

Special Session
Right to the City

Why Organized Grassroots Stakeholders Matter:

Exploring Right to City Perspective of Asia Region
How to Face Climate Change and Pandemic

Maria Fides Bagasao
[Co-Founder of Huairou Commission]

Basic principles of Right to City are founded on People's Participation , Democracy and Resistance to Exclusion, claim to space for meaningful life and work .Climate Change and the Pandemic continue the inequality and exclusion among gender, economic status. These times provide opportunity to reverse condition that can basic principles of right to city can be rebuilt and strengthened . The times of climate change and pandemic provide powerful reflection for a change how urgent to take care of one another , interconnection between humans, families, communities, locally and across the nations,

This article highlights why organized grassroots stakeholders matter in facing Climate Change and Pandemic is equally a powerful platform to reverse inequality , exclusion and power relations in decision making in Asian region.

The Asia Pacific region is home to the fastest-growing cities in the world, and they are responsible for 75% of the region's carbon emissions. The IPCC noted that the poorest groups in the poorest countries have the least ability to cope with climate change. Women,more than half of the world's population /Despite disadvantaged position in the communities as a result of ingrained structural inequalities and cultural norms grassroots women are constantly developing strategies and devising smart solutions that address multiple vulnerabilities as well as empower them.)14th Conference on Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change)

The COVID-19 pandemic is harming health, social and economic well-being worldwide, with women at the centre. First and foremost, women are leading the health response: women make up almost 70% of the health care workforce, exposing them to a greater risk of infection. At the same time, women are also shouldering much of the burden at home, given school and child care facility closures and longstanding gender inequalities in unpaid work. Women also face high risks of job and income loss, and face increased risks of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment during times of crisis and quarantine.(OECD 2020) Priorities in building resilience must highlight the needs, interests, priorities of women ,majority of organized grassroots coalitions .

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities and emphasized extraordinary efforts put by grassroots communities in rebuilding their communities.Organised grassroots networks act as trusted allies to the governments and support resilient

community development. Grassroots leaders across the regions from biggest grassroots global coalitions, WIEGO and Huairou Commission have spearheaded resilience building in climate change adaptation as well as during Pandemic.(IIED,Climate and Development Days, Dec .2020)

The value of citizens' engagement for a resilient recovery must be recognised. It is important, for the global actors to, therefore, align their policies, priorities and programs to the needs of those who are affected the most, but are constantly innovating solutions to address climate change ,pandemic and other disasters, at the local level, using their own resources, knowledge and capacities. (IIED, Climate and Development Dates, Dec. 2020) (Further details are omitted here.)