the areas of: oral and written communications, leadership development, policy and financing and government structures. Additionally, the NDP process pinpointed how and why global frameworks like the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) are empowering for grassroots women—specifically in regard to establishing an accountability framework and highlighting the importance and capacities of women organized in poor communities to provide essential information, skills and good practices key to implementation.
- Promoting Development through Awareness and Locally-Led Initiatives:** The work of HC members in communities around the world is purposefully holistic, covering a wide spectrum of priorities, campaigns and activities. And it is their local work that drives and informs their representation of grassroots women on global advocacy agendas. The process of organizing and convening the NDPs provided opportunities to both share their work and to step back and even more clearly define their priorities and fortify their practices. Groups documented and shared practices in organic farming, seed production and food processing. They also shared their work on producing safe and inclusive cities, mapping spots that are not safe for women and conducting social audits to identify services that must be guaranteed by local and national governments if conditions are to improve.
- Grassroots Women's Tools for Local-to-Global Empowerment:** Members used the occasion of the NDPs to take stock of all of the tools that they use, how effective they have been, how they might improve upon them and what new tools might be developed for the future. Huairou Commission board and members also used the occasion of the NDPs to form a "tools committee" that compiled *The Huairou Commission Grassroots Community Empowerment Toolkit*. The tools documented in the

Toolkit share three important criteria: each tool is women-centered and promotes long-term processes of empowerment; each tool has led to tangible results that can be sustained over time; and each tool has proven to be easily adaptable to local situations and solutions. These included tools such as Participatory Community Mapping, Guided Community Walks, Wealth and Wellbeing Rankings, Local-to-Local Dialogues, Peer Learning and the Social Tenure Domain Model among others.

- **Building Constituencies and Networks:** Each organization hosting an NDP pilot developed an inventory of their partners and the sectors that each represents and assessed the commitments they have made to further the work of grassroots women. Each organization also developed strategies for strengthening existing and developing new partnerships (government, private sector, university, NGOs, etc.) that will further their work.
- **Influencing and Changing Public Policy and Processes:** As with the other areas, the NDP pilots didn't only allow Huairou Commission members to reflect upon and document their successes in changing policies and processes, they also catalyzed such change. In Nicaragua, for instance, the NDP helped Huairou Commission member organization Las Brumas to reach an agreement with members of the government to include them as members of the national climate change board.

The overview below highlights additional issues and priority actions documented across countries and regions via the NDP pilot highlighting areas for further programmatic attention:



Regionally, in 2017 Huairou Commission focused its attention on organizing regional assemblies of members carried out in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean. These assemblies enabled leaders and representatives of grassroots women's organizations to collectively agree on directions for the Huairou Commission's transition to a movement that is governed by grassroots women. A key achievement of these regional assemblies was the formulation of regional strategies for advancing the common goals. The regional assemblies also produced valuable insights into the differing roles grassroots organizations as compared to the roles of NGO's – these insights have relevance for the global community of actors working with civil society to advance national and international commitments to building resilience.

Parallel to the movement building work, the Chair, members of the Executive Committee (Exec Com), volunteer organizational strengthening professionals, pro bono lawyers and the global organizer staffed a range of infrastructural processes critical to assessing and deciding upon structural changes that would reorient how the network functions and is governed. Among the work elements they anchored were: a

thorough review of the location, focus and development level of HC members; support to insure regional transition meetings were held in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean; sustained strategy and progress reviews by the Exec Com and Governing Council and the preparation of legal strategies for changing the governance structure of the organization (new by-laws, roles and functions, etc.). These tasks were performed simultaneous with leveraging funds for the 2018 Global Grassroots Women's Congress (over 150,000 USD in travel and lodging) and insuring the Secretariat was functioning well.

Simultaneously, the NY Secretariat successfully managed significant changes in its Senior Staff (reported to SIDA as they happened) only to emerge stronger in our program and policy work as well as in fundraising and strategic partnering. At the finance and administrative level, entry and senior level part time staff and consultants were hired to enhance bookkeeping and financial management. And policies and procedures were vetted thoroughly to identify deficits and gaps and corrective action recommended.