

Stories of how people are adapting to climate change

Ages: 11-16

Climate change adaptation means communities, supported by governments, taking early action to reduce the damaging impact that climate change will have on their lives. This resource is intended to tell some stories of adaptation measures people are taking around the world. It is a series of words and pictures from the countries Oxfam works in.

Peru



Julio Abad Mendoza, 60, Farmer, civil defence committee, Chapica Carmelo, near Piura, NW Peru. He is holding his picture showing one of the miracles of Jesus.

"The people from Centro Ideas have helped to teach us prevention measures and communication techniques. It would be useless if they came and we didn't learn. We had civil defence committees before, but they were never organised. Our houses would fall and our land plots would be covered by the river. But now, with support, we are better prepared. Things are much better."

Climate change is affecting the climate of Peru and is making extreme weather more frequent. The region around Piura in North-West Peru is increasingly vulnerable to floods and land slips. Rainfall has become heavier and more intense, and people put themselves at risk to save their crops and homes. Oxfam works with local Non Governmental Organisations to help these communities prepare. Activities include: hazard maps, early warning systems, building stronger houses with larger roofs, and identifying safe areas and escape routes. Communities have been encouraged to organise themselves through local civil defence committees.



A youth brigade checks the roof of a house in La Huaquilla. From left: Massiel Morales (23), Judith Prieto Cordoba (22), Elvis Prieto Cordoba (22).

"We have a warning system using the church bell, and whistles from the lieutenant. We also do broadcasts around the village. CIPCA has helped us with training, and this has made us stronger. Before this, the young people were shy, we were afraid of speaking, we were embarrassed, even amongst ourselves. CIPCA gave us confidence. The brigades are very important for when disasters hit - it is good to be prepared, and the difference is knowing you are prepared."

Massiel Morales, 23

In response to particularly heavy rains in early 2008 an emergency brigade of young people formed in the small village of La Huaquilla. In conjunction with the local civil defence committee, they were given training on early warning systems, evacuation routes, safe zones, and risk assessment, especially regarding the most vulnerable homes and farms.

Peru experiences increasingly intense rainfall and droughts, and local capacity to cope has been inadequate. Aid agencies support communities through local civil defence committees, so that the people are better able to prepare for disasters, and claim essential services such as water, health, and education from national government. They also work to raise awareness of local people's needs - including water, sanitation, and disaster preparedness - through workshops and training.



John Granda Chivilchex, Coordinator Proyecto DIPECHO V Programa Oxfam, Peru

"It's important to involve young people, to teach them about preparing for disaster, and giving them the capacity to rescue people, livestock, and crops. This is a difficult area - the hamlets are very isolated, and the river gulleys flow all around. As young people their possibilities are cut short - they don't get an education, and the technical knowledge to look after their crops and animals properly isn't reaching them."



Justin Ccallacsca, 26, and his wife Lisa Angelica Sisa Morochara, 24, works the early warning system, Jachana, Caylloma.

Justin: "We have two thermometers, with maximum and minimum temperatures, and we have a rain meter as well. I measure at 7.00 am and 7.00 pm every day, and report this to Caylloma district through the radio. The information is used to forecast the weather for the region, and helps to alert people."

Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world. It is located at the friction points of three continental tectonic plates and is prone to seismic activities such as earthquakes and tsunamis. A significant proportion of the populations affected by small or medium scale disasters are deprived from their right to life and dignity. Disaster events push the poor people into poverty, increasing their dependency on natural resources. This, in turn, degrades the environment and further increases their vulnerability to disaster risk. Despite the growing understanding and acceptance of the importance of disaster risk reduction and

increased disaster response capacities, disasters and the management and reduction of risk continue to pose a challenge. Maintaining good hygiene is especially important in times of disasters when ordinary sanitation facilities are not available. Good health and safety practices are proven to save lives.



Suwarti delivering hygiene training

Suwarti, is a hygiene and sanitation Cadre and takes her voluntary position quite seriously. She was trained by Oxfam and Primari (partner) to work with local people promoting safe hygiene and sanitation practices. On most days, she makes house calls to check on hygiene situations. Here she is visiting Sri Yanti who has 2 children and whose mother lives with the family. She checks the bathroom and latrine that they have built themselves, with improvements on the basic design, and shows the hygiene schedule which she has prepared herself.



Third grade teacher, Esti, shows Sintia Waromi how to use a Tippy Tap after using the toilet, during a community event at SDN Waharia elementary school.

Sanitation kit bags containing games, activities and information are being used to promote hygiene practices and hand washing amongst children.



Villagers tend their vegetables as part of a Farmer's Field School.

Farmer Field Schools are a way of group learning where local people are trained to become teachers and all the participants learn in a practical manner. Several nurseries are visible in one part of the village, which the Field School is using as a testing ground. Growing different types of crops that are suitable to the changing climate is one of the main ways small-scale farmers are adapting to climate change. Onions, water, spinach and tomatoes are among the new crops being grown in Indonesia. Water tanks have been installed to help guarantee irrigation. The Field Schools are also teaching nutrition and animal husbandry skills.

Bangladesh



Abul Hossain Chowkidar raises the family home on to the newly-raised ground.

"Now, my house has been raised. I can stay with my children on a dry place during floods. I feel very happy about it. I feel good that my land is getting raised for the flood."

Abul's family live with the devastating effects of climate change. In 2007, one of his sons was washed away by the floods. His wife, Sufia, was nursing her new-born baby, when she turned away and in an instant her youngest boy had been washed away. Despite a frantic search, Sufia never found him. A local development agency working with Oxfam has helped her by raising her home above the flood level (this also provides employment for local women working as day labourers), as well as giving training on preparing for floods. Hopefully when the annual floods come these changes mean the villagers will be able to cope better.



A man demonstrates a water pump used for irrigation, used to help diversify the crops grown.

"We have crops such as sweet potato, maize, chilli, carrot, onion, and garlic, which we eat and sell at the market too. Before the flood we store seeds and food, and tell the community to save seeds in case the crops are damaged. Then, during the floods, we can cultivate crops such as pumpkin and beans on the roofs of our homes. We feel good because this helps to feed the village."

The majority of the world's poor people work in agriculture. Adapting farming practices is crucial to ensuring food security for the world's population.