

UN HABITAT

CITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

NEWSLETTER

April 2011

Youth in Kampala, Uganda Look at Climate Change Through a Gender 'Lens'

UN-Habitat actively supports developing countries in tackling climate change through its Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI). Starting with only four cities in four countries in late 2008, the Initiative now covers more than 20 cities world-wide. As youth generally comprise the largest community group in cities, it is imperative that they proactively address climate change. The potential for youth to take the lead in combating climate change is obvious and can be harnessed and translated into action on the ground.

CCCI is mainstreaming the engagement of youth in climate change activities in four cities in Africa by conducting workshops and training. These workshops provide selected groups of youth with knowledge about climate change impacts in their cities, and prepare them to undertake specific adaptation and mitigation actions. At present (April 2011) CCCI has carried out such workshops in Mombasa, Kenya, and Kampala, Uganda; in the near future the Initiative plans to replicate this training model in Kigali, Rwanda and St Louis, Senegal. The workshops are being taken with the involvement of city officials and relevant organizations such as municipal engineers, fire brigade, first aid (i.e. St Johns), scouts, and others.

The objective of these training activities is to provide the youth with knowledge about local climate change impacts, and inspire them to develop and carry out their own community-based projects. Specifically, these activities aim to present data and findings from the CCCI's climate change assessments, suggest possible responses to the findings, clarify the role of the youth in supporting their neighbour-



Kampala, Uganda ©UN-Habitat

hoods in this area, and encourage them to further spread knowledge and undertake appropriate response activities.

In each city, the process begins with around 40 youth attending and participating in a one day workshop. Following presentations that provide basic knowledge on the topic of climate change response, participants discuss and clarify their roles, as youth, in their respective neighbourhoods. Then facilitators train the youth to become trainers themselves, and build their capacities to further disseminate knowledge. (This practical training can enhance the youths' employability for similar jobs later.) The workshops conclude with participants identifying clear actions and guidelines for their cities.

These introductory workshops then are

followed by specialized training on either climate change adaptation or mitigation. The 2 days of training on adaptation feature presentations, group work, and live demonstrations on disaster responses by local and national organizations. Youth are introduced to the subjects of floods, including their nature and characteristics; water and sanitation concerns during floods; climate proofing; disaster risk reduction, emergency teams and roles; and evacuation strategies. Trainers also demonstrate first aid techniques. As a step towards institutionalizing the role of the youth in the city's policy guidelines, local officials are invited to the training sessions to discuss and exchange views. Youth are encouraged to apply the knowledge gained from these trainings and come with projects or plans that they could undertake in their own neighbourhoods.

In parallel with the adaptation training, facilitators conduct a 5 day-long training on mitigation. This training reflects information available on mitigation opportunities in the target city. For example the topics of solar energy, chemical products, recycling materials, improved solid waste treatment and so on are introduced and discussed with representatives of relevant private organizations and city departments.

The workshop and training in Kampala, Uganda took place during the week of 7-12 March 2011. This event had the added advantage of including a gender component. The youth were introduced to the gender dimensions of cities and climate change and, through a participatory and interactive process, given an opportunity to consider how climate change affects men and women (and girls and boys) differently. The enthusiastic and vocal youth – balanced for gender, naturally -- increased their awareness of the gender differences in vulnerability to climate change. They committed themselves to continue looking at climate change and related issues through a gender 'lens', and to develop responses that would take into consideration such gender differences.

During this training the local Scouts Associations also were invited to present their roles in disaster preparedness. Furthermore, on the day following the adaptation training a troop of scouts visiting from Japan accompanied their hosts from Kampala on a visit to St. Margaret



Kampala, Uganda ©UN-Habitat

College. There the youth cleaned up a drainage facility that was blocked and filled with solid waste. In this activity the youth were supported by the UN-Habitat One Stop Centre in Kampala. (Unfortunately, due to the mega-earthquake that hit Japan the next day, the Japanese scouts left Kampala early and were unable to attend a joint tree-planting session and cultural exchange programme.)

In parallel to these pilot activities the Kampala City Council – an active participant at the training - is in the process of developing a Gender Policy. In view of CCCI's presence, and as the result of the youth and gender workshop, they have committed to address climate change in

the Council's forthcoming Gender Policy. This step should help to ensure that the needs of both men and women, girls and boys, young and old, are acknowledged and addressed appropriately, and that attention to the issue of climate change is appropriately institutionalized.

Climate change is an inter-generational concern. At the same time climate change-related natural disasters affect men and women differently. CCCI's experiences working with youth groups and mainstreaming gender concerns in Kampala, as well as in Mombasa, Kigali and St. Louis, are yielding insights that will inform our approach to addressing these at-times neglected aspects of climate change.

Permaculture Demonstration Spaces in Esmeraldas, Ecuador

Human action undoubtedly accelerates climate change, which is already accepted in scientific and governmental circles as an irreversible process. However, urban agriculture can directly contribute to preventing and mitigating its effects. Its predominantly small scale of production minimises resource use and allows rapid response to disaster situations like hurricanes, intense rains and other extreme climactic events that have increased in frequency and intensity due to climate change. Urban agriculture also contributes to mitigating the effects of drought and reducing pressure on dry and eroded land. Moreover, it produces a significant amount of food and other benefits that satisfy basic human needs and indirectly reduce phenomena like migration (which is one of the wider consequences of drought).

By developing in a decentralised manner in many individual cities and towns, urban agriculture considerably reduces the need for the transport and storage of agricultural produce. This in turn reduces the consumption of fossil fuels, one of the principle causes of climate change. In many cases urban agriculture has been developed in abandoned spaces formerly used as trash dumps, thereby facilitating their reclamation and, ultimately, the expansion of urban green space. Green space in cities also functions as a carbon sink and helps reduce the greenhouse effect.

The phenomenon of urban agriculture has in many ways developed based on the principle of permaculture which emphasises the efficient use of energy, application of ecotechnologies and restoration of

ecosystems and degraded environments. As it is applicable at many scales and in a wide variety of environments, permaculture impacts heavily upon the processes that generate and accelerate climate change with an overall positive effect on mitigation.

In addition, permaculture, in its respect for diversity and concern for the rescue of the native, designs and implements settlements and environments adapted to specific local conditions, with emphasis on risk reduction and high resilience to extreme situations. These settlements and productive environments are a useful model for future settlements in times of low energy availability and high importance of local production and local markets. As part of the different systems of Permaculture, the agro-productive sub-

system is designed by integrating forestry components, temporary and permanent small size crops and animals, allowing to close nutrient cycles and minimize the emission of greenhouse gases while they become a sink for these gasses.

CCCI implements its programme through strategic interventions related to climate change adaptation and mitigation, including the creation of permaculture demonstration areas. An agreement between the Foundation Antonio Nuñez Jiménez for Nature and Man (FANJ) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has already funded some of these areas.

Australians Bill Morrison and David Holmgren developed permaculture in the 1970s in response to the prevailing conditions of contaminated soil, water and air related industrial and agricultural systems, the loss of species of plants and animals, the reduction of nonrenewable natural resources and the underlying economic system.

Permaculture is one methodology for designing sustainable human settlements. It addresses human needs, including nutrition and is designed to work with the least amount of energy, use local resources, often discarded or not considered, and include the diversity, productivity and resilience of natural systems. In short, Permaculture helps move by a new type of development, local-sustainable-development, and go towards a new model of city less predatory and more humane (FANJ 2006).

Thanks to this agreement, CCCI obtained the experience of the FANJ in the area of sustainable development. Through a participative process, FANJ experts contributed to the sustainable local development of urban and rural systems, with an emphasis on the ecological and cultural aspects of development and taking permaculture as the organizing principle. The Cuban experts organized a series of workshops in Esmeraldas around this topic, and succeeded in training a number of persons who could promote this approach. With technical assistance from FANJ, a number of these 'promoters' went on to apply the principles of permaculture to build new or improve existing spaces. Today these pilot spaces stand as an example to the city in general, and to the neighbourhoods of Las Acacias and San Pedro where they



Espacio Barrio San Pedro, ©ONU-Habitat, Ecuador

were developed in particular.

Additionally in these spaces the promoters led and participated in the construction of three dry toilets, and incorporated these facilities into the permaculture cycle of the demonstration spaces. These dry toilets use a proven technology that, in addition to reducing the household consumption (and contamination) of water, permits the recovery of nutrients that can be used to fertilize the soil; this technology thus helps to close biological cycles within the permaculture system. In particular in a neighbourhood such as Las Acacias, a settlement located on a slope with limited basic services and at serious risk of landslides, such a system offers an additional advantage: it reduces the saturation of the soil, a situation which can aggravate landslide risk with all its attendant and lamentable consequences.

Including such technologies as an integral part of a permaculture design helps to guarantee the holistic functioning of a settlement's various components, including shelter, agriculture and local resources, with a minimal use of energy and external resources.

Today, thanks to the support of the Municipality of Esmeraldas, residents of Las Acacias enjoy a 2,100 square meter demonstration space. This space includes housing constructed out of local materials, dry toilets, a system to filter wastewater for agricultural uses, and facilities and spaces for composting, drying seeds in the sun, planting, enclosing small animals, capturing rainwater, and so on – all that incorpo-

rate the principles of permaculture. This holistic approach, developed in Cuba and tested in Esmeraldas, merits additional study; the experience is offered to other cities and towns, both within CCCI and otherwise, for consideration and possible replication.

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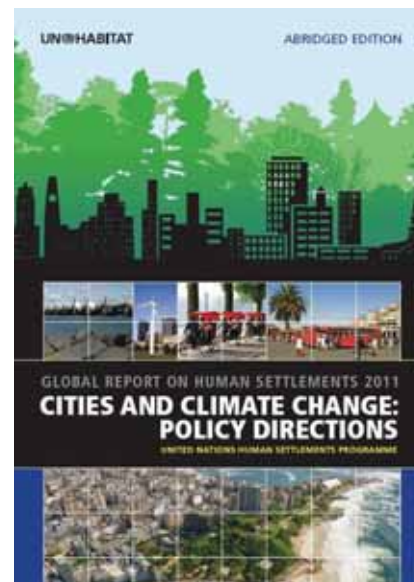
Baño seco en un espacio demostrativo Barrio Las Acacias, ©Roberto Sánchez, FANJ

Global Report on Human Settlements 2011: Cities and Climate Change

Cities and Climate Change reviews the linkages between urbanisation and climate change, two of the greatest challenges currently facing humanity in the 21st century, and whose effects are converging in dangerous ways. It illustrates the significant contribution of urban areas to climate change while at the same time highlighting the potentially devastating effects of climate change on urban populations. It reviews policy responses, strategies and practices that are emerging in urban areas to mitigate and adapt to climate change,

as well as their potential achievements and constraints. In conclusion, the report argues that urban areas have a pivotal role in both climate change mitigation and adaptation and identifies strategies and approaches for strengthening this role.

For more information visit <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/>



EVENTS

Second World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change Bonn, 3-5 June 2011

Preceding the UN Climate Talks in Bonn, this is Resilient Cities' second World Congress and is convened by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, the City

of Bonn and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change. Representatives from local governments, UN and international agencies, national governments, financial and insurance institutions, the urban infrastructure industry and non-governmental organisations will converse with city planners, urban researchers, consultants and

academics about urban climate change adaptation. Resilient Cities is the global platform for learning, cooperation and networking on all aspects of urban resilience and adaptation to climate change. For more information visit <http://resilient-cities.iclei.org/bonn2011/>

ABOUT US

Headquartered at UN-Habitat in Nairobi, the Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) involves the participation of more than 20 cities worldwide. It targets medium-sized cities in developing and least-developed countries and emphasizes good governance and practical initiatives for the municipalities and their citizens. The CCCI team has adapted participatory processes

developed previously by UN-Habitat so as to specifically address climate change issues within the city. A complementary set of tools is being developed to support cities in raising awareness on the impact of climate change and support mitigation and adaptation activities. Since 2008, CCCI has been generously supported by the Government of Norway, the United

Nations Development Account, the Cities Alliance and other sources of global, regional, national and local funding.

Newsletters of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative are electronically published periodically. For more information contact uepb@unhabitat.org or visit www.unhabitat.org.

