

# Co-Creating Transformative Knowledge and Action



Suridarban. Photo: AIDMI.



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*Advocating Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building in South Asia since 2005*



## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue of *Southasiadisasters.net* is titled, 'Co-Creating Transformative Knowledge and Action' and highlights the links between co-creating knowledge, societal transformations and sustainability. In the field of climate change adaptation and sustainability, co-creating knowledge implies using complimentary knowledge systems that promote transformation pathways.

In case of complex and intractable policy problems, co-created policy solutions which are bottom-up are more likely to generate usable actions and outcomes (Coggan et al.). Therefore, co-creating knowledge in the fields of climate change, environment and development policy is key to achieving enduring outcomes. This issue of *Southasiadisasters.net* is an attempt to understand how co-creation approaches to knowledge building can be leveraged to pursue pathways to positive societal transformation.

AIDMI presents a number of instances of co-creating transformative knowledge and action in this issue. From capturing the voices of all transboundary stakeholders in the Sundarbans to exploring the role of non-state actors in mitigating loss and damage related with disasters, co-created transformative knowledge and action can help in addressing complex social problems. ■

- Kshitij Gupta, AIDMI

## INTRODUCTION

# Co-Creating Transformative Knowledge and Action

By *Mihir R. Bhatt, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, India*

Co-creation and transformation are closely linked together. This is especially true for sustainability issues characterized by extensive uncertainty and complexity. Transdisciplinary approaches that support the co-creation of knowledge in collaboration between science and society are advocated in research that aims to explore pathways for societal transformations towards sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

The study of co-creation focuses attention on the human dimensions within an issue and the complex interconnections between knowledge and decision-making, highlighting the myriad of social, cultural and political influences shaping relationships between context, actors, science, policy and practice (Wyborn, 2015).<sup>2</sup> In the field of climate change adaptation, co-creation of knowledge among various stakeholder groups such as bureaucrats, academics, at-risk communities, development practitioners, and other implies the complimenting knowledge systems that stem from bottom up to promote transformation pathways.

Thus, in various contexts and iterations, **transformative knowledge and action** include taking an integrated approach and treating systems as a whole, to grasp the complexity of current problems and is critical towards the current status quo. In the field of development practice,

transformative knowledge and action can lead to accomplishing sustainable outcomes under the themes of disaster risk reduction (DRR), livelihoods, gender, natural resource management, and other aspects of social and economic change.

The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) recognizes the importance of taking this system-wide and collaborative approach in pursuing the imperative of risk reduction, climate action and sustainable development. Hence, transformative action and knowledge have been an integral part of AIDMI's various activities at the national, sub-national and regional levels in South Asia and beyond.

During various discussion under TAPESTRY project ([Click here](#)) with Dr. Lyla Mehta of Institute of Development Studies (IDS) AIDMI team has found that her emphasis on justice in co-creation—justice to co-creators but also to those who will be influenced by the co-creation—is worth remembering through co-creation process.

For instance, AIDMI has been part of the TAPESTRY project, which has over six years of experiences of action research around uncertainty and transformation, with a focus on livelihood and gender, in the Sundarbans delta. Co-creation of knowledge with researchers by local

1 (Wibeck et al., 2022), Co-creation research for transformative times, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1618556/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

2 (Anthea Coggan et al., 2021) Co-creating knowledge in environmental policy development. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2667010021001177>



leaders blur the boundaries—geopolitical and knowledge and ecological—between the two parts of Sundarbans delta. As there are as many similarities as there are dissimilarities, the ongoing collaborative research work explores multiple Sundarbans, simultaneous economic and ecological influences, as well as various ways these influences are interpreted or contextualised by local and non-local individuals. Ultimately, the project seeks to understand and help support emerging ‘patches’ of transformations, working with local partner institutions for transformative knowledge and action.

While drafting the chapter for book, “Bridging gaps in understandings of climate change and uncertainty” with Synne Movik the gaps in aspects of transformation came up that need to be bridged.

AIDMI has also been taking a system-wide approach to school safety and safe re-opening of schools in the pandemic era. AIDMI collaborated with UNICEF India and Government

of Gujarat to establish safe school -re-opening guidelines and pilot for over 100 schools in desert in Gujarat and jointly design and develop training and instruction to school teachers and administrators to ensure that when schools re-opened, the students and other school stakeholders were protected against the pandemic. Schools transformed from insecurity to safety due to co-created knowledge and action.

A review of AIDMI’s recent work—humanitarian system study, adaptation in farming, and intersectionality of gender—suggest that co-created transformation mostly enhances the profile of subject matter, attracts more investment in activity, and cements collaborations and links. In addition, institutional and individual capacities and concepts are built.

AIDMI has always believed in creating pathways to transformative knowledge through its capacity development initiatives. In the end what mattered was who changed, and

how. In a series of capacity building trainings, AIDMI has co-created transformative knowledge and action with National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) of India on themes such as ‘Impact of Pandemic on Education’, ‘Intersectionality of Women led Disaster Response and Preparedness’. The sessions transformed the way the themes are thought about. May it be gender or education.

AIDMI’s continued commitment to evolving pathways for co-creating transformative knowledge and action is AIDMI’s ongoing publication of *Southasiadisasters.net* which has brought together now over 800 researchers, academics and practitioners from the field of development to co-create the relevant over 200 themes of risk reduction, climate action and sustainable development since 1995. This issue is a reflection of such co-creation effort to create pathways for transformative knowledge and action in South Asia. ■

## Joint Evaluation as Co-Creation

Tsunami risk is not on the national agenda as much as it was a few years ago. And this is odd as India will suffer twice if not thrice the economic loss if it met with the tsunami wave of 2004 scale today.

The major joint evaluation by ALNAP titled ‘[Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, Synthesis Report: Expanded Summary, Joint evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami](#)’ was path-breaking in this regard. The process

was co-created by authorities, UN organisation, donor, governments, and INGOs. The key recommendation included improvement of quality of humanitarian action by enhanced linkages to long-term development; making accountability to the tsunami victims and vulnerable population central; and plan and conduct joint and collaborative third party evaluations around key issues.

Co-creation cuts in many ways, AIDMI has found in its work. It cuts across many individual researchers and stakeholders most commonly. But it also cuts across various levels of evaluation or research such as policy to operation. Co-creation also cuts across sectors such as water and food but also methods such as data survey on GIS and visual methods such as photo voices. These possibilities are yet to be mapped. ■

- AIDMI Team



# Transformative Loss and Damage Actions – Non-State Actors Come on Board

By *Sam Bickersteth*, Climate and Development Adviser, UK

Loss and damage has been a topic of debate within the international climate regime from its inception. The provision of a mechanism to support insurance against sea level rise in small island states was proposed by Vanuatu even before the UNFCCC was created in 1992. But rising incidents of actual climate driven losses has pushed Loss and Damage into the heart of the climate negotiations process with the establishment of the Warsaw International Mechanism in 2013, and Article 8 of the Paris Climate Agreement which treats Loss and Damage as a stand-alone item and by implication more than just an adaptation issue. A frequently quoted example of real climate losses is the evidence of rising salinity in coastal Bangladesh which makes cultivation impossible. Research (ref 1)) has identified the value of lost rice production in 3 villages to be \$1.9m.

The Glasgow Climate Pact (COP26) agreed to establish Loss and Damage Dialogues and called for scaled up “action and support, as appropriate, including finance, technology transfer and capacity-building, for implementing approaches for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage”. But many were disappointed that it did not go further and establish a financial mechanism for L&D. However this did not stop certain regional governments and philanthropic organisations from allocating designated funds to loss and damage for the first time.

There is plenty of evidence that climate related losses are real with actions being taken by governments and non-state actors. For example,

the Government of Kiribati purchased land on Fiji in 2014 anticipating possible relocation of its entire citizenry of 100,000. And private actors and corporations are having to act as we know from the legal case won against Shell in the Netherlands in May 2021.

As with climate adaptation and mitigation actions there has been a broadening of stakeholders responding to loss and damage to include non-state actors. People, businesses, cities and regions are already taking action in the face of both slow and sudden onset climate losses. Transformative loss and damage that can build the capacities, take action and invest to prevent, minimise and repair loss and damage at sufficient scale requires this wider group of non-state actors. This is recognised in the Glasgow Climate Pact

*Urges developed country Parties, the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, United Nations entities and intergovernmental organizations and other bilateral and multilateral institutions, including non-governmental organizations and private sources, to provide enhanced and additional support for activities addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change (Para 64) (ref 2).*

The Marrakesh Partnership For Global Climate Action together with the Race to Zero/Race to Resilience High Level Champions are undertaking a consultation with Non-State Actors on transformative action on climate losses May-November 2022. Non-state actors actions on climate related losses will

be consider around the following areas:

- immediate and early action, disaster risk reduction and prevention and humanitarian response by NGOs, response agencies and others
- risk management including climate related risk finance, insurance, and social protection programmes at regional, national, business and household levels.
- cultural, social, health & biodiversity (and related ecosystem services) losses often known as non-economic losses. Less attention has been given to responding to these losses which may be irreversible and more significant than economic losses
- responding to the impacts of slow onset changes such as temperature increase, sea level rise, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and desertification. Measures to address climate related migration and displacement is one such area gaining more attention.

Loss and damage is a reality that challenges institutions, systems and society used to a more stable climate. Failing to act on these challenges by both state and non-state entities is not an option. ■

## References:

Rabbani, G., Rahman, A. & Mainuddin, K. (2013). Salinity-induced loss and damage to farming households in coastal Bangladesh. *International Journal of Global Warming*, 5(4), pp. 400-415. [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop26\\_auv\\_2f\\_cover\\_decision.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop26_auv_2f_cover_decision.pdf)

# Co-Creating Knowledge: Groupe URD Strategy and Experiences

By *Véronique De Geoffroy*, Executive Director, Groupe URD, France

Groupe URD is convinced that the aid sector must undergo a profound transformation in order to respond adequately to the growing vulnerability of the most fragile populations in crises whose scale, duration and severity increasingly exceed the response capacities of the societies and states affected, as well as the capacities of the aid sector and the international community.

In this context and in the face of current crises and future upheavals, Groupe URD's *raison d'être* is to support aid actors in developing new forms of solidarity which support local actors and strengthen the resilience of populations and territories.

It involves the reinforcement of a committed professionalism of the individuals who participate in solidarity actions so that they are drivers of the necessary changes. It also implies adapting the operating methods of organizations and the international aid sector in order to meet new challenges while ensuring a quality response - adapted, responsible and efficient - to current needs. Finally, the participation of donors in the targeted changes is key: policy makers and donors should be aware of the impacts of their choices on the protection of populations and future generations.

All actors (aid workers, donors and policy makers) have the potential to change and processes are already underway but to support more effective

transformations, we need to deepen our approach to accompanying change, to rely on allies, to develop partnerships and to better understand the obstacles and brakes to change.

This is why we will continue to anchor all our activities (evaluation, research, training and dissemination activities) in a **5-step change management cycle**, which is based on the premise that it is by working over time, with the different actors in the field, and by facilitating collective intelligence processes that systemic change occurs.

- We stimulate critical analysis of aid practices at individual and collective levels in order to **raise awareness** of the need for change. This can be achieved through the dissemination of evaluation and field research results. An example would be this Video of the real-time evaluation in Haiti for the IASC, 2010 - Groupe URD or the

lessons paper we developed in 2021 for ALNAP with AIDMI and ADAPT, on Adapting humanitarian action to the effects of climate change.

- We promote and propose prospective analysis to imagine new forms of solidarity (new programmatic approaches, new partnerships, paradigm shifts) and we develop concrete and operational proposals in terms of practices, approaches, organisational modes, etc. to identify the way to move forward. This can also be achieved through the dissemination of ideas and innovative experiences as in this example of use of solar power in humanitarian programmes.
- We support individuals and organisations to implement the changes identified. This is done mainly through our training activities.
- Finally, we stimulate collective and real-time learning, enabling stakeholders to reinforce each other. This is achieved mainly through our networking activities.

Finally, we are aware that in order to bring about real change in individuals, organisations and the sector, we need to work not only on practices, methods and systems, but also on representations, beliefs and individual, collective, organisational and sectoral attitudes. And this may be the most complex level of change...





# Co-Creating Transformative Knowledge and Action: A Connecting Business Initiative Example

By *Shahmaz Radjy*, Communications and Knowledge Management Officer, Connecting Business Initiative, Switzerland



Business-led Emergency Operations Center by PDRF. December 2021.

Photo credit: The PDRF.

**R**esilience is defined as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. In the context of disasters, this runs the gamut from preparing for emergencies to responding to crises and recovering from them. But what does that mean in practice? And how do partnership, collaboration, and co-creation feature?

At the UNDP-OCHA supported [Connecting Business initiative \(CBI\)](#), we engage with the private sector before, during, and after emergencies. We partner with local business networks in 13 countries, focusing on everything from knowledge sharing to capacity building and funding support as

linked to the spectrum of disaster management and recovery.

## Learning from the Philippines: Business Continuity and Emergency Operations

One of our founding Member Networks, the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), has been operational for over a decade and their mission is to help [build a resilient Philippines](#).

PDRF focuses on business continuity planning (BCP) through their digital business resilience hub, SIKAP, that enables Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to bounce forward to the “next normal.” It’s an all-in-one source of practical and

useful business tips, available loan programmes from government agencies and private sector organizations, and mentorship opportunities for MSMEs. They are also running capacity building programmes for [public service continuity planning](#), enabling Government agencies and healthcare services to benefit from private sector tools and PDRF’s experience.

The first Business-led Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the world is also run by PDRF. From there, they monitor the situation while sharing warnings as needed. When a disaster strikes, PDRF visits affected areas to assess and respond to damage, providing regular

situational reports to their members and leading the private sector response and engagement. This response capacity was the key to their ability to [deal with a triple threat in 2020](#): COVID-19, Super Typhoon Goni and Super Typhoon Vamco. In 2021, [PDRF notably supported the response to Typhoon Rai](#).

PDRF's experience serves as an inspiration for fellow CBI Member Networks as well as disaster management initiatives around the world. That's why we have worked with PDRF to feature their work in [articles](#), [case studies](#) and more, as well as providing them with

[speaking opportunities](#) in webinars and conferences.

### **A Network of Networks for Better Business Engagement in Disaster Management**

At CBI, we work with all our Member Networks to facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, support impact-driven projects, and showcase their results. We are also about to launch a PDRF-led course on business continuity planning, and are always open to collaborations to amplify the importance of working together and including local business in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

On a global scale, we leverage our United Nations connection to carry out advocacy efforts on key topics – all related to better engaging business in disaster management – such as anticipatory action, localization, the role and impact of gender and the private sector in the context of disasters.

What better way to embody the principle of “stronger together”? ■

*Find out more about the Connecting Business initiative [here](#), [follow us on Twitter](#), or [sign up for our mailing list](#).*

#### KNOWLEDGE

## Understanding the Bengal Delta: Agenda for Co-Creating Knowledge

Excellent latest thought-provoking book is published for those busy understanding and addressing the impact of changing climate in the Delta of Bengal.

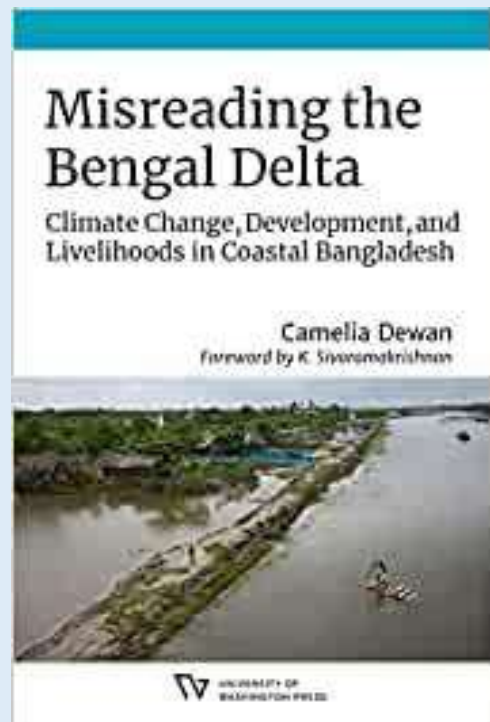
Bengal Delta is of great interest to many: from climate, conflict, co-location of hazards, coastal cyclones, and sea level rise, to name a few perspectives. And what is so far consolidated about the delta in the past decade is the need for a direct focus as on climate change, livelihood, and coastal development. But are the trends observed accurate? Are there other perspectives to look at the delta of Bengal? And what are these possible perspectives? Dr. Dewan offers us a way to start looking at these perspectives.

AIDMI work in the delta finds that it offers an opportunity for sustainable transformation, and gives examples of the extraordinary lives of ordinary women in delta. The farmers in delta areas need additional attention from research and development organisation. Delta agriculture is of special kind and needs special attention.

AIDMI finds that book offers an opportunity to co-create knowledge around some of the key areas of concern to all, such as: climate justice to coastal communities; possible role of youth in transformation; and making local and repeated humanitarian response more climate smart.

Such co-creation of the objective of the joint evaluation was possible due to inter-agency working groups; the direct linking of relief, rehabilitation, and development in approach; and a coalition way of thinking and working.

And, this co-creation has in the end effective become of the well-conceived synthesis reporting. ■



## Gender Vulnerabilities in Disaster-hit Sundarbans

By Dr. Chandrima Sen, Associate Professor of Geography, Rammohan College, Kolkata; and Sumana Bandyopadhyay, Professor of Geography, University of Calcutta, India

The Sundarbans comprise a complex mangrove ecosystem that has repeatedly experienced the onslaught of cyclones, storm surges and related climatic hazards. Characterised by poverty, the high density of population in varying states of vulnerability, emerges as a singular reason why hazards quickly change to disasters, inflicting destruction to the settlements, destroying cultivated land and thereby leading to “a progression of vulnerabilities” (Blakie et al, 2003). Vulnerability can be considered to have some components, which vary from higher to lower levels according to political and social factors affecting different groups of people:

- the initial conditions of a person,
- the resilience of their livelihood,
- their opportunities for self-protection, and
- their access to social protection and social capital

(After Blaikie et al. 1994)

We seek to understand the position of women within these vulnerable communities, and find that they are, in fact, more vulnerable due to their pre-defined roles in the family as well as in the community. Our observation and interactions with women of families uprooted from their homes and homesteads during the storm surges of Amphan and Yash, helps us assimilate findings that go on to elucidate the need to focus upon women as a clearly defined target group in enabling

protection mechanism and adaptive strategies. Women are more likely to be effective in confronting disaster events, when empowered with training and skill-sets that enable more coping and adaptation strategies for the communities at large.

Gender dimension to disaster management is a recognition of social vulnerability. The disasters affect the triple roles of women. The primary role is carried on for generating livelihood. In this case there is need for joint ownership of livelihood assets as rebuilding of the economy of the affected area takes place. There is increased pressure on women to conduct their reproductive roles as many of the family members are injured. The decision to relocate involves taking care of the people with special needs in the family. The community role thus becomes crucial as women of different family units come together to help each other in the process of care and generation of livelihood. Encounters across affected hamlets located in Botkhali, Beguakhali and Dulki villages provide an array of scenarios where women-headed households are confronted with the challenges of relocating in post-disaster situations. Vulnerability does not impact all the women equally. There are especially vulnerable groups of women, such as single women, elderly women, women with special needs, and women heads of households. The

extent of damage is also a function of social status and economic strength. Men also face the trauma of losing their ideal masculine role as a provider to the family. They take to alcohol and drug abuse. These add to domestic violence and insecurity for the women members.

Transformative action is required for post disaster action. Special needs of pregnant, lactating and menstruating women have to be taken care of while planning the shelters and infrastructure. Traditional cultural values have to be honoured. The privacy and honour of women may be especially at stake in the post disaster shelters. Though we did not encounter their experiences in shelters during our field work, we use inferences collected from published material on the accounts of other disaster affected locations.

The role of collaborating non-governmental organisations and the administration becomes significant in disaster preparedness, social capital building, capacity building. It is proposed that inclusive management principles must begin with contextualising the gender perspective and we have enough evidences to indicate that participatory processes are of extreme importance in building of disaster resilience, wherein, women play effective and efficient roles. ■



# ‘Co-Creating Transformative Knowledge and Action’ Revising and updating the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)

By Philip Tamminga and Aninia Nadig, CHS Revision Managers, Geneva, Switzerland

## The Core Humanitarian Standard

In 2014, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) was established. As a core standard, the CHS reflects a wide consensus on the essential elements of principled and effective approaches to assuring aid organisations are accountable to the people they aim to assist. As copyright holders, CHS Alliance, sphere and Groupe URD have launched a wide consultation process to reflect on the learning since it was developed and use this to update the standard, so it remains relevant today and in the future.

In many regards, the process to establish the CHS was just as important as the outcomes. While it was never conceived of or described as an exercise in co-creation, the development of the CHS reflects many of the characteristics of co-creation, with a clear aim of transforming how humanitarian action is done.

Hundreds of aid professionals and experts and aid organisations contributed to the process, sharing their inputs to define the core elements of accountability to crisis-affected people. Their accumulated knowledge and expertise on what works well and what doesn't in humanitarian actions is one of the strengths of the CHS. It provides a common set of agreed actions and responsibilities that can help organisations assess their ways of

working and continuously improve against the standard.

An often-overlooked element of the process was consultations with crisis-affected people and communities and other local actors on what they consider as important in terms of effective and accountable organisations. Their perspectives are reflected in the CHS's Nine Commitments – an integrated and inter-related set of statements of what people can expect – and hold organisations to account for.

The participatory and inclusive nature of the process, while imperfect, did bring together experts and users, but also incorporates the views of people and communities on what more effective and accountable relationships look like with organisations and institutions that support them. This makes the CHS a truly global standard grounded in local realities.

This aspect of co-creation goes beyond the development of the standard to its use and application. Since it was launched, hundreds of organisations have adopted the standard. Each organisation can choose how to translate the CHS commitments into their own policies, procedures, and programmes, guided by the common, shared framework the standard provides.

For some, this means focusing on specific elements that need attention, such as establishing effective

feedback mechanisms to facilitate more open and transparent dialogue with communities. Others use the standard for internal capacity-development to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to transforming internal systems and processes to become more effective and accountable. A growing number use the CHS to monitor, assess and verify how well they meet the CHS commitments, and use this as a tool for continuous improvement.

Regardless of how it used, the accumulated learning and experience over the past seven years is an incredible source of knowledge that is already being used to transform the overall aid system. The CHS is now referenced in many of the most important policy frameworks around humanitarian action at the national and international level, and it has transformed the way we think about accountability.

Looking ahead, the CHS revision process is an opportunity to consolidate our knowledge of the value of the standard in driving better people-centred approaches improve performance and accountability. For the CHS to reach its full potential, we need to take stock of the lessons learned over the past seven years, consider and integrate new developments, and reach increased awareness, endorsement and use of an updated standard by wider set of stakeholders.

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Just like the development of the standard, the process aims for a participatory, inclusive process where all different stakeholders and users of the standard can provide inputs on how to make the content more accessible, understandable, and relevant, and explore how to ensure the standard is better known and used by a wider number of organisations.

One key element of this is to validate and reaffirm the CHS's core commitments by prioritising listening to people and communities themselves on what they need and value. This will be key to co-creating an updated standard that puts "people and communities at the centre". The process will also include the perspectives of

community-based and civil society actors working with vulnerable people and communities on how an updated standard can support their work.

It will also be an opportunity to explore how an updated standard can support system-wide changes in the aid sector and beyond, building on the achievements and lessons learned so far. This includes wider take-up of the standard by UN agencies, governments, donors and policymakers, and making links to emerging issues facing the aid sector.

The outcome of the process should be a widely used strengthened and improved standard in support of more effective and accountable relationships between vulnerable

people and communities, local, national and international actors.

#### How to Get Involved

We want to hear from individuals and organisations across the world on how to make the standard more accessible, relevant and user-friendly tool to drive better quality and accountability. ■

Please visit

[www.corehumanitarianstandard.org](http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org) or contact the CHS Revision Managers for more details on the different ways you can contribute to this important process.

For more information about the process and how to engage, please contact the CHS Revision Managers:

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#### CASE STUDY

## Co-Creation of Transformative Knowledge in Colombia: Two Key Initiatives

By *Aydée Cecilia Marín P<sup>3</sup>*

In 2010, the communities of the Mojana region, on the Caribbean Coast of Colombia, South America, had to leave their territory, after the Cauca and San Jorge rivers broke their banks following heavy rains, caused by the La Niña phenomenon. In four countries, more than 200,000 people were affected and 20,000 homes were flooded. This region is one of the most biodiverse and strategic sites for food security in the country. The families lost everything.

Today, 12 years later and within the framework of a climate change

adaptation project known as *Mojana: climate and life*, led by the Adaptation Fund, the United Nations Development Program, and the Ministry of the Environment, and financed by the Green Climate Fund, two interesting initiatives stand out. They speak not only about the resilience of these communities, but above all about the leadership of rural women to co-create conditions and actions of resilience to reduce disaster risks. The initiatives promoted by women are in the field of restoration, the recovery of ecosystems and the development of

livelihoods adapted to the environmental conditions. "We are no longer women in the kitchen. Now we are women in the territory creating and preserving life"

A first outcome of this female leadership is the Platform for Rural Women and Climate Change. This opportunity for participation encourages women to coordinate actions to transform territory from within, so that "the environmental impact of what we do and of the climate conditions is not so devastating. We are learning to walk hand in hand with the

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<sup>3</sup> Journalist Social Communicator. Trainer of Trainers and Focal Point of Sphere in Colombia.

With the support of Nadia Rey, Advisor on social appropriation. Mojana Program, Climate and Life.

More information at <https://pnudcolombia.exposure.co/en-pasifueres-las-mujeres-poderosas-le-apuestan-a-la-vida> and <https://www.fondoadaptacion.gov.co/mojanaclimayvida/>

environment", says Marina González with joy and conviction.

They report that so far, they have planted 53,000 native trees in the area, they have identified, with the scientific support of the region's universities, the ancestral seeds that must be planted in this territory to guarantee sustainability, and have adopted new cultivation practices without pesticides, and silvo-pastoral systems to guarantee food security. As a result, the ecosystem is recovering, even the wild fauna has been rehabilitated, and the species of fish that were on the brink of extinction have come back enabling a more varied nutritious diet, as well as opening the possibility of extra income improving living standards.

However, these transformations do not refer only to the relationship with the territory but also to the construction of community and family relationships where empowered women lead productive projects, climate monitoring, the inclusion of new generations for continuity of the actions that the older generation has started. They say they have a big challenge to



Women from Pasifueres monitoring the progress of forest restoration.

motivate young people to join these transformation processes. Opportunities for access to education, which have been scarce historically, are being offered to a communities forgotten by the State, so that through knowledge they can make better decisions regarding the use of the land they inhabit.

A second initiative is the Early Warning System, which seeks to ensure that women and men have access to information about the weather through appropriate communication channels and that the information issued by the La Mojana Forecast and Warning

Center, with the technical support of the IDEAM (government agency for meteorological information), are important, understandable, and relevant for both women and men. In this way, a differential gender approach is included in the knowledge of risk and in decision-making for disaster preparedness and adaptation to climate change. Considering that adaptation and disaster risk management are two sides of the same coin, knowing the risks allows co-creating more accurate adaptation responses to the effects of climate change in the short, medium and long term. Women are making this a reality in tune with the regional progressive gender agenda that seeks to guarantee all the rights of women in their diversity, including collective and environmental rights, and thus move towards sustainable development styles that contribute to the achievement of physical, economic and social autonomy. in making decisions in the management of their territory.

*"Here we learned everything, we received a lot of training and in the end, we carried out this project. With the knowledge we made the nurseries, the restorations and the orchards, now we accompany other communities to do the same", says Juana Madariaga. ■*



The process of empowering the women was ongoing and took time, but their commitment was unwavering.



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