

The Community Resilience Fund:

A 12 Country Pilot to Scale Up and Catalyze Local HFA and Climate Smart Actions



12 community-based networks

300,000 people

12 countries

3 years and counting...

Catalyzing Bottom-Up Action Led by Those Most At Risk:

Recent disasters, from earthquakes in Chile to the floods in Rio de Janeiro, have created an impetus for a multistakeholder process that protects the development assets of the poor and reconfigures traditional, top down disaster management programming. To reduce risk and help communities adapt to climate change it requires innovative and participatory programs to address how organized groups of poor men and women living in disaster prone and climate- threatened areas can access flexible funding to protect, build, and sustain their development assets.

Setting Standards for Community Inclusion:

Recognizing the need for a decentralized financial mechanism to advance community development priorities and locally implement the Hyogo Framework of Action, GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission created the Community Resilience Fund (CRF) in 2009. Currently being field-tested in 12 countries through member networks' grassroots women's organizations, the CRF has put resources in the hands of grassroots women's groups to identify context appropriate priorities, and take actions to reduce risks to natural hazards and the effects of climate change. Designed as a flexible funding mechanism the Fund seeks to strengthen the leadership of grassroots women by identifying and mapping vulnerabilities, using small funds to surface climate appropriate solutions and create collaborative partnerships with government and institutional stakeholders to build a culture of resilience.

Operating in 12 Countries in Vulnerable Rural and Urban Communities:

The initial round of pilots, financed with more than half a million dollars (principally from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP Gender, Provention Consortium, and Swiss Development Cooperation) have reached over 300,000 climate-threatened households in a dozen countries. The 'locally owned' Fund builds upon and scales up the steps that organized groups of grassroots women are taking to protect their development assets and cope with disasters and climate change. Their innovative solutions include work on reforestation, river embankments, basic services, infrastructure, land and settlement protection as well as the development of adaptive agricultural and food production systems, and livelihood diversification initiatives.

Creating Community Champions to Lead Resilient Development:

Through the CRF pilots grassroots women are increasingly taking on new public roles that reposition them as key actors and decision makers in shaping local resilience actions, planning and budgeting. These women are taking the lead on a wide variety of actions aimed at enhancing local resilience. Their actions include the mapping of community assets, disseminating knowledge on risks and vulnerabilities, negotiating for resources with governments, advising local governments and training them on resilience building, joining local committees and reviewing national disaster risk reduction strategies.

In a remarkably short time, organized women's groups have demonstrated:

- Mapping risk and vulnerability — a key mobilizing, negotiating tool
- Addressing issues of food security
- Securing livelihoods and expanding markets
- Improving health and sanitation conditions
- Upgrading community infrastructure by introducing hand pumps, foot bridges, national authorities on risk
- Partnering with government to design and evaluate programs
- Managing and accounting for funds.

Seeking Partners to Expand Pro-Poor Action through the Community Resilience Fund (2010 – 2015): There were two important commitments made to increased funding in 2011. First, NORAD pledged an additional \$500,000 for women-led local action on climate resilience. Second, the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery South-South program funded an initiative to expand this approach in India and Central America.

How can you join the movement to reduce risks and vulnerabilities in poor disaster prone and climate threatened communities?

Commit to Action:

National, provincial and municipal governments can declare a percentage of funds that will be dedicated to community-led action to demonstrate the capacity and strength of locally-led disaster risk reduction and adaptation.

Become a Partner:

Fund locally led pro-poor DRR and climate change adaptation mechanisms that reduce vulnerabilities, poverty and help close the gap between national programming and local realities.

Recommend Community Based Organizations:

Suggest experienced grassroots women's organizations to participate actively in the Fund.

Lessons Learned:

1. Risk mapping is an effective entry point for grassroots women to benchmark risks/ hazards, assess their needs and priorities and help prepare community plans that protect assets and people.
2. A critical element to ensuring transparency, accountability and impact is for grassroots women's organizations to set up committees to assess and manage the funds
3. Engaging with government and local authorities who champion this locally-led approach is an essential criterion for success.
4. Many initiatives begin modestly in response to the work of community leaders but the ability to expand the scale of activities across a wider network is critical to extending the impact of local successes.
5. Sustaining action beyond the initial investment is best achieved when community groups leverage money and resources.

For more information at the Global Platform please come to the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International booth or contact grootsss@aol.com, julia.miller@huairou.org or suranjanagroots@aol.com

Some Key Achievements:

Women break new ground by creating roles as vegetable farmers: In Maharashtra, India Swayam Shikshan Prayog's grassroots women's federations of more than 100,000 women working through savings and credit and enterprise initiatives in earthquake and drought-prone communities have taken action to redress food insecurity and poor nutrition by mapping food supply chains and becoming first time vegetable producers. By controlling access to land, shifting from cash crops to organic vegetable farming, and creating access to local markets to sell their produce, women were able to ensure better nutrition, improve food security, and increase their livelihoods. As a result, government sponsored agriculture research and training centers now recognize women as farmers for the first time and offer training for women farmers.

Advanced governmental partnerships: In Honduras, the Mayor of Cantarranas, as a result of exposure to the impacts of CRF supported action in a government workshop asked the Comité de Emergencia Garifuna women's committee to train his municipality on community resilience and how to locally implement the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA). In a victory for grassroots women at the same meeting, the Honduran Government, impressed by the strategies and achievements of the Comité, signed a Memorandum of Understanding that allows Comité to access programs on housing and food security. Perhaps even more impressive is that for the first time in Honduras a grassroots women's group has been recognized by the national government and given special status as an expert resource group with the ability to provide resilience training.

Secured positions on government committees: GROOTS Kenya, which works across four provinces with over 2000 self help groups, has conducted trainings on organic farming, created community kitchens and developed collective community-led demonstration plots for organic farming, to link rural communities to organized groups of grocers in urban informal settlements of Mathare in Nairobi. The female farmers are now planting traditional climate -resistant crops to improve their food security and to enhance their livelihood opportunities by creating markets to sell their produce. By meeting regularly with government officials, grassroots women in Kakamega and Gatundu have been appointed to sit on advisory committees located at the local level convened by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Improved health and sanitation: In the Philippines, DAMPA catalyzed a series of negotiations with authorities after they conducted 28 meetings with over 3000 community representatives across three communities and confirmed that access to clean and safe drinking water was a priority. To reduce costs, women leaders organized themselves as a water cooperative to pay for water connections in the neighborhoods. Now all 2000 families in the community are receiving clean water.

Community Contributions to the Fund: In Nepal, Lumanti has formed a national network with 7 organizations working on community resilience. Remarkably, each group pledged their own savings (5000 Rupees each) to operate the Fund in 10 risk prone communities thematically on issues related to resilience (health, sanitation, landslides, and food insecurity).