

En-Gendering HFA

Grassroots Women's Strategies for Implementing the HFA

Our Approach

- **Grassroots women must be positioned as active agents of resilience building and risk reduction, not as victims and vulnerable groups.**
- **Disaster relief, recovery, reconstruction and risk reduction are opportunities for grassroots women to reposition themselves in their communities.**
- **Grassroots women's disaster risk reduction priorities and practices represent a long term development approach that reduces vulnerability and poverty.**

Why Partner with Grassroots Women's Organizations?

Grassroots women's organizations:

- Bring large **constituencies** with a series of development and poverty reduction practices that can be adapted for disaster risk reduction and resilience.
- Have a **strong track record** on problem-solving and addressing community priorities.
- Have wide **knowledge networks** through which effective practices can be rapidly transferred and scaled up.

Since the First Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2007, GROOTS International and Huairou Commission have advanced the local implementation of the HFA. Although our work on disaster resilience covers a diverse range of experiences and practices spread across two regions (Latin America & the Caribbean and Asia), we have one central idea that is common to all our work: **Organized groups of grassroots women must play public decision making roles in shaping DRR initiatives.** Without their participation at the local, provincial, national and global level, it is not possible to implement gender as a cross cutting element across the Five Priorities for Action in the HFA and promote meaningful citizen engagement with at-risk communities.



5 BIG STEPS WE HAVE TAKEN SINCE THE GLOBAL PLATFORM IN 2007

- 1. A COMMUNITY DISASTER RESILIENCE FUND** Demonstration projects underway in India and Central America are funding grassroots women's organizations to initiate and expand resilience practices in collaboration with local governments and other stakeholders.
- 2. COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY TRANSFERS OF GOOD PRACTICE** More than 350 grassroots women trainers in Asia and Latin America & the Caribbean are using peer learning exchanges and community workshops to transfer their skills, knowledge and practices as well as to mobilize their communities to address risk reduction.
- 3. GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S RESILIENCE NETWORKS** Through learning and advocacy initiatives at local, national and regional levels, a large number of urban, rural and indigenous groups are coming together building constituencies of women's groups committed to advancing pro-poor disaster risk reduction.
- 4. LOCAL – NATIONAL - REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS** Grassroots women's organizations have advanced partnerships with strategic actors such as local authorities ProVention Consortium, UNDP, India's National Disaster Management Authority, Guatemala's CONRED and Central American disaster management agency CEPREDENAC. These partners are exploring strategies for institutionalizing approaches emerging from local practices.
- 5. GRASSROOTS-FRIENDLY FRAMEWORK ON RESILIENCE** Grassroots women's organizations in our networks have vast experience in development and have organized to undertake disaster relief, recovery, and reconstruction. Through collective reflection processes at different learning forums, we are evolving a shared understanding of resilience that focuses on long term vulnerability reduction.

Community Disaster Resilience Fund

Principles for CDRF Implementation in India

1. NGOs with a track record of promoting community driven work are involved.
2. Linkages created with livelihoods and mainstream poverty reduction programs.
3. Funds will be managed by community based organizations.
4. Scaling up mechanisms are built into the pilot projects.
5. Pilot projects are located inside of expanding networks that will increase the demand for resilience the practices demonstrated



NEED FOR A COMMUNITY FUNDING MECHANISM

At the First Global Platform on DRR in 2007 GROOTS International, Huairou Commission and ProVention Consortium hosted a workshop on national frameworks for implementing the HFA. Noting the lack of policy and financial support for local implementation, a series of recommendations were recorded including calling for mechanisms to channel funds directly to community based organizations and grassroots women's groups. As a follow-up action, the initiating groups raised monies to pilot a fund to enable local community based organizations and women's groups to drive the demand for pro-poor disaster risk reduction programs at the national and local levels. The Fund (CDRF) has subsequently been launched in India, Guatemala and Honduras.

CDRF SUPPORTS COMMUNITIES TO:

- Experiment with solutions to address locally identified risks and vulnerabilities.
- Create local stakeholder platforms that bring grassroots women's priorities and practices to the national disaster reduction agenda, as well as poverty development programs.
- Leverage resources for community based organizations from development, DRR and poverty reduction programs

PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

In India, 8 demonstration projects funded by ProVention Consortium, GROOTS International and Huairou Commission have been launched in 7 states. The CDRF demonstration projects are endorsed by the National Disaster Management Authority of India and supported by the civil society network, National Alliance on Disaster Risk Reduction. The goal of this partnership is to demonstrate how such community funds would function and to explore ways in which the Government could develop similar funds accessible to community based organizations. During consultations NDMA conveyed to the National Alliance that impacting and influencing national government would require pilot projects be spread across several states to demonstrate their effectiveness in multiple context. The potential of these pilots to go to scale was also considered to be a key factor in eliciting support from Government for similar community resilience funds.

BUILDING ON WOMEN'S INNOVATIONS

Through the CDRF related learning forums, women have identified effective community resilience practices. During a recent workshop in which grassroots leaders from Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu came together, they analyzed how to adapt and strengthen practices to secure livelihoods and basic services. Strategies included: Assamese women having their own weekly markets in which they could incorporate DRR plans. Women from Bihar had a self help fund for health emergencies and disasters. Women from Maharashtra, Bihar and Tamil Nadu talked about their engagement with government programs to improve the delivery of basic services and prevent gender based violence which is often exacerbated during disasters. Self help group members from Orissa also shared their strategy for providing no-interest emergency loans during disasters.



Organization	Community Resilience Demonstration
Institute for Development Support, Uttarakhand	Collective action to prevent erosion of natural resources and forest cover will be addressed through reforestation and conservation of water in partnership with local forest committees.
Kanchan Seva Ashram Bihar	Communities will focus on building local stakeholder support for local resilience initiatives in drought and flood affected areas
Urmul, Rajasthan	Promote the cultivation and marketing of 'sevan' grass, a nutritious fodder for livestock which can survive multiple years of drought and support livelihoods of communities.
Saurashtra Voluntary Actions, Gujarat	Improving community health and sanitation and organizing to access government social safety net programs.
Sanghamitra Service Society, Andhra Pradesh	Planting diverse species of trees and mangroves to protect the coastal ecology and strengthen the livelihoods of coastal communities, particularly fishvendors' federations. The network of emergency response teams will take the lead in implementing CDRF.
Rural Volunteers Center, Assam	Developing and securing women's weekly markets while advancing community water and sanitation initiatives promoted through community health volunteers along with the promotion of seed and grain banks to ensure food security.
Covenant Center for Development, Tamil Nadu	Flood, tsunami and drought affected self help groups will identify trainers and leaders to transfer successful large scale livelihoods and market strategies which have been developed by CCD over the last 15 years.
Udyama, Orissa	CDRF will contribute to agricultural development fund, providing support for seeds.

Identifying Indicators to Measure Impact

After launching the demonstration initiatives, the first activity that organizations had to undertake was the creation of baseline indicators to measure progress. At a workshop on this theme, participating organizations agreed on three broad sets of indicators for measuring impact:

1. Reduction in the number of unsafe shelters and public utilities in the community.
2. Enhanced livelihoods and food security through livelihoods strategies and protection of natural resources.
3. Increased community access to basic services .

Community Mapping to Identify Priorities

Grassroots women and their communities have identified the major vulnerabilities and capacities in their communities. Priorities range from improving emergency response and early warning systems to improving livelihoods and basic services, especially health and sanitation services.

Risk Mapping Demonstrations in LAC

Four Country Risk Mapping Exchange

'Resilience' was an unfamiliar concept to grassroots women until they learnt to link their vulnerability reducing development strategies. Women needed tools to help them identify and analyze the elements of their work which would reduce the impact of disasters in their communities. Risk mapping was identified as a tool by which women could mobilize their communities, build their awareness of risk, expand resilience practices and negotiate with decision makers for resources to support community priorities.

In July 2008, twenty eight community leaders from disaster prone areas in Jamaica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras came together with a large number of local residents gathered in Guadalupe to prepare a community risk and vulnerability map of this small hurricane prone town in the Garifuna dominated Caribbean coast of Honduras. This community mapping exercise was part of a four-day, four country learning exchange, hosted by the Comité Emergencia Garifuna with support from GROOTS International and a training team from the Jamaican Construction Resource Development Center.

Opened by local authorities from Trujillo and surrounding *municipios* working in partnership with Comité, the exchange enabled participants to hear about and witness the destruction wreaked by Hurricane Mitch and the scope of community-led rebuilding efforts implemented over the last ten years. Officials underscored the importance of the Comité-initiated agricultural tool banks had been in helping restore their farms after Mitch.

Training in hazard mapping began when Carmen Griffiths from Construction Resource Development Center, Jamaica provided an overview and explained that community mapping was simply about putting community information into pictures and helping communities to collectively understand the 'big picture'. "Mapping is a tool to help communities express their needs," explained Carmen. ***"When people don't know how to communicate their own needs, outsiders come in and tell them what they need and what they should do."***

As they walked around Guadalupe, participants stopped to talk to local people about their experiences of disaster taking notes on buildings, sanitation pipes, drains, community centers, the health center, dance clubs and shops. They saw the area by the river most affected during the last hurricane. But for some, the most exciting part of the walk was the seed bank, which the Comité has created to protect agriculture and food security in the event of hurricanes or floods. Safely located on higher ground away from the sea, the Guadalupe seed bank had over 25 varieties of indigenous, insect-resistant plants, including many varieties of yucca and plantains. This enables families from surrounding areas to take saplings to replant in their farms; and harvest yucca in the event of hurricanes or floods.

After walking around the settlement and interviewed residents, everyone returned to the beach to create their map. As they marked houses, the rivers and seed banks, locals chimed in adding and correcting the map, saying, "No, no, that house goes there, next to that shop and this is where the river flows." By the end of the day the group was able to prepare a map using, twigs, pebbles, plants and paper, showing vulnerable houses, main roads, community spaces, the yucca mills, shops and the seed bank.



Analyzing Vulnerabilities

When analyzing their vulnerabilities, women named structural factors - unsafe houses on the sea side, adobe housing and poor sanitation - that could cause damage and loss. They went on to identify economic, social and political realities that increases the likelihood of loss and damage. These realities included poverty, food insecurity, the lack of government subsidies for food crops, the lack of reliable information and the loss of indigenous knowledge and practices.

Transferring Risk Mapping & Negotiating for Safer Communities



New Grassroots Training Teams and Bridges Emerge in Honduras

Once they learned risk mapping, the Comite trained 60 women in three communities – Guadalupe, Santa Rosa de Aguan (the newly relocated settlement after Hurricane Mitch) and Rio Esteban y Trujillo. Five women who were trained in this process are now trainers, responsible for working with the Comite to transfer the mapping and seed banks to other poor, hazard prone communities. In Guadalupe the risk mapping process led residents to press local authorities who agreed to construct a footbridge.

Local Budgets for Women’s DRR Strategies are Set Aside in Nicaragua

The Union of Cooperatives of Las Brumas have organized three meetings with community leaders and the heads of cooperatives in three different municipalities since the exchange and training. After risk mapping, grassroots women undertook several dialogues with local authorities in which they demanded that a proportion of the local budget be earmarked for women’s work on conserving natural resources and reducing the impact of disasters in their local development initiatives. In Wiwillie the municipality agreed to provide 4% of the municipal budget for women’s risk reduction strategies. Grassroots leaders in Las Brumas have identified two more local authorities to approach to collaborate on additional risk mapping exercises. In addition, the mountain-based cooperatives have met with coastal groups in Costa Caribe and Crucero to introduce them to mapping.

Building a National Platform with Diverse Constituencies and Practices in Peru

GROOTS Peru – a national network-bringing together women from Mujeres Unidas, Bancos Comunales, and CONAMOVIDE are being supported by NGO SEA to pilot risk mapping processes. Grassroots leaders from the three organizations have organized a series of preparatory meetings and workshops in rural and urban areas to initiate risk mapping. These organizations bring together diverse women from rural, urban and forest based communities with varied practices that range from organizing relief to community banks and building seismic safe construction. The mapping processes are mobilizing communities and helping them set agendas for dialogues decision makers.



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Visiting A Relocation site La Planada 10 years after Hurricane Mitch

After Hurricane Mitch, over 350 houses had to be relocated in a new area called La Planada, further upstream and away from the sea. The Comite raised funds from American Jewish World Service to buy land for relocation while the local authority had an agreement from the Government to fund the construction of 250 houses, but only received funds to build 190 houses. Local authorities said that the community members had worked tirelessly, building canoes to transport construction materials across the river and then carrying materials to the building sites. The reconstruction is far from complete-- “For people to live in the houses they need safe drinking water, sanitation, health clinics and electricity,” said the Mayor. Visitors observed that roofs were made of asbestos and weren’t entirely hurricane-safe and much of the infrastructure was incomplete. The authorities confirmed that they did not have adequate water, sanitation or electricity for the settlement. In short, ten years after Hurricane Mitch, communities of Santa Rosa de Aguan are still recovering.

Building a Grassroots Regional Network in LAC



Women called upon local and national governments to model transparent and democratic decision making by collaborating with citizen's groups on:

- Response and contingency plans
- Gender equitable and accessible public entitlements
- Information and planning processes
- Infrastructure projects that upgrade housing basic
- Services and livelihoods

In March 08, more than 50 leaders representing 25 grassroots and indigenous organizations participated in a 3 day workshop in Antigua, Guatemala called 'the Role and Power of Grassroots and Indigenous Women's Groups in Disaster Risk Reduction.'" Representing more than 30,000 citizens living in disaster prone areas in 10 Latin American and Caribbean countries, grassroots leaders convened to share their innovative local strategies. Indigenous women discussed the knowledge and skills women have gained from coping with the impacts of disasters and climate change. Hosted by Fundacion Guatemala and supported by ProVention Consortium and GROOTS International, workshop participants signed on to GROOTS International's call for public policies and institutional standards specifying the roles and resources assigned to at-risk communities and marginalized (women and indigenous) groups. Focusing on regionally specific pro-poor DRR programs, participants prioritized the need to finance the:

1. Transfer and strengthening of indigenous knowledge and practices that have been critical to the survival of at -risk communities for generations.
2. Rapid scaling up of community women's participation in DRR through peer training programs that adapt and transfer effective grassroots women led practices to reduce risk and promote resilience.
3. Capacity development of grassroots women's networks so they can undertake community research, risk mapping, propose appropriate action plans and collaborate with government to reduce vulnerabilities.
4. Creation of community friendly and culturally accessible media that reach out to rural and indigenous groups in their local languages.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR UP-STREAMING LOCAL INNOVATIONS ON DRR

Other workshop outcomes include women's interest in launching a Latin American regional networking platform to sustain their advocacy and linkages for peer learning and community to community capacity building. In addition, several partner institutions--CONRED, Guatemala and CEPREDENAC, the regional disaster management agency of Central America—present at the meeting subsequently have been in dialogue with GROOTS member groups in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to explore collaborative ways to develop linkages with local initiatives that empower women in DRR to national and regional DRR programming in Central America. Shortlisted for a World Bank S-S proposal (linking to GROOTS partners in India), these institutional and GROOTS member groups in Central America will collaborate during the Mitch+10 review meetings in Teguchigulpa in July 2009.

Building Asian Grassroots Networks on Resilience

Asian Women Wanted to Convey to Decision Makers that:

- Women should be seen as initiators, authorities, and transfer agents of resilient development and thus included in decision making processes. Grassroots organizations must drive the demand for locally led DRR because without their efforts global and national programs will not reach local disaster-prone communities, nor address the needs and priorities of the communities.
- Grassroots women's efforts in the context of poverty reduction, disaster and development are key to building resilient communities.
- Partnerships with local and regional stakeholders should be created to mainstream effective locally led DRR, including at the local government level new programming and budgets that are inclusive of these strategies.



Stemming from the need to create an enabling environment for women's groups to effectively scale up disaster risk reduction initiatives, the Huairou Commission, in partnership with member organization Lihok Pilipina and the Cebu City Government organized a six-day Asian Grassroots Women's Academy on Resilience in October 2008. 85 participants from 10 Asian countries and 7 other countries primarily grassroots leaders - shared and analyzed their practices; evolved a common framework on resilience; and explored the creation of regional grassroots platforms to upstream locally led resilience initiatives.

Women from tsunami affected communities presented their assessment of relief and recovery processes. From their stories it was evident that women had played public roles in monitoring aid distribution, securing housing and had organized themselves to make government accountable to communities. For many women, it was the time they participated in public decision making processes. These experiences were contrasted by those of urban communities for whom evictions and floods were equally devastating. Presentations from grassroots leaders focused on securing housing highlighted the fact that insecure housing, the absence of basic services and insecure livelihoods exacerbated the vulnerabilities of poor communities. It was evident that these vulnerabilities have to be addressed by DRR programs if they are to be relevant to local communities. Both tsunami affected groups and urban poor groups agreed that there was a need to initiate and expand resilience building practices.

Moving Forward on Building Resilience in Asia

SUB-REGIONAL ASIAN NETWORKS

Academy participants were enthusiastic about initiating sub-regional networks of grassroots practitioners in South Asia and Southeast Asia

TSUNAMI+5 REVIEWS

Participants from tsunami -affected countries are keen to evaluate the impact of five years of investments in post-Tsunami recovery and reconstruction programs in improving the quality of life for women, their families and their communities.

ADDRESSING LONG TERM VULNERABILITIES OF THE URBAN POOR

Participants working with the urban poor expressed an interest in linking their work on secure housing tenure for reducing long term vulnerabilities of communities living in disaster prone areas.

Center Staging Women's Participation & Gender Equity in the HFA Priorities for Action

Priority 1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

Women are Negotiating and Partnering with Decision Makers at Local, National and Regional Levels

Women are demonstrating resilience strategies in collaboration with local governments to address local DRR priorities of women and their communities. Las Brumas in Nicaragua, Comite de Emergencia Garifuna in Honduras have for the first time developed partnerships with local authorities to support their resilience building initiatives. The regional partnership of GROOTS' member groups with CEPREDENAC has opened doors for dialogue with national disaster management agencies in Honduras and Guatemala.

Key ingredients for fostering women's engagement

- Mechanisms linking local priorities and practices to national programs.
- Funding mechanisms that allow locally focused women's groups to drive the demand for pro-poor DRR.
- Grassroots women's formal engagement in decision making processes.

Priority 2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.

Women are Using Risk Mapping as a Tool for Mobilizing, Awareness-Raising and Negotiating Enhanced Community Security

Grassroots leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean are transferring community risk mapping in ways that mobilize communities around resilience. In Mt Vernon, Jamaica community leaders from Construction Resource and Development Center led a flood prone community through a community mapping exercise that led the community to negotiate for footbridges. In Jinotega, Nicaragua, the Las Brumas farmers' cooperative local risk maps became the basis for negotiating for 5% of municipal budgets to support women's reforestation and soil conservation and other sustainable agricultural practices. One municipality has agreed to set aside 4% of its budget to support women's resilience efforts.

Key ingredients for fostering women's engagement

- Local stakeholder platforms that implement community actions after risk mapping is completed.
- Local Disaster Risk Reduction plans and budgets that incorporate grassroots women's priorities.

Priority 3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.

Women are Organizing Peer Learning Exchanges and Promoting Grassroots Trainers to Transfer Effective Practices

The Asian Grassroots Academy in October 2008 was an effort to mobilize the knowledge, innovations and experiences of a range of grassroots women from tsunami affected, urban poor and rural communities to develop an understanding of resilience and risk reduction. In the GROOTS network, more than 350 grassroots trainers in six countries are organized to transfer their knowledge and skills to hazard prone communities.

Women are Managing Information and Linking Government and Community Initiatives

In India, ASHAA women's health groups from earthquake and tsunami affected areas carry information on health and sanitation programs to communities; and bring community concerns to health service providers and district officials.

Key ingredients for fostering women's engagement

- Resourcing grassroots women's groups to function as information generators and communicators.
- Institutional support for knowledge and innovation that is generated from and transferred by grassroots women's organizations.

Priority 4. Reduce the underlying risk factors

Women are Negotiating with Governments to Ensure Secure Housing, Basic Services and Livelihoods for their Communities.

DAMPA's organized 7500 families in Quezon City, Philippines to relocate from flood prone areas. Here one of the underlying risks was the insecure housing. But in the relocation sites the lack of basic services put families at risk during disasters. Thus DAMPA developed organizing and negotiation strategies for securing basic services and livelihoods for the relocated community. In addition DAMPA also developed innovative financial instruments like the community mortgage to enable community members to own their homes. Like several members of our network, communities in DAMPA's network identify sustainable livelihoods and asset protection as a major priority.

Key ingredients for fostering women's engagement:

- **Mechanisms that integrate and align disaster risk reduction programs with grassroots women's capacities and priorities.**

Priority 5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

Women are Training and Organizing Disaster Response Teams.

Women in Andhra Pradesh India had to work hard to gain the acceptance of their communities accept them as part of emergency response teams. But for the last two years these women members of emergency response teams that have traveled across coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu training new disaster response teams. The Sanghamam network of trainers has thus far conducted more than 70 trainings.



Key ingredients for fostering women's engagement:

- **Formal recognition of grassroots women's organizations as key actors in emergency response.**

Global Campaign on Community Resilience

LAC Bolivia: Centro de Mujeres Candelarias/ Fundacion Apachita; Brazil: Rede Pintadas, El Salvador: ACUDESBAL; Guatemala: Fundacion Guatemala, Rede Pescadores Artesanos del Caribe, CONAVIGUA; Honduras: Comite de Emergencia Garifuna; Jamaica: Construction Resource Development Center; Mexico: Unidad Agricola Industrial de la Mujer; Nicaragua: Union de Cooperativa Las Brumas, Movimiento de Mujeres Ingniluhita; Peru: CONAMOVIDI, Servicios Educativos del Augustino, Central De Bancos Comunales El Augustin and Sta. Anita, Mujeres Unidas Para un Pueblo Mejor, Estrategia, Red de Mujeres Organizada de Lima Este and FOVELIC

Asia Afghanistan: STARS Afghanistan, Bangladesh: Participatory Development Action Program; India: Rural Organization for Social Education, Covenant Center for Development, Sanghamitra Service Society, Swayam Shikshan Prayog;; Indonesia: Urban Poor Links; Philippines: Lihok Pilipina, Bantay Banay Network, Damayan g mga Pilipinong Api, Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies, Nepal: Lumanti Support Group for Shelter, Himawanti Nepal, Sri Lanka: Sevanatha Urban Resource Center, Turkey: KEDV -Foundation for the Support of Women's Work.

Building a Shared Understanding of Resilience

Problems Women Faced as a Result of Disasters	Sustained Women-Led Strategies to Redress Problems
Loss of lives	Organized and worked with men to rescue people during disasters. Formulated disaster management plans with their communities. Underwent training to form emergency response teams
Delayed and inadequate relief for disaster hit communities, often caused by corruption and lack of transparency	Mobilized their communities to clean up debris Took over the distribution of relief aid, ensuring that those who needed it most received it.
Destruction of homes and property Relocation or eviction due to coastal regulation, disaster management programs and infrastructure	Identified safe areas/houses/structures where community could be sheltered. Monitored house reconstruction and reported to government on progress Trained communities in disaster -safe construction. Mobilized communities to relocate to safer locations. Negotiated collectively for housing, land titles and basic services.
Water contamination/water borne diseases Poor access to basic services; health, schools, water, sanitation	Took on monitoring of water quality. Spread awareness to prevent water borne diseases. Operated community pharmacies, where affordable medicines are accessible to urban poor. Negotiated for potable water and improved sanitation facilities. Created awareness on preventing epidemics. Volunteered to de-clog drainage systems in partnership with the government. Developed a community health fund to improve access health services. Promoted accountable health care services. Took community contracts to improve roads and sanitation Provided care giving facilities for children and the elderly. Monitored health services to improve accountability to poor communities
Loss of income and livelihoods assets.	Organized a savings cooperative through which funds are easily accessible in the event of disaster. Created tool banks and seed banks to share agricultural implements, restore agriculture and ensure food security. Explored new livelihoods opportunities. Linked to government development programs. Reclaimed agricultural lands.
Entitlement and decision making processes that disconnect women from resources, decision making and implementation.	Initiated partnerships with government and NGOs Initiated dialogue with Local Governments. Ensured that survivors were included in contingency planning exercises and inter-agency committees during disaster response. Undertook action-research to gather community information and convey this to decision makers.

Promoting Pro-Poor, Gender Equitable DRR Programs and Policy

Current State of DRR Programs	Agenda for Change
1. Grassroots women are excluded from decision making processes	Set standards for engaging grassroots women’s organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of disaster relief, recovery, reconstruction and risk reduction programs.
2. Grassroots women’s roles in disaster resilience remain invisible and informal	Formalize and fund grassroots women’s roles in DRR. e.g. Appoint grassroots women’s groups as information managers who can create a demand for resilience and link communities to gov. programs
3. Grassroots women’s initiatives are disconnected from national programming and policy processes.	Create mechanisms that upstream lessons from local grassroots-led practices to national programs.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can grassroots women really design, implement and evaluate DRR programs?	Yes. Grassroots women can design, manage and implement DRR programs when the agenda setting processes are reversed and begin with local priorities. Because they live and work in disaster affected communities, grassroots women are best equipped to design and evaluate programs that work for their families and communities.
How can we trust grassroots women’s groups to deliver results?	Grassroots women’s organizations have a track record of addressing community development interests. Grassroots women’s organizations working on housing, infrastructure, basic services and livelihoods have been addressing community interests for decades.
Isn’t resilience- building a technical exercise? How can grassroots women lead resilience programs	Technical aspects of DRR are just one component of DRR. Grassroots women’s organizations are demonstrating that they are capable of mastering and transferring technical skills such as building or monitoring the construction of disaster safe housing, improving drainage systems or managing emergency health funds. For poor communities and grassroots women being part of organized citizen’s groups with linkages to decision makers are equally critical components of disaster risk reduction because many of their vulnerabilities are embedded in their poverty and exclusion.
Can grassroots women manage DRR and development money?	Grassroots women s self help groups, cooperatives and federations are used to revolving huge sums of money and accounting for how funds are used. Managing this money is a big part of how women and their organizations develop and are empowered. Moreover, grassroots women have strong track records delivering value for money and reducing corruption and wastage (problems commonly faced in disaster response and DRR). Gender equitable DRR requires a percentage of funds be dedicated to women’s participation in DRR and for building women’s capacities where needed.
Can grassroots women’s initiatives go beyond small successful pilot projects?	Of course they can! Grassroots women’s initiatives can go to scale when: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer learning and transfer strategies are built into the initiative. E.g. When grassroots leaders and trainers agree to transfer their practices to other neighborhoods, districts and countries 2. When the pilots and demonstrations are located inside dynamic, expanding grassroots knowledge networks that are interested in building demand for resilience

GROOTS International Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS International) emerged in Kenya in 1985 when 6 proactive women organizers envisioned a global network where grassroots women's organizations, working to develop their communities and reduce women's poverty, could form relationships and partnerships across national and regional boundaries and share information, experiences, skills and resources and forge a global social change agenda reflective of common priorities and diverse local realities. That dream became GROOTS. Today GROOTS is a flexible network of women-led grassroots organizations and partner NGOs who cooperate across more than twenty seven countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Europe (East and West) and North America who work to develop poor rural and urban communities and empower women to take the lead in decision making processes affecting their lives (local to global). Linked by shared principles and values, and committed to linking women leaders in poor communities worldwide, GROOTS' members focus on advancing four goals:

- *To strengthen grassroots women's participation in the development of their communities and the approaches taken to planning and problem solving.*
- *To globally identify and share the successful development approaches and skills pioneered by urban and rural grassroots women's groups.*

- *To increase the opportunities grassroots women leaders and groups' have to network directly and build a movement for social change across national boundaries.*
- *To ensure international institutions and policy makers acknowledge and resource grassroots women's priorities and capabilities.*

These goals support GROOTS in building a movement of grassroots women's organizations who can:

--articulate a pro-poor, women-centered vision of sustainable community development featuring integrated, collective, inter-generational/family supportive approaches, --collect and transfer the knowledge and skills grassroots women have created from strategically solving community problems and improving their living and working conditions across groups and countries, --internationally challenge the social exclusion grassroots women face when development and government officials (and other elites) speak and take decisions on their behalf, and --globally redirect development programs and monies to local, grassroots women run community based organizations and reduce donor and government reliance on outside professionals and wealthy non-governmental organizations (who take knowledge and money out of the local economy and women's hands). GROOTS implements a global work plan featuring five thematic programs (reflective of members' community development and advocacy priorities), including • *Resilient Communities: Women Reduce Risks, Hazards, and the Impact of Disasters*. The programs commonly support peer learning and training opportunities, expand and strengthen grassroots women's organizing and negotiating efforts, focus on shifting policy priorities and investments, and engage institutions and partners of influence to support grassroots women's agendas for short and long term change.

Huairou Commission (HC) founded at the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995, is a coalition of seven women's networks (national, regional and international) and development professionals committed to partnering with grassroots women leaders and organizations to develop their communities and improve their living conditions with the support of institutions focused on poverty alleviation, sustainable development and gender equality. Working with stakeholders in academia, local and national governments and multilateral agencies, the HC works on thematic campaign initiatives that generate resources and platforms for grassroots women's organizations to use to advance and formalize their leadership in development and governance activities (local to global). In cooperation with its member network GROOTS International, the Huairou Commission's Global Campaign on Community Resilience emerged from the priorities of women's groups in disaster struck communities in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Honduras, Nicaragua, Jamaica and Peru who saw the urgent need to position women as leaders in decision making roles in post-disaster relief, recovery and reconstruction so that they could sustain their participation in long term development. Currently the Community Resilience Campaign features a range of regional initiatives to develop community trainers, and women led disaster risk reduction projects endorsed by national and regional governing institutions in LAC and Asia. At the 2009 UNISDR Global Platforms on DRR meeting, Groots and HC members will focus on raising funds and institutional support for a global Community Disaster Resilience Fund that will enable women's groups to participate equally and effectively in pro-poor DRR and redress the gaps and inequalities noted in the Views from the Frontline research.

GROOTS International and Huairou Commission's work on resilience has received core support from the American Jewish World Service, UNDP Bureau for Policy Development (Gender Team), ProVention Consortium, Ford Foundation and CORDAID; and special project support from the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction and UNIFEM East and South East Asia.

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