



The Impact of a Global Grassroots Women's Movement: The 4th World Women's Conference in Huairou, China, until Today

Huairou Commission
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Introduction

The Huairou Commission: Women Homes and Community is a women-led social movement of grassroots groups from poor urban, rural, and indigenous communities who collectively work together to improve living conditions and status. The Huairou Commission's mission is *to work towards a world transformed with balanced power relations and sustainable, resilient communities where grassroots women leaders with their groups and communities are at the center of decision-making, where people lead lives free from poverty, inequality, violence, insecurity, and all forms of injustice.*

During 2020, the Huairou Commission celebrated the 25th anniversary and used this landmark to reflect on its history, explore contributions of grassroots women to community development, and evaluate the impact of their work to empower women and strengthen capacities for local development. With this Beijing 25th Anniversary Reflection Series, Huairou Commission members determined future strategies to continue to advance the agenda of grassroots women around the world.

In 1995, 30,000 women from around the world attended the civil society meeting of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing, China. Poor urban and rural women's groups were severely under-resourced. GROOTS International and the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, however, obtained funding from UNIFEM and relentlessly negotiated to establish a Grassroots Tent at the NGO site of FWCW in Huairou near Beijing. For the first time, grassroots women had their own space at a UN Conference. Impressed by the energy and organizing of grassroots women and their partners in the Grassroots Tent, Wally N'Dow, then Executive Director of the UN Habitat, "commissioned" fifty women leaders to monitor Habitat II to be held the next year and named the group the Huairou Commission. This unprecedented act gave an organized group of grassroots women a central role in the human settlements arena. They capitalized on this opportunity to demonstrate the political power of locally connected grassroots women's groups coming together as a peer learning community.

Now, the Huairou Commission is organizing in 42 countries with 101 member groups including grassroots organizations led by grassroots women; facilitating NGOs that work in partnership with grassroots women; networks of grassroots women's organizations; and the founding Huairou Commission networks. Secretariat of the organization is in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, with leadership through a global Governing Council.

The Huairou Commission hosted a series of two-hour reflective conversations on seven themes critical to the organization. The Beijing +25 Anniversary Committee provided ongoing leadership for the process, meeting weekly for several hours to plan progress, strategy, and logistics. Session facilitators also met separately to arrange details. The seven topics chosen as the basis of discussion emerged with a zoom-based launch of the process involving 70 Huairou Commission member groups. Members of the wider network then participated in a survey, recommending topics for discussion and volunteering participation.

From May through November 2020, sixteen two-hour, online, focus group discussions involved Huairou members from different world regions. Several sessions included several external partners relevant to the topic and organizational history. Each theme involved two or three sessions, with each recorded, transcribed, and summarized. The list of recommendations resulting from each session was consolidated and forwarded for consideration by the Huairou Commission Congress meeting in November 2020. For the complete list of

participants in discussions see the Appendix. Sessions also included translators and a few observers. Molly Vallillo, provided staff support and leadership throughout the process.

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Section 1: Peer Learning

In these processes, you bring something, and you get something. That is the change. It is very satisfying, this way of working.

- Haydee Rodriquez – Union de Cooperativas de Mujeres, Productoras ‘Las Brumas’

Key Points

- *Peer learning is transformational*
- *Peer learning takes different forms*
- *Learning must be adaptable to context and culture*
- *Peer learning thrives on relationship and network building*
- *Follow up, planning and logistics are critical*
- *Empowerment and change are central outcomes*

The Forms of Peer Learning

Peer learning was an essential tool for the Huairou Commission since the organization’s inception at the Fourth World Women’s Conference in Huairou, China. Peer learning took place in the grassroots women’s tent. The practice involves fundamental principles of transforming power as participants exchange knowledge, methods, strategies, and experiences with other grassroots women. Peer learning involves direct engagement with equals rather than top-down, one-way transmittal of information. The practice takes a variety of forms. Members of the Huairou Commission referred to events they associated with the practice, including peer exchanges, grassroots academies, peer mentoring, and Urban Thinkers Campuses.

Peer learning within the organization spans continents, through numerous events occurring over more than twenty years. The sessions build bridges between women from a wide range of cultures and communities. In the organization’s early days, women from Germany traveled to learn from women in Turkey on the front lines of earthquake recovery. Grassroots women from all over the world were hosted by Cebu City, Philippines, in 2008 for a Grassroots Academy. Events sometimes brought together regional actors, with women across Central America learning from groups in the Caribbean. Other exchanges were primarily in-country, such as when two groups traveled between communities across Kenya to observe local activities.

Peer learning helps grassroots women broaden their horizons to focus on sharing different development practices and themes. They are venues for exchanging solutions, strengthening methodologies, improving management, creating partnerships, and developing skills to address new or different ideas.

How Does It Transform?

Participants in the session assessed impacts of peer learning, exploring ways the practice changed individuals in the Huairou Commission community. The group explored how women benefit from peer learning experiences, recalled their first peer learning experience and the resulting impact.

Several described their first peer exchange as "life-changing," highlighting that it created a solid foundation for a longstanding bond with the Huairou network. Several people mentioned the critical link between peer exchanges and relationship building. Exchanges provide a place where grassroots women come together and get to know each other's work and the people involved. Through this comes the ability to collaborate and build an organizational culture that provides space for regular reflection, even at the local level. The experience helps women gain exposure to different ideas and leaders within the networks. One member recalled their first Grassroots Academy in the Philippines more than twelve years ago, showing how they began forming relationships with Commission staff and other network leaders.

I am so proud and inspired when I heard about the different practices from different countries from the members. It motivated me to be a leader in a wider Commission, to be part of a wider organization.

- Jhocas Castillo - Damayan Ng Maralitang Pilipinong Api (DAMPA)

Another participant's first memory was of an exchange between Kenya and India, with women from five countries conducting activities. This "Village Learning Seminar" helped women become independent, learn to stand on their own, and mobilize resources. The role of Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in India as an early leader in peer exchange methods was particularly inspiring. The organizing experience of the women from this group and the strength of their practices provided critical role models. Women from India recall focusing on HIV/AIDS after learning more from Kenyan groups already working on the problem. The strategies learned from peer exchanges shaped activities of grassroots women in India for the next 29 years. A male from Zambia describes his first peer learning in a neighboring country:

I was fortunate to attend the first-ever regional meeting in Zimbabwe. I learned that some of what we are doing is peer exchange, even though we had never been trained in peer exchange.... But a lot of information I got in Zimbabwe, we are trying to push it and make sure we are there for everyone and especially those groups we are working with.

- John Masuwa, Circles of Hope

Exchanges are a chance to showcase both expertise and talent. One member remembered an exchange between Turkey and Germany. "I realized the potential of how we can show the women's skills to convey and influence women's leadership. From then to now, we are still using what we learned."

Role in Empowerment

Peer exchanges were like an inheritance that we received.

Many women said peer exchanges strengthened their sense of empowerment and helped them see their own accomplishments in a new light. For example, one grassroots women member from Brazil recalls the powerful impact of attending an event in Guatemala:

It was important because it awakened us. It took us away from the thought that we were the poorest little town in the world. It gave us another perspective that we were not as poor as we thought. We had another perspective of the work we are doing and took us away from that thinking about us as poor people. The academies helped us recognize our knowledge, to recognize the practices that we had.

- Nereide Segala Coelho – Rede Pintades

Grassroots academies enriched the work women do, strengthened leadership and informed practice. In agriculture, it "open the door" to practices in resilience. Others describe a mixture of emotions. Exchanges brought excitement and energy about new ways of thinking about the real world, and practical strategies to overcome challenges. There was also appreciation for a different kind of "hands-on" learning, using examples from the real world. The active nature of the learning experience was compelling because it brought women together to engage in a more meaningful way. One participant noted that "When you are learning from seeing, it's more powerful than when you are reading about it. At the same time, another member describes heightened frustration with the current state of development and structural inequities in resources after attending an exchange:

I also felt a little disappointed because I saw the amount the women were doing. After all, it was just within, from our slum to the other slum. I was looking at the amount the women have achieved with their own resources, with nobody's support, and I was like, "Hey, this is where resources are supposed to come to." So, I was happy and still, I was a little disappointed. I picked up that it is important to lobby for other women living in the slums to amplify their voices in different ways.

- Jane Anyango – POLYCOM Development Project

What Participants Learn

Main takeaways from peer learning experiences are that they 1) reinforce understanding that grassroots women have a great deal of knowledge, 2) highlight critical solutions and innovations, and 3) help women learn how other grassroots women organize. The importance of the reciprocal nature of the experience was emphasized, with one participant noting that, "In what we learn—we bring back knowledge." Participants learned to map, network, share, develop strategies to move forward, identify what is working and what does not. They also discuss how to engage with governments and leaders at local, national, and international levels. Peer exchanges also help women develop skills, leadership, and provide a platform for participants to evolve and grow.

Before the peer exchange, many communities did not recognize or place much value on grassroots women's ideas. The exchanges and academies and replicating practices at the local level helps teach grassroots women to be more disciplined about engagement. Women discuss how to plan more carefully and be more strategic. They learn which questions to raise with government and political officials. Preparation for engagement with local governments strengthens women, enabling them to have more impact in local communities. Women gain power to influence change:

We had a peer exchange with the Latunde people. We help women get access to land, but we did not know how to work with the chiefs. So, in this peer exchange, we learned how they interacted with chief's and the chief was linked to the members. So, we replicated, which helped women here, because as a chief or an assistant chief, of course, this mandate is upon them. Women are accessing land. Women can farm because of this initiative, and we helped many through our chiefs to make women own land, especially those who evacuate from their homes. We have resettled them because of involving this chief. So, through this peer learning exchange, we learned how to work with the chiefs.

- Rachel Ojala -Shibuye

Learning is multifaceted. A peer exchange helped one woman understand how to improve savings. Others learned how to make their organization stronger through increased connection to global and regional networks. Women learned better ways to work in organizations. They learned monitoring and tracking, and about financial tools to keep an organization going. Peer learning increases self-sufficiency:

We had a peer exchange with the Uganda people. We learned how they make baskets, so we copied that and trained women. And, helped them have the materials to make baskets. This helped women and engineered their economic empowerment. Of course, if a woman is economically empowered, she can pay school fees for her children. She can also farm because the barrier for women to farm is capital. So, it has acted as a source of labor for them.

- Rachel Ojala -Shibuye

Peer exchanges also introduced new development concepts in many local settings. Grassroots women aligned their activities to broader global processes, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda. Women described feeling more relevant because of participating in different conversations "not just as grassroots women, speaking about the usual issues."

We learned how to organize better, to engage more meaningfully, and ... how to present our work and share it in a better way.

Jane Anyango—Polycom Development Project

Knowledge about resilience in the networks blossomed through peer learning. Grassroots women from Zimbabwe were taught seed banking from women in Central America, which helped them work with indigenous seeds. Women explained connections between resilience and food security, with women in central American women learning to make plantain flour. Women also shared new techniques useful in pandemics. For example, women in Honduras and Guatemala gained knowledge about rituals used in traditional medicine. They also learned to use mango seeds and organic fertilizers, create greenhouses, and healthier forms of pesticides.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, women shared ways to map risk and vulnerability. One group describes this as a new opportunity to "walk around communities and create maps." The experience was a significant turning point because the Central American group embraced the practice for the first time, eventually adopting this as one of their main areas of expertise. They mention connection to the Huairou Commission as significant because it was the sole source of support for most groups.

I did not know what the word resilience was, although we were already working in resilience practices. We started using the word and the concept was very important for our community. I started working with disaster risk management before, during, and after. Today we have opened our practices. All the techniques we have, all the things we have learned, and we are now doing—we are now opening to local governments. For example, the methodology. In the beginning we were afraid but realized how we were really teaching and training our local governments. This was very important work that we have been doing through what we have learned from the peer exchanges.

- Haydee Rodriguez – Union de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras ‘Las Brumas’

Lessons Learned on Effectiveness

Participants next addressed the issue of when exchanges work, how they work, when they do not work well, and why. Before an event, organizations need time for sufficient preparation and planning. Hosts need to be well organized, with not only their budget but managing small details like handouts and leaflets. The selection of participants is critical because people need to bring passion and an eagerness to share and learn. They also need to clearly understand the objective and focus of an exchange.

In the sessions it is important for participants to be shown practices in very concrete ways to appreciate an idea.

People must see the outcomes of a methodology to understand the importance of what they can use, not just talking about the practice or what they are doing, but to see the result, women growing plants, a large collective of women working together, the women's ability to talk to the government... whatever the result. They must see it and experience it.

- Suranjana Gupta – Huairou Commission

Peer exchanges should be an investment rather than a "one-time thing." Exchanges between groups with an ongoing relationship who are part of a network have greater impact than those involving strangers. After the exchange follow-up between involved groups helps assess what was learned and implemented as a result. Some participants begin to use practices learned but need additional technical help to move further.

We might take away one or two practices, but the full impact of an exchange in terms of continuing to work with groups, coming back, visiting them again, seeing how their practices grow, reflecting on your learning a year or two later, looking at how you started. All those larger impacts depend on us doing the exchange inside a larger network and movement.

- Suranjana Gupta – Huairou Commission

Funding to finance the exchange is another central building block which enables adequate numbers to "scale up" practices at the end of the process. It is important to recognize that in some cases, groups can work with resources they already have.

Where to Go from Here

Planning

Create a peer learning plan. A plan should cover exchanges at a global level and identify required themes, participation, funding, necessary follow-up and methods to track implementation.

Plan more exchanges between external agencies and grassroots leaders.

Create a Peer Learning Resource Guide. A tool should track information about who can teach what subjects, who needs to learn what, and new training curricula.

Careful pairing and participant selection. Create a checklist of factors to assess individual needs, abilities, education, and passion for learning. Correct pairing plays a critical role in capacity building.

Communication

Additional network building is needed to keep participants connected to significant events or exchanges involving partner's dialogues.

Follow-Up

Provide review three, six months, and a year later after a peer learning event by a follow-up team. Monitor to understand differences in contexts, since some practices cannot be easily transferred to specific communities or countries.

Increase post exchange communication between organizations involved in the exchange.

Section 2: Working with the UN

The UN would have been different if the Huairou Commission had not been there for the last 25 years.

- Ana Moreno, Secretary-General UN Habitat III

Key Points

- A long, rich history of partnership.
- The change process has been two-way.
- The growing recognition of grassroots women.
- Grassroots women's expertise has an extraordinary power.
- Being proactive rather than reactive is key.
- COVID 19 presents new opportunities.

History of UN Involvement

The Huairou Commission has a long, varied history of involvement with the United Nations, which has evolved over time. GROOTs and Neighborhood Women brought a large delegation of grassroots women to secure a space for their Grassroots Women's Tent to share strategies, caucus and advocate and build their global voice. From the organization's founding at the UN Fourth Women's Conference in Huairou in China by the Secretary General of UN-Habitat II, Wally N' Dow, linkages between the United Nations and the Huairou Commission continued... 1996 Habitat II in Istanbul, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Development Program, and various other parts of the UN globally, regionally.

- Jan Peterson, National Congress of Neighborhood Women

You are not talking about one UN agency, where you have established a solid partnership, but a multitude of high-level spaces that opened their doors to the Huairou Commission, to its network members, and Grassroots Women, and I think that is also unique. I do not think there are a lot of partners who have that privileged relationship and access. So, I think that is something important to capture.

- Kathryn Travers - WICI

A central theme is that many higher-level policy spaces were never previously accessed by grassroots women before the Huairou Commission's engagement. A member from Honduras Ana Lucy Bengochea from Wagucha was the first grassroots woman to have a prominent role in a UN meeting closing ceremony panel at the World Urban Forum in Barcelona. The discussion affirmed the steady growth in grassroots women's involvement with the UN over time.

It is not just that I was there, but all the other grassroots women leaders have been there for 25 years. We stay in our neighborhoods. Mayors come and go. UN staff come and go. Partners come

and go. But grassroots women are that steady group bringing that important community perspective.

-Jan Peterson, Past Chair - Huairou Commission, National Congress of Neighborhood Women

Impact on the Huairou Commission

Questions concerned whether the UN relationship has been worth the level of investment of time and effort. One member commented, "it takes a lot of effort to get to a World Urban Forum, and it costs money, all that." Participants considered whether this should remain an essential strategy for the Commission, and the impact on member groups. A question in a membership survey assessed whether respondents perceived any change in their organization resulting from UN event participation. Out of ten responses, nine (90%) report positive impacts, while one said there were none. Almost all respondents said they brought resources, new partners, new knowledge, alliances, or built confidence. Eight out of ten gained new perspectives, with five able to negotiate new sources of funds as a result.

Interaction with the UN places demands on members. Members need to document, translate, communicate, and showcase. These tasks are essential for local practices to go to the global stage. Huairou members helped organize tours to local communities in various countries as a regular part of large UN meetings. Commission members organized visits to low-income communities such as Kibera and Mathare in Kenya. Grassroots women in the National Congress of Neighborhood Women invited the head of UN Habitat to East Harlem to meet with tenants of the public housing for a UN High-Level Political Forum meeting in New York. Members reflect on these occasions with a sense of pride, noting that for many officials, it's the first time they really see the community work. This is why grassroots women must be in the UN, to show firsthand what the grassroots women do and to build these important relationships.

Despite the pressures these tasks entail, many emphasized the value, credibility, and respect for participant organizations that result from UN interactions.

This is important because it has been providing a lot of respect and knowledge to our grassroots organizations in the country and the region.

- Maria Teresa Rodriguez, Fundación Guatemala

Many examples of active Huairou Commission engagement in various countries illustrate linkages between the global and local work. In the Philippines, the member group Damayan ng Maralitang Phipinong Api (DAMPA) Inc. worked with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to promote national and international practices. Through the project DAMPA partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture in a pilot demonstration involving grassroots women leaders in a Seeds Festival. In Kenya, the Mathare Legal Aid and Human Rights Advocacy organization responds to COVID-19 with the United Nations Fund for Children (UNICEF) who donated water tanks for grassroots women and older persons. The organization is on committees spearheading how grassroots women and communities gain access to water through accessible boreholes, which cut down distances' women need to walk. The group engages with UN-Habitat, through

local activities enabling them to align their work with the Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda.

Essential Huairou Commission tools such as community mapping engage grassroots women in accessing resources. In Mathare in Kenya, mapping has expanded with UN involvement and is helping with Covid 19 response. In Honduras, Plataforma Comunitaria Comités y Redes de Honduras (Wagucha) Honduras works on gender empowerment and community emergency planning with the Environment Ministry as part of a Community Development Initiative that involves engagement with Parliament on an empowerment tool. Mujeres Iberoamericanas en Red por la Igualdad Presupuestal entre Mujeres y Hombres (Mira) affirms the importance of their work with women throughout Mexico extending UN and Huairou Commission linkages and power.

Invitations to UN conferences and meetings enhance grassroots women's self-confidence and speaking skills. They focus attention on new best practices, increasing their sense of empowerment and worth. Some noted, "this is this place where we can push our advocacy as grassroots women." UN engagement strengthens communication across the Huairou Commission member networks, with groups playing a wide variety of roles. With help from the Commission, members move national follow-up to Beijing Conference principles, enhance coordination, and solidify methodologies. Many work more closely with government actors in local communities, not as passive partners but providing direction, suggesting the "things to do" and "things to do differently." Thus, groups feel well-positioned, with improvements in status due to Huairou Commission's backing and support. Participant's gain strength from the long history and scope of the Commission's relationship with the UN over time.

It is not just participating in the meetings, but that there are privileged things that go in those spaces. So, it is not the same as an organization who just goes and attends a meeting. I think that is important to highlight. That you are not talking about one UN agency, where you have established a solid partnership, but a multitude of high-level spaces that have opened their doors to the Huairou Commission, to its network members, and to grassroots women. I think that is also unique. I do not think there are a lot of partners who have that privileged relationship and access.

- Kathryn Travers - WICI

Impact on the United Nations

The relationship between the Huairou Commission, the UN, and other development partners has not been unilateral. The organization helped UN system members reach their stated goals.

The process has not been only from one arrow, [but] with two arrows. We have been impacting different UN agencies. We have been doing many different modifications and innovations inside the UN agencies as a global movement, pronouncing our voices there. We are impacting the UN system, impacting the World Bank.

- Maria Teresa Rodriguez, Fundacion Guatemala

Engagement increased attention to the views of grassroots women.

The narrative has shifted. Now when you go to any of these meetings, there is a conversation around the importance of grassroots voices. There is space for people to speak about their own experiences and what

they are doing in their communities... 25 years ago, I'm not sure that that was the case. I think that is a big impact that can be credited, in large part, to the work of the Huairou Commission and its members.

- Kathryn Travers, WICI

World Bank representatives report becoming more relevant, due to the feedback and expertise of grassroots women. Sixteen years ago, the World Bank invited the Huairou Commission to train staff to improve investment projects and technical assistance. The World Bank engaged organization members to document good practices, grassroots women's community activities, and ways they influence programming and policies. Member groups at national and local levels provide technical and operational assistance as project recipients, implementers, and consultants.

There has been, again, this evolution from mere compliance to meaningful partnerships. I think the global connections that Huairou brings, as a convener of a constituency of grassroots women leaders, is important. It brings weight and credibility. So, when we are saying to the governments that we work with, that this is whom you should be working with, these guys can help you deliver. That has weight and credibility to it. But then I think the very local expertise and knowledge of the context and what is needed, and what will work is ... So, bringing this sort of local level to global level, I think is important.

- Margaret Arnold – World Bank

UN-Habitat

The Huairou Commission has a twenty-five-year history of deep involvement with UN-Habitat. Recognition of the value of grassroots women by Wally N'Dow, a former head of UN-Habitat, provided the original impetus for the Commission. Since then, the Commission continued to be a stakeholder in a wide range of agency activities. Participants in the discussion pointed to the fact that Huairou Commission members contributed to developing gender evaluation criteria and the UN Habitat's Advisory Group on Gender (AGGI). The organization showcased gender strategies in many Urban Thinkers Campuses' (UTCs) organized by HC members in various countries. One member from the southern Africa region commented this format was familiar and helped encompass "what we have already been doing at the community levels.... talking to the women, talking to our civil engineers, talking to our planners as to how we want our city to look like for us."

The Commission also played an active role in preparation and engagement in the Habitat III conference in Ecuador in 2016. The Commission drew upon decades of experience bringing grassroots women to forums organized by the UN. They mobilized women to participate in policy unit discussions and women's caucuses and were active in the New York Habitat Civil Society Working Group that originally began due to civil society interest in the Habitat conference process. The Women's Assembly which the Commission helped organize, provided a platform for hundreds of women from countries worldwide to express perspectives on policy related to women and human settlements. The Commission also worked with the UN to host an expert group meeting on gender in New York leading up to the conference and sponsored a large delegation of network members to attend the Ecuador gathering. The Huairou Commission exhibition at the conference attracted visitors from around the world.

Members recalled many ways over time that UN-Habitat has drawn on expertise of member groups in different regions. One group from Honduras mentioned guiding UN-Habitat on themes ranging from indigenous groups to urban planning, cultural diversity, and inheritance. Expertise in risk, community mapping, and help identifying local weaknesses in health systems was also provided, particularly during the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The head of UN-Habitat in New York expressed appreciation for HC's attention to self-reflection and reorganization.

I have been extremely impressed with the Huairou Commission's commitment to stay dynamic and adapt, and not be the organization they were 25 years ago. I can say with personal experience that it is rare to see an organization take the huge step of shifting from an NGO to a membership organization. I say this because some organizations that we have worked with have not adapted, and they have also not anticipated what they call Founder's Syndrome. Founder's Syndrome is that a leader comes forward and generates an organization, mobilizes, gets everybody riled up, and the organization grows, but it is too dependent on that individual.

- Chris Williams – Director, UN-Habitat New York

They felt that it was also useful that the Huairou Commission has not confined their work solely to that organization but also worked with other development organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP, UN Women, as well as the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Organization. This demonstrates the ability to examine a range of issues from the perspective of grassroots and women's empowerment perspectives. The capacity to have broad outreach and connections increases knowledge and communication about other parts of the UN system for all parties.

UN Women

Participants in the session from UN Women, affirmed that the Huairou Commissions' activity over many years has been vital. In addition to an active presence for many years in the civil society group GEAR, instrumental in the formation of UN Women, Huairou helped shape a variety of UN Women's programs and policies. The leadership of the organization was instrumental in helping conceptualize one of UN Women's global initiatives --the Safe Cities Free of Violence Against Women and Girls. The Commission's influence building partnerships with Women in Cities International, Jagori, and others, was "absolutely critical," making a case for the need to work with local governments the neglected issue of sexual harassment in public spaces. Grassroots women's mobilization and advocacy on safety resulted in improved laws, policies, and data.

Many recalled the important influence of Ann Michaud, hosting the first Safer Cities meeting for women. She was part of the Commission's member group in Canada, Women in Cities International. The Huairou Commission brought women from various parts of the world to this conference. UN-Women and UN-Habitat embraced conference themes in their subsequent work.

The Huairou Commission, was at the table for the conceptualization, the formative design, but also the training that we needed to lift off a lot of this program through the development of a training module on engaging women's grassroots and other groups in this work, to participating in all of our global forums that bring together these multi-sectoral partnerships, to having on the ground partnerships with UN women, even though that has been yes, challenging, and uneven as well at times given the lack of also funding. But, because of that, it helped to really create a brand, that when these multi-sectoral partnerships are in place at the local level, what makes it Safe Cities in terms of this brand is that women are in decision making roles. Without women in decision making roles in these partnerships, they would not be under the Safe Cities brand. I think the woman that works with the UN women now on Safer Cities came out of the group in Canada with Women in Cities. This is where we brought a whole program that developed at two UN agencies. And then when Jhocas talks about going back and doing this work in the Philippines, the model was started by Huairou members, Women in Cities, and then we take it to the UN and then Jhocas ends up benefiting in Manila.

- Laura Capobianco – Policy Advisor Safe Public Spaces and UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, Global Flagship Initiative

Women's rights in public space, which is about rights across all spheres, and political organizing, about the right to live free from fear, free from experience of violence, is central to the work of Huairou Commission members. The expertise from the Commission around risk factors related to violence against women has been recognized by UN Women. Dampa, the Huairou Commission organization in the Philippines, recalls focusing on this sphere of work and the positive impact:

Because I have been one of the global advisory council members of UN Women, since then that project on safety from UN Women we accessed some funds. So that is why we have safety in public spaces in the Philippines. And we see this started our advocacy as DAMPA. So, from there, we were recognized as a grassroots movement and our grassroots communities and organizations have capacity to manage. So, we accessed this, and you know what happened? We became their partner, and we are the one who started the safety in public spaces advocacy in the Philippines and it was replicated to different cities. And it is now a national law in our country. It is a concrete example of what a big impact to us in partnering UN agencies.

- Jhocas Castillo - DAMPA

The Commission's members' expertise around grassroots women's economic challenges and demands for increased access to skills, training, credit, and employment is a critical area that influenced UN Women. More holistic, direct approaches, and work with local governments on various neglected issues were pushed because of the expertise of member groups on housing, land rights, governance, home-based care and sanitation. UN Women's work with cities and national governments gained meaningful bottom-up guidance. The 25 years of Huairou Commission's partnerships with researchers, universities, and the organizations compendiums documenting grassroots women's expertise has been important providing UN women, "not only institutional memory building, but also the intergenerational knowledge transfer that's needed to work with young feminists and in different ways."

So, this knowledge that we do not reinvent the wheel, we learn from the wheel but, we also give it a greater tread as we move on through all this joint work.

-Laura Capobianco – Policy Advisor Safe Public Spaces and UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, Global Flagship Initiative

The discussion touched on some differences in methods of working between grassroots women and UN Women. The UN agency works more closely with national mechanisms because "our relationship with government has to work." Members also appreciated growing recognition of the value of grassroots women by the UN, which was attributed to mobilization by the Huairou Commission.

The biggest thing that we have achieved is that grassroots women are recognized as constituents in the UN. We are no longer just lumped in with NGOs. So, we have to really take that space. That Huairou is the leading group in the world that helped create these spaces like the Community Practitioner Platform, like getting grassroots women on the UN Women Advisory board.

- Jan Peterson, National Congress of Neighborhood Women

Grassroots Women and Agenda Setting

Participation in UN processes and meetings through the Commission has helped grassroots women play a more active role in agenda-setting and policymaking at global, local, and national levels. Grassroots women's practices are now "demonstrated, consolidated and turned into public policies. That is the difference that we are making." Huairou's network members are influencing changes in public policy to reflect real concerns of women in countries worldwide. Members felt this involves not mere presence, but also increased power because they are taking collective positions on critical policy issues.

We are emphasizing national policies because, in some way, when we are participating in these specific subjects, we are pushing our government to make these subjects part of the national policy. That is why it is so important to understand the subject of the meeting, how we will participate, and follow up with these commitments that we make in these meetings, in these scenarios.

- Ana Hernández Asociación Alianza de Mujeres Costarricense

Group participation in UN meetings and processes allows governments to learn more about the work of grassroots women. It enables key actors to value their essential contributions to a variety of policy areas. Because governments know a Huairou Commission organization connects to the United Nations, they "are giving us more space. They are giving us more time. They are listening to us. They are hearing us". The respect motivates women to keep up momentum and continue building activities and programs.

When we go to all these high-level meetings, UN and Habitat Forums and World Urban Forums, we always meet the government representatives there. There are always government representatives participating. That opportunity has helped us to build a better link, relationship with the governments. When you come back [to the community], that has helped us, in the relationship and to work in partnership for advocacy and everything. The process is not only easing progress, but an opportunity for them to see our work, to know about ourselves and realize what we have been contributing and to recognize the work of the grassroots women.

Here in Nepal, every time before the Habitat meetings, they have a committee every year. Every year before celebrating World Habitat Day, they have a meeting. They call on us, the Grassroots Women's organizations, the community organizers, and invite us to be a part of the process, to make a contribution, and be a part of the decision-making process as well. This is an important achievement.

- Lajana Manandhar, Lumanti Support Group for Shelter

In some cases, UN activities through Huairou help groups "shift the needle" on issues of importance. Ongoing assessment of the organization's goals, objectives, and targets is needed to determine progress. In Uganda for example, SWID recalls:

We have been strengthened as grassroots women, and we also sit at high-level panels and put out our voice and our governments identified us during those meetings. Coming back to our countries, we could find the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development inviting us to present the paper during conferences at the national level. This recognition has strengthened us as grassroots women, and we are able to articulate issues, even at global, regional, and national levels. Then we disseminate that information back home.

- Joyce Nangobi, Slum Women's Initiative for Development

Where to Go from Here

Covid Crises Response and UN /Development Agency Linkages

Create a Grassroots Women-Led Post Covid Plan for the UN/Development Agencies. The Covid 19 crisis provides new strategic challenges and opportunities for the Huairou Commission. The UN system is missing measurement tools and different approaches to address realities at the local level. The involvement of local stakeholders and grassroots women leaders is critical to recovery and investment because of their unique knowledge of facts on the ground and the development agenda at the local level.

Since the Huairou Commission has been doing innovations in Covid response and because response and recovery are two of the organization's main issues, *the Commission should develop a plan for recovery and to provide it to the UN*. Huairou funded 20 or more groups working on COVID. Disaster and by extension, pandemics, affect women and grassroots women more, thus Huairou needs to pay more attention to preparing members to deal with this. Members suggest that:

Everything is going to be different after COVID, everything. Even our relationship, or even the processes we are going to be having with the UN, or sustaining with UN agencies, or the UN system. So that, for example, we are probably not going to be able to travel, to attend some of the global meetings in the way that we were used to like doing a very efficient work in these kinds of meetings, doing advocacy, connections, links, networking.

- Maria Teresa Rodriguez, Fundacion Guatemala

Strengthen Huairou Commission Skills for Development Agency Links

Increase use of management of results in HC Strategic Planning and training. That includes attention to identification of goals, data collection and measurement which is critical in working with international development organizations.

Through Zoom, Huairou should institute more training of the next level of people to understand how to do this work to improve HC ability to effectively bring attention to achievements of grassroots women throughout the world.

We need to harvest from different communities and different countries, so that we can continue showcasing more of the work of grassroots women and Commission members. Ann Wanjiru, Mathare Legal Aid Human Rights Advocacy

Increase monitoring of development agency agendas: Pay attention to new strategic priorities of specific UN agencies and development institutions. The World Bank, for example, is developing a strong agenda on persons with disabilities on sexual orientation and gender identity, indigenous people, and racism, youth empowerment and empowering elders. Looking at the expertise that elders bring, and their role in cities, are high on their agenda. Increase outreach to stay ahead of changing priorities.

Strengthen outreach to resident coordinators. For the United Nations and UN-Habitat, the UN resident coordinator at the country level is an important contact. The resident coordinator system has undergone an overhaul in the last two years, with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General now playing a coordinating function. Linkages at that level are critical to HC's ability to deal with all UN organizations under one umbrella. The Head of the UN-Habitat Office in New York can help the organization facilitate linkages.

Increase local UN agency contact from members: Members need to stay relevant and remain on the platform Huairou has created at the UN, particularly during the Covid crises. The organization needs to be proactive rather than reactive. Members need to contact national, regional, or sub-regional UN agencies. They should also arrange meetings with representatives of governments, since they control resources, to share what we want them to say to the UN. Zoom is a valuable tool to arrange conferences with leaders.

Revisit strategic alliances: Revisit strategic partnerships and collaborations among grassroots women's organizations. UN-Habitat suggests Huairou build on historical links with groups like Slum Dwellers International, women's entrepreneurs, and the small business entrepreneur's network. Shared values, commitments, and approaches would not mean groups always have to work together. Groups might be allowed to speak on behalf of one another. They might engage jointly with resident coordinators or individual UN agencies as a more extensive set of organizations.

Alliances with other grassroots women's organizations makes for more effective engagement with the UN system, and specifically UN-Habitat. I really think it is time that all the constituencies of the New Urban Agenda use the United Nations Habitat Assembly much more strategically to advance global policy on urban development. And I think the World Urban Forum, the New Urban Agenda platform, an online platform that's been established, all these mechanisms will be stronger if the constituencies of the New Urban Agenda are better organized, and in a stronger position.

- Chris Williams, Director, UN-Habitat

Build partnerships into MOUs: UN Women suggests that HC give more attention to the complex issues involved in implementation, noted to have often been "very uneven." Recognize the competitive processes that UN agencies work with involving calls for proposals and competitive selection.

UN Women is limiting the number of individual MOUs with organizations but expressed interest in exploring an institutional or strategic partnership, cutting across different policy program areas of UN Women in thematic focus areas.

Communication and Outreach

UN/Development Agency: Increase member and UN Communication: To compensate for lack of physical presence due to Covid 19, the organization needs to pay attention to communications, including disseminating press releases and reports to share what we are doing to/with the UN. UN-Habitat would like more readily available information about the work of Huairou's various women's organizations. The organization should release one or two-page newsletters three or four times a year focusing on the "voice from the grassroots." Newsletters should highlight what groups are saying and doing in communities. A webinar series would help UN partners understand details about Huairou member work. This links with ensuring more grassroots women obtain and use digital tools for information receipt and dissemination.

Huairou should invest in helping groups disseminate, expand presence, and get women to harvest and put together achievements, so the organization continues to grow. They should invest in expanding our presence in the communities.

Huairou member groups should host in-country mini-meetings before attending larger global meetings. Currently, groups do not devote time to preparing or collecting information from the people on the ground. Part of preparation for attending events such as the Commission on Status of Women should be holding a micro or a mini CSW within countries. This type of gathering might help groups present for communities or countries rather than a single organization.

Section 3 Partnerships

It is important to select the right partner, a trusted partner, who can help us fly, and take off.

- Trang, Life Center Vietnam

Key Points

- *Share common values and vision.*
- *Partnerships should be catalytic.*
- *Adopt partnership principles or common agreements.*
- *Address imbalances of power.*
- *Understand Huairou's bottom-up structure.*
- *Partnerships are critical to success.*
- *Understand the needs of both sides.*

Types of Partnerships

Many groups in the Huairou Commission affirm active engagement with a wide array of partners at different levels. Partnerships involve relationships with government departments, civil society organizations, grassroots groups, and a range of networks and movements. Some partnerships are important due to the expertise the partner brings. Examples include connections with legal groups and technical people, such as architects, engineers, contractors. These linkages are critical for groups working on land and housing. Partnerships with academics are valued by many member groups in the Huairou community to help elevate messages of grassroots women. Partnerships with the private sector and corporate groups sometimes helped grassroots women's groups mobilize new resources.

Another type of partnership occurs with those considered "family," which are organizations and individuals who are particularly close to the Huairou Commission because of a history of long-standing relationship. Similarity on core values is essential for partnerships to work. One Huairou Commission organization in the Philippines working on urban housing describes associations with other NGOs occurring through a process of selection of "co NGOs" who are "like-minded":

We always believed that if like-minded NGOs work together, we can easily facilitate our task, and create impact. And we can influence the government in the decision-making process. If policy advocacy is in partnership with other groups, based on our experience, advocacy is easier. When policy advocacy is done well, the initiative will create a long-range impact like policy change and legislation.

-Lucila Malibiran, Community Organizers Multiversity

For those partners who are like family, special bonds of trust emerge from many years of collaboration, advocacy, and involvement. Some members from Latin America pointed to linkages with indigenous groups that have been critical. Other members with experience of marginalization and homelessness, describe the

journey from the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing until now. Members of the group Yellowknife in Canada, mention their experience working with partners:

There were no partnerships when I was starting at Beijing, -- you existed in your own little advocacy group, trying to navigate the influence of government and NGOs. For example, I lived in a shelter for women who were homeless. So, my life was trying to deal with the rules. And the way that the NGOs worked, the way they thought, and the way they wanted me to think-- I wanted me to be me, and it was not the same.

In that time, those early days, my friends, and I got together and established our own organization, which was really a movement. And then, I learned how to get partners, how to develop relationships, and become stable as an organization and become stable in my life and help others become stable in their lives.

Then you look at partnerships. I found over the years, I constantly got gaslighted, if you know what that word means. It means that you have privileged NGOs, with professional women with all the power and all the money, who set the agenda. They are the ones who let you in-- if you are subservient and if you allow them to control what was going on.

-Arlene Hache, Keepers of the Circle

What You Need in a Partner

A good partnership requires several main characteristics. First, **equity and mutual participation** helps maintain the long-term growth and sustainability of the relationships. A group from Honduras notes that for a partnership to succeed:

You need to offer something in a partnership to be valued: You have to offer something to the other partner. This is a way that will work in partnership with local partners, so they do not look at us as if we were a beneficiary--they look at us as a valued partner that can develop, they look at us as a bonding partner that has the experience, [to help] learn what we must do.

-Ana Lucy Bengochea, Wagucha Honduras

Second, **what the other organization brings to the table** is critical. Many groups note the importance of involvement with other grassroots leaders, while legitimacy and the ability to advocate for grassroots leaders are particularly valuable. Partnerships also should involve a **shared vision, clear objectives and expectations, honesty, and transparency**. Discussants repeated the need to partner with groups who "value what we value". A group from Vietnam comments:

We need to identify an organization that can help us and work with us on sustainability and scaling up the efforts and initiatives. We need to choose partners that are not only capable and committed but also have the mandate to protect women's rights striving for gender equality and driving for the integration of women-led resilience practices into the global government agenda for Vietnam.

- Trang Nguyen, Centre for the Promotion of Quality of Life

In other instances, another important **quality includes the sense of being "supported"** and knowing that the member groups would be there, providing backup in times of need. One member from Zimbabwe highlights that:

A partnership should be rewarding and involve cohesion and connection with the other groups. Among HC members, there also needs to be openness and a sense of protection and support. The partnership should be catalytic, diverse, and involve both mentoring and training. By this, I mean help whatever work you are doing on the ground. Is this helping you extend whatever you are doing? Is it advocating for new policies? Is it helping you to do that? A partnership should be diverse, inclusive, and emphasize mentoring and training. It should be flexible and lead by example. It should also continually build pipelines for diversity and leadership development.

- Theresa Makwara, Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association

Strategies and Methods

A variety of unique strategies were shared about specific methods that help member groups in their partnership work. Wagucha in Honduras creates, "expert groups." These are specifically tailored for niche areas, with organized groups focusing on food security, culture, handicrafts, autonomous ownership, and sustainability. Similar processes are labeled "clusters" in other HC member groups.

Building alliances and federations are another tactic used in some countries, with participants agreeing to work for a common agenda and issues. Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), the large grassroots organization in India, describes their process of organization in federations. When they create a partnership with local government, people from the grassroots groups help make decisions, with one person or a small group involved in working out details. They work with 250 committees with leaders in every village taking part in dialogues with the local government, with people from SSP facilitating. This process starts at the village level with the implementers and practitioners. The result is improved knowledge and understanding, dialogue, follow-up at the district level, and negotiation between people in communities and officials.

Relationships between partners often progress over time, moving from informality to a more formalized arrangement. Groot's in Jamaica indicates that partnership involves experience, collective work, being an expert group, and negotiating with other partners.

In terms of what is working well in partnerships, Co Multiversity states:

We always believe that certain tasks can create impact, if it is done in partnership with other people, in partnership with government, and with people's organization with the same issues and visions, hoping to achieve change in the long run.

- Lucila Malibiran, Community Organizers Multiversity

Urban Thinkers Campuses (UTCs) are another tool used by many groups to facilitate conversation between partners. UTCs not only bring partners together but also stimulate discussions led by grassroots women. This platform helps address imbalances of power.

Written agreements and MOUs help clarify relationships between partners. The International Land Coalition's partnership with Huairou is one example where an MOU was helpful. Using collective bodies rather than individual actors can strengthen formal agreements, particularly when signed with government bodies. GROOTS, Jamaica, presented their MOU to both the mayor and entire Municipal Council in the communities of Portmore and May Pen. Dual submission helped ensure formal documentation about the process. When

MOUs involve more than one political actor, when political parties change due to elections the MOU are more certain to stay in place. Members of GROOTS Jamaica continue to sit on formal bodies related to safety and security, such as the disaster risk management council. This is an example of grassroots women playing an active role in shaping and sustaining policy at the community level. The group also works with the Planning Institute of Jamaica, a vital national institution aiding policy implementation for the various governments in power.

When you can sit at that level and influence the policy overall for the nation, you are sitting at the right place, and you must recognize your importance in moving the country forward.

- Louise (Lana) Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective

Many participants affirm the need for a different approach in relationships between grassroots women's groups and the government. These linkages are quite different from working with other members of civil society. One challenge with the government is the need to ensure that grassroots women's voices play a lead role. Funding is also sensitive, with some expressing preference for direct funding rather than allowing others to control decision-making and allocations. Some member organizations find mapping a helpful tool to identify the number and types of people to engage in a stronger government relationship. Co-Multiversity, a Huairou member in the Philippines, first creates an agreement between the partner and technical team, which clearly states the different roles each will play. They also create a management team to monitor assigned functions. They felt this process increased their power over time.

When we deal with critical issues, critical people in the government, we first have a mapping. Who from the government side are our allies? Who from the NGO side are our allies? Who from the church are our allies? And then we try to work together. That is important. So, when we face the congressional group, we are already together as partners with different groups. So, when they confront the government about our issues, the government will be worried because they see legal groups, architect groups, organizing groups, and other people's organizations. But at the end of it all, it is the people's organizations who will identify the issues that the different partners can address or help them address. So that is how our partnerships are going on in the Philippines.

- Lucila Malibiran, Community Organizers Multiversity

Partnership Impacts

A wide range of examples illustrate impacts of partnership in various parts of the world.

Latin America and the Caribbean:

In Peru, the organization Femum, mentions the value of the Urban Thinkers Campus and their work engaging in partnership with different actors such as indigenous communities, municipal networks, and the private sector. This engagement led to changes and improvements:

In the private sector, it was the first opportunity to connect with the powerful construction sector. In this case, we are doing a training program for the private sector construction workers, beginning with one workshop [and then], a second. By coming to the training program, directors of the private sector companies understand the relevance of the New Urban Agenda and all their tools. In this case, the learning for us is that we need technical support and expertise to promote this sector because they need technical help for increased improvements in the sector.

-- Olenka Ochoa Berreteaga, FEMUM ALC

Partnerships with municipal networks and mayors in the region are also described as "different" because they often want political support. Political actors and governments get a boost from connections with global networks. Several groups were proud of their role in helping to bridge those connections.

We try to connect mayors and the national network of municipal or local government with approaches from global spheres, with the United Nations, political and technical support in moments of crisis, for example, during the Covid crisis. We try to support mayors and municipal networks with the tools, ideas, proposals to do something in the communities. And this is also political because the mayors are controlling complex circumstances.

- Olenka Ochoa Berreteaga, FEMUM ALC

Conamovidi, another grassroots group member of Huairou in Peru, has worked for a long time on food security. Their work with women's participation and gender involved long-term partnerships with the government at national and regional levels. At the local level, there are alliances with local governments. The involvement is more sustainable because they share daily work with people from the community around various proposals. This framework relates to women's rights, social and health services, as well as family development. The communication helps with budget discussions, although they still have not achieved the desired influence on direct allocation of funding.

North America

Important legislative victories result from partnerships with the government in several cases, although this process generally takes a long time. A Canadian member highlights the influence on policy related to "lived experience" adopted in that country:

I want to give you a little example of a change in Canada that was revolutionary for grassroots women and women with lived experience of homelessness-- Indigenous women. Our federal government only recently (now this is 25 years later) is valuing the perspective and voices of women with lived experience, with grassroots women. That is partly due to the work of the Huairou Commission, Habitat for Humanity, and the SDGs. It reflects the work of grassroots women worldwide. It reflects what we have done to say-- we have the expertise, we know what we are doing, we are creating movements, and we have some local solutions.

So, our federal government now, at least as it relates to homelessness, has entrenched the voices of women with lived expertise of homelessness in their governance framework, meaning, in legislation, they have established a panel of grassroots women with lived expertise. Women will influence where the money goes, how programs are delivered, and whether they are effective. So that is an important difference between Beijing and today. And so, I want to make the statement that the voices of grassroots women, finally, have been valued, at least in the Government of Canada.

- Arlene Hache, Keepers of the Circle

In New York City, Huairou members from the National Congress of Neighborhood Women are public housing tenant leaders who work in the housing projects, recently delivering almost 900 meals a day. For this effort, they built relationships to obtain free food with a wide range of organizations having difficulty distributing to

public housing tenants in need. In this case, "the only people that can get them to the people are the women themselves that are in public housing."

Asia

Groups often draw on other types of support, including humanitarian and social support. In India, in Maharashtra, a Woman's Federation involved with SSP works closely with the local government. Many corporate companies help grassroots women's community resilience efforts because of the long continuation of dialogues and advocacy. They contribute to the community resilience fund as a community investment. During the Covid pandemic, grassroots women leaders worked with UNICEF to help migrants returning from cities to villages. Vulnerable families learned about job opportunities. As a result of the success of this partnership, they are expanding from 50 to 250 villages. A written MOU helped to ensure the framework for access of grassroots leaders:

We have a written MOU with that district in the state government of Maharashtra to work in 250 villages. We recently received the order from the government. SSP will work with the local government. They facilitate whatever grassroots leaders ask, directly access many facilities in local offices, and leaders can visit and talk to officials.

-Chandran Puthiyottil, Swayam Shikshan Prayog

The Life Center in Vietnam works with the Women's Union, with positive economic impacts. The engagement involves inclusion of more partners, such as government actors like the Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development and Environment and Natural Resources. The resources mobilized from the various government departments support technical assistance to livelihood initiatives of grassroots women. Strategies include many capacity-building activities involving the women. Activities increase women's knowledge of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and encourage them to have practices and collect evidence at the grassroots level that promotes advocacy at the national level. They are also documenting their various forms of partnering and helping grassroots women report their initiatives and projects to help them with modeling and transferability regarding the code of conduct.

Africa

In Zimbabwe, Ntengwe has a wide variety of partnerships with governments, NGOs, and other grassroots groups. The recent Covid 19 crisis is challenging for groups but has also been useful in bringing out new levels of creativity:

The grassroots groups that we are working with have adopted transformative practices. Some have dismantled injustice and inequity and become quite vocal and visible advocates for grassroots-led social change. Through bridging emerging approaches, learning, and other models we have adopted from the Huairou Commission, especially during this pandemic, we have seen innovations these grassroots groups have addressed-- certain possibilities to have a better tomorrow. They are already talking about building a better post- COVID-19 opportunity for the grassroots women who have suffered various losses.

- Elisabeth Markham, NTENGWE for Community Development

The group has deepened core activities on land rights, resulting in a significant change through partnerships within different communities and areas in Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, and Harare.

Challenges with Partnerships

Participants affirm that partnerships often involve a range of complex challenges. Many problems stem from disparities in power between more prominent NGOs and the smaller, more informal grassroots groups. In many cases, original expectations and relationships change over time between groups. Instances of power disparities emerged in a case in New York City, described by the Neighborhood Women in Greenpoint Williamsburg, home to the Huairou Commission Secretariat:

In general, primarily in the US, at least we can say in the city of New York, most of the more professional housing groups have gone into low-income housing developments and taken over their community centers and their programming. Then they run it the way they want to run it –so you think they use the center the way a grassroots group would use it? You cannot have your funerals, your baptisms, your weddings. You cannot have it at night because staff do not want to work. So, the clarity to me, is very painful. Everybody sounded so nice about the partnership. Three years ago, we started working with a partner -- we brought in a housing group in the community to help save our nearby Senior Center, a group I also started in 1975,

A large not-for-profit group came to help the Senior Center and the fight for control of its building And this not-for-profit group could write and negotiate at a higher level with more political people. They were a multi-million-dollar organization now, and the senior center was probably a \$200,000 organization. After a year of battling to save the Senior Center, that not-for-profit organization it took over. They were able to grab the organization, rewrite the bylaws, and get people to agree ...People said, do not worry, do not worry. We must do this to protect our board, we will ensure all this will come back to you. Well, let us just put it this way, they took over the entire building, the organization, and no longer does the local group get to run their own organization-- that happened in two places in our community. And these are all people that like each other, have known each other, worked together for 45 years, but had no written agreements.

- Jan Peterson, National Congress of Neighborhood Women

This story reinforces the importance of clear terms of partnerships spelled out in written agreements. This involves spending time in the early stages of the relationship to develop clearer MOUs to mitigate against the unexpected. However, difficulties with formal agreements mentioned by several groups go beyond creating or signing them and involve sustaining the agreement's terms over time.

Representatives from Yellowknife in Canada reflect other types of challenges with power imbalances:

Maybe it is the activist in me. I find that partnerships are difficult to navigate and maintain when you have an imbalance in power structures facilitated by a neoliberal agenda that wants to pretend that inequities do not exist or are not contributors to inequities. So, I find partnerships challenging. We have developed partnerships with the mining industry, employers, governments, and other nonprofit NGO sectors. They all think that we have shared values. However, when it comes down to concrete implementation, you see that they do not understand how to convey those values.

- Arlene Hache, Keepers of the Circle

Other Huairou Commission members in a partnership involving a process related to the African Union describe challenges from lack of inclusion in coordination and leadership. Members describe feeling passive, primarily receiving notices about work to be done. They felt that " we don't know the logistics, how the money is shared among the other member organizations, or who has gotten money to do a certain activity. We are just told to submit, maybe if they ask questions, we submit our answers, and that is it. Yearly we are called for meetings to endorse what they have agreed upon, or if they do let us into discussions, it's normal that they've already decided what needs to be done." This operational style resulted in a breakdown of the partnership over time.

Challenges related to partnerships can also involve structural issues associated with the organization of the Huairou Commission. One member comments:

We are bottom-up. This is our problem. We are bottom-up, but everybody else is top-down. So, they come in with one person from ActionAid or Oxfam to make all the decisions for them. And we come in with six or eight people representing us in a committee form.

-Florence Shakafuswa, Katuba Women's Association

This collective format requires more work to ensure partnerships work well. Another challenge is that in many partnerships involving the Commission, the network is "stripped" of member groups over time. A typical process is that the women are plucked off and folded into these other institutions and grassroots women lose their collective voice.

We had a lot of trouble with the Uganda Land Alliance, where our members were all there but did not work collectively within the Land Alliance. So, the grassroots did not hold their voice. They count as members but did not collectively advocate a grassroots women's agenda within the Land Alliance.

- Jan Peterson, NCNW

When members go to large regional conferences, they hold a meeting to set an agenda as grassroots women. But this often does not occur at the national and local level or in various partnership arrangements. Thus, the voices of grassroots women become individual rather than collective voices. This is an issue for future discussion among Huairou Commission members, including at national and local levels.

Problems also occur with activities focused on advocacy, gender discrimination, and implementation, particularly in rural areas. In some cases, this is because of differences in the policy environment and context. Partnerships often involve large numbers of national and international actors, and there is a degree of competition with organizations working in the same geographical areas. Although groups may be technically working towards the same goal, coordination and collaboration are often limited. Failure to work together can lead to gaps in coverage, duplications, and inefficiencies. This is particularly problematic in periods of emergency response such as the Covid 19 crises.

Partnership Principles

One strategy used by the Huairou Commission is a framework called "principled partnerships" that outlines guidelines for partnerships between professionals and grassroots that address issues surrounding differences in communication and ways of acting. The framework arose from frustrations and resentments arising from

professionals coming into communities and not seeing grassroots women as experts on their neighborhoods and issues. The following is the *Partnership Code of Conduct*, as described in Huairou Commission's Operating Framework:

Partnerships are alliances with organizations and individuals, including, among other things: professionals, academics, researchers, and practitioners who subscribe to the roles and responsibilities set out for partners in this Operating Framework. Partners bring influence and knowledge that may help redress the power asymmetries and imbalances that grassroots women's organizations can neither access nor influence alone. Partnerships may begin by HC outreach or unsolicited expressions of interest.

THE PARTNERSHIP CODE OF CONDUCT (Leavitt, 2012)

- 1) Explicitly recognize inequalities of power, resources, and money.
- 2) Identify and be transparent about shared concerns, risks, and uncertainty.
- 3) Use language that everybody understands.
- 4) Regularly review changes and compare changes to the original partnership objectives.
- 5) Provide resources to grassroots women to document their projects, sustainability, and transferability.
- 6) Create ways to link grassroots partners to opportunities for funding, sitting on boards, being appointed to advisory committees, and jointly issuing strategy papers.

Various members of the Huairou Commission also have partnership frameworks. Keepers of the Circle, an indigenous women's hub in Canada, focuses on equity as a core principle and has created a cultural, linguistic competency framework equivalent to an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. In Canada, the member group Yellowknife works with two tools-- an indigenous cultural, linguistic framework that spells out ground rules for partnerships between indigenous and non-indigenous groups and MOU's.

Ntengwe, the Zimbabwe organization working on children living in poverty and injustice, is developing a partnership "model" to put grassroots women self-determination at the center of the community self-determination goal. Elements of their partnership framework include a) bringing together actors working on common problems, b) creating an alliance of supporting organizations, c) institutional capacity strengthening of grassroots movements and networks, and d) generating and sharing knowledge at local, regional, and international levels. It is also critical to promote and scale-up innovations and alternative solutions and hold duty bearers to account for protecting and fulfilling the rights of women and children. The organization is also introducing a new Theory of Change. This effort aims at strengthening partner's ability to expand stronger partnerships and engage in strategic advocacy.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Partnership Assessment

Host a grassroots Academy focusing on the theme of partnerships with member groups. Use this to clarify who has what partnerships, where they go for, and what kind of partnership is essential.

Include board involvement. This helps the assessment process.

Do mapping/framing of different Huairou Commission and member group partnerships.

Integrate partnerships in the Huairou Commission strategic plan and Congress to clarify who we partner with, how we are partnering, and ways to make partnerships more transparent to members.

Review MOU's, goals, objectives, and working status of partnerships. Further define overarching goals, norms, and principles. Clarify what we want to get and what we bring. Review existing partnership arrangements (such as the International Land Coalition and LPI with the African Union) to address member concerns; Clarify national engagement strategy with International Land Coalition, LPI and others.

Move away from the term partnership to limit this only to cases where Huairou or member group has a written MOU. Instead, label relationships "collaboration" to define people or organizations where relationships are more short-term.

Define individuals/organizations with whom the Huairou has a special "family-like" relationship through long committed involvement. Further, outline mutual needs and integration into structures, gatherings, and activities.

Create a partnership committee of members working deeply on partnership (e.g., Elizabeth Ntengwe, Florence, Anna Lucy, SSP).

Develop a grassroots partnership model; Introduce a Theory of Change and strategic advocacy.

Internal Processes

Reinforce Huairou Commission member's understanding of their relationship with Huairou as a membership rather than donor/ recipient relationship.

Address challenges of partnerships, including power imbalances and funding resources with potential and existing partners.

Huairou should hire a focal point person for partnerships.

Leave autonomy for groups at the country level concerning partnerships but share examples from other countries and partnership tools.

Create partnership focal points within the Huairou Commission.

Reexamine implementation of the code of conduct and partnerships between members in addition to international partners. Review the strategies to enhance coordination (country, national, regional, and international). Ensure there are coordinating bodies in place to strengthen partnerships. Align/improve information availability about member groups. Strengthen the collective voice to get the attention of prospective partners through increased understanding of what members want, what we should consider for partnering.

Strengthen collaborative partnership at regional and global levels. Increase member communication through more regular membership zoom meetings for sharing, discussion of negotiations, updates on members, and Huairou activities and partnership progress (including Covid 19 response, etc.) Involve Regional Coordinators and members of regional coordinating councils.

External Processes

Host formal meetings with key partners to establish, assess agreements and MOUs to clarify relationships.

Review new approaches, including cluster networks, non-structural modalities, funding mechanisms, and standards to help grassroots groups obtain funding through government authorities, donors, or the private sector: update funding information, criteria for funding, and sources.

Increase organizational communication to go beyond obtaining grants. Improve planning to address coordinating/ collaboration among members.

Section 4: Grassroots Women's Relationship to the Feminist Movement

Grassroots women leaders may not be articulating feminist theories or feminist language, but they are living the power they have exerted to change their situations, families, and communities.

- Corazon Juliano-(Dinky) Soliman

Key Points

- *Identification and ambivalence among members.*
- *Changing the movement to recognize the grassroots.*
- *Evidence of grassroots activism worldwide.*
- *Challenges of resources and power.*
- *Building bottom-up solidarity.*
- *New strategy partnership potential.*

History of the Relationship

The historical links between the Huairou Commission and the feminist movement stems from the growth of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women in 1975, when 75 to 95 women first came together in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, with solidarity increasing after acquiring the building that is still headquarters for the Huairou Commission Secretariat to this day. Members of the National Congress initially experienced isolation, biases, and stigmas as they organized women in a traditional community. During that period there were challenges connecting with the women's movement in the United States, as they sought to introduce a grassroots women's agenda.

By 1975, meetings with international activists involved in the first United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico City helped link the group to global issues. By 1985 global connections continued as the National Congress of Neighborhood Women obtained official standing in the UN through the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and participated in the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi when GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood) began. Connections with women in countries such as the Philippines and Jamaica helped the organization formalize into an international network. Members participating in the UN women's conferences in Mexico and Copenhagen noticed the absence of formal grassroots women's perspectives. After a long period of receiving small grants, increased funding helped GROOTS have a more substantial presence at the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing, China, in 1995. After extensive negotiation, a grassroots women's tent was approved for Huairou, China, as part of the civil society conference events. Government meetings at the conference were in Beijing, while the tent in Huairou at the civil society gathering eventually became a center for global

grassroots women's mobilization. The event attracted UN-Habitat head Wally N'dou, leading to the eventual launch of the Huairou Commission as an entity to represent grassroots women worldwide.

We also held a grassroots caucus for the first time. We always have women's caucuses. We did not create the idea of caucus, but it was the first-time grassroots women were having a caucus at a global meeting. Then Nandini Azad, from the Working Women's Forum in India, ran our caucus and brought the issues down to the formal UN governmental meeting in Beijing. And we also had during this whole event besides the mother center's quilts, which they [created] from all their mother's centers across Europe. There was a meeting group of women working on land and property going on every day in preparation. A group of women from Papua New Guinea joined our grassroots tent as well as fisher women from Newfoundland who were losing their way of life. The women were sharing their practices by region. For the duration of the tent, and that was why Secretary General of UN Habitat II Wally N'dou came to hear what they had come up with because they were working on the platform. But the fact that we had a group of women every day working on a position paper on women land and property that we were going to bring to the Habitat meeting in Istanbul 10 months later, was a significant point in our effort to open space, because in the Beijing meeting, we were a marginal group just trying to get in the door. I mean, before Beijing we did everything from holding regional meetings to running a 50/50-campaign, asking the feminist community to each bring grassroots women to get them there.... A lot of advocating, and we at least supported land and property. But now, we were already beginning to build a claim on the next global meeting, where we would find out that there was no women's movement.

- Jan Peterson, Past Chair of the Huairou Commission, National Congress of Neighborhood Women

Since these early days, members of the Huairou Commissions global network eventually grew to represent a wide array of groups from more than 45 countries with increasingly diverse grassroots women's organizations involved. Partners such as Winnie Byanyima from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) made a point of helping Huairou in its early days elevate the work through support of their activities and publications. The organization pioneered new strategies for redressing disinheritance and securing women's land and property rights, with help from partners such as Caren Grown, active in the organization's work more than 15 years ago. Huairou increased efforts to bring a grassroots approach to working collaboratively to challenge cultural interpretations of what was happening in communities. They formulated new ways to empower grassroots women's organizations to negotiate land access and protect their property and land from chiefs and other key authorities.

The Commission's work grew over time to embrace a range of other issues. They influenced new approaches to agendas on disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation. They contested the notion that grassroots women's groups are vulnerable groups, insisting that, whether from major disasters around the world from the 1990s to now, it has been grassroots women leaders that play a central role in relief and recovery. Their experiences are central to reshaping what constitutes risk reduction and resilience building, with those lessons continuing during COVID 19. Members express pride in pioneering tools and strategies that the Huairou Commission built from the bottom-up, including working on engendering local governance and producing safe and secure communities with grassroots women at the base.

Huairou' s Contribution to the Women's Movement

We are talking about 25 years of people deepening relationships, celebrating working across race, class, and ethnicity as one of a few groups that show a robust, diverse face.

- Jan Peterson, Past Chair of the Huairou Commission, NCNW

A review of the Huairou Commissions' work shows ways the network helped shift the agenda's related to poverty and economic empowerment from welfare, microfinance, and a client-oriented approach, to putting grassroots women at the center of driving their own solutions and priorities. The shift occurred on housing and essential services, decent livelihoods, and access to productive assets and investments. For more than two decades, the organization focused on urban and rural women's empowerment strategies, emphasizing collective, integrated approaches. They measurably shifted HIV, AIDS, and pandemic response, putting grassroots women's leadership centerstage through the work of the Home-based Care Alliance they helped launch. They reframed caregiving and care in the pandemic and community work globally.

Grassroots women groups and leaders performed activities to move beyond how this work is viewed traditionally in the feminist movement to show collective work that can be scaled, recognized, and compensated. Grassroots leaders shared a wide range of examples that demonstrate their involvement in shifting and reframing discussions around key development issues, including work on land rights, economic empowerment, and climate, setting new standards for directly improving women's lives. Huairou members deepened and broadened bread and butter issues that members work on in community development, housing, governance, safety, and security. The centralized planning tools of government's link to grassroots women's priorities. Grassroots leaders nurture peer learning, exchanges of good practices, and knowledge among grassroots member organizations, who increase empowerment and policy fluency.

Huairou Commission members shared many examples of good practices and evidence showing grassroots women leading strategic and holistic approaches, building alliances, and increasing women's social, economic, and political capital. These top competencies break stereotypes of grassroots women as vulnerable and dependent in the women's movement, government, or wider CSO community. Grassroots women's movements gained measurable experience and authority in work involving the Sustainable Development Goals and the feminist movement. Their work with constituencies and their priorities are referenced more frequently in community development, in ways beyond just the sphere of women's rights.

Participants reflected on the global diversity of their impacts. A GROOTS Jamaica member recalled before the launch of the Huairou Commission, "some of us were timid, some of us were scared, getting in that space. But some were forceful who realized that if we are not in this space, then nobody will consider us. Nobody will take what we see seriously. Over the last 25 years, there have been achievements for grassroots women, not just in the Caribbean but across the entire world." Because of the Commission, more grassroots women are organized nationally, individually, and personally and have gained momentum to be called upon.

In Asia and the Philippines, the activism at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the formation of the Huairou Commission increased grassroots leader's exposure, helping elevate their activities beyond local activism on land and eviction. As a result of attendance at the Beijing Conference, grassroots women increased their understanding of gender. They began a process of reflection, with new levels of attention to gender mainstreaming and movement beyond the previous gender-blind approach. They produced a Beijing manual outlining steps in organizing to ensure women are engaged. In Nepal, grassroots women groups became more active at local and national levels, contributing to the Voluntary National Reviews. They

become involved in the women's major group for SDG 5, focusing on ending discrimination against women and girls. The Huairou Commission's affiliate group, the Women's Community Forum, works with more than 35,000 grassroots women, advocating and helping influence the development agenda. Grassroots women recently led a survey assessing grassroots women's needs related to the Covid 19 crises. They increased recognition by UN-Habitat in Nepal and in government negotiations to secure space in formal structures enabling them to raise community issues, increase budgeting, decision-making, and programming relevant to grassroots women.

In India, the Huairou member group Jagori, helped push legal reforms on domestic violence laws and criminal legislation reforms related to stalking, voyeurism, and violation of women's rights and public space. The Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act was an important policy passed because of women's advocacy, with groups increasing efforts to provide services for women survivors of violence. Grassroots women's activism with local and state government authorities grew along with engagement in gender budgeting, campaigns, training, building women's understanding of their legal and citizenship rights, and representation in local governance.

In Africa, in Zimbabwe, Ntengwe for Community Development worked with feminist and grassroots organizers to decrease gender-based violence, land grabbing, increase land rights, economic empowerment, and equality for women. Linkages to the Huairou Commission enhanced Ntengwe's work with over 300 grassroots women's groups and networks, as they helped secure laws giving new protection to thousands of women and their organized groups. Work with girls supports education, increases women's rights to equal job opportunities, in addition to helping seed new groups with support from the Community Resilience Fund.

In Kenya, Polycom Development works in the Kibera slums. Over the years, linkages with the Huairou Commission and Habitat involved hosting four Urban Thinkers Campuses, including one in 2015 before the UN-Habitat III conference where the group brought together grassroots women with policymakers, officials from the UN, the community, and academia. This gathering allowed grassroots women to lead the agenda. Polycom was able to "bring the UN right into the community." They also played a leadership role in SDG 11 under the SDG Kenya Forum. The Urban Thinkers Campuses provided an opportunity for grassroots women to help critique what the government and other stakeholders characterize as successful projects, resulting in an increased understanding of realities on the ground. The Voluntary National Review for Kenya refers to the organization as powerful implementers of SDG 11, furthering the goal of making cities resilient and sustainable. Recently the organization is hosting a fifth Urban Thinkers Campus in preparation for the Afro Cities summit taking place in Kisumu in Kenya. In Ghana, member groups such as the Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation are active, helping ensure grassroots women's voices are prominent in community negotiations concerning land and security of tenure. Members helped establish committees active on land at the community level that include 30% representation of women. This elevated women's voices in many communities and influenced the creation of a woman's advocacy platform. Through this, women's committee members met with chiefs pushing measures, increasing women's access to land, governance, and decision-making processes at the community level. Women on the committee are also influential at the national level, helping push legislation to increase joint ownership of land.

In Latin America in Nicaragua, Las Brumas, works on a range of issues including women's access to land, political empowerment, climate change, and food security at national and local levels. Their efforts helped over 700 women achieve ownership titles, while Community Resilience funding helped their work with

cooperative leaders. Training is part of the fundamental core of their work. Strategic alliances with governments, communities, and Ministries are also instrumental. This includes an active political network of 40 women activists and engagement with women in prominent government roles. They also partner with the police combatting violence against women. Mujeres, Democracia y Ciudadanía A.C in Mexico embraced peer exchange methodologies as an essential focus. More recently, because of the Covid 19 pandemic, attention moved to distribution of free food. Over 20,000 people were served. The group operates four community kitchens, greenhouses, community gardens, and raises and distributes rabbits and chickens.

Members of Huairou and GROOTS also fought to create spaces within the UN that hold their events.

Whether it is the women's caucuses that we have run at every Habitat, or our grassroots caucuses at the CSW and other places --we continue to work on holding space. We continue to talk to each other on running panels. Now we work with partners. We built up a whole partnership effort because if we did not have people that people knew on our panels, people were not coming in. We came up with 50 names. Each one has been like a building block. We have each done something and then linked it up. It is the linking it up that is giving us power.

- Jan Peterson, Past Chair of the Huairou Commission, NCNW

Equally important is the fact that this work measurably shifted priorities of the women's movement. Members were consciously shattering a culture of global meetings and gatherings speaking for and about grassroots women and their issues "without us." Huairou Commission democratized agenda-setting roles and models. They expanded recognition for knowledge, expertise, good practices, and authority of grassroots women's organizations. The organization's partners helped finance the work through creative strategies for collective investment. Many cases illustrate increased advocacy and inclusion in decision-making spaces and the strong track record of influencing legislation growing through grassroots and professional collaboration. Women like Joan Winship helped the organization publicize problems faced by judges such as sextortion and documentation of challenges with corruption, as seen through the eyes of many grassroots women. Margarita Wahlstrom helped open doors, setting up initiatives within UNISDR called the community practitioner platform. Partnership with groups like Slum Dwellers International helped increase influence in UN-Habitat.

So, what are the concrete spaces that we can use to work with each other and the new ways of working? Because we do not have one woman that we just send out to go to UN meetings, and they negotiate everything. We have diverse leadership, so we do that. And the way we do that is still important.

- Jan Peterson, Past Chair of the Huairou Commission, NCNW

Member Perceptions of the Feminist Movement

Participants moved into two diverse breakout groups composed of either grassroots leaders or professional affiliates of the Huairou Commission. These reflected on both groups' perceptions of whether they considered themselves as feminists. Many members of both groups confirm that the majority were comfortable identifying themselves with that label. A representative from Jagori, for example, commented that they "always identified itself as a feminist organization. For us, feminism is part of a journey where the personal is political." Another member reflected on the holistic nature of feminism commenting that, "when

I started to think about it, like it's the whole system. So, it is a perspective. So, maybe more, yes. I would say that my outlook is feminist." Others linked their activism as gender equality activists growing out of their past experiences. One member comments that, "For us, feminism is part of a journey growing out of personal experiences as girls, teenagers, mothers, and spouses, independence and freedom fighters, or members of political change movements."

Although most in the group acknowledge long experience pushing for women's interests, some still grapple with the feminist label. Some felt hesitant because it is not clear to them that feminists were active enough helping to improve women's lives through work on the ground. Some did not feel experienced or knowledgeable enough to feel comfortable using the label. Others stated they had different political and social values than traditional feminist groups. A few linked their ambivalence to broader challenges surrounding the feminist movement. They mentioned public controversies around abortions and perceptions of feminism as primarily a "well-educated, white women's movement." In parts of Latin America, historical divisions separated socialists and feminists.

I saw urban poor women; they are not feminists, but they are overcoming. Urban poor, they do not call themselves feminists. They do not know the answer, but they are fighting all this marginalization, all this violence. It is important to know, articulation of feminism and how we try to change women's position. They need to know the basic concept.

- Fides Bagaso, Community Organizers Multiversity

Feminist activists also sometimes ignore grassroots women's perspectives. There were comments that "feminism is about power relationships," and mention of contradictions in attitudes towards feminism among grassroots and poor women. Proposals for alternative labels included terms like "gender equality advocates" or "women's empowerment advocates." Many highlight the importance of the Huairou Commission as a movement focused on influencing change in the feminist movement. A newer, more systemic, integrated approach to gender needs to embrace a wide range of issues that link class and economy to issues such as conflict, human rights, challenges for girls, narco-trafficking, political influence, power, and corruption.

Feminist Movement Partners Perspectives

A group of leading, feminists joined a session to reflect on their views about the influence of the Huairou Commission on the feminist movement. All acknowledged that mobilization of grassroots women through the organization successfully brought a different perspective to the movement, influencing new ways to make feminism reach into all corners of women's lives. Margarita Wahlstrom pointed to essential strengths of the Huairou Commission. She pointed out that the organization's way of working is not hierarchical but rather works towards democratization of agenda setting, building on interaction of groups, particularly in distribution of roles. This helps ensure everyone is present in different gatherings and that all play a critical role. The strategy illustrates the power of collective action in practice and the ability to empower everyone that participates. The Huairou Commissions' long history also affirms the ability to bring activities, lessons, and experiences up from the local level through various systems to high-level platforms in both the United Nations and government settings.

Sheela Patel highlighted the long, close, enduring, personal relationship between the Huairou Commission and her organization, Spark in India. She recalled the influence of Commission members and their activism

on resilience and disaster risk reduction, stimulating her initial interest in climate change and eventual appointment to the Commission for Adaptation to Climate Change. Charlotte Bunch, from the Center for Women's Global Leadership, discussed her early links with the National Congress of Neighborhood Women in New York. She emphasized the powerful impact of the Commission's message to view grassroots women as "experts and not just victims" and their intersectional, holistic approach.

Recognizing expert leaders, driving impactful results, because I think that is what you have been working to do and what feminists in social movements in all our arenas really must do, particularly in this moment.

- Charlotte Bunch

She defined the Huairou Commissions' policy fluency as the ability to get involved in global policy settings and set the policy agenda. Dinky Soliman recalled her former role in the Philippines as Minister for Social Welfare Development. She reflects that "women's organizations at the grassroots here in the Philippines, are very active not just in care for communities but influencing poverty, like influencing policy like the reproductive lab deal, getting the social protection programs monitored, and being held accountable." It was noted that the Huairou Commission has done important work influencing institutions such as the Asian Development Bank. Women's grassroots groups such as Dampa were extremely active dealing with problems of Covid 19, serving as "active workers to protect. They are the ones asked to do many things that the government cannot do-- which is to reach the community, despite physical distance. They are doing delivery of food packs, and needed services. Not as victims, but actually as partners for the government." She argues:

Maybe this new vocabulary for power and relationships, the intersection you were mentioning, is a new language that needs to come out based on the reality of relationships and power arrangements.

- Corazon Juliano-Soliman

The women's movement also faces charges of lack of leadership and effectiveness. Right-wing movements across the globe wage attacks on women's rights and priorities. Differences in level of education, feminine consciousness, or attitudes towards family, sometimes create distance and mistrust between grassroots and feminist leaders. Grassroots women's groups face violence because of their work's impact on powerful political and economic forces. Professionalization of work on women's empowerment and gender equality occasionally undermines the activism, organizing, and diversity efforts necessary for vibrant feminism. Concerns in the women's movement also surround different views about values or standards about who speaks for whom.

Gaps sometimes exist between how feminists and women's grassroots groups frame issues such as balancing work and care. Grassroots women successfully broadened the definition of care beyond family to community, linking environmental work that grassroots women do as part of the care economy. Rivalry between women's organizations remains a problem, although this has not strained relationships between the Huairou Commission and a variety of feminist leaders. Charlotte Bunch comments that:

The development world makes you competitive. Some institutions favor one against the other, you are competing for money. It is like sibling rivalry. But in the last three or four decades that we have all been working together, we have shared ideas, we have shared explorations.

- Sheela Patel, SPARC

Hierarchies and competition around resources remain problems in the larger humanitarian system. Huge levels of resources tend to favor a few development organizations, with many other active organizations left underfunded at the local level. Large international NGO's such as Care and Save the Children and large corporate INGOs, dominate funds and roles, creating diversion from the agenda of leadership building and transformative change.

We do have a danger, about the women's movement being professionalized. The INGOs cornering the women's voice, and grassroots groups often are plucked up and put into pots within large INGOs, and they are put on an agenda that is not their agenda.

- Jan Peterson, Past Chair of the Huairou Commission, NCNW

The challenges of disparities around money and power were central to the formation of the Huairou Commission.

So, we have people, but started out with having no money in Huairou. And that was why we created the Huairou Commission because we found out that we had all these networks. They have grassroots groups that all have their own power, but the networks had no power. I mean no money and we are having a hard time being able to work. So Huairou was built to begin to infuse some resources, and the ability to have women in local community's work with women and other local communities, so they could go over their political power brokers who generally control their community or their own city. So, the fact that our women can link with other city women and other cities, and in the regions and nationally and globally gives them a power position that a lot of the women's movement does not have. And the two of them together can forge and are forging a much more serious political space.

- Jan Peterson, Past Chair of the Huairou Commission, NCNW

Where to Go from Here

Building of Bridges and Agendas

Strategize new strategic alliances, for example, between the youth and women's movement.

Look at specifics of organizational relationships between humanitarian and grassroots women. Create a collaborative structure between the Huairou Commission grassroots organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Cross women at local levels, because there are millions of them, and they have little support.

Change narratives of humanitarian organizations. The Women's Movement has been a global, national, and regional force for social change. However, there is a need for a change agenda in the humanitarian sector. The language is still focused on vulnerable groups with a hierarchy in terms of resources in the humanitarian system.

Expansion of Huairou Commission Agendas

Concerning networks and alliances, select just a few things to drive globally. Select a few agendas to deal with biases, stereotypes, and resources. Use this to increase visibility, entry point to partners, organizations, and spaces where the Commission has not been before. Use openings to build on the agenda of things grassroots organizations are doing in different countries.

Increasing Grassroots Women's Communication

Continue to document and communicate progress and outcomes to institutionalize the work of grassroots women in many areas. Evidence-based representation is critical, whether related to climate change or Covid 19, reemphasizing the Huairou Commissions message of empowerment versus victimization. Help inventory and work with grassroots women's groups providing relief without additional support in Covid.

Continue to build solidarity from the bottom-up. Engage current conversations such as the Black Lives Matter movement and seek to emphasize essential workers. Reconsider the intersectional, cross-sectional hierarchy. Decide how to reach new, different, emerging networks, and new influences in the feminist movement to share Huairou's methods and expertise. Strengthen linkages to networks formed around customary and informal justice systems. Expand conversations through technology such as Zoom.

Resources and Support

Seek and support funding that goes beyond short-term, one-year funding.

Review relationships with academia to ensure grassroots representation is accurate and authentic.

Section 5: Community Resilience

We must consider challenging this language of grassroots women looking like they are helpless, they are in a corner crying, waiting for someone to bring solutions to them, and show how grassroots women are working as a collective in significant numbers, critical mass, defining the change they want to see and transforming communities in the context of climate change and many development agendas.

- Violet Shivutse, Shibuye

Key Points

- *Grassroots women in Turkey and India set the stage.*
- *Importance of preparedness, coordination, organization.*
- *Mapping as a critical tool.*
- *Disasters strengthen women's leadership.*
- *Grassroots women build sustainable communities.*
- *Resilience models help Covid preparedness.*
- *Increased focus on structural inequality and climate justice*

Evolution of the Resilience Campaign

The Huairou Commissions' work on resilience began due to impacts from several significant disasters in various parts of the world between 1995 and early 2000. Major earthquakes struck countries like India and Turkey, with hurricanes disrupting communities in Honduras and Nicaragua. There were existing groups of organized women in various places focused on grassroots women's leadership and development, with few viewing themselves as specialists on disaster. However, many soon recognized the ongoing disruptive natural disasters and hurricanes as an opportunity to mobilize grassroots women to get them more engaged in recovery and reconstruction. The process created the opening for rebuilding communities, providing new entry points for planning change. It became clear women can play a more central role in deciding how communities develop.

In 2005, due to the tsunami's impact, the Hyogo Framework for Action was signed and adopted by countries worldwide. Language integrated gender as a crosscutting theme but still referred to women as a vulnerable group. It gradually became evident in subsequent years that local implementation of the Hyogo Framework was lagging. During this period, the Huairou Commission began working to counter the image of grassroots women merely as a vulnerable group of passive victims by demonstrating the varied public roles they play in phases of response, recovery, and reconstruction.

Whether it was through planting trees, organizing to have a greater voice, or acquiring and claiming land rights, women became active in different aspects of building resilience in a wide range of communities. In the period around 2008, three crucial milestones included a community mapping exchange hosted by Wagucha in Honduras. Carmen Griffith from Jamaica showed women from Central America and the Caribbean how to walk around an area to do a community participatory mapping process. She explained how to conduct an assessment in clear, simple terms. Margaret Arnold from the World Bank sponsored a Guatemala Grassroots Academy hosted by Fundación Guatemala, with an initiative on government certification of grassroots leaders emerging from this meeting.

Along with operationalizing these ideas and local implementation of the Hyogo Framework, the Huairou Commission also created the Community Resilience Fund. The fund put money in the hands of grassroots women to demonstrate their approaches to resilience. The Resilience Diamond, illustrating four pathways for change, and Community Resilience Fund did not focus solely on practical actions like changing how people did agriculture or constructed homes. They also emphasized the importance of organizing, coalition building, networking, and partnership to highlight the way these issues integrate. The launch of the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience during this period helped counter the notion that only NGOs should be the voice of civil society. Margarita Wahlstrom was the first to champion the idea. This created a space at the global level where communities had their own identity and recognition as a stakeholder group. Communities, particularly grassroots women, doing the actual work on the ground, and experiencing disasters, also had a voice at the decision-making table in policy dialogues.

By 2015, grassroots women gained recognition as a legitimate stakeholder group. Many leaders in the Huairou Commission network participated in deliberations around various global policy frameworks. Members began to feel their influence, playing a role in the Sendai Framework, which shifted language from women's vulnerability to their empowerment. In the five years between 2015 and 2020, women were also influencing global policy commitments including the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement, and New Urban Agenda. Attention moved to building coalitions and partnerships, technical understanding of linkages between climate and disaster risk reduction, and increased strategic relationships with groups like Slum Dwellers International, a newer entrant in the climate space. Resources available through the Community Resilience Funds to grassroots groups give them more direct resource management and leverage of funds. Root causes and structural issues of inequalities and power became an increased focus, including climate justice issues and intersections surrounding the Covid crises.

Examples of Resilience Work

Early Leaders: India, Turkey

Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in India and the Federation of Women's Groups originally became engaged because of ongoing disasters such as earthquakes and droughts after 1995. Before this, work in India on disasters was primarily government-driven and top down. However, grassroots women found themselves

experiencing pressures from natural disruptions occurring every few years. The organization decided their focus should shift beyond just immediate drought or disaster to resilience more broadly. They began looking at natural disruptions in the context of climate change's impact on food, water, and livelihoods. This eventually led to the application of a community-led model adapted in more than four districts. Women were concerned about increasing access to community food, water, and alternate livelihoods to make families more resilient.

After disasters such as the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, tsunami in 2004, and floods in 2008, women went to communities in other states. They shared local knowledge from previous disasters and information about their active role in recovery and rehabilitation. They identified needs for housing and basic services. They also identified groups of women open to learning new skills to cope with climate change and disasters. Women engaged in a range of activities, including surveys and assessments of water resources, as part of a strategy to collect evidence.

Participants from SSP visiting Turkey were impressed by mobilization of women in earthquake-impacted areas and their progress creating tents and resource centers.

The idea of women forming support groups to help each other emotionally and link their work with local governments has been there. And time and again, what we learned is that it is not enough for women just to be empowered economically. They need to take on public roles. Though disasters are unfortunate in the devastation that they cause, it is also an opportunity for fast-tracking development because the communities, the men, the local government, everyone is open to local action.

While the response period is very top-down, what we have found is space is there [to go] from recovery to resilience. And unless women are organized, they are pushed back unless they take up public roles and almost develop new identities, not just as leaders to mobilize communities, but also as planners and problem solvers.

-Prema Gopalan, Swayam Shikshan Prayog

Since this time, women in India more recently adapted resilience skills to the Covid 19 crises. Grassroots women's groups engaged in activities such as a survey of more than 20,000 families, including those most vulnerable and migrants returning to villages after losing jobs. Women also became involved in relief, partnering with local governments to improve food access from the public distribution system. They are shifting roles to ensure the entire settlement has access to food and livelihoods. Partnerships with government, universities, and other institutions, have been instrumental in helping access both technology and resources.

In Turkey, original work by grassroots women on resilience began in the late 1990s, after a significant earthquake in the country. The Foundation for Support of Women's Work helped grassroots women impacted by disaster set up eight women's centers in the quake region. The inspiration for the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work was activities of women peers worldwide. They recall that the connection, support, and advice from women in SSP in India, helped women in Turkey increase mobilization and effectiveness in the recovery process. In 2010 Ayse Yonder, a longtime partner with the Huairou Commission from Pratt Institute Department of Urban Planning in New York city, brought students to Istanbul from the United States. The students teamed up with women in the neighborhood in Turkey to do community

mapping. "And that kind of that inspired them... and they wanted to do some more of that work". Support from the Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Fund and the community launched planning in five neighborhoods in Istanbul. Major phases included first, to learn more about the disaster management and risk reduction process. A second phase involved conducting community mapping and using findings to develop recommendations. The third final phase involved using results for advocacy, creating partnerships with government agencies, and using information to monitor progress.

After the initial pilot project, in five neighborhoods the following year the Foundation raised funding to replicate the process in 20 other Istanbul neighborhoods which covered 500,000. This phase of work took place in partnership with both the municipality and Technical University of Istanbul. Faculty and students did initial training and then engaged in mapping, with information entered into GIS systems. A plan and handbook for women followed discussion of results and recommendations. At the end of the project, around 2015/6, participants presented the work to a large group of government representatives, including all local headmen.

Lessons from Nepal, Indonesia

Lumanti Support Group for Shelter, another Huairou member, worked with women and women's savings credit cooperatives in Nepal for a long time. In 2015 in a municipality struck by an earthquake, the organization mobilized despite the unexpected nature of the disaster because of a preexisting urban resilience-building project. An organized women's group sprang into action, coordinating work around the immediate emergency and during follow-up recovery and reconstruction. When the earthquake occurred, grassroots women quickly increased communication and outreach to learn more about who had been affected.

Although everyone in the community was frightened, women began collecting critical information about who was hurt, lost, killed, or needed a place to stay. Rapid emergency support resulted. Previous training of grassroots actors in vulnerability assessment and planning, eased coordination with the local government. Over 2000 men and women had preparation on risk assessment, operations and providing first aid. This cadre speeded service distribution to people in need. Strong linkages with municipal government helped despite instructions that no group should work independently to avoid duplication. Preparedness, coordination, and organization led to resources for risk assessment, operations, first aid, water, and sanitation.

The women's group's efficiency in this case strengthened respect in the community. During the recovery stage, the grassroots women's groups mobilized financial support. The Huairou Commission and other donors provided help for building temporary housing for those who lost homes and access to livelihoods. Women pitched in with management of construction of needed facilities. Groups of women played an active role with thousands of houses completed in different areas. Women gained skills in coordination of housing construction and government subsidies. In some rural areas, where a women's group did not exist before the earthquake, new groups organized, through strategies such as quick orientations and dialogues. Women also organized their own resource center to provide information.

Yakkum Emergency Unit from Indonesia is a more recent member of the Huairou network active in resilience. Although the organization has previous experience in emergency response, since joining the Huairou Commission, the grassroots women continued to evolve. Like other Huairou network members, the organization's strategy also goes beyond emergency response to ensure empowerment of disaster-affected communities. The group does community-based disaster preparedness, utilizing a variety of capacities and resources. In their Emergency Response Program and newer Women for Post Disaster Risk Reduction Program, disaster risk reduction is mainstream. Women do vulnerability capacity assessment and disaster risk mapping, to collect data about vulnerable groups. Through these activities, the most at-risk communities are prioritized for social protections. When YEU initiates action with grassroots women, they also engage national and local governments to ensure awareness and support for grassroots initiatives on the ground. They get government funding for planning, space, grassroots women's workshops, training, and community consultations.

They empower grassroots women's leaders to understand budgeting, purchasing and program planning. They initiate peer learning about resilience practices, inviting local governments and stakeholders to provide practical solutions to community problems. They also conduct local/national dialogues with various Ministries, including the national agency for disaster management. Policymakers use these forums to share information on impacts of national efforts at grassroots levels. More recently, work focuses on COVID-19 mobilizing vulnerable groups to engage in data gathering to help at-risk communities access government cash transfer programs. In some cases, the group also mobilizes their own resources.

Critical components help in the shift from an NGO to grassroots-driven response:

One was the idea of using mapping to identify who and what was vulnerable and set priorities. The second was the Community Resilience Fund, which allowed women groups to address and work on their vulnerabilities. And the third was a grievance redressal mechanism through which grassroots organizations may complain if they feel staff are not responsive or doing things without approval.

- Suranjana Gupta, Huairou Commission India

In addition, when organizing a local dialogue with the government, the organization changed policy to have community members speak on behalf of themselves rather than having staff members speak or organize interventions.

Lessons from Latin America

In Central America, groups in Guatemala such as Fundación Guatemala started work on resilience in 2008. They came together with Huairou members from India, who visited Guatemala for the first Latin American workshop with 71 grassroots leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean. Although these groups were previously working on resilience activities, it then was referred to as "community development." The workshop elevated the importance of linking activities to disaster reduction and climate change adaptation.

We made a revolution to the process of intervention of communities because [through] their work, we understood that women are not victims in disasters, that women are actresses. We provide a lot of leadership in disasters. We went from chaos to creativity. It was particularly important because Prema, and Ana Lucy and

our friends from Peru came to Guatemala. It was exciting because we started developing a Latin American network and connected to practitioners and advocacy builders.

- Maria Teresa Rodriguez, Fundación Guatemala

After 2008, a solid relationship emerged in Guatemala with national and regional authorities such as the Coordination Center for Prevention of Natural Disaster in Central America (CEPREDENAC), who helped network members meet with Guatemala's National Coordinating Agency for Disaster Reduction (CONRED). This gathering was the start of the south-south project linking Honduras, Guatemala, and India, and the Community Resilience Fund and Community Practitioners Platform.

These efforts focused on empowering women and strengthening leadership so that networks received humanitarian help and intervened at local, national, regional, and global levels. Many relationships built then are still working.

We went from recovery to resilience because we started working better on our preparedness. Women have responded to COVID-19 with a group that already is working with preparedness—It is completely different. Now that women face disasters like this pandemic, women have resources in their hands from the community resilience fund. They already have networks that come from the community practitioner's platform. We have made a big difference moving from recovery to preparedness and recovery to resilience because we started working better on readiness.

- Maria Teresa Rodriguez, Fundacion Guatemala

While women's groups from India and Turkey were role models for Latin America, mapping was essential for developing a complete resilience process. The mappings conducted in Latin America were an instrumental tool to engage in political advocacy with local government and disaster reduction agencies, and agriculture ministers. In Nicaragua, groups like Las Brumas work in resilience at three levels: before, during, and after a disaster. Las Brumas instituted a range of important agroecological practices. Since COVID-19, grassroots women are developing flour from plantains to sell and organize innovative strategies on various fruits, so crops do not go to waste. They utilize many Huairou Commission's tools in their work, that range from mappings to local- to-local dialogs to focus on the issues.

All the different tools we use contribute to local and community development for women. We are also working in alliances with universities. We have also been aware that women are preparing themselves in their communities on resilience, land, and property ownership. This alliance we developed has given us many results. For example, the government now recognizes us as leaders. They have given us a bonus to be able to work with our communities. We have also been acknowledged for the cultivation of our own seeds. Resilience for us has helped us to impact our territory.

- Haydee Rodriguez – Union de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras 'Las Brumas'

In Honduras, Wagucha, is a grassroots women's group active on resilience since 2010. In this country, like others, women became recognized as "experts" and work on training in partnership with the municipality, community, and national government. They became knowledgeable on grassroots strategies to integrate protection of nature and entrepreneurship, focusing on agricultural practices, traditional medicines, and plants for handicrafts.

Examples from Africa

Shibuye Community Health Workers, a group in Kenya, is another organization addressing climate change and disaster. Although this work started just in one community, it eventually expanded to five other counties. The group found community risk vulnerability mapping helpful to increase community interest. Mapping was "a magnet that calls all the community people to join you." The increased community curiosity helped introduce other useful strategies including local to local dialogues about resilience.

When you begin doing dialogues with leaders, you have a key that is opening a door for the community to start engaging with the leaders directly. I give examples of how Kenyan leaders will always say, "I will come for the meeting," but they used to just come, give a speech of 10 minutes, and then everyone is clapping, and they leave.

- Violet Shivutse, Chair of the Huairou Commission, Shibuye

More recently, climate change stimulated new levels of government and citizen engagement because of the widespread impact. "Everyone is sitting and listening because of the strategies that grassroots women are doing. Action Plans are coming because of what grassroots women are doing".

In Kenya, another Huairou member, the Kenya Poultry Women's Association, works with the urban poor on a COVID-19 project, also linked to climate change. In recent months the community experienced disasters, impacting large numbers of women in the lake region. The group's mapping of informal settlements revealed extensive impacts on the community, particularly among the most vulnerable groups of women. Although they have relatively small resources, the organization reached out to other organizations and helped women get livelihoods restarted. The organization also engaged the local government. Current plans for an Urban Thinkers Campus build on past organizing successes. Disaster risk management is rising on the policy agenda because of local advocacy combined with large numbers of impacted women and severe economic impacts. Women in the area partner with other Huairou Commission members in Kenya, such as the organization Shibuye, to help strengthen organizing.

Central Lessons Learned from Major Disasters

Huairou members learned many crucial lessons from disasters. The first was the importance of organizing. Preparation is critical to ensure an organized group of women is ready when a disaster happens to make it easier to provide needed services. Good relationships with local governments must be in place early, along with a vulnerability assessment plan. Follow-up and implementation with local government involves work on small-scale infrastructure and action-oriented activities. Access to finance must tap external and internal resources at the local or global level.

Swayam Sikshan Prayog (SSP) in India and other groups in the Huairou network illustrate that disasters help jumpstart innovative solutions among women in fields ranging from water and sanitation to health and nutrition. These innovations make a huge difference. If women work with savings and credit or focus on livelihoods and income, it helps families have increased security. During the COVID crises, for example, many

women depended solely on helping networks and communities. After multiple disruptions in the last decade, women learned to respond more holistically, rather than reacting to a single crisis or cause.

The period built highly resilient models, enhancing both food security and income. Women are now changing focus to environmental issues --preserving land, soil, or large-scale reforestation. Central to this are investments in grassroots women's leadership, capacities, and ability to drive action on the ground. They are collecting data and working to negotiate with authorities to bring services to the most vulnerable and government programs and resources to those most in need. Grassroots women are currently making the case that they are an important constituency in climate change adaptation, bringing tools and practices that work, engaging in partnership, and demonstrating sustainable partnerships that balance community, grassroots women, government, and private sectors. This effort has:

Positioned grassroots women differently, which is important for us in Huairou Commission because we have worked on so many thematic activities. But in the thematic activity of climate change, framing was very directed to how we position grassroots women, from the language of the vulnerable, from being treated as a small project.

- Violet Shivutse, Chair of the Huairou Commission, Shibuye

Messages from Huairou' s International Resilience Partners.

Leading partners with a long history with the Huairou Commission reinforced findings that the organization's work has made a significant, practical difference. In some communities, earthquakes and disasters created a new cadre of community women masons for example. Secondly, they reinforce the need to prioritize children and women who are more vulnerable.

Heads of nations have repeated that the COVID-19 pandemic is a big storm, and we are all in this storm together. The statement is not true. I agree it is a catastrophic storm, but we are traveling on different boats, and some vessels are shaking, such as the boats in which the refugees and the migrants are traveling.

- Unni Krishan

Leadership was identified as a critical factor that "makes or breaks" relief and recovery. There is a need to think more carefully about mental health and psychosocial support that few agencies adequately address. Passionate care and support for people who need palliative and end-of-life care are critical. These unmet needs offer substantial job opportunities. Taking a lead role in the debate surrounding minimum income is essential along with climate justice work. Automation and artificial intelligence may make some regular jobs obsolete; however, other doors are opening, especially jobs requiring a robust human factor, particularly in areas of care and support. Digital and real-time data are helpful to empower communities.

Margaret Arnold from the World Bank stressed that building inclusive and sustainable development involves movement building, along with building power and partnerships. Rather than thinking in silos, it is critical to think about multiple issues which mimics the fact that "grassroots women are multitasking and dealing with many different risks at the same time. "It is critical to look at some of the underlying, root causes of vulnerability which go beyond just emergency response and recovery plans". She emphasized the importance

of changing perspectives to see communities not solely as beneficiaries or clients of projects but as knowledge holders, experts, and equal partners. This requires a complex but essential shift.

COVID has been much more like sudden onset realization. The fact wealthy countries were hit so hard laid bare how social inequality and social marginalization affect vulnerability. I need to have you know in the city where I now live, New York City; blacks are dying at twice the rate of white people. Same thing in the Amazon. Indigenous peoples are dying at twice the rate of other Brazilian people. So, we see that it is about social vulnerability. Similarly, in the climate space, we've seen social unrest breaking out in the fact that the Chile climate negotiations last year got canceled due to social unrest because people were not part of those decisions. We must make tough decisions in addressing climate change, and people need to be a part of that because there are tradeoffs and winners and losers.

- Ayse Yonder, Pratt University

Global awareness and dialogue increased around racism and structural inequality, resulting from recent conversations around the murder of George Floyd and protests around police brutality. These are influencing a wide range of organizations, including the World Bank. Thus, more attention is turning to issues of climate justice. The Huairou Commission has done significant work building partnerships and positioning themselves as experts. Part of the "great reset should also be "demonstrating how grassroots community needs are a part of those solutions, and they need to be an equal partner at the table."

Arghya Sinha Roy emphasized that the Huairou Commission engaged in pilot efforts in the Asia region that involved members from the Philippines and Indonesia. These pilots helped the Asian Development Bank staff think about new ways of working. They also helped identify more innovative forms of partnership and procurement, shed light on which approaches work, and which do not, when it comes to delivery on the ground. In 2020, planning is occurring for new regional programs looking at community resilience.

There is a critical editorial by Richard Horton of the Lancet where he said COVID is not a pandemic-- it is a sendemic-- a series of sequentially happening epidemics. And you know, we need to understand this is destroying livelihoods and institutions. This is why the Huairou Commission needs to look at this opportunity for consolidating the livelihoods of grassroots communities.

- Vinod Menon

Vinod Menon outlined the need to use this period to advocate for the community practitioner's platform to look at climate resilience and community resilience building. He emphasized a need to recover from shocks of all kinds, including economic shocks, natural disasters, or human-induced disasters. Suitable feedback mechanisms to policymakers is critical, including local communities and women's group's application of new software tools such as mobile phone apps to provide feedback to the government. In India, volunteers in many states are working with civil society organizations and governments forging new types of partnerships. "Saving lives is important", he notes, "but saving livelihoods is much more important." Thus, there is a vital role for organizations like the Huairou Commission and its member organizations to be more systematic and to engage in risk communication to local representatives in this period.

Where to Go from Here

Planning and Assessment

Resilience planning should address plans for a recovery period that links issues such as climate and Covid. Empower families to be self-sustainable. Strengthen the resilience fund and response to those impacted by a variety of health issues, including HIV. Building resilient homes should involve the economic empowerment of women and girls to self-sustain. Focus on investing in small communities, local community groups, and families to be resilient because of uncertainty about when the Covid pandemic will end.

In North and Central America, engage in internal work on the US agenda related to COVID-19. In Guatemala, one group works with young women on food systems. The leadership school is emphasizing food systems in cities. More efforts should engage grassroots women in North American communities around resilience and emergency planning issues. Huairou should assess what is going on in the various regions to determine appropriate plans.

Document more experiences of what network members are doing well in the field. Assist with transferring knowledge of models such as leadership schools from Guatemala, India, or Kenya to other countries. Use exchanges to define priorities.

Prioritize review of where the Homebased Care Alliance is within the resilience campaign. Increase efforts to tell stories of caregivers within the campaign.

Move into a lead role in the psychosocial and mental health support issues needed in crises. Mental health and psychosocial support are unmet needs that offer substantial job opportunities. Take a lead role to create a culture of community-based, compassionate women caregivers.

Take a lead role in the debate surrounding minimum income and climate justice

Increase monitoring of government social policies during this crisis. Engage women in the monitoring process through a Watchdog process.

Training and Capacity

Do additional work on training grassroots women on simple participatory mapping and documentation processes. Support women to identify and document their communities, needs, strengths, and the way forward. Women also need additional training on application of leadership skills in this area.

Do more training on value chains, including selling crops and strengthening women's skills in working land.

Organizations such as Las Brumas have a new leadership school that trains women in varied subjects, including resilience and disaster risk reduction. In addition to the Resilience Fund, other strategies and tools may leverage and grow funds to enter new themes like sustainability for the future.

Use digital and real-time data to empower communities.

Funding

Build solid financial mechanisms for support to enhance the existing resilience fund. Groups working with the resilience fund want to scale up the fund locally to increase the value of the networks and the leader's ability to negotiate and collaborate with local governments.

Work with network groups to review and access funding opportunities within local governments. For example, through the city authority, a community-driven development fund in Kampala empowers small groups of women to access funding.

Institutionalize the resilience fund. Additional efforts should focus on the creation of small enterprises.

Increase lobbying to strengthen the resilience fund. A wide variety of proposals need to empower women to do small programs or projects at the community or household level. Women should have the income to revive their lives by starting new businesses or making changes to businesses women were doing previously.

Look at new types of innovative finance models. Go beyond the resilience fund to leverage other kinds of resources globally, regionally, and nationally, so the Commission can continue to demonstrate and scale up climate innovations.

Outreach

Prioritize network building. As an Action Coalition leading in economic justice and climate change, reach out to other grassroots organizations beyond the Huairou Commission.

Engage in more structured partnerships with universities and research institutions, mainly because climate change requires scientific knowledge. Consider expanding into additional areas, including food security, water management, and energy cooperatives. Map existing close partners in colleges and universities to explore building on relationships for mutual benefit. Ensure partnerships move forward based on mutual respect and trust.

Increase work on establishing good partnerships with local governments, local ministries, and Ministries of Agriculture and disaster agencies in all our countries necessary for resilience. Use connections with these agencies to increase training and resources.

Create more strategic partnerships with the scientific community,

Involve more young leaders. Capacitate networks of local organizations—strengthening local organizations and scaling up sustainable economic empowerment and leadership, including a new vision for young women political leaders.

Pay more attention to increased visibility in Huairou's knowledge role.

Section 6: Organizing and Leadership

Within the last three years, I think that is due so much to grassroots women, particularly Indigenous women. They have made the case that if you do not involve people with lived expertise, you are not going anywhere as a community or as a country. It is all about getting grassroots women's voices to the top of the pile. More recently, our government passed a policy, especially around housing and homelessness, to value the voices of Indigenous women, the voices of lived experience, and make them the group that gets resources, gets the money, and gets the power. That has really changed the conversation. We still have a long way to go though.

- Arlene Hache, Keepers of the Circle

Key Points

- Varied tools build women's leadership.
- Similar tools, different contexts.
- Leadership strategies help go from CBOS to movements.
- Strengthen innovative grassroots communication.
- Leadership training supports knowledge transfers.
- Used lived experience to drive policy and policymakers.
- Engage new, young grassroots leaders.

Taking Stock

One of the main aims of the session was to review the various tools and processes that the Huairou Commission has used to strengthen grassroots women's leadership over the years in a more integrated and holistic way. The group examined the many different contexts in which tools were applied. They also explored tools' challenges. Examples include the varying way groups in the network deal with themes such as the intersection of leadership with land and shelter access and management, essential services, health, violence against women, the SDG's, peace and conflict, community resilience, climate change, and women's involvement in agriculture and enterprise.

Huairou Commission's primary instruments include peer learning exchanges, the Grassroots Academy, the Leadership Support Process, Local- to- Local Dialogues, and community mapping. These strategies were disseminated, transferred, and adapted among network members over time during the 25-year history of the organization. Each has a value in building women's leadership, access to power and politics across the globe. Previous discussions mention each, but the group now sought to explore which methods are used widely by looking across the globe. They investigated whether methods such as Local-to-Local Dialogues differ across regions and how regional transfers impact their use. The Huairou Diamond is an instrument designed to provide an overall framework. Each aims to strengthen and build grassroots women's leadership and networks, but the group examined whether they achieved their intended goal. The discussion explored innovations in tools and practices, and suggestions for the future way forward to enhance leadership.

Tools and Innovations for Leadership in Africa

In Ghana, the Grassroots Sister Foundation relied on various Huairou Commission tools to reach out to grassroots women and partner agencies. Three constants are peer exchanges, local-to-local dialogues, leadership support groups, and community mapping. Peer exchanges have been beneficial in work on disaster risk, integrated with the Community Resilience Fund and revolving funds for work on flood and droughts, particularly in rural areas.

We bring these women from one place to the other to see how the other counterparts are dealing and working around building your wealth. Sometimes, you only have to bring the woman around to see what other women are doing to know what they can get out of the appraiser's situation.

- Fatima Alhassan, Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation

This strategy strengthens leadership because three or four leaders are chosen from the various groups in one locality to visit another community. They experience first-hand, how they are working with the community resilience fund, revolving fund, saving schemes, or work in agriculture or enterprise. During the exchanges, women sit and discuss concrete, practical, difficulties, such as problems when spouses try to borrow savings scheme money. Local- to- Local dialogues are instrumental in advocacy, particularly with the groups work with local chiefs or religious groups on issues such as women's rights. The Local-to-Local Dialogues were most useful for creating awareness, changing mindsets, building consensus, and mobilizing groups. This strategy for group advocacy helped in mobilization on women's land rights and security of tenure. Organized roundtables involved grassroots women, traditional leaders, family heads, and the Customary Land Secretariat. Land reforms in Ghana and the Land Reform Bill benefitted from these discussions.

Other leadership support efforts involved large gatherings where grassroots women came to focus on leadership strengthening. Large congregations allowed women to sit in groups, decide on focus issues, and formulate solutions which then moved forward for further plenary debate. Community mapping was one of the earliest Huairou Commission tools adopted in the country. The mapping process raised awareness, sensitizing people, and governments about needs for mindset changes around specific threats for grassroots women. For example, mapping played a critical role in dealing with problems of allegations of witchcraft:

Allegations of witchcraft sent more than 2000 women to various camps in the northern region. In our campaign against the allegations, when we needed to know the number of women accused or killed, we did a community mapping to determine the areas where these women were from and where most came into camps. We realized areas had this problem. We were able to carry out the conversations we had with the embassies, especially the United States and British Embassy, supporting the various camps. We gathered the information through community mapping, and this is what we shared with these organizations when we met them to have discussions on what to do.

- Fatima Alhassan, Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation

In Kenya, the member group Shibuye Community Health Workers uses demonstration plots to showcase grassroots women's strong practices to advance food security. A demonstration plot with 20 to 25 grassroots women mobilized from a particular village became a learning center for practical weekly training. The practice began because the government Agricultural Extension Service effort for outreach and training previously focused only on large-scale farmers. The demonstration sites provided a space for agricultural extension officers to work jointly with grassroots women learning to train on farming practices to address food security. Topics included soil rehabilitation and management, growth of an indigenous vegetable, climate change, or a demonstration site for poultry. Shibuye trains three or four grassroots women from a group to become community resource people.

We kept each other's indigenous knowledge and captured knowledge that grassroots women have been using that the agricultural extension office does not have. Because the grassroots women have very successful practices, but they usually are not tapped by the government. And we keep learning their Western knowledge that does not enhance our food security or our soil rehabilitation activities in the right way.

The agriculture extension office comes together with grassroots women trainers and the group setting up the demonstration site for cross-hybrid learning. The agriculture extension officer learns from the grassroots women, and the grassroots women learn from the agriculture extension officer at particular plots. Through this process, we conduct innovative experiments. Each one of the women attending replicates practices in their home. One demonstration plot typically involves 25 grassroots women and a demonstration Learning Center, each holding a similar demonstration in their homes.

- Violet Shivutse, Chair of the Huairou Commission, Shibuye

Agricultural field days bring the community, government, and others to learn from these sites about practices of the grassroots women. This positions grassroots women as leaders in agricultural activities, climate change adaptation methods, soil rehabilitation, management, and sustainable practices that advance livelihoods, promote food security and health. Previously these events focused only on larger farmers but now involve many stakeholders, including private banks and companies, who learn about new developments, practices, and technologies. Grassroots women benefit because banks give awards to women, such as farming tools or equipment. The event serves as a resource mobilization strategy and learning center for grassroots women and the whole community.

In Nigeria, before the organization IWCC became a member of the Huairou Commission, they did not have specific approaches to work with leadership skills. Since becoming network members, they have adopted a wide range of the methodologies such as local-to-local dialogues, which empowered them to move from a CBO/NGO to more of a grassroots movement in the country. The group learned a range of skills such as grant

writing and the leadership support process through Huairou Commission affiliation. In terms of women's leadership, Kwara state is one of the few states in Nigeria with large numbers of women in elected office. Some credit goes to previous years of grassroots mobilization that occurred through Huairou Commission membership.

In Zimbabwe, a support group, Survivors in Action, involves women survivors of domestic violence who joined the Huairou Commission and adopted the leadership support process. This tool transformed the group when they shared their stories, so they no longer viewed each solely as victims but rather as women with the power to make change. The Home-based Care Alliance became a useful strategy for group mobilization at the local level along with the local-to-local dialogues. Member attendance at an international conference on home-based care in the Netherlands led to a meeting with the advisor to the President, resulting in a summit on caregiving when people returned home.

When we managed to bring [the advisor to the President] to the summit, organized under the umbrella of the Home-Based Care Alliance. He wrote a nice article, saying he was touched by the many caregivers he saw that day. Some had nothing, some barely had shoes, but had done a lot towards HIV and AIDS. With this, I saw effective collective organizing bringing policymakers to the table.

- Shorai Chitongo, Huairou Commission

Tools and Innovations in Latin America

In the Latin American region, a variety of groups in counties across the region use Huairou leadership tools. In Mexico, women found the methods resulted in solid achievements in leadership levels. In Nicaragua, groups like Las Brumas continually use community mapping, Local-to-local dialogues, the strategy of peer exchange, and Leadership Support processes. They recently developed a new tool called "remapping" to measure the engagement and follow-through by local authorities to commitments made to grassroots women. Mapping and local-to-local dialogues helped build bridges with local authorities, regional development agencies, and organizations such as CEPREDENAC. The Grassroots Academy was another essential strategy for the region, with community mapping helpful for identification of women's land and property. The mapping process also involves youth, thereby cultivating new leaders. These methods were applied for resilience, food security, and climate adaptation. Letters of agreement strengthened alliances with local and national authorities effective in resilience practices, Covid 19, and work engaging women in development of medicines and food.

Several countries in the region are developing or planning leadership schools and centers for grassroots women's training. Guatemala has a leadership school on women's right to food systems in cities, and Honduras has a center to train women. In Nicaragua, women are working on land guarantees to build a leadership school.

To work with the local government [you need] strategies on how to facilitate women. Because leadership is not enough-- we need to build it. And it does not just exist. We must develop and create leadership in women.

- Haydee Rodriquez – Union de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras ‘Las Brumas’.

The remapping process usually follows a local- to- local dialogue where grassroots women and governments create a work plan on a particular issue. The work plan generally includes specific dates for government

compliance. This provides the framework for the remapping process to measure if government authorities follow up. Sometimes remapping involves gathering evidence such as photos or videos for evaluation of progress.

In Perú, Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Organizadas por la Vida y el Desarrollo Integral, (CONAMOVIDI) has frequently used peer learning exchanges, primarily focusing on agriculture and land. Women acquiring land learn from women who already have ownership and experience with land use and development. The Community Resilience Fund is used in conjunction with these tools, initially in the form of a revolving fund like microcredit, to invest in training and improve livelihoods. More recently, a new strategy includes giving a seed grant to women raising small animals. When these animals have babies, other women receive the same number of animals they got from the resilience fund. This strategy helps multiply the impact of the original seed grant, with the initial support of 10 animals escalating dramatically over time.

They have built a network of women "trainers of women trainers" working on sensitization and accompaniment of women suffering from violence, providing access to justice. This work includes over 100 women. They have also been mapping and using a range of economic strategies. The group works on community restaurants, providing sanitation kits. Advocacy involves local to local dialogues fostering negotiation spaces with local, regional, and national government. With Covid-19, the focus moved to food distribution to vulnerable people, such as the elderly or those suffering other diseases. The group also used mapping to assess the municipal budget on issues of concern for grassroots women.

Tools and Innovations in Asia

In the Philippines, grassroots women, particularly in towns, worked to make the government respond to requests of the women's groups on a range of issues, including land tenure and violence against women. They formed a movement of many women's organizations. Peer learning has been a strategy aimed to help different groups visit and collaborate. Local-to-local dialogues often helped negotiations between the government and the local people, sometimes including the barangay captain who is mayor.

During the Covid pandemic, CEBU was an epicenter for Covid in the Philippines. Grassroots women began an initiative that stemmed from previous work with the Department of Science and Technology. When the pandemic grew, women remembered the beneficial nature of one of 20 certified medicinal trees identified by the Department of Science and Technology. The tree leaf was not a treatment but an immune booster. The women in Bantay Banay began distributing this for people to take daily in target communities. The first area was one community with 201 Covid 19 positive people. The women's group brought a nurse and specialist, distributing the leaf and instructions to boost immunity, such as ginger and sardines. After their outreach, all 201 people they worked with became negative. The group continued their efforts, going boundary by boundary, expanding in other communities:

Despite the lockdown, the Bantay Banay women members grouped themselves to give boosters. They were in 12 barangays. Two weeks after that, there was another barangay that had 622. An army truck was there so nobody should get out. But the women were there preparing all those things, with all the women and volunteers. So, they went in. We tried to make an update every week. Six hundred positives, and so many

women and men become Covid 19 negative. Everybody said, "How did you do it?" And so, they were asking for that, not only within Cebu outside of Cebu. But that was good because it was evidence.

- Teresa Fernandez, Lihok

Community Organizers Multiversity, another Philippines Huairou Commission member group, adopted a training process that involved women and grassroots organizations using an action, reflection, action process, shaped through influences that include a combination of the Paulo Freire and Alinsky approach. They begin with issue-based organizing, with people focusing on simple issues like access to essential services.

So, they start with an action. And then after, mobilization. We do some reflection until they realize they can break the culture of silence. Then we mobilize again. They go through a process of action, reflection, action until they feel empowered and confident enough to mobilize and negotiate with government agencies to resolve their issues.

- Lilian Pimentel, Huairou Commission Asia

The organization developed a training manual on community organizing that guides community organizers working with grassroots leaders. They mainstreamed gender in community organizing and produced a helpful handbook on the subject for new trainers, with support from the Huairou Commission.

The group does not use the formal label of local-to-local dialogue since, in their cultural context, they consider this a process of negotiating with different government agencies. Representatives suggest the highest skill leaders acquire involves learning to deal with government agencies. Because the government has the most significant resources, training is needed to lobby the legislature. The organization also does peer-to-peer learning with different grassroots communities. Women from various villages come together, share problems, and how to fix them using peer strategies. Leadership support involves conducting workshops and training focused on learning organizing skills that enable women to feel confident and empowered enough to articulate their needs.

There is a need to now train a new generation of leaders in the region. An inventory of leaders found that most are already in the 60s. A survey went to members of Huairou asking for a brief bio of leaders to identify mentors' expertise and emerging leaders. A needs assessment was included in a proposal for young leadership development, suggesting training ten new leaders per country, holding an exchange in different regions to enhance peer learning, and exposure to regional practices.

Tools and Innovations in North America and the Caribbean

In Canada, Yellowknife Women's Center began early work with peer exchanges. They also adopted tools such as the basic agreements and strategies for community development from the sourcebook on leadership development by Lisle Burns, a longtime partner of National Congress of Neighborhood Women in New York. It was not clear that peer exchanges and other techniques were successful until much later. Currently, they also face challenges of an aging leadership. There is a need for a succession plan in indigenous groups, that preserves indigenous customs and processes. The group has developed a peer-to-peer training tool focused on economic security and jobs. They have developed a highly rated indigenous culture-based training model. Over the last eight years, they trained 470 women, with a 76% success rate for women obtaining meaningful

employment. Training by indigenous and young indigenous women uses a peer-to-peer model. Tools related to working with those with lived experience are now available. The government has accepted them as evidence-based and credible, and plans are in place to implement them more broadly across Canada. These tools relate to recent decisions by the national government to adopt a policy focused on giving recognition and money to those with lived experience of homelessness, including indigenous women.

There seems to be that penchant for non-indigenous, professional women's groups to rule in Canada and the US. What happens in both countries is that they have the money, the resources, and appear to be more together, more professional on the surface. It is all buried in a very professional kind of glaze. But, you know, women on the street, grassroots women, women in the communities, sort of, are treated as-- "I'm not quite as knowledgeable." So, I do not know how you find it in different countries, but I find it divided between professional women in Canada. And, you know, the women who serve marginalized women are so distinct that it has taken a while to create an equitable sort of situation.

There have been recent transformations observed in Canada regarding women in political office, with many more women running than in the past, primarily due to the Me-Too Movement.

Suddenly, you have a whole microcosm of a turned upside-down world, where men are not in power the women are. However, what happened is that, again, you still had professional, not grassroots women, not women with lived expertise of poverty and homelessness who again tried to marginalize and silence indigenous and grassroots women. And so that sort of promise of women to do things differently totally disappeared, and they kind of literally ate each other alive so that they barely are surviving. And you know they will go into a session now where they will try to oust the indigenous woman, currently the only woman premier in Canada. So even there is that propensity to have professional and white women. [The tendency] of women in power to dismiss marginalized women is so powerful that even if you can get women into power, it is so destructive to them.

- Arlene Hache, Keepers of the Circle

Context is key, including cases where there is no or a weak political party system. How government is structured, and the different styles of government are essential to pay attention to when training women for political leadership.

In Jamaica, Sistren Theatre Collective also used peer exchanges, local-to-local dialogues, and performing arts strategies to strengthen grassroots women's leadership. Their peer exchanges include groups that are members of GROOTS Jamaica and other CBO's. The impact of the peer exchanges is that there are now people who have joined GROOTS Jamaica or applied to be members of the Huairou Commission based on their work, knowledge, and experience. The local-to-local dialogues and tools used to engage with local authorities and other stakeholders have focused on a range of policies and issues impacting the community, including domestic violence, violence against women and girls, and COVID-19. The safety audit tool is also used for training and is particularly useful because many low-income communities in Jamaica have challenges with safety. This strategy was transmitted from Canada when women from Jamaica joined over 50 other Huairou women who attended the conference in the 1990s in Montreal where Ann Michou from the Huairou member group, Women in Cities International, shared information about their women's safety audit strategies.

And that helped us to move and gain recognition in spaces that we were never recognized before. Women are now sitting on committees with the local authorities. Women are called on to participate in policy dialogues and other community and stakeholders' activity, such as the police, etc. I have been saying for quite a long time that we need to copyright our tools. We need to register them, so people will not take and use them as their own. And we need to start doing that as urgently as possible.

- Louise (Lana) Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective

GROOTS Jamaica is transforming the safety audit and adjusting tools to the Jamaica situation. They are changing the questionnaire and adapting it to other problems such as domestic violence, violence against women more broadly and more recently for work on COVID-19.

In the United States, the National Congress of Neighborhood Women's group in Brooklyn helped launch the Huairou Commission and many vital tools. These include practices such as the Leadership Support Processes. Over the years, many of these practices faded away along with the stronger organizational structure of Neighborhood Women in the United States. The organization still houses the Huairou Commission in the building in New York. Strategic planning for Neighborhood Women is underway.

The importance of a physical space for women's groups was highlighted, with several examples from various countries in the North America and Caribbean regions where groups struggle to keep their organization.

Tools and Innovations in Europe

The Network for Families in Prague has often used the Leadership Support Process, which they describe as "for us somehow, normal, for communication." All meetings use LSP methods. Local-to-local dialogues helped them communicate with local authorities and stimulated the entry of more women into local politics. The group is working on community voting and preparing women to be elected. They have an initiative on city safety, focusing on a city for children. Their philosophy is that if the city is safe for children, it is safe for everybody. Mothers Centers are an essential mechanism for women to have their own space as a base for activities. Peer learning and peer exchanges are used at the local, regional, national, and more recently at the European Union level due to a new project involving the European Union, Slovakia, the Slovenian women, and the German network.

The Way Forward

Materials, Tools, Communications, Innovations

Protect the specific tools developed by the Huairou Commission through certification or copyrighting to ensure their recognition as intellectual property.

Review and create different visual material such as small videos. These should include creative ways to communicate concrete actions through images and simple messages to promote knowledge of the tools and application in our grassroots organizations. Help groups use and create visual materials, videos, or picture stories and small notes to mentor leaders in the development stages with their members.

In the strategy for visual and graphic materials, carefully consider regional needs and capacities. Some regions need printed materials, while other areas require alternative means of communication. Pay attention to the diverse needs of women in urban and rural communities. In visuals, movies, and other materials, consider strategies for people who cannot read. Create posters in appropriate languages.

Focus on sharing and possibly replicating various examples of innovations discussed by the group. These include the lived experience policy, peer economic models, succession plans from Canada, demonstration plots and agricultural field days from Kenya, Covid 19 safety audit adaptations and medicinal Covid 19 strategies from Indonesia, and City for Children Prague.

Assess the array of existing tools used by the Huairou Commission members. Translate simple materials into local languages.

Increase documentation of the work the organizations are doing.

Review guidelines and frameworks on HC tools and adaptation given Covid 19.

Create a global observatory on grassroots women's empowerment.

Consider tools to showcase and create a section in the newsletter on HC tools at work. Use this for groups to tell success stories of tools, adaptations, and how it has worked for them.

Training and Mentoring

Conduct a training assessment: Review materials used/adapted for training. Identify who has them. Explore what new tools are needed. What places for training exist? Who are training partners and who can be trainers? Who can be mentors? What is a timeline? Collect and review existing tools such as Huairou sponsored Multiversity training manual, gender handbook; Develop new training tools on fundraising, conflict resolution.

Build on and implement the funding proposal on leadership already developed for Asia, including gathering bios or information about leaders.

Conduct a comprehensive check-up on leadership in each region. Review leadership assets, strategies, and materials that Huairou already has. Identify what we do and do not have. Identify how we generate a new set of leadership and manage existing ones. Review whether we need a new membership drive. Consider what kind of structure needs to be in place to mentor new generations.

Huairou needs to develop an organized plan of how the organization's tools are offered and taught on an ongoing basis.

Create an ongoing systematic training program. Create a cadre of 10 new leaders per country to be trained. Training should include a peer exchange and exposure to HC practices.

Establish a mentoring system, such as the system started in Ecuador, at the Habitat III conference. Create a plan to identify mentors. Roll out a strategy related to grassroots women leadership development, with timelines.

Review the role of partnerships and alliances in training strategies.
Consider systemic areas of power in society.

Review Theory of Change (TOC) training. Review training philosophies and adaptations to consider needs for a mental shift in the approach many of these tools are trying to take considering systemic areas of power in society.

Create templates or guidelines for groups to use. Create these for a range of issues, land rights, budgeting, proposal writing: review templates and guidelines in existence in the network, including close HC partners at universities and colleges.

Organization, Funding, Space

Review space issues and concerns within the Huairou network to consider how many people have spaces to claim for training or other space issues, references, and plans. Review possibility for revised spatial uses, including the Secretariat building in Brooklyn transformation to a training center.

Additional funding is needed for groups to implement and use Huairou Commission tools.

Revisit suggestions about needs/strategies for income generation.

Revisit previous proposals for the creation of a library.

Help groups write proposals and increase tools and training on proposal writing.

Technology

Review current use and potential for zoom technology at the regional level. Conduct regional zoom meetings with not only leaders but members at lower levels. Bring together 5 to 15 people in a room to do an assessment.

Use cell phone conferences/teleconferences for women in rural areas. Use a variety of forms of communication, including appropriate technologies for rural areas.
Help increase access to technology in rural areas for grassroots groups.

Help improve technological skills for grassroots women's groups.

Staffing

Review staffing needs of Huairou. Review both regional and overarching requirements for people that will help with implementation, research, inventories.

Power and Politics

Review political aspects of power within the Huairou Commission and current practices related to funding race, class, and issues between North and South.

Huairou should consider providing additional support in leadership management skills.

Membership

Review existing barriers to Huairou Commission membership, including rules about delayed membership that now exist and impact participation.

Consider strategies to attract youth and emerging generational leaders who want to harvest knowledge and increase generational change.

Bring together meetings focusing on North America and possibly Europe. Reconsider staff needs and capacity for this region.

Conduct regional mapping and inventory.

Help member groups work on Covid 19 challenges.

Revisit an inventory survey previously conducted of all the members of Huairou. Review suggestions from this survey that are still relevant and probably some things that are not. Revisit calls for concrete skills development and recommendations, including sample budgets and help with conflict resolution.

Continue to pay attention to the balance between the Huairou Commission as an umbrella that allows for the individual work on the ground of different organizations to be fully recognized and supported.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Develop initiatives around the issue of the SDGs and ideas we want to localize. Integrate this with how our grassroots groups monitor and collect information at the local level and ways to improve monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) implementation. Review how to monitor so governments and development partners are more accountable.

Section 7 Land and Housing

It is important that Huairou Commission continues working on land advocacy and governance because this has helped us to have successes in our work. Because it is not only the land access but the control of it. We can have land, but if we do not have the land ownership or do not have the legal approval of having this land, we do not have access to financing either.

Haydee Rodriquez – Union de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras ‘Las Brumas’.

Key Points

- *Long history of involvement*
- *Integrated linkages land, housing, security*
- *Success in negotiations and regional tools*
- *Evictions and speculation remain problematic*
- *Grassroots women need vigilance*
- *Membership helps women value the power of land*

History of Huairou’s Work

Sessions traced the fact that women's access and ownership of land and housing was a critical part of the work of Huairou Commission members over the last 25 years. For decades, a huge investment by groups has gone into securing women's land rights and investigating impacts on grassroots women in localities across the globe. The Huairou Commission launched a land campaign, integrating work on land and housing with their central tools and methodologies. Many local-to-local dialogues involved conversations about policy and women's land concerns between governments and women's grassroots groups. Watchdog groups helped monitor individual injustices to women related to land.

At the regional level, the Woman's Land Link Africa (WLLA) academies have been a platform for grassroots women Commission members to focus on land concerns in the African region. These started in 2003 at a Women and Land meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, hosted by Oxfam. In 2009, the Huairou Commission worked in cooperation with Urban Poor Links of Indonesia and Leaders and Organizers of Community Organizations in Asia (LOCOA) Secretariat co-organizing a workshop on anti-eviction in Makassar, Indonesia. Efforts to overcome traditional land inequities impacting women in Africa and struggles against evictions in Asia were highlighted at several World Bank, Land and Poverty conferences in Washington as part of the

broader fight to bring attention to grassroots women and land rights in global forums. The Huairou Commission was a co-founder of the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN) and worked to ensure that land tools are gender-sensitive and linked to women's empowerment. GLTN is a network of international partners that includes academics, professionals, civil society organizations, and international intergovernmental organizations like FAO and the International Land Coalition (ILC). They were also involved in formulation of the Gender Evaluation criteria, piloting the Social Domain model, and working with coordination during the GLTN Gender strategy. The Huairou Commission has also been an active member of the International Land Coalition globally, engaging in the reference group on women's land rights and advancing women's land rights within the action coalition and reference group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Other partnerships and activities include participation in the gender working group of Right to the City, involvement with Women and Habitat, and long-standing engagement and coordination of the New York Civil Society Habitat Working Group.

Over the last 25 years, there has been increased recognition of land issues illustrated in the land indicators found in the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations. The organization has actively pushed for a methodology to collect meaningful data related to indicators to improve data collection at the national level. The Huairou Commission was a leader in designing one of the early global campaigns on women's land rights, launched with other partners. At the regional level in Africa, they engaged with the Africa Land Policy Center and steering committee of a civil society platform on land in Africa and the Kilimanjaro initiative. Much of the work related to land is also embedded in members' activities on resilience to ensure that land governance is equitable, sustainable, and gender responsive.

The Huairou Commission's work related to land has three main objectives. The first is to promote grassroots women's representation within the local to global land governance structures. Secondly, the effort to increase women's access to and control over land aims to enhance their resilience and ability to overcome shocks, either internal or external, by improving livelihoods. A third and final objective is to support grassroots women's groups' aim to redress inequality and economic justice, improving family nutrition and stability. This ties to the Huairou Commission's Diamond Theory of Change that highlights the importance of organizing, strengthening capacity, advocacy, and network building. Land activities have built on the organization's strengths of partnership building, communication, and monitoring at local, national, regional, and global levels.

Efforts are ongoing to provide and strengthen land security for grassroots women to sustain rural and urban economies. In urban areas, many members emphasize the intersection between gender and land for housing, security, and public space for all. Land grabbing, speculation, and protection from investors remain significant issues. There are also challenges for indigenous people and minorities in the context of land competition. Members emphasize the importance of understanding land as part of a system that links to broader issues of social networks and market access. Balanced approaches regarding the rural and urban nexus and community and individual land rights are also part of the mix. In recent years the Huairou Coalition has been active in the global campaign called Stand for Our Land, as part of their commitment to women's land rights.

Progress and Experiences in Africa

Significant, sustained efforts by the Commission over several decades involved tools useful for land work in Africa. Members joined annual academies through the Women's Land Link Africa (WLLA) initiative for at least five or six years starting in 2008. Kenya used an ombudsman tool and paralegal work, issued reports, and guided efforts in many countries like Uganda. Member groups engaged in mass efforts to push women's access to title deeds in various countries such as Uganda and Zambia, through work on the ground by groups like UCOBAC and SWID. In Kenya and other countries, women are now making significant progress getting rights to direct entitlement, constructing houses, and shifting the climate of repressive cultures concerning women and land. While many organizations have been working on women's land rights through various campaigns, the contribution that distinguishes the Huairou Commission's work has emphasized grassroots women's role, emphasizing the importance of their driving force.

Conversations concerning women and land are often indistinguishable from those on gender-based violence. Integration with household food security and climate change adaptation practices should be recognized as well. Shibuye in Kenya has been using a tool to showcase the amount of land rehabilitated by grassroots women when women gain access and control. These efforts advance women's economic empowerment through agriculture and claim a range of physical spaces, including market stalls. This has been useful in engagement with the African Women Development Fund. They are also engaging in successful dialogues with Chiefs in various communities on women's land rights.

UCOBAC in Uganda is actively engaged in land work through data collection activities. Several regional groups use mapping and land monitoring to understand progress in implementing existing laws and policies. Grassroots women led the process of generating data and monitoring progress on the SDG land indicators to determine how far governments have gone. Many groups are using this information to engage with local leaders, stakeholders, funders, and investors. There have also been strategic partnerships created between grassroots groups and government at the local and national levels. Women influence processes that the government rolls out and find ways stakeholders can support local initiatives and locally-led practices that women use to increase tenure security.

Engagement occurs with the Ministry of Lands at the national level and regionally, through coalitions such as the International Land Coalition, where they do advocacy around regional frameworks. Awareness-raising has taken place around the Kilimanjaro initiative. Efforts help ensure that policies on the ground align with regional provisions and global monitoring like the SDG land indicators.

Something that I have seen in the Huairou Commission that groups have done very well is to go beyond the evidence-based advocacy that grassroots are using based on the land mapping and evaluations they are doing. We started going beyond the ability for women to access or be able to use the land. We have done so much in strengthening the security of tenure so that women feel secure on this land through registration, especially for us in customary land.

- Francis Birungi, Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children's Welfare

Some Huairou members groups are also involved in post-conflict communities, working on challenges concerning women recovering from the trauma of civil war. Some women are impacted by displacements and return from camps to communities only to find husbands killed during war. In some cases, women do not

have space left for them because traditionally, women do not own land. Huairou groups help provide support in fragile communities where women grapple with traditional, discriminatory laws and social norms. They find themselves scrambling for land because everyone is trying to take a piece of what is remaining.

Work has involved the use of tools adapted from GLTN, including the social tenure domain model to ensure registration of customary land, so women's land rights are recognized and made stronger either individually or in association with families or clans.

But the idea for us is to make sure that in the province, as the government is trying to ensure that they manage the issues on the customary land, especially in post-conflict communities. We are getting in there and saying grassroots women from these communities can organize themselves and adapt some of these approaches that are user- friendly such as the social domain model or the gender evaluation criteria. But also, the local- to- local dialogues to be able to engage with the leaders, to be able to engage with the men on issues around social norms, so they can be able to assert their rights in this land. So, we are seeing that there is a very big shift around moving beyond access for women but looking at the whole spectrum of rights where women are not only able to access but they're able to make decisions on land. But they also have security of tenure through the registration of their land rights, either individually or in association with others.

- Francis Birungi, Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children's Welfare

In Zimbabwe, women members affirm problems due to the traditional culture of patriarchy. Social norms resulted in women not taking land seriously, although they used it for subsistence farming. This was based on a system where husbands who owned the land often worked in urban areas, while women worked the land. When grassroots groups joined Huairou, they began to empower themselves, recognizing land as a more important economic vehicle. Women worked collectively to move into agribusiness, engaging in a mixture of farming like vegetables that could sell for profit. Huairou Commission membership helped grassroots women learn more about collective advocacy for land through the home-based care alliance.

Progress and Experiences Latin America

Overarching historical problems for countries throughout the region of Central and South America include tendencies towards patriarchal, authoritarian systems of government and public policies related to land that tended not to recognize women or indigenous people. For Huairou Commission grassroots women leaders from Central America in the organization, Fundación Guatemala, their first introduction to the Huairou Commission came because of land and property issues. At the time, the Women and Peace network in Central America engaged the women, working with the advocacy committees for land access because Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala were in a post-conflict situation. During the 1960s and 1970s, Latin America experienced the historical process of agrarian reform that involved land distribution. By the 1980s and the 1990s, there was an intense backlash against the reforms. Grassroots women leaders discovered that women were not part of either land adjudication or requests for municipal government lands. In Nicaragua, by 2010, a law was passed supporting women's land acquisition in rural areas, although members report little success with this legislation.

Representatives from Peru noted the Covid 19 situation increased problems for women because of overcrowding and displacement of families due to additional space needs for survival. This increased informal settlement. In addition, extraction and mining from land have also been problematic for women. In some countries, corruption in land institutions remains a challenge. In Guatemala, grassroots women found themselves locked into loans, resulting in repayments "continuing for the rest of their lives." The co-property of land was an invention by grassroots women leaders from Guatemala in exile in Mexico because of the Civil War. After the peace treaty, the Land Fund of Guatemala embraced the concept. Still, it eventually became problematic because money resulting from land production became merely a subsidy to some men using the money to pay coyotes to travel to the US, leaving women stuck with the loans and no money left for actual land production.

In recent years, network members' movement to work on resilience in the region emerged out of many years of frustration around progress on women's land and tenure, "because for ten years we were seeing no single short-term change in women's life." They now emphasize the importance of recognizing that access to property, land, and security of tenure is the first stage of the resilience process. Las Brumas and other groups report some success in legalizing land in favor of women. They created family agreements where men agree to give a portion of their land to women legally. They are also engaging women in community mapping for assessing women's legal ownership of land, working in conjunction with the Human Rights Defendant's office. The Community Practitioner's Platform uses methods including pilots focused on renting land for women. Strategic alliances help women get access to small amounts of land to help them grow crops. The strategy overcomes traditional donors' reluctance to give women money to buy land, despite the relatively low price in particular areas and ability to generate significant returns from commercial crops.

Progress and Experiences in Asia

In Bangladesh, grassroots women have low rates of land ownership. Although the government changed laws, they remain unimplemented, and the poor are experiencing new hardships due to displacements from COVID 19. Challenges of providing shelter to thousands of migrants from Myanmar diverted government efforts. The Huairou Commission member, Participatory Action Development Plan (PDAP), is campaigning on the issues, holding local-to-local dialogues with the government who continue to promise affordable housing, with little evidence so far of implementation. The group is engaged in training grassroots women, but problems remain with funding to address concrete financial issues that impact land access. Intersectional challenges for the poor include linkages between eviction, displacements from disaster, land rights, and lack of access to jobs that intertwine with income and food security. Dampa, another Huairou member in the Philippines, emphasizes resilience- building, linked to land and housing due to displacements resulting from disasters. Eviction and demolition are dominant urban issues due to government projects and designated "dangerous" slated for relocation. Co-Multiversity in the Philippines successfully focused activity on city relocation with women engaging in surveying available government plans. In response to dissatisfaction with the government plans for relocation, women identified more suitable land. They negotiated with the government to set up a medium unit building that was more accessible to jobs and basic services.

In Nepal, representatives in member organizations such as Lumanti and Nepal Mahila Ekta Samal (NMES) report that the government has formed a new Commission to deal with the problems of informal

settlements. Although this is the 16th Commission on this issue, with previous efforts leading to few results, now the laws have been strengthened and grassroots groups including the Informal Settlers Federation are working together to ensure that community representatives are included in district chapters of the newly formed government Commission. The groups have also been working in a number of cities across the country to reach out to help the poor access land and increase access to finance and low interest loans, build housing and acquire land using multiple strategies. They have worked in partnership with local governments to increase access to infrastructure and organized national webinars for World Habitat Day on various issues related to affordable housing and prosperity. Groups have also been successful in influencing negotiations with the government to change plans for evictions and relocations in various communities. They have also advocated with government to ensure that at least one woman from each community is part of a facilitation team to connect with the community. Emphasis was placed on measures to reduce problems of forceful eviction as an issue that should be focused on in the work. There have been various strategies used to help with land access for the poor including arrangements with banks or arrangements for common people to obtain land on lease for agricultural work or animal husbandry, with more limited taxes or some percentage of tax assistance. Challenges remain with reaching the landless, most poor and vulnerable, however.

Progress and Experiences in North America

In the United States, members of the Huairou Commission include women's tenant leaders active in New York City public housing who work with residents to help with their concerns. These include problems related to engagement with the New York public housing authority, NYCHA. They are concerned about the future and that critical issues for tenants are still not addressed. The members point to gaps in resident's inclusion in recent Housing Authority requests for proposals and contract selection processes.

We are constantly fighting to have our seat at the table to get in and say this is how we think it should benefit us, the residents as a whole.

- Maria Forbes, National Congress of Neighborhood Women

The women are also engaged in a range of activities, including discussions involving a highway overpass, the Blueprint for Change initiative, and PACT/RAD strategies for public housing renovation. They complain about previous losses due to decisions about public housing made before 2016. "We lost our playgrounds, we lost our parking lots, we lost a lot of space in which things could have been developed, like community centers where people and senior citizens could have gone, and children played." Despite promises to create additional affordable housing, tenant leaders report that rents increased, with people not being able to afford the resulting housing.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Organization

Review, reactivate the buddy system previously used and WLLA Land Academies. Consider replicating these strategies in other world regions.

Create a more detailed list of land-related partnerships available to all members. Engage in assessing participation in alliances and coalitions related to land, housing, and urbanization. Review strategies, staffing,

and participation, to ensure organizational benefits and appropriate involvement. Assess linkages to the positions and issues that Huairou seeks to address. Also, consider increased communication about partnerships in communication vehicles such as the newsletter.

Review strategic positioning, including the Huairou Commission role in the Beijing Plus 25 process and leadership in the Action Coalition on Economic Justice. Consider using various spaces to work with other organizations and help organize and coordinate around issues that matter to us, like land and poverty.

Organize the Huairou Commission into thematic teams that examine issues, including groups focusing on women's land rights, social protection (and the interface), economic justice, data, care economy, and HIV, agricultural activity. Use teams to develop a plan that reflects our bottom-up approach to gender.

Funding and Resources

Develop a team to focus on conducting assessments, analysis, strategies to deal with funding or credit for women's acquisition of land and housing. Review strategies by others, including SDI, Frontline funds, to obtain support/ capital for land access or slum upgrading from the grassroots perspective. Organize peer exchanges focusing on the issue of funding and resources.

Consider new funding strategies for land housing, including proposals for donors/developers with money leaving a percentage of project funding to give the women to buy land, writing proposals, creating women's savings schemes (including training on saving), or creation of our own fund to give loans for women to buy land. Strategies for working with banks and other partners were successful in some areas (Nepal). Review low levels of funding needed in some communities that can dramatically expand women's income (ex, Nicaragua).

Formulate holistic strategies for funding for women that go beyond only access or land acquisition and integrate ideas around resources for production technology and funds for land maintenance. Review business strategies, future income-generating strategies, or strategies for organizational space to integrate with land and credit access for women. Review community land trusts and communal ownership strategies.

New York City grassroots women tenant leaders need access to an attorney, help with a physical assessment of property, and a co-negotiator with the housing authority.

Initiatives and Capacity Building

Empower women to turn successes on land production into government negotiations for ownership.

Support replication of member innovations. Examples are: facilitation teams at the local level (involving grassroots women representatives in local authorities), family agreements (where men allocate portions of their land to women legally), or pilot initiatives for land rental to increase women's land access.

Reinforce training to increase grassroots women's understanding of policy issues related to land and housing.

Focus on supporting measures, for example, on reducing forceful eviction. This should include further examination of strategies of groups such as Dampa and others that have worked out partnerships with the government and the private sector to prevent forceful evictions. Review and reinforce strategies to ensure

communities receive information at an early stage and for community consent. Also, consider methods such as zoom sessions focusing on issues and partnerships and peer exchanges between groups facing or skilled with dealing with evictions.

Increase women's training on the type of land to purchase in terms of potential vulnerability to disaster, climate change, etc.

Assessment

Assess how much land women are gaining in the various organizations. Review current baseline status and whether there have been gains or losses related to women and land. Map initiatives and strategies to determine how women are succeeding at obtaining and getting land, collectively or individually. Align this with replication of successful schemes such as Nicaragua's mapping initiative. Review places with member identified problems, such as group ranch challenges/ issues in Kenya.

Engage in outreach to groups active on HIV/AIDS and care in Africa to find out what strategies they use to bring the land issue to the attention of local stakeholders. Find out how many groups use disaster as an opportunity to access land.

Conduct a deeper assessment of whether land available to women is used to the maximum.

Conduct an assessment of space available to women's organizations for uses other than only housing.

Hold a meeting of the home-based care group members. Review links between home-based care, communal approaches, and land issues. Pay attention to regions with rising numbers of elderly. Examine innovative strategies. Review issues of seniors in Kibera who need help with housing design and link them to architectural and other forms of support.

Continue to focus on country progress on monitoring and reporting of SDG land indicators. Examine future ways to use the UN Sustainable Development Goals as an entry point to train local women and build partnerships with the local government.

Conduct a more thorough assessment of policies by region of issues and strategies that are impacting women.

APPENDIX: Beijing 25 Reflection Session Participants

Beijing 25 Organizing Committee

Jan Peterson, Honorary President, Huairou Commission
Violet Shivutse, Global Chair Governing Council Huairou, Kenya
Lana Finikin, Deputy Global Chair, Huairou Commission Sistren, Jamaica
Pamela Ransom PhD, Associate Prof. Metropolitan College USA
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Project Staff: Molly Vallillo Huairou, USA
Report Author: Pamela Ransom PhD
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Theme One Peer Learning

Facilitators

Violet Shivutse, Shibuye, Kenya & Global Chair, Huairou Commission
Suranjana Gupta, Huairou Commission, India

Session One

Africa:	John Masuwa, Circles of Hope, Zambia, Rachel, Shibuye, Kenya, Joann, Shibuye, Kenya
Asia:	Jane Anyango, Polycom, Kenya, Jhocas Castillo, Dampa, Philippines, Chandran Puthiyotil & Naseem Shaikh, SSP, India
North America:	Marnie Tamaki, Canada
Latin America	Haydee Rodriguez, Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras “Las Brumas” Nicaragua, Nereide Segala Coelho/ Elizete/ Red Pintades, Brazil

Session Two

Africa:	John Masuwa, Circles of Hope, Zimbabwe, Anne Agar, Polycom, Kenya. Veronica Kanyongo, Seke Rural Home- Based Care, Country, Theresa Makwara, ZPHC Zimbabwe
Asia:	Jhocas Castillo, Dampa, Philippines, Chandran Puthlyottil, SSP, India

Latin America: Ruth Serech Icu, CODIMM, Guatemala, Diocelinda Iza, Organization of Indigenous and Peasant Women, OMICSE, Ecuador, Nereide Segala Coelho, Red Pintades, Brazil, Haydee Rodriguez, Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras “ Las Brumas” Nicaragua

Caribbean: Lana Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica

North America: Marnie Tamaki, Canada

Theme Two: Working with the United Nations

Facilitators

Jane Anyango, Polycom, Kenya
Sri Sofjan, Huairou Commission, Malaysia

Session One

Asia: Jhocas Castillo, Philippines, Dampa, Lajana Manandar, Lumanti, Nepal

Latin America: Haydee Rodrigues, Las Brumas, Nicaragua, Magdalena Garcia Hernandez, Mira, Mexico, Ana Hernandez, Asociación Alianza de Mujeres Costarricense, Costa Rica, Ana Lucy Bengochea, Wagucha Honduras, Honduras

Caribbean: Lana Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica

Africa: Joyce Nangobi, SWID, Kenya, Ann Wanjiru, Mathere Legal Aid and Human Rights Advocacy Kenya, Limota Giwa, IWCC, Nigeria, Fati Alhassan, Grassroots Sister Foundation, Ghana

North America: Kathryn Travers, WICI GROOTS International, Canada; Marnie Tamaki. GROOTS Canada

Session Two

Africa: Joyce Nangobi, SWID, Kenya, Ann Wanjiru, Mathere Legal Aid and Human Rights Advocacy Kenya, Fati Alhassan, Grassroots Sister Foundation, Ghana

Latin America: Haydee Rodrigues, Las Brumas, Nicaragua, Magdalena Garcia Hernandez, Mira, Mexico, Ana Hernandez, Asociación Alianza de Mujeres Costarricense, Costa Rica, Ana Lucy Bengochea, Wagucha Honduras, Honduras

Caribbean: Deloras Robinson, GROOTS, Trinidad

North America: Marnie Tamaki. GROOTS Canada

Session Three

Partners: Chris Williams, UN Habitat, USA, Margaret Arnold, World Bank, USA, Patricia Cortes, UN Women, USA, Laura Capbianco, UN Women, USA, Ana Moreno, Consultant former UN Habitat), Spain, Erik Berg Habitat Norway

Members

Latin America: Haydee Rodriguez, Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras “Las Brumas” Nicaragua, Ana Hernandez, Asociación Alianza de Mujeres Costarricense, Costa Rica

Caribbean: Deloras Robinson, GROOTS, Trinidad and Tobago, Lana Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica

EU/North America: Katherine Travers, WICI Canada; Marnie Tamaki GROOTS Canada

Africa: Joyce Nangobi, SWID, Kenya, Ann Wanjiru, Mathere Legal Aid and Human Rights Advocacy Kenya, Fati Alhassan, Grassroots Sister Foundation, Ghana, Violet Shivutse, Shibuye, Kenya

Asia: Lajana Manandar, Lumanti, Nepal, Jhocas Castillo, Philippines, Dampa

Theme Three Partnerships

Facilitators

Lana Finikin- GROOTS Jamaica/Sistren Theater Collective

Frances Birungi UCOBAC

Session One

Latin America: Rosario Gutierrez Marquez Centro de Mujeres Indígenas Aymaras Candelaria, Patacamaya, Bolivia; Olenka Ochoa Berregeta, FEMUM ALC, Perú, Ana Lucy Bengochea Wagucha Honduras, Honduras, Relinda Sosa Perez CONAMOVIDI, Peru

Africa: Jane Anyango, Polycom, Kenya, Nakisozi Mastulah, Kawempe Home Based Care Alliance, Uganda, Florence Shakafuswa Katuba Women's Association, Zambia, Elizabeth Markham NTENGWE, Zimbabwe

North America: Arlene Hache, Yellowknife Women's Center, Canada

Europe: Sengul Akcar, KEDV, Turkey

Asia: Prema/ Chandran Puthiyotttil, SSP, India, Kathy Tom, GROOTS/PNG/Country, Canada, Luz Malibiran, CoMultiversity, Philippines. Nguyen NN Trang, Life Center, Vietnam

Session Two

Facilitators

Lana Finikin- GROOTS Jamaica/Sistren Theater Collective
 Frances Birungi UCOBAC
 Jan Peterson, National Congress Neighborhood Women, United States

Latin America: Rosario Gutierrez Marquez Centro de Mujeres Indígenas Aymaras Candelaria, Patacamaya, Bolivia, Olenka Ochoa Berregeta, FEMUM ALC, Perú, Ana Lucy Bengochea Wagucha Honduras, Honduras, Relinda Sosa Perez CONAMOVIDI, Peru

Africa: Jane Anyango, Anne Agar, Polycom, Kenya, Nakisozi Mastulah, Kawempe Home Based Care Alliance, Uganda, Florence Shakafuswa, Katuba Women's Association, Zambia, Elizabeth Markham NTENGWE, Zimbabwe

North America: Arlene Hache, Yellowknife Women's Center, Canada

Europe: Sengul Akcar, KEDV, Turkey

Asia: Prema/ Chandran Puthiyottill, SSP, India, Kathy Tom, GROOTS/, Papua, New Guinea, Luz Malibiran, CoMultiversity, Philippines, Nguyen NN Trang, Life Center, Vietnam

Theme Four: Grassroots Women and the Feminist Movement

Facilitators

Violet Shivutse (facilitator), Shibuye, Kenya
 Sandy Schilen, Huairou Commission, USA
 Maite Rodriguez, Fundación Guatemala, Guatemala

Session One

Africa: Jane Anyango, Polycom, Kenya

Asia: Jhocas Castillo DAMPA Philippines, Bindhu Sreshta/ Sobina Lama, Nepal, Tess Banyal, Philippines, Fides Bagasao, Multiversity, Philippines

Caribbean: Lana Finikin, Sistren, Jamaica, Deloras Robinson, GROOTS, Trinidad and Tobago

Latin America: Elsa Maria Arroyo Hernandez, Mexico, Magdalena Garcia Hernandez, Mira, México, Haydee Rodriguez, Las Brumas, Nicaragua. Nereide Segala Coelho, Brazil, Ana Hernandez, Costa Rica, Josefina Miculax Sincal, Guatemala

North America: Marnie Tamaki, GROOTS Canada, Sandy Schilen, Huairou Commission, USA, Jan Peterson, Huairou Commission, USA

Europe: Sengul Ackar, KEDF, Turkey, Emma Galama, The Netherlands

Session Two

- Africa: Jane Anyango, Polycom Kenya, Lilia Ravoniarisoa, FVTM, Madagascar, Emily Tjale, Lamosa, South Africa, Elisabeth Markham, Ntengwe, Zimbabwe, Fati Alhassan, Grassroots Sisterhood Foundation, Ghana
- Asia: Jhocas Castillo, Dampa, Philippines, Bhagavati Adhikari, Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj NMES, Nepal, Bindhu Sreshta/ Sobina Lama, Community Women's Forum, Nepal, Tess Banyal, Linkok, Philippines, Suneeta Dhar, Saftipin, India, Fides Bagasao, Multiversity, Philippines
- Latin America: Elsa Maria Arroyo Hernandez Mujeres, Democracia y Ciudadanía A.C, México, Haydee Rodriguez, Las Brumas, Nicaragua, Rosario Gutierrez Marquez, Centro de Mujeres Indígenas Aymaras Candelaria, Patacamaya, Bolivia, Nereide Segala Coelho, Red Pintades, Brazil, Ana Hernandez, Costa Rica, Asociación Alianza de Mujeres Costarricense. Josefina Miculax Sincal, Fundacion Guatemala, Magdalena Garcia Hernandez, Mira Mexico
- Caribbean: Lana Finikin, Sistren Jamaica, Deloras Robinson, GROOTS, Trinidad and Tobago
- North America: Joyce Brown, Working for Change, Canada; Marnie Tamaki, GROOTS, Canada, Sandy Schilen, Huairou Commission, USA

Session Three

- Partners: Lydia Alpizar, MesoAmerican Initiative for Human Rights Defenders (former Exec Director AWID, UNRISD), Margareta Wahlstrom, Swedish Red Cross (former UN Assistant Secretary General DRR), Sweden, Sheela Patel, Spark, Slum Dwellers International India, Srilatha Batiwala, Consultant, past founder Spark, India, Corazon (Dinky) Soliman, Consultant, Philippines, Joan Winship, Past Head Global Judges Asso, USA, Charlotte Bunch, National Center Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University, USA
- Huairou Commission: Violet Shivutse (facilitator), Shibuye, Kenya, Sandy Schilen, Huairou Commission, USA
- Latin America: Matie Rodriguez, Fundación Guatemala, Guatemala, Jhocas Castillo, Philippines, Dampa, Haydee Rodriguez, Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras "Las Brumas" Nicaragua, Lana Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica, Elsa Arroyo Hernandez, Mexico
- Asia: Sobina Larna, Lumante, Nepal, Fides Bagasao, Co Multiversity Philippines

Africa: Emily Tjale, Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA), South Africa, Elizabeth Markham NTENGWE, Zimbabwe. Jane Anyango, Polycom, Kenya

Europe: Emmie Galama, The Netherlands, Sengul Ackar, KEDF, Turkey

North America: Jan Peterson, National Congress of Neighborhood Women, USA

HC Secretariat: Shorai Chitongo, Huairou Commission, New York, Glen Dolcemasclo, Huairou Commission, New York, Deloras Robinson, GROOTS, Trinidad

Theme Five: Resilience

Facilitators

Prema Gopalan, SSP
Suranjana Gupta, Huairou Commission

Africa: Violet Shivutse, Shibuye, Kenya, Veronica Katalushi, ZHPPF, Zambia, Grace Loumo, Aware, Uganda, Mary Were, Kenya Poultry Farmers Association, Kenya, Maxensia Nakibuuka, Lungujja community Health Caring Organization (LUOHECO), Uganda

Asia: Jhocas Castillo, Dampa, Philippines, Naseem Shaikh, SSP, India, Lajana Manandar/ Sobina Lama, Lumati, Nepal, Quazi Baby, PDAP, Bangladesh, Hepi, YEU, Indonesia

Latin America: Diocelinda Iza, OMICSE, Ecuador, Nereide Segala Coelho, Red Pintadas, Brazil, Maite Rodriguez, Fundacion Guatemala, Guatemala, Norma Elizabeth Choc Botzoc, Socias de la Plataforma Comunitaria de Practicantes de Resiliencia -Fundación Guatemala, Guatemala, Haydee Rodriguez, Las Brumas, Nicaragua

Partners: Claudia Herrera, Executive Secretary, CEPREDENAC, Margaret Arnold, World Bank, Dr. Unni Krishnan, Humanitarian Director, War Child, Alejandro Maldonado, Consultant Disaster Risk, former Exec Secretary CONRED, Vinod Menon, Consultant India, Founder Members of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Government of India, Arghya Sinha Roy, Asian Development Bank, Ayse Yonder PhD, retired Professor City Planning, Pratt University, United States

Theme Six Organizing and Leadership

Facilitators

Fides Bagasao, Co- Multiversity, Philippines
Sarah Silliman, New York University, United States

Session One

Africa: Violet Shivutse, Shibuye, Kenya, Fati Alhassan, Grassroots Sisterhood, Ghana
Asia: Tess Banyal, Lihok, Philippines, Lana Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica
Latin America: Haydee Rodriguez, Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras “Las Brumas” Nicaragua, Maite Rodriguez, Fundación Guatemala, Guatemala, Relinda Sosa Perez, CONAMOVIDI, Peru
North America: Aley Kent, Network for Family United States
Europe: Rut Kolinska, Network for Family, Czech Republic

Session Two

Africa: Violet Shivutse, Shibuye, Kenya, Fati Alhassan, Grassroots Sisterhood, Ghana, Limota Gawa, IWCC, Nigeria
Asia: Tess Banyal, Lihok, Philippines, Lana Finikin, sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica
Latin America: Haydee Rodriguez, Unión de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras “Las Brumas” Nicaragua, Maite Rodriguez, Fundación Guatemala, Guatemala, Relinda Sosa Perez, CONAMOVIDI, Peru
North America: Arlene Hache, Yellowknife, Canada, Aley Kent, Network for Family United States
Europe: Rut Kolinska, Network for Family, Czech Republic

Theme Seven: Land and Housing

Facilitator

Mino Ramaroson, Huairou Commission, Madagascar

Session One

Africa:	Lilia Ravoniarisoa, FVTM, Madagascar, Violet Shivutse, Shibuye, Kenya, Frances Birungi Odong, UCOBAC, Uganda
Latin America:	Nereide Segala Coelho, Red Pintadas, Brazil, Haydee Rodriguez, Las Brumas, Nicaragua, Yolanda Nunez / Maite Rodriguez, Fundacion Guatemala, Guatemala, Relinda Sosa Perez, CONAMOVIDI, Peru
Asia :	Bhagavati Adhikari, Bimala jee Nepal Mahila Ekta Samal NMES, Nepal, Lajana Manandhar, Lumanti, Nepal, Jhocas Castillo, Dampa, Philippines
North America:	Maria Forbes, National Congress of Neighborhood Women

Session Two

Africa:	Lilia Ravoniarisoa, FVTM, Madagascar, Pauline Kariuki, Rural Women Initiative Kenya, Kenya, Violet Shivutse, Shibuye, Kenya, Nzira Razão Deus, Forum Mulher, Mozambique
Latin America:	Rosario Gutierrez Marquez Centro de Mujeres Indígenas Aymaras Candelaria, Patacamaya, Bolivia, Nereide Segala Coelho, Red Pintadas, Brazil, Haydee Rodriguez, Las Brumas, Nicaragua, Yolanda Nunez / Maite Rodriguez, Fundacion Guatemala, Guatemala, Relinda Sosa Perez, CONAMOVIDI, Peru
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