



# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND



Financing mechanism for grassroots women's locally-led climate change adaptation and resilience action



**HUAIROU COMMISSION**  
*Women, Homes & Community*



**Sida**

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION AGENCY

# About UCOBAC

## ***Vision***

We envision empowered communities free of poverty and able to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

## ***Mission***

To promote human rights and improve the welfare of vulnerable women and children using community based initiatives.

## ***Values***

- Honesty
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Volunteerism
- Transparency & Accountability

## ***Programs***

- Orphans & Vulnerable Children
- Women's Land and Property Rights
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights / Gender Based Violence
- Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation

*Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) works with organized grassroots women to mobilize resources, apply indigenous / local knowledge and practices to influence public policy processes and promote community resilience and adaptation to effects of climate change.*

# Gender and Climate Change



*“The long spells of drought have greatly affected me and my family. I depend on farming to feed my family and to sell some surplus food in the market to earn some income to cater for other basic needs at home especially the children’s education and health needs. But these days, its very difficult – Everything has changed! We cannot know when the rains are coming and for how long they will stay as it was before. The rains come for a very short time and then it is too hot and dry for a very long period – When I have planted my crops like maize and beans, everything dries up before they mature. Its is a daily struggle to produce what to eat and to sustain any income generating activity from the produce ”-*

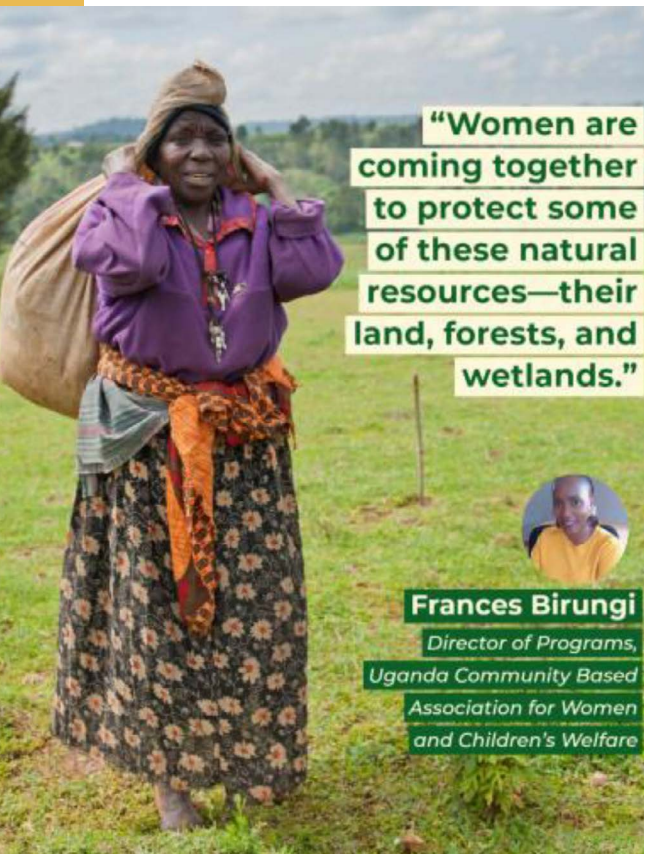
Namwaya Fatuma, Buwagama village, Bulesa sub-county,  
Bugiri district.

Climate change impacts people and countries in many different ways, yet the impacts of climate change are not gender neutral because of existing gender inequalities. Climate change is the living reality of women with two facets – on one hand women indeed are the most affected because of long standing issues of gender, and on the other hand, they are also active agents in addressing immediate and strategic solutions to climate justice.

Population growth and food consumption patterns indicate that agricultural production will need to increase by 70 percent by 2050 to meet global demand for food. The impacts of climate change are reducing productivity and leading to greater instability in production in the agricultural sector (crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry). The largest population in Africa live in rural areas and rely heavily on agricultural, water and forest resources to sustain their livelihoods. They are thus immediately affected by climate change related disasters such as flooding, drought etc that only aggravate the hunger and poverty in the countries.

Women, who are primarily responsible for provision of food and water for their families are indeed hardest hit by effects of climate change. Women’s experiences of climate change either in the context of a family, community, country or global, have implications on women’s rights. The UN Human rights Council resolution 10/4 of 25th march 2009 recognises that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are vulnerable owing to geographical location, gender, age, indogenous, minority or disability. Poor women and girls suffer more because of limited access to information on climate change, forecasts and warnings, training and capacity building, access to climate change financial resources.





**“Women are coming together to protect some of these natural resources—their land, forests, and wetlands.”**

**Frances Birungi**

Director of Programs,  
Uganda Community Based  
Association for Women  
and Children's Welfare

Climate change efforts must address gender inequality. Men and women experience and are affected differently by climate change. There cannot be climate justice without gender justice. Women's action, voice and agency is critical in climate change adaptation and resilience efforts. Women are powerful agents of change and are key actors in contributing effective responses to the challenges of climate change.

There is therefore a need for women to be supported through global and national level policy and financing to strengthen local/grassroot women's leadership, capacity, practices and knowledge.

When women are engaged as decision-makers in climate change and disaster risk mapping, resilience and adaptation planning and action, their communities are better able to adapt and manage climate change shocks and stresses.

### **“Climate change is caused by human action”:**

Climate change (CC) is a result of two and half centuries of human activity. Human beings have caused CC through increasing GHGs by using fossil fuels, eg coal, petroleum, and natural gasses in order to power houses, transport, factories etc. In addition, the unsustainable use of natural resources like land, forests and wetlands for agriculture, infrastructure and industry, widespread logging, real estate development etc have also affected the environment (Isis International, 2012).

### **How Climate Change Happens**

Climate change happens when the earth becomes cooler or hotter as a result of aerosols and greenhouse gasses (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Examples of GHGs in the atmosphere include carbondioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and halocarbons.

The Green house effect happens when GHGs trap heat from the sun causing more warmth than usual. In the last century, the entire globe has warmed at 0.8 degrees Celsius, where most of the warming occurred in the past 30 years. Scientists have been making effort not to let the global temperature rise above two 2 degrees Celsius or else catastrophic effects such as accelerated increase in sea level, severe flooding and drought, extreme weather events, depletion of natural resources, scarcity of water, seasons becoming shorter or longer, etc can happen. (Isis International, 2012)

## Effects of Climate Change on Women and Girls

### Effects of Climate Change on Women and Girls

- Climate change impacts are not gender neutral due to existing gender inequalities.
- Affects all but disproportionately impacts those in marginalized and underrepresented groups.
- They suffer more due to limited access to information on climate change, forecasts and warnings, and exclusion from climate change financing, planning and decision making.
- Exacerbates economic, socio-cultural, and ecological inequities, increasing their vulnerability, disempowerment and marginalization.
- Reduces agricultural production, thus increasing food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition.
- Affects their livelihoods/income generating activities, thus increasing and feminizing poverty.
- It limits their opportunities to access social services like education, health, water, sanitation, affecting their general wellbeing.
- Leads to displacement, migration, dispossession, instability, insecurity and mortality.
- Increases risk of gender based violence and exploitation.
- Increases care work burden on women/girls as it affects agricultural land, water and forest resources, biodiversity and ecosystems that they depend on for this role.





# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND

Greater ambition on adaptation, resilience and accelerating climate action that transforms the lives of the poor requires that we connect locally driven resilience and adaptation to global policy and finance. Resilience building processes driven by local communities in collaboration with local governments are demonstrating the capacities, priorities and innovative scalable solutions of local communities.

The Community Resilience Fund (CRF) is a global mechanism for channeling resources to diverse communities in order to operationalize resilience practices and reduce their vulnerability to climate change induced hazards and calamities. It is a field-tested mechanism that enables organized groups of grassroots women in poor, hazard/disaster-prone settlements high-risk conditions to mobilize collaborative resilience practices that reduce community vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change.

For many years, grassroots women have been viewed as a “vulnerable group” in the face of climate change. They have been seen as “victims” and “beneficiaries” rather than actors and active agents who can mend and improve their communities from the effects of climate change. This puts local, grassroots, indigenous, community-based organizations at a disadvantage when trying to access resources to address local adaptation and resilience building priorities. Funds earmarked for climate change frequently do not reach local communities living in poor, disaster-prone areas.

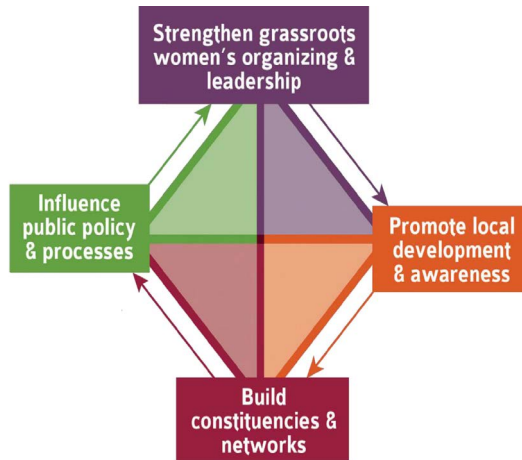


*Strategizing through a group discussion on gender and leadership*

## How the CRF works

The CRF mechanism is anchored in Huairou Commission's diamond vehicle for women's empowerment, gender equality and resilience that has four key elements that work in tandem to strengthen women's leadership and networks to build local led adaptation and resilience.

### The Huairou Commission resilience diamond



The community resilience elements are:

- **Enhancing leadership** – Strengthen grassroots women organizing, public leadership and agenda setting.
- **Demonstrating expertise** – leveraging and promoting local/indigenous knowledge and practices in climate change adaptation, resilience and disaster risk reduction.
- **Building Coalitions** – Building constituencies, networks and partnerships at all levels for inclusive and sustainable adaptation and resilience efforts.
- **Influencing policy** - leveraging partnerships to expand and sustain grassroots-driven resilience practices by influencing and changing public policy and process.

These four elements are interconnected and form the empowerment-oriented community resilience framework at the heart of the Community Resilience Fund mechanism.

### Goal of the Community Resilience Fund mechanism

The CRF mechanism seeks to empower grassroots women to emerge as leaders, champions, change agents of climate change adaptation and resilience in their local communities, through;

- Demonstrate a funding mechanism that channels flexible patient and predictable financial resources directly to local grassroots women. This funding mechanism can promote a decentralized, locally led and community driven approach to climate change adaptation, resilience and disaster risk reduction.
- Develop the capacity of local communities to identify, map and prioritize their risks and vulnerabilities and develop community-led plans for adaptation and community resilience.



- Improve understanding and application of indigenous knowledge and capacity to design and implement their own solutions through locally led practices for climate change adaptation and resilience building. Through the practices, grassroots women demonstrate to decision makers their capacities for reducing community risks and vulnerabilities in the face of natural hazards and the changing climate. This, in turn, enables grassroots women to gain recognition of their public roles and resources to sustain and scale up grassroots-led resilience activities.
- Generate lessons and form partnerships and collaborations to ensure that community-led disaster resilience priorities are funded and implemented.
- The mechanism enables grassroots groups to access and leverage new matching resources (in the form of cash, services, and supplies), thereby expanding and sustaining their resilience building efforts.
- The CRF mechanism enhances women's organizing, public leadership, and agenda setting capabilities that demonstrate women's effective entry into public decision making, thus helping women gain new identities as change makers and greater visibility as leaders in resilience development.
- It is a local/ grassroots learning tool that allows communities to test new resilience strategies, generate new knowledge, and establish platforms for learning and transferring knowledge and practices to other at-risk villages and towns.





## Community Resilience Fund in Uganda

**Huairou Commission** has with financial support from **SIDA**, provided funds to different member grassroots women organizations in Uganda who have invested in mapping, learning, and grassroots-led knowledge and practice demonstrations and negotiations with local and national governments to leverage resources including funds, community assets and technical assistance, and formal recognition from local or national government agencies.

In Uganda, **Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC)** is one of the organisations that have participated in the operationalisation of the Community Resilience Fund mechanism through a project **"Promoting Grassroots Women led Resilience Community Development in post 2015 policy implementation"**. The Fund has reached over six grass-roots women led groups who are members of UCOBAC in a period of six years (2016 - 2021) in Bugiri district. A total of over 180 women and their families have participated in and benefitted from the CRF processes in Uganda. Women's groups implementing the CRF strive to ensure that CRF benefits are spread widely among community members, maximized to the fullest extent, and sustained overtime.



# Building community resilience and adaptation to climate change in Uganda

Grassroots women in Uganda are using the Community Resilience Fund to build resilience of their communities guided by the resilience diamond theory of change as follows;

## Enhancing leadership – Strengthen grassroots women organizing, public leadership and agenda setting

Grassroots women have organized themselves to function as agents of change in their communities. The women have organized in collectives and use this space to empower themselves as leaders in identifying/mapping their climate change risks and vulnerabilities, prioritization of these risks and vulnerabilities and setting their agenda and community led action plans with their own solutions to the identified/mapped existing and emerging risks and vulnerabilities. The grassroots women have capacity building interventions planned to strengthen their



*Bugiri grassroots women engaged in a group discussion on risk mapping*

ability to lead climate change adaptation and resilience processes in their communities. For example; trainings are organized in

- Leadership, advocacy and lobbying
- Climate change and environmental protection practices
- Gender and women's land rights
- Financial literacy
- Agri business value chains and agro ecological practices
- Policy analysis and engagements
- Coalition/movement/partnership building
- Budget analysis, monitoring and advocacy.

As a result, the self-esteem and confidence of many of the participating grassroots women has greatly improved, many women have taken on leadership positions in their respective communities, and the women are recognized by local government as key partners in the development process, some of the women have been appointed to the local government committees on climate change and environmental.





*“I have participated in several trainings including a training on women’s empowerment, advocacy and leadership. This training really changed my life. I acquired knowledge and skills and gained confidence to become a leader in my community. I contested and was elected as a woman councilor in the sub-county. As a woman leader, I am very vocal about issues related to climate change.*”

*I emphasize the need to support women to continue producing food and doing agri-business despite the long droughts. Women in my community have been able to receive drought resistant crop varieties from the local government to grow more food even during dry season due to my influence.*

Adongo Josephine, Iwemba sub-county.

### **Demonstrating expertise – leveraging and promoting local/indigenous knowledge and practices in climate change adaptation, resilience and disaster risk reduction.**

Based on the mapped and prioritized risks and vulnerabilities especially around the effects of climate change on grassroots women’s livelihoods and food security, grassroots women have used their local knowledge and the knowledge attained through the several capacity building trainings to design and implement a number locally/community-led practices for adaptation and resilience to climate change.

This has strengthened and expanded grassroots women led community resilience and development through increasing and protecting grassroots women’s resource and asset base like land, strengthening their livelihoods and incomes, and increasing food security in their homes and communities. Additionally, there is reduction in gender-based violence through awareness creation and sensitization trainings.

#### ***Examples of community-led practices:***

- *Promoting sustainable agriculture through practicing agronomic and climate smart agriculture.*
- *Maintaining kitchen gardens.*
- *Conserving natural resources like wetlands, forests and tree planting.*
- *Construction of energy saving stoves.*
- *Formation of village savings and loans associations.*
- *Recordation and registration of land rights.*
- *Holding community sensitization on climate change and disaster risk reduction through community dialogues/community radio engagements.*
- *Diversifying livelihoods through starting up agri business and income generating activities.*



*As a mother of eleven children and with a bed ridden sick husband, life was very difficult. My gardens were not doing well due to the long droughts and so providing food for my family was a problem and so was medical and education needs that I could not afford to cater for. I joined a women's group in my community as I realized that the problems I was facing were not unique to me but many women like me were stranded. We formed a group to find a collective solution to our problems. UCOBAC trained our group members in many aspects of climate change and resilience building to overcome the effects of climate change to agriculture which we depend on. I learnt about climate smart agronomic practices which I applied in my garden. My banana, groundnut, maize, cassava and vegetable production has greatly improved. I am now able to feed my family from the garden and to sell off some produce to earn some income. We also started savings in the group – so I and my group members can access loans to expand our sources of income. I recently got a loan from the savings group and started a hair dressing saloon in my village.*



*Life has changed for me, my family and other women in the group.*

Proud Lubega Annet, Nabiyunyu village, Iwemba sub-county.

### **Building Coalitions – Building constituencies, networks partnerships at all levels for inclusive and sustainable adaptation and resilience efforts**

Grassroots women mapped strategic institutional actors/stakeholders/allies and federated with them for learning and advocacy purposes – through these networks, they have developed common agenda for climate change adaptation and resilience.

Grassroots women have connected/linked with and are collaborating and partnering with other groups, networks, communities, which has strengthened and expanded public awareness and support of grassroots women climate change adaptation and resilience knowledge and development agenda. Grassroot women's local knowledge and practices have been consolidated and transferred. This has been through documentation of best practices, holding peer learning exchanges, holding grassroots women's academies. Generate lessons and form partnerships and collaborations to ensure that community-led disaster resilience priorities are funded and implemented.

Through these strategic linkages, collaborations and partnerships, grassroots women groups have also been able to access and leverage new matching resources (in the form of cash, services, and supplies), thereby expanding and sustaining their resilience building efforts. Additionally, many grassroots women are being involved in local government climate change adaptation and resilience projects as community mobilisers, educators, monitors, advocates etc.

**Influencing policy - leveraging partnerships to expand and sustain grassroots-driven resilience practices by influencing and changing public policy and process**

Grassroots women have engaged with policy makers and implementers at local and national level in order to influence policy and financing processes to be responsive to the priority needs/risks/vulnerabilities of local communities. Grassroots women have organized and held local to local dialogue with local government authorities to influence their local decision making and financing processes. Additionally, the grassroots women have formed a Community Practitioners Platform (CPP), a space that brings together climate change adaptation and resilience practitioners/actors to engage and collectively come up and implement joint climate change action plans that are inclusive and responsive to the priority mapped risks and vulnerabilities. Grassroots women are also engaged in monitoring policy implementation and budgetary processes at local level to ensure transparency and accountability.

As a result, grassroots women are recognized and certified as resilient development experts/partners/change agents in the climate change adaptation and resilience efforts as they are actively engaging and influencing the ongoing processes at local and national level. Grassroots women have been formally recognized through entering formal agreements and development of joint action plans with their governments.



*An institutional partners' meeting organized by UCOBAC with the grassroots women representatives*

## Challenges

- The CRF is still small and unable to reach more grassroots women groups in different parts of the country.
- Existing social norms that discriminate and disempower women from participating in public leadership, property ownership and gender-based violence – More time and work is needed to invest in transformation of these norms at community level.
- Covid-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions on engagement, socializing, movement etc affected the plans and work at community level. It also escalated the vulnerabilities and risks faced by grassroots women at community level by affecting their livelihoods and food security activities.

## Key recommendations

To scale up and accelerate inclusive resilience and adaptation, policy makers should create investment streams that build capacities of local communities and grassroots women to:

- Understand and map risks and vulnerabilities by combining both local, indigenous and scientific knowledge.
- Provide flexible, patient predictable funding directly to local communities and grassroots women and build financial capacities of women's groups to manage more funds.
- Enable communities and their networks to gather evidence and data for advocacy and collaboration with different actors.
- Ensure that grassroots groups are able to access and navigate through institutional mechanisms/arrangements to access resources, engage in planning and decision making
- Undertake iterative learning processes, embracing risk and failure as part of learning and innovation.
- Secure more funding from CRF for implementation of earmarked project activities.
- Address social and structural gender inequalities that continue to exclude, disempower and tie women in vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability.
- Position Unpaid Care work at center of climate justice and COVID19 recovery.
- Invest in local/indigenous knowledge capabilities to build community resilience and adaptation.

### Principles for Locally Led Adaptation

They are intended to guide the adaptation community as it moves programs, funding, and practices towards adaptation that is increasingly owned by local partners. Through a community of practice, together these organizations will share progress and lessons learned to enhance our understanding of what is needed for effective, equitable locally led adaptation.

- Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level.
- Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled, displaced, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised ethnic groups.
- Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily.
- Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy.
- Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty.
- Flexible programming and learning.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability
- Collaborative action and investment.





*Learning to set up a nursery bed - kitchen gardening*



*A grassroots woman leader addressing local leaders in a dialogue meeting*



**This is a publication of  
Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare  
(UCOBAC)**

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