

**Huirou Commission:  
Building a Movement of Grassroots Women for Resilient Development  
Report of Achievements in 2018**

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2018 was a milestone year for the Huirou Commission. We:

- Demonstrated an organizational model of grassroots decision making at the global scale
- Demonstrated how access to flexible finance increases community resilience and women's leadership
- Built bridges between global policy and local action
- Strengthened coalitions and gained support for climate resilience and gender-just development

**Huirou Commission Governance Transition: Demonstrating an organizational model of grassroots decision making at the global scale**

Huirou Commission - as a coalition of grassroots women's groups and allied advocates, academics, and professionals - was born of a collective effort to secure public recognition for the leadership of organized groups of grassroots women in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development and to position local women-led organizations as driving forces in public agenda-setting and political accountability.

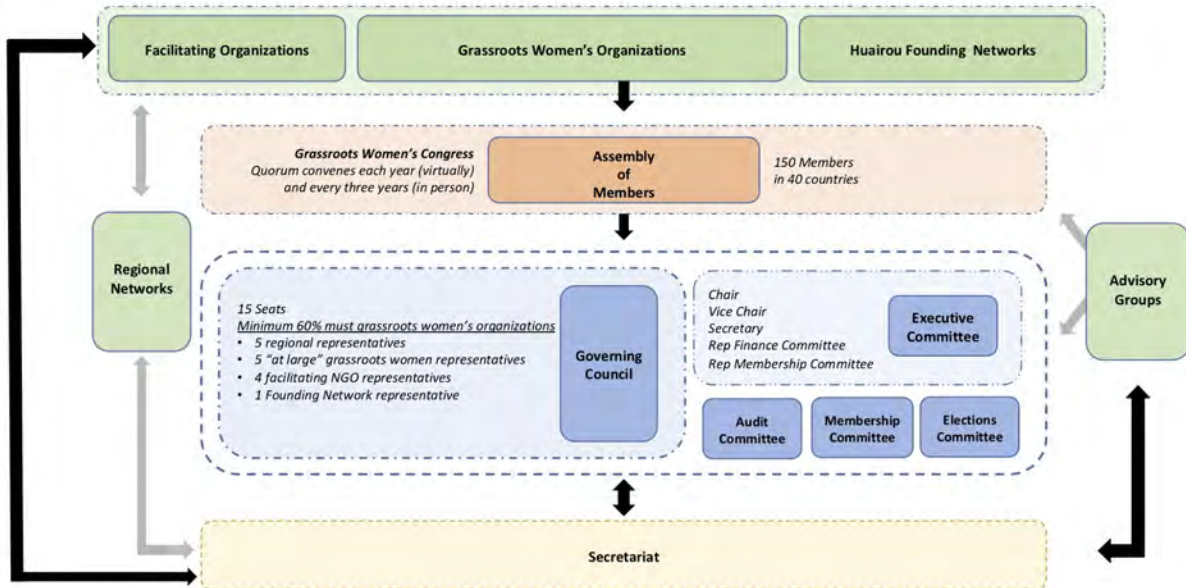
Putting this vision to practice, Huirou Commission resolved to advance our social movement building approach by establishing structures and processes wherein grassroots women leaders and groups were empowered to globally govern the organization. In February 2018, the Global Grassroots Women's Congress (GGWC) produced a milestone by transferring decision-making power from NGO allies and professional staff to leaders of grassroots women's organizations.

The GGWC was convened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> UN Habitat World Urban Forum. Mature member organizations from 28 countries met for two days of shared learning, debate, planning and decision making. Delegates of 56 member organizations voted on leadership, new rules of organizational governance (by-laws), strategic directions and a social compact affirming shared commitments to cooperation and collective action.

A Governing Council, comprised of 15 members (10 leaders of grassroots women's organizations, 4 NGO representatives and 1 founding network representative) was elected; and, its first order of business was to elect an Executive Committee to serve as caretakers between Annual Meetings of Members (GGWC) and to appoint Sandra Schilen as Executive Director.

The new operating structure is intended to foster bottom up decision-making processes that ensure Huirou Commission is accountable to and governed by its members (per the following diagram).

**Huairou Commission Governance Structure  
Adopted 2018 Global Grassroots Women's Congress**



The newly adopted membership policies and criteria consciously define and reinforce key values and expectations of members in their emphasis on: Constituency, Contributions, Commitment and Communications. In addition, members are distinguished by their levels of experience in order to encourage: association and peer learning among groups with similar capacities and mentorship processes whereby advanced groups coach less experienced ones.

The Congress also adopted a Social Compact to describe who we are as a global movement and our philosophy of positioning organized groups of grassroots women at the center of development, decision-making, and advocacy. It outlines: movement values, HC's model for movement building and also our approaches to membership, governance, resources, and partners.

Elements for the current and next HC Strategic Plan were affirmed through discussions among members and reviews of the outcomes of National Dialogues Platforms and Urban Thinkers Campuses. Similarly, leaders reinforced the 4-point Resilience and Movement-Building Diamond while emphasizing the strategic importance of advocacy and partnership building in relation to key Sustainable Development Goals. Climate change and disaster resilience, land tenure security and engendering local governance - in the context of center staging and empowering women as leaders and agents of social, economic and political change (local-global)-were given special emphasis.

Building on 2-years of prior collective planning, consultation and organizing (locally, nationally, and regionally), the 2018 Global Grassroots Women Congress demonstrates how listening to the views and experiences of 130+ network members (representing over 750,000 constituents in 50 countries) can be updated and expressed in a collective agenda for women's empowerment and gender-just socio-economic development. It is an important milestone in Huairou Commission's transition (and the global women's movement for gender just development).

Ongoing work will focus on enhancing the process of decentralization and the capacities of the governing bodies and strengthening regional processes, peer learning and mentoring among members.

We are proud and mindful that grassroots women’s groups and NGO partners effected a transition whereby:

- Governance shifted to a grassroots women-led majority;
- Program development and operations prioritize strategy-driven activities that foster grassroots’ collaboration and peer learning; and
- Organizational planning and procedures will increasingly be organized through collective action and collaboration of members/partners (with Secretariat and NGO partners support);

Similarly, we know that our ambitions for realizing this new governance and operational model will require us to focus and invest in these processes throughout our next five-year strategic plan.

### **Community Resilience Funds: Demonstrating how access to flexible finance increases community resilience and women’s leadership**

The Community Resilience Funds (CRF) serve as an innovative and flexible finance mechanism to channel resources directly to grassroots women’s groups living in risk prone poor communities. Initially piloted with grassroots women’s groups in India, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Peru in 2008; ten years later groups in 21 countries have collaborated to show how it is an important tool for reducing their vulnerability to climate and disaster threats.

The CRF is designed to support grassroots women’s groups to deliver effective pro-poor disaster risk reduction and resilience building practices and to collaborate with local and national governments to scale-up grassroots and women-led development initiatives.

Huairou Commission members are exposed to a wide range of natural hazards, as well as political instability, conflict and violence. Through mapping risks and collective planning, grassroots women’s groups are able to build community resilience with an understanding of how risk and vulnerability affect women.

In 2018 drought stood out as an overriding concern from the dry cordillera of Central America that connects Nicaragua to Honduras, to the Indian State of Maharashtra and Eastern Africa - all of which are also climate change hot spots. Many HC members suffer from flood as well – in 2018 alone floods in the Philippines, India’s Kerala, and Nicaragua reinforced the importance of risk mapping and building strong partnerships with government agencies.

In 2018, USD 390,935 of CRF funds were distributed to 14 Huairou Commission members across Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa, providing access to flexible finance to 488 grassroots groups working with over 33,000 women (See ANNEX: CRF Map and Table of Resilience Practices)

CRF uses vary across contexts and organizations. While all groups adhere to operational guidelines established in 2011, each organization tailors the process to the local context, including procedures to manage, distribute and monitor the funds to ensure transparency, efficiency and accountability.

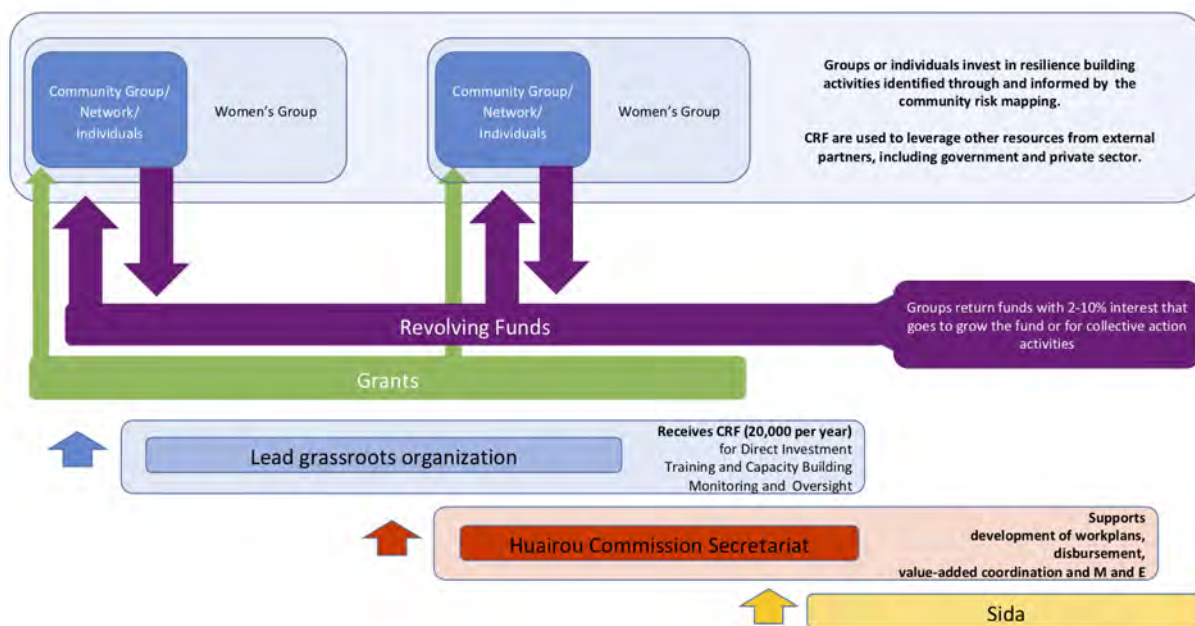
In general, Huairou Commission members distribute the CRF to members of existing self-help groups (farmer/producer cooperatives, savings and credit groups, caregiver groups and informal housing and settlement associations) who live in impoverished rural and urban communities exposed to climate and disaster risks).

CRF distribution commonly takes two form:

Grants: Funds to enable grassroots women leaders to: collectively make plans and initiate strategies and practices that reduce vulnerabilities arising from climate and disaster threats. For example: climate resistant cropping, adaptive forms of managing water and sanitation to increase supply/and reduce health problems, land and environmental conservation (forest, coastal and soil protection (per table examples). Here the CRFs are distributed in the form of cash or goods/supplies (such as agricultural inputs).

Revolving funds: Loans are provided to invest in productive activities that will generate an income that allow reinvesting back in the fund. These activities respond to existing risks and vulnerabilities. The loan period varies from 1 to 14 months and the groups reimburse the money typically with an interest rate between 2 and 10%. The interest paid is reinvested in the fund and/or used by the groups to fund other resilience building activities. The reinvestment of interest into the funds allows the funds to keep growing and ensures continuance of leadership and community resilience-building activities in the absence of external resources.

### Illustration of the Flow of Funds

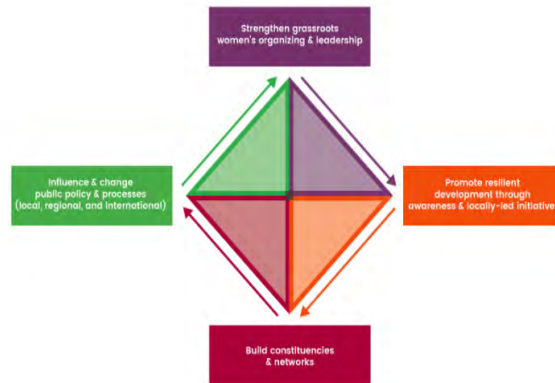


Groups are also using the funds to forge new collaborations and leverage additional resources from external partners to scale up or strengthen grassroots-led resilience practices. In 2018 the CRF attracted new investments from partners in the form of cash, in-kind support such as seeds and other agricultural inputs, seed capital for women’s entrepreneurship, investment in collective assets such as basic infrastructure and services, capacity building opportunities and technical support, thus expanding and sustaining resilience building efforts. Additionally, the Fund provides access to resources necessary for climate-proofing actions that protect natural resources, reverse environmental degradation, upgrade infrastructure, reduce pollution, ensure food security and enhance financial resilience.

During 2018 Huairou Commission members developed and implemented a range of resilience-building practices in preparedness and early warning, climate-smart agriculture, integrated natural resources management and economic advancement. These practices have been listed in detail in Table 1 As part of CRF’s theory of change, represented by the Community Resilience Diamond below, strengthening women’s leadership capacity is integral to building community resilience. Activities

developed emphasize action-based learning such as transfer of collective knowledge of risk, risk information tools, risk governance mechanisms, and capacity to negotiate with local authorities to advance community priorities, and focus on publicly positioning grassroots women as experts and leaders in the eyes of their own communities, government institutions, and other actors.

### Huairou Commission’s Movement-Building Resilience Diamond



In 2018, CRF supported:

**2675** Women leading action strategies and publicly advocating for resilience  
**294** Community-led risk maps and analyses of governance systems  
**58** Local-to-local dialogues convened with local authorities

In 2018, gains made by CRF groups extended beyond the reach of grassroots women’s movements to benefit the broader community through community-led risk mapping, power mapping, emergency preparedness, and climate change mitigation and adaptation practices. Mitigation and adaption practices are the entry points from which grassroots women transform their livelihoods, assets, and the environmental conditions of their homes and communities. This is the basis from which women also transform gender and power relationships at all levels. Through exercising collective power, grassroots women increase knowledge and confidence through peer learning, networking, and partnerships.

### What makes the CRF unique: Example of Shibuye Community Health Workers, Kenya

In rural Kenya, Shibuye Community Health Workers is supporting communities living on lands that have been decimated by mining, logging, and land grabbing. The land has lost agricultural productivity, damaged water catchment and increased exposure to risk of landslide. In 2016, Shibuye organized grassroots women in 5 communities to map risks and collectively plan and deliver resilience building actions. Additional communities were added in 2017 and 2018.

Shibuye’s grassroots groups have used CRF to improve soil pH, access clean water, and secure land rights, food and nutrition security and access to clean energy, and participate in forest management.

To access the funds, Shibuye members complete a form detailing their needs and how they plan to make use of the funds. An independent committee reviews all applications and decides which applications go forward and whether support will be in the form of cash, tools or other purchased inputs. The groups return the money with a 10% interest rate of which 5% goes back to the CRF and the other 5% is used by the group for collective action.

Shibuye has leveraged the CRF to attract investments by the government. With support from Agricultural Extension Officers, CRF reached 1,600 farmers in 7 months to enhance their climate-smart agricultural practices and natural resources management. Shibuye also offered grassroots women alternatives to microfinance institutions by helping groups set up their own savings and credit schemes. Looking ahead, Shibuye is planning to organize 500 grassroots women farmers and resilience practitioners into a cooperative in order to lend larger sums of money to members, expand markets for farm produce, and act as a bridge between grassroots women and other microfinance institutions.

### *Learning from our Resilience Practices*

In 2018, HC marked the midpoint of the current partnership agreement with Sida by reviewing progress in implementing the CRF and the HC overall strategic plan, reflecting on lessons learned and advancing strategies to enhance implementation. Following a series of surveys and stock taking exercises, Huairou Commission's Resilience Practitioners, the "Resilience Braintrust," convened in Maharashtra, India – home to some of the most matured groups of CRF implementers – for collective reflection on the important contributions made by grassroots women to expand the CRF and guarantee its sustainability.

Among the findings, the mid-term review showed how

- The number of women assuming public leadership roles in advancing resilient development is set to significantly exceed targets: Strong progress has been recorded by all groups supported through the Sida project and, in several countries, grassroots women's leadership and expertise were formally endorsed, certified or remunerated by government authorities.
- Community Resilience Funds (CRF) have been matched by new investments: Grassroots women's organizations have identified and invested in a broad range of resilience building measures, including innovative livelihoods strategies that empower grassroots women economically while protecting natural resources and ensuring food security. Many of these initiatives were able to mobilize additional financial and in-kind resources to fortify their activities and impact.
- Capacities to articulate and measure the reductions in risk vary across groups: The review determined that all grassroots groups implementing resilience activities could competently describe disaster and climate risk and vulnerabilities in their communities. However, capacities relating to pinpointing and explaining how group activities reduced people's vulnerability to disaster or climate risks varied significantly across these organizations.
- Huairou Commission members are making steady progress in building alliances and influencing government policies and programs. At global platforms, grassroots women's active participation established their status as key stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of global policy frameworks. Member-organizations leveraged these gains to hold dialogues and make collaborative agreements with national and sub-national authorities. These gains are partially reflected in the indicators.



These reflections suggest some lines of action that would enhance delivery and aggregate impact of agreed outcomes. More advanced capacity building activities for public advocacy would enhance grassroots women's ability to shape public policy and secure ongoing partnerships with national authorities. In order to attract global funding streams, Huairou Commission will focus on strengthening financial management systems and capacities and presenting the CRF as an effective financial mechanism to channel funds to grassroots organizations.

Ensuring a shared understanding across groups of what and how indicators are capturing change would enhance monitoring and evaluation tools and strengthen HC's internal learning and external advocacy. At the same time, standardizing elements of the community risk assessments and developing a common language to articulate risks and resilience would enable members to demonstrate the full scale and impact of grassroots-led risk reduction.

### **Global Policy: Grassroots women's organizations building bridges between global policy and local action**

In 2018, the maturity of our global grassroots social movement and the solid cooperation and technical support of our NGO partners/allies was abundantly evident in our policy advocacy work. With our sights fixed firmly on demonstrating the standing and competencies of organized groups of women working for better living conditions, earnings, and quality of life for their families and communities, Huairou Commission focused on:

- representing the 'bread and butter' grassroots women's agenda in the women and development movement (land and property rights, decent housing, basic services, and livelihoods; and public respect and recognition)
- illustrating that 'inclusion' requires dismantling elite and hierarchical cultures surrounding voice, representation, and authority
- shortlisting the cross-cutting issues in SDG implementation that can accelerate gains, and
- leading the call for devolving climate financing and innovative social protection mechanisms to reach and engage poor communities,

In a year when multi and bi-lateral development agencies invested more than a quarter of a million dollars on engaging our grassroots member leaders from across 35+ countries in an impressive range of expert policy and programming discussions, the network noted that two decades of organizing had produced an important milestone. At the same time, we noted the challenges of changes in the institutions closest to our core priorities (UN Habitat and UN ISDR) and the rise of anti-democratic, regressive national policies that require us to redouble our activism and connections. Highlights in this period included

The women that founded the Huairou Commission first came together in the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995 over their shared belief in the need to change public policy and an equally strong belief in their ability to do so. Through focusing on the International Agendas, broad global coalitions have formed to press for change and, over the years, Huairou Members have become increasingly adept at leveraging their unique position as a bridge between local and global actors.

At the 2018 Global Grassroots Women's Congress, members prioritized a collective advocacy agenda targeting Climate and Disaster Resilience, Land, Cities and SDG's – emphasizing women's leadership in each. As a result, Huairou Commission convened, co-convened or participated in 46 policy events -- including global and regional UN forums, consultative events and Expert Group Meetings. In 2018, external development policy agencies (UN, regional and global development banks, bi-lateral aid

agencies, etc.) extended travel scholarships to 75 HC members to tap their thematic and sectoral expertise as well as local, community views 2030 policy implementation issues. These scholarships, valued at more than \$245,000 USD, reflect the value attached to the expertise and views of Huairou Commission members by the international community and also represent a significant, 20% value addition match to our 2018 SIDA grant.

Through these engagements we have helped to influence policy makers and draw their attention to the breadth and impact of grassroots women's constituencies, good practices and strategic contributions to advancing inclusive, gender responsive sustainable development. As important as our efforts to influence the official outcomes and strategies of policy accords and institutions, Huairou has been leading evidence-based advocacy that demonstrates the practical and strategic development results of women-led grassroots action while calling for the urgency of development institutions shifting how they plan and implement their investments to include rural and urban poor community based women's groups

### *Advancing Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risk*

In 2018, Huairou Commission's Resilience campaign focused on high-level advocacy targeting the national and international organizations mandated to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Anchoring an advocacy coalition pressing for devolved climate finance, HC working in collaboration with Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in 2018 to consolidate common messages and jointly approach people of influence. Building on a series of policy dialogues organized under the title "Who is Aiding Whom?", HC increasingly focused on pressing to update the architecture of climate finance systems—including bilateral and multilateral funding windows such as the Green Climate Fund—to recognize and enable grassroots groups to qualify for resources.

HC joined SDI and IIED in strategic dialogues in Stockholm and produced briefings for use by Ambassador Lennart Båge of Sweden, who served as chair of the Green Climate Fund at the time. While complications internal to the Board of the Green Climate Funds stalled our immediate plans, HC continued to mature a campaign on Climate Finance with SDI and IIED. The Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco provided a venue for HC to champion, with its allies, a grassroots women-led agenda in formal and informal sessions. Taking the opportunity to raise awareness among senior leaders, HC Chair Violet Shivutse and Executive Director Sandy Schilen shared views and strategies informally with former United States Vice President Al Gore; and together with our coalition partners we learned of and charted a roadmap to leverage Sheela Patel's appointment as a Commissioner on the Global Climate Adaptation Commission co-chaired by Ban Ki Moon, Bill Gates and Interim World Bank President Krystalina Georgieva for the next 18 months.

Further advocacy in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience focused on the Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction organized by the UNISDR, regional and global development banks and regional associations of ministers. Focusing on devolved finance and inclusive programming and policy platforms, priorities included use of grassroots women-led risk and vulnerability information and greater attention to integrated approaches that recognize the links between disaster risk, climate change and inequalities in socio-economic development. Venues where grassroots women and professional leaders took prominent roles as invited expert practitioners included:



The Asian Development Bank's Annual Meeting of Ministers in Manila where Sandy Schilen joined a National Disaster Management Authority of India appointee, Philippines counterpart and IIED rep for a 90 minute session on Strengthening Climate and Disaster Resilience: Investing in Community level Solution attracting more than 250 participants in an interactive dialogue.

The World Bank's May Understanding Risk Conference, Mexico City, where Magdalena Garcia represented the recent experience of grassroots women's groups leading recovery efforts in the earthquake struck neighborhoods of the D.F.

The **Asian Ministerial Conference for DRR** held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (July 3-6, 2018) where Jhocas Castillo from DAMPA, Philippines moderated the multi-stakeholder panel on DRR governance chaired by the State Minister of the Cabinet Office in Japan.

Participation in UNISDR's **Sixth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas** held in Cartagena, Colombia (June 20-22, 2018) where Garifuna leader Analucy Bengochea from WAGUCHA in Honduras presented the Cantarranas Methodology, which was developed by grassroots women to establish cooperative bonds between municipalities and local community groups under the framework of UNISDR's Resilient Cities Campaign's 10-points checklist. HC Executive Director Sandy Schilen participated in the parallel session on the theme of gender, women's empowerment and resilience and formally called for the need to recognize women's contributions and leadership in risk reduction and build partnerships that recognize their leadership capacities. Equally important, the venue enabled 5 HC leaders to meet and spend quality time with the newly appointed DSG of UNISDR.

In 2018, UNISDR committed to strengthening its mechanism for stakeholder engagement. HC pressed for and sustained formal recognition of the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience (CPPR) as constituency that enables organized groups of grassroots women to represent their expertise and views in their own voice. Through HC advocacy, grassroots women's perspectives shaped the agenda of the first Stakeholder Forum to be held at the Global Platform and through participation in organizing committees, contributed to the design of formal sessions of the Global Platform.

### *Expanding our influence in Cities and Local Governance*

Since its early days as an advisory body to Habitat II, Huairou Commission's strategy has been grounded in women's vital role in the improvement of human settlements. The **World Urban Forum 9** was a landmark policy event in 2018 as grassroots women claimed noticeable space and took the movement to another level.

Fifty grassroots women and 24 technical allies from Huairou Commission membership participated in WUF9. Leaders of grassroots women's organizations were in 40 speaking engagements, discussed participation opportunities and feedback during daily morning caucuses, and approached government representatives for bilateral meetings. Presence at diverse policy and partnership dialogues brought grassroots women's perspective to all aspects in the Forum. The solidarity and collective participation of grassroots women was made even more visible because they wore similar colored T-shirts, identifying them as leaders of grassroots women's groups.

WUF9 was the first one to officially host a Grassroots Assembly, which Huairou Commission co-organized with SDI and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), enabling leaders of grassroots

women's groups to contribute to the WUF9 Declaration. The Assembly was a seminal event in our partnership with UN Habitat, as it further advanced institutionalization of grassroots women actors at the agency. The new UN Habitat Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, delivered a welcoming note and emphasized in her remarks the essential role communities play in building resilient urban future.

It was during the UN-Habitat Governing Council in May 2017 that Huairou Commission called attention to grassroots women's work in the side event "Taking Action to Implement the New Urban Agenda through Urban Thinkers Campuses" (hosted by Arcadis Shelter Program & World Urban Campaign). During 2018, five **Urban Thinkers Campuses** (UTC) were held by Huairou Commission's grassroots women groups in: Harare, Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Parents of the Handicapped Children Association - ZPHCA), Kibera, Kenya (Polycom Development), Abuja, Nigeria (IWCC), Dhaka, Bangladesh (Participatory Development Action program - PDAP), and Guatemala City (Fundación Guatemala). UTCs led by our member groups focus on participatory and people centered urban development. This brings the total of Urban Thinker Campuses organized by HC members to date to 20 - several have already been lauded by their governments for their leadership in raising local awareness of the New Urban Agenda.

To reinforce the importance of steering the investments of UN organizations towards the priorities of women living in poor urban and informal settlements, Huairou Commission has focused its advocacy in 2018 on engagement with UN Habitat at this critical juncture of their history. HC, having partnered with UN Habitat and its governing bodies for over two decades, was well placed to contribute mature views on UN Habitat's newly proposed governance structures and strategic plan. HC members play a leading role in the AGGI, the Advisory Group on Gender, and lead or co-leads several constituency groups established through the World Urban Campaign. Our members have met formally and informally with the UN Habitat Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif and her senior staff, offering support and guidance on strategies to ensure that women's leadership and grassroots organizations are integrated within UN Habitat's plans and programs.

### *Sustainable Development Goals*

In 2017, HC convened National Dialogues on localization of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2018 Huairou members sustained that effort with a focus on contributing to Voluntary National Reviews in countries scheduled to report, including Jamaica and Mexico. At the outset of HLPF 2018, Huairou members participated in the Expert Group Meeting "Building sustainable and resilient societies through the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," co-organized by UN Women, UN Habitat and UNEP, where they introduced grassroots women's perspectives in monitoring of SDGs, with particularly focus on how community data collection tools practiced by grassroots women can enhance understanding of gendered development realities on the ground.

In July, HC members made their debut at the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York, the United Nation's central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Huairou Commission members were selected through competitive processes to make statements and speak in formal sessions.

Haydee Rodriguez of Las Brumas Coopertive in Nicaragua was invited to speak in the official session on multi-stakeholder collaboration where she introduced grassroots-led innovations in delivering the SDG's and illustrated how community driven actions support integrated approaches that empower women politically and economically.

The theme of HLPF 2018's theme was "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies," providing an opportunity for HC members to showcase their expertise and achievements through the Community Resilience Funds. HC co-organized an event at UN Headquarters, chaired by UNISDR, that focused on the role of disaster risk reduction and climate resilience in sustainable development. Violet Shivutse, founder of Shibuye Community Health Workers, introduced the Community Resilience Funds and the contributions being made by the HC members to implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This year, the Major Groups and Other stakeholders (MGOS), the official stakeholder engagement mechanism of the UN system, welcomed a new constituency, The Sendai Stakeholders, co-chaired by the Huairou Commission. This new group was formed to advance an integrated, all of society approach to resilience across the SDGs. HC was also part of the MGOS Steering Committee tasked with coordinating key aspects of stakeholder engagement in the High Level Political Forum, thus providing HC members with a new opportunity to contribute to the overall positioning of stakeholders in UN processes, including engagement with the ongoing process of UN reform.

HC also contributed to the Voluntary National Review Labs and took the opportunity to organize bilateral meetings with senior officials, including the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Executive Director of UN Habitat.

### *Campaign for Land Tenure Security*

Despite the importance of land as an asset for livelihoods and social recognition, women represent less than 20% of the landholders globally. Women continue to be denied equal rights to access, use, inherit, control, and own land even though global instruments and commitments were designed to protect their rights. Huairou Commission's (HC) work in the last two decades demonstrates the central aspect of land rights in empowering grassroots women and building a partnership strategy at the global and regional level to ensure grassroots women's needs and expectations are considered and addressed.

In 2018, HC land work promoted equitable and gender responsive land governance that enables grassroots women's groups to secure tenure of land and housing (and buffer the impacts of climate change and the competition for natural resources). Because land can be a source of capital, serve as a social safety net and consolidate wealth within the family and community and transfer wealth across generations, HC focused its efforts on achieving the following objectives:

To promote grassroots women representation within the land governance structure

To ensure grassroots women's access to and control over land in order to enhance their resilience to climate change through the improvement of their livelihoods

To support grassroots women's groups in improving family nutrition

Policy venues in which we were active, included:

- Co- designing the 2019-2023 Global Land Tool Network gender strategy to build on tools such as the Gender Evaluation Criteria and matrix (measuring different dimensions of gender inequality in relation to land).
- Sustaining our engagement in the International Land Coalition and its governing council and working groups to ensure that women's land rights and the ILC gender action plan are implemented and the women's land rights working group grows and enhances its impact.

- At regional and global level, HC's land work in 2018 focused on advocacy and networking for grassroots women's voices to be heard in platforms of dialogue such as the SDGs, the Africa Framework and guidelines on land policy. HC involvement in international events was strongly felt for 2018, including participation in events at World Urban Forum, CSW 62, the annual World Bank Land and Poverty Conference, GLTN partners' meeting, the Global Landscape Forum, and the International Land Coalition's Global Land Forum.

Crosscutting actions such as partnership building, advocacy and communication, and resource mobilization are done to ensure that grassroots women's needs and expectations are considered at global, regional and national level discussions and decision-making processes.

### **Partnerships:** Building coalitions and gaining support for climate resilience and gender-just development

As a network of grassroots women's organizations and their allies from professional academic and development institutions, the Huairou Commission has embraced a movement-building approach to nurturing coalitions of partners that support collective action towards common goals. Partnership takes many forms: some are loose alliances that come together around a specific campaign or advocacy opportunity, while others are more enduring bilateral partnerships between an individual grassroots women's organization and a government institution, or between Huairou Commission and other international organizations.

2018 saw Huairou Commission continuing to strengthen its partnership with UN at the global level, particularly UN Habitat and the UNISDR. The key elements of these partnerships have been described in the context of our policy engagements and our leading role in nurturing coalitions through various multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms associated with each, such as the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience, which is active globally as an officially recognized constituency in the UNISDR. The Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience (CPPR) is a sustained multi-stakeholder platform that seeks to drive demand for community-led resilience building and evolves in different ways in different country contexts.

Central America has one of the most visible regional CPPRs. The platform includes grassroots women's groups from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and CEPREDENAC (Coordination Center for the Prevention of Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic). Regular CPPR meetings and special gatherings help renew and consolidate partnerships. For example, 16 CRF groups participated in the fourth "Festival of Seeds" (December 2018) held at CODISRA (Presidential Commission against Discrimination and Racism) in Guatemala, including representatives from various national ministry's gender units, CEPREDENAC, and the governments of Honduras and El Salvador.

In 2018, we also strengthened our partnership with international development banks, particularly the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in promote efforts to integrate tools such as social protection and community driven dev into recognizing and financing grassroots groups and networks to formally contribute to disaster and climate risk reduction, for instance, through helping ADB design its new flagship Community Based Resilience Initiative.

While a detailed analysis of all the partnership arrangements initiated and sustained by HC members is not yet available, the following section describes some of the partnerships that were nurtured by HC members implementing Community Resilience Funds in 2018.

### *Raising awareness to attract new allies*

One of the ways that grassroots women groups build new alliances is by showcasing resilience practices to government officials and other stakeholders to raise awareness of grassroots women's innovations and set the stage for future partnerships.

In Honduras, **WAGUCHA** further developed the regional resilience training center in Trujillo, adding an internship program for young people, children, and women. WAGUCHA also presented a project portfolio on behalf of all the municipalities of MAMUGAH (Garifuna Municipalities Association of Honduras) to future donors in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and Costa Rica.

**LIFE Centre** in Vietnam identified 31 grassroots women leaders to join the Women's Resilience Network. In a presentation to 45 representatives of local, district and provincial government (People's Committee), unions, and national government departments, the 31 women were recognized as experts and public advocates for women-led resilience response. The women also documented 9 sustainable livelihood practices, which are uploaded to YouTube in order to be shared with peers and other stakeholders.

In Kenya's **Ntengwe for Community Development**, significant public recognition came when 28 traditional leaders and 12 government representatives committed to partner with 16 grassroots women leaders to map and assess their districts' disaster risks and identify areas to strengthen resilience. The women further advocated with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to develop a gender strategy and action plan using gender-sensitive indicators, as well as criteria for networks and coalition building. Grassroots women leaders in Hwange district now form the core of a bottom-up, multi-level system of support through village- and ward-level clusters and district-level federation to collectively build resilience.

**Zimbabwe Parents of the Handicapped Children Association** has joined awareness campaigns for disaster risk reduction and climate change hosted by Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Women Affairs; Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate Change; and Environmental Management Agency. The campaigns resulted in reaching thousands of women and communities on prevention, preparedness, management, recovery, and reconstruction. New community trainers were identified, and grassroots women obtained improved access to water for gardening, fishery, and food processing. Joint awareness campaigns were also held with 6 municipal and local authorities. Affiliation with Zimbabwe Farmers Union now enables grassroots women to have timely access to information and expanded markets.

### *Building links with grassroots groups and stakeholders to amplify advocacy*

Establishing partnerships with peer groups and civil society actors has been one of grassroots women's core strategies to amplify their voice and advocate for community-led resilience.

**Luna Creciente** in Ecuador participated in debates, lobbying, and actions with the National Platform for Women's Rights and the Coalition of Women of Ecuador. They also participated in the World Encounter of the International Coalition of the Earth. The activities expanded advocacy spaces for women from popular sectors in Latin America. Luna Creciente successfully obtained an agreement with the City of Cayambe on a road map to prioritize grassroots women's proposals.

**Ntengwe for Community Development** extended its SDG localization network with Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association by showcasing their experiences in climate change adaptation, organic farming and operations of the CRF. In addition, Ntengwe shared its entire climate change adaptation and mitigation practice and tools by compiling and submitting a coherence case study to the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction. Subsequently, Ntengwe joined the network to maximize grassroots women's voice and impact at the global level.

#### *Advancing partnerships to access programs and resources*

Strategic partnerships with government units and other institutions are strengthening grassroots women's resilience practices through resources and trainings that did not previously reach women in marginalized communities.

**DAMPA** in the Philippines built institutional relationships with Climate Change Commission and National Economic and Development Authority so that grassroots women could access programs with Local Government Units and other networks. Grassroots women received training in urban gardening and accessed livelihood programs from the Department of Agriculture. They also received animals and other goods for CRF projects from the Philippines Carabao Commission and the Department of Labor and Employment.

After risk mapping 7 communities, grassroots women from **PDAP** in Bangladesh developed action plans that address livelihoods, drainage, and waste managements in informal settlements. They also reached out to other donors to secure water and sanitation, as well as an access road. As a result, Habitat for Humanity provided a water tank and toilets in Beguntila and Duaripara slums, while World Vision provided slab for road repairing in Bhola slum.

In Kenya, **Polycom Development Project** pursued partnerships with government ministries and other national level entities at events such as SDG Forum Kenya, where 10 partnerships were established including with National Early Warning and Early Response in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination to advance SDG 5. From the National Gender Affirmative Action Fund, the women obtained education bursary for their children and some groups received business loans.

In Uganda, **SWID's** relationship with land offices in Uganda facilitated the processing of land titles for grassroots women, and its partnership with Jinja Municipality resulted in funds going to unlock drainage channels in Walukuba community. This has resulted in reduced flooding, improved sanitation, and awarding of a stipend to the grassroots women who unblocked the drainage channels. With the local government of Budondo and Butagaya, grassroots women engaged in dialogue with government representatives so that access roads were opened and piped water extended.

During 2018, **Uganda Community-based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC)** signed 10 MoUs with local government units and district associations, as well as CSOs at local and national levels. The local district government in Bugiri linked women to suppliers, farmer associations, cooperatives, and markets. Agricultural and environmental officials also provided training in finance and production. Operational Wealth Creation, a government program, provided women with seeds and fruit tree seedlings and the women obtained priority placement for national agricultural input distribution.

#### *Claiming political space with public entities*



Leadership in community organizations and holding public office are key indicators that grassroots women are transforming the power dynamics that had previously put them in marginalized positions.

In 2018, twelve grassroots women from **DAMPA** became political leaders – they are holding administrative positions in local government units (barangay and municipal levels). Grassroots women leaders have been publicly acknowledged as contributors of policy changes.

Grassroots women from **Polycom Development** found that several local committees have less than nationally required one-third representation of women. After grassroots women’s advocacy, 2 of these committees have included women. Through the Stakeholders Assembly of the Subcounty Agricultural Office, the women established a Working Committee where grassroots women from 5 political wards are now represented. In Homabay County, 4 grassroots women have been nominated by the Assistant County Commission to join disaster management committees.

At **Shibuye Community Health Workers**, also in Kenya, 21 grassroots women are strategically sitting on various county level boards and committees. There are 5 new partnerships formed with county government, 46 grassroots women are now members of sub-counties’ committees for agriculture, forest, poverty eradication, and gender.

In Zimbabwe, 12 grassroots women from **ZPHCA** have now taken up community and local authority leadership positions while 60 peer educators are now being recognized as agents of change at the community level. These peer educators have taken various community advisory roles, thus advising the traditional and local leadership on DRR, climate change adaptation, gender, land and women’s water rights, amongst others.

In Uganda, 9 of **SWID**’s grassroots women from 3 different villages have been elected to the local council, one of whom became the chairperson. SWID developed manuals on leadership and distributed copies to grassroots women’s groups aiming to strengthen women’s participation in decision-making bodies. It also worked with a radio station to broadcast and educate listeners about women’s participation and leadership.

In Nicaragua, eight grassroots women from **Las Brumas** have been promoted to public offices. In three municipalities, women became a municipal delegate, a vice mayor, and proprietary councilors. With this achievement at the municipal governments, grassroots women are influencing municipal budgets.

**WAGUCHA** in Honduras reported that 6 grassroots women have gained new leadership positions. They hold positions as municipal councilor in Jutiapa, leading the state project “Vida Mejor,” secretary of the municipal emergency committee, participating at the national risk management office, Colon Women’s Network at MAMUGAH, and heading a municipal risk management board at Santa Fe municipality.

## ANNEX: COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUNDS IN 2018

| <b>Resilience Practices Supported in 2018</b>  |
|--|
| <p><b>Climate-Smart Agriculture</b></p> <p>Huairou groups are transforming their agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate. Through a combination of traditional and innovative practices, groups are adapting and building resilience to climate change while increasing their agricultural productivity and incomes.</p> <p>Responding to more frequent droughts, erratic rainfall and the anticipated pressures on water resources, groups have started selecting seeds that help to ensure crop resistance to harsh weather conditions and crop pests. These adaptation strategies are being complemented by techniques such as early and dry planting.</p> <p>Indigenous knowledge is playing a key role in crop diversification, leading to a reduced risk of crop failure due to increase of rainfall variability or pests, while at the same time promoting better nutrition. Groups are also decreasing vulnerability through intercropping, a technique in which crops that benefit from each other are planted together thus helping combat pests and diseases, improving soil structure, increasing yields, and providing a number of ecological benefits.</p> <p>The introduction of organic farming practices is supporting groups to conserve soil, increase carbon sequestration, reduce pollution, reduce costs by replacing high-price chemical inputs with locally available materials, favor integration of traditional agricultural practices, and give farmers access to new market opportunities products can be sold for higher value.</p> <p>In urban contexts, groups are promoting the establishment of home and community gardens to foster urban resilience. Some innovative practices led by the groups to maximize space for gardening while preventing the impact of floods in urban settings include sack and table gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crop selection, ex. growing drought resistant crops (Ntengwe, UCOBAC)</li> <li>• Crop diversification (WAGUCHA)</li> <li>• Intercropping</li> <li>• Seed improvement (SWID)</li> <li>• Planting techniques, ex. early planting or dry planting (Ntengwe)</li> <li>• Organic farming (Ntengwe, ZPHCA, Fungua)</li> <li>• Ecological based pest control, ex. push-pull technique (SHIBUYE)</li> <li>• Composting (Life Center, DAMPA)</li> <li>• Urban gardening (DAMPA), ecological gardens (Luna Crescente), vegetable gardens (ZPHCA)</li> <li>• Kitchen gardens (UCOBAC)</li> <li>• Sack gardening (SHIBUYE)</li> <li>• Table gardens (Fungua)</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Integrated Natural Resources Management</b></p> <p>Besides ensuring the resilience of their livelihood strategies, groups aim to restore or maintain the productive and regenerative capacity of their natural resource base through practices that protect water-recharging zones, prevent erosion, facilitate the absorption of water in soil, retain humidity and increase biodiversity, thus increasing resilience to shocks and climate change.</p> <p>Some of these practices are ecosystem based: cost-effective nature-based solutions that recognize ecosystems' capacity to act as natural buffers. These solutions include practices on integrated water resource management (e.g. irrigation), disaster risk reduction (e.g. soil management and reforestation), and adaptation (e.g. afforestation with native species).</p> <p>Soil restoration, through practices like soil cover, and reforestation are enhancing agriculture and pastoral livelihoods and increasing resilience to drought and flooding. The trees planted also serve as carbon stocks, mitigating climate change, and as a source of income and nutrition to households.</p>   |

Guatemalan groups are recovering and improving the creole seeds, guarded by the Mayan community for generations, in an effort to decrease vulnerability to climate change through traditional production practices. Seed improvement contributes to the restoration of ecosystems and to preserve the biological and cultural diversity.

Climate variability and water shortage is also being combated in both rural and urban contexts through practices such as rainwater harvesting, dam construction, improved reservoir capacity, and wastewater reuse, decreasing women's workload as the main water fetchers. Drainage and waste management practices in urban settings are contributing to reduced pollution and the risk of flood and disease outbreak.

Groups are also leading the implementation of energy saving methods, such as construction of fuel-efficient stoves and production of biogas. These practices decrease community vulnerability to land degradation and deforestation while reducing the emission of gases into the atmosphere, enhancing women's health and decreasing their workload

- Restoration of degraded land (SHIBUYE)
- Sustainable land use and soil protection (SHIBUYE, UCOBAC)
- Afforestation (Ntengwe)
- Reforestation (POLYCOM, SWID, ZPHCA, UCOBAC)
- Plant nurseries (Fungua, SHIBUYE)
- Creole seeds' recovery (Fungua)
- Water management (SHIBUYE, ZPHCA)
- Construction of fuel-efficient stoves (Ntengwe, SWID, UCOBAC)
- Making biogas from animal manure (Life Center)
- Solid waste management and recycling (POLYCOM, Life Center, DAMPA, Ntengwe)

#### **Resilient Livelihoods & Economic Advancement**

An integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change includes women's economic empowerment and resilient livelihoods. Since poverty is one of the main drivers of vulnerability to hazards, grassroots women's organizations' adaptive measures include modalities that facilitate access to assets, enabling households to build resilience.

Increasing impacts of weather-related disasters boost poverty and undermining community resilience. Climate change poses a threat to the economic resilience of grassroots women, many of whom depend heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods. Furthermore, climate stress for water and forest resources often forces women to travel long distances to fetch water or wood, limiting prospects for engaging in high-return ventures.

Groups have responded in particular to agriculture sensitiveness to climate variability and water stress by investing in non-farming initiatives (e.g. community-based tourism), making the best of climate changing conditions to create new economic opportunities (e.g. aquaculture practices in areas with prolonged floods).

Women's economic empowerment increases women's access to and ownership of assets, provides strategies to adapt to and absorb shocks, and enables women to access government safety net programs. Women gain power and agency and become better financial managers, thinking longer-term and making more strategic financial choices.

In this context, women are positioned to proactively promote climate-resilient livelihoods strategies in combination with income diversification. The creation of savings and credits groups has provided women with the financial services necessary to access productive assets and inputs that add value to the products they produce, develop new products and services, or expand and improve their position in the value chain.

- Water hyacinth pickles and shrimp raising (Life Center)
- Water hyacinth-made handicraft (Life Center)
- Eel raising with worm compost (Life Center)
- Frog raising model (Life Center)

- Fishing (Ntengwe, ZPHCA)
- Carabao milking (DAMPA)
- Organic chicken farming (Ntengwe)
- Goat keeping (ZPHCA)
- Tea made from sour soup leaves (Life Center)
- Vegetables and fruits drying (Ntengwe)
- Community based tourism (Ntengwe)
- Savings and credits groups (DAMPA, Ntengwe, PDAP, ZPHCA)

#### **Disaster Prevention and Preparedness**

Members have continued to apply effective prevention, preparedness and early warning tools and practices to build up communities' resilience to disasters.

Risk mapping continues to be the central tool that informs resilience-building strategies and actions. Through the analysis of existing risks, vulnerabilities and resources at the community level, risk mapping raises awareness, informs decision-making and engages community members in a structured learning, documenting and analysis process. Armed with conclusions based on research, mapping empowers grassroots women as knowledge creators and leaders and serves to determine use of the CRF.

Women are engaged at all levels of disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, including early warning systems, education, communication and information. Based on the risk mapping outcomes, groups implement awareness-raising campaigns and mobilization activities on the existing risks and vulnerabilities in the communities. These lead to the elaboration of contingency plans that enhance community preparedness and response capacities. At the same time, groups advocate for policy changes to address the underlying causes of vulnerability, thereby contributing to disaster prevention and mitigation.

Local-to-Local Dialogues are an organizing and partnership-building tool that facilitate local authorities' engagement with grassroots women, support women to influence public decisions and place grassroots women's priorities and practices on local government agendas. These dialogues support efforts to strengthen the collaboration between women's organizations and local governments on integration of gender equality and women's empowerment across all phases of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation plans.

Other practices include:

Grassroots groups support to local governments by providing capacity building on relevant topics, enabling them to offer better support to communities and increase government responsiveness to climate change.



**Grassroots Women Groups** Using  
Community Resilience Fund in **2018**

 **Participating Groups**

 **Participating Women**