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Feminist Participatory Action Research as a tool for Climate Justice

Dr Naomi Joy Godden, Pam Macnish, Trimita Chakma and Kavita Naidu

Abstract

The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) uses Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) to strengthen grassroots women's movements to advocate for an alternative development model – the 'Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future' (5Fs) – to ensure new, gender-just, economic, political and social relationships in a world free from climate injustices. Grassroots women of the Global South face the extreme impacts of climate change resulting in reinforced and exacerbated inequalities driven by a patriarchal capitalist economy. APWLD's Climate Justice-FPAR 2017-2019 (CJ-FPAR) supported young women researchers across Asia to lead grassroots research to expose the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women to demand climate justice. The programme evaluation found that CJ-FPAR proved highly successful as a feminist political tool in enhancing grassroots women's activism through capacity building, producing new knowledge, tools and resources, undertaking impactful advocacy and strengthening the movements' architecture. We argue that FPAR is a useful methodology for grassroots feminist climate justice activists to collectively document lived experiences of climate change and strengthen women's movements to engage in strategic activism and advocacy for rights-based policy change.

Key words: Climate justice; Feminist Participatory Action Research; women's human rights; Asia; feminist activism; social movements.

Introduction

Feminist activists argue that the gendered injustices of climate change are caused by globalisation, fundamentalisms, militarism and patriarchy - a neoliberal development model of power and control that exploits women and the environment for global corporate profit (Women and Gender Constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2020). In Asia and the Pacific,

[Climate change] is a devastating reality for millions of women... Typhoons, flash floods, landslides, drought, rising sea levels, unpredictable water access and weather patterns, crop loss and large-scale displacement are a daily reality and likely to increase. For women of the region, climate change often compounds and fuels existing inequalities and chronic marginalisation

(Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development 2015 p.4).

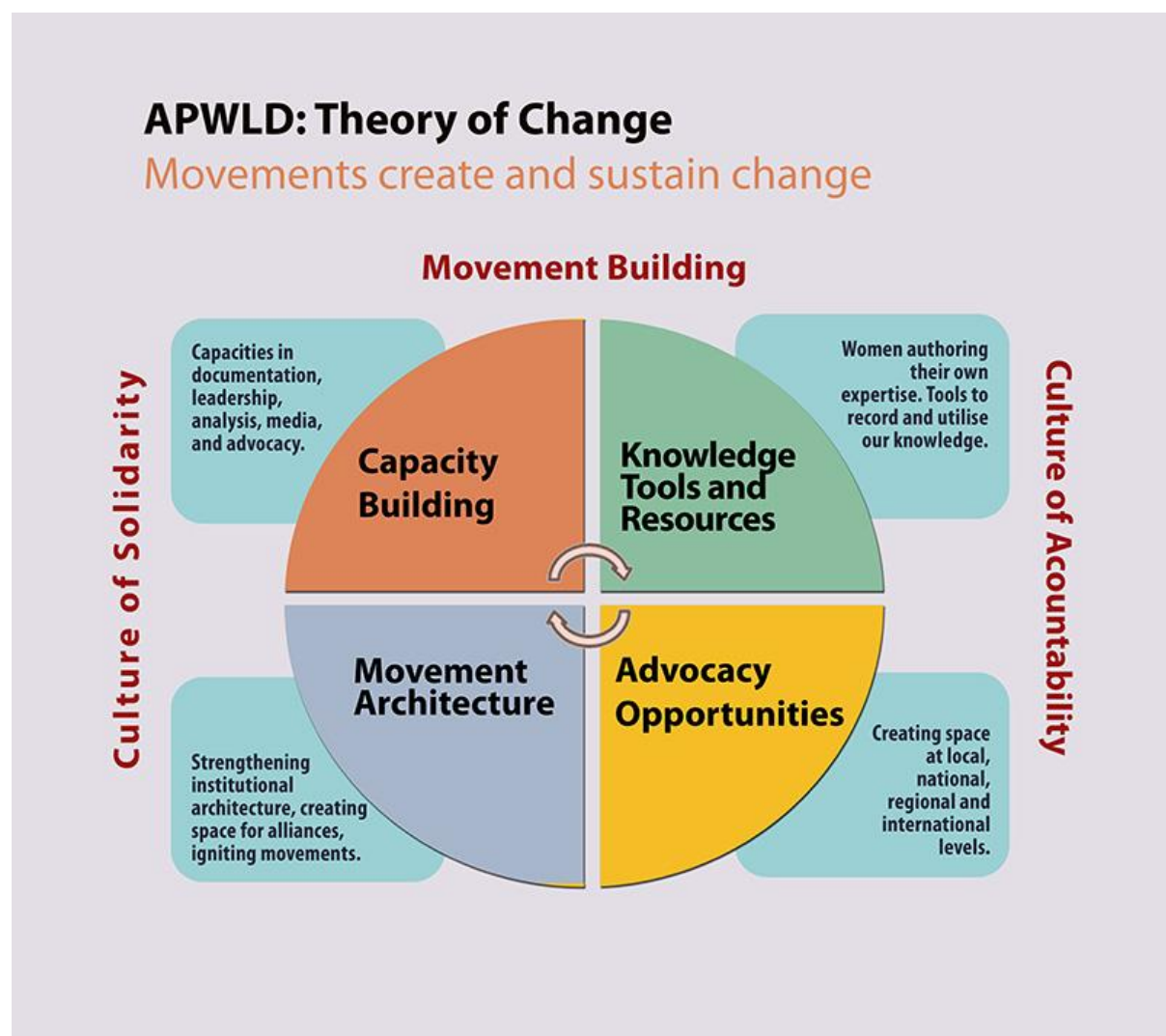
The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) is a leading network of feminist organisations and individual activists in Asia and the Pacific. It fosters women's movements to influence laws, policies and practices at local, national, and international levels to promote gender equality and women's human rights.

In response to the devastating impacts of climate change on grassroots women in Asia and the Pacific, APWLD advocates for a Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future (5Fs): an 'alternative development model to ensure new, gender-just, economic, political and social relationships in a world free from climate change' (APWLD 2016, p. 1) [1]. In addition to collective action for climate justice, APWLD's work through its various programmes focuses on challenging discriminatory laws, policies and practices to increase women's access to justice and

strengthen their political leadership and participation in decision making processes; it builds the capacity of the most marginalised, indigenous, migrant and poor women on their rights over land, resources, decent work, peace, and security; it advocates to ensure international and regional laws, norms, standards and practices reflects women's human rights; and it promotes *Development Justice* [2] to increase the power of feminist movements to interrogate trade and investments rules and halt the growing power of corporations.

APWLD's Theory of Change (Figure 1) is based on the notion that women's human rights are achieved and sustained when autonomous feminist movements exist and have an enabling environment to work. Feminist movements can be strengthened through bringing about changes in four domains: 1) Capacity building; 2) Producing new knowledge, tools and resources; 3) Undertaking impactful advocacy; and, 4) Strengthening the movements' architecture.

Figure 1: APWLD Theory of Change

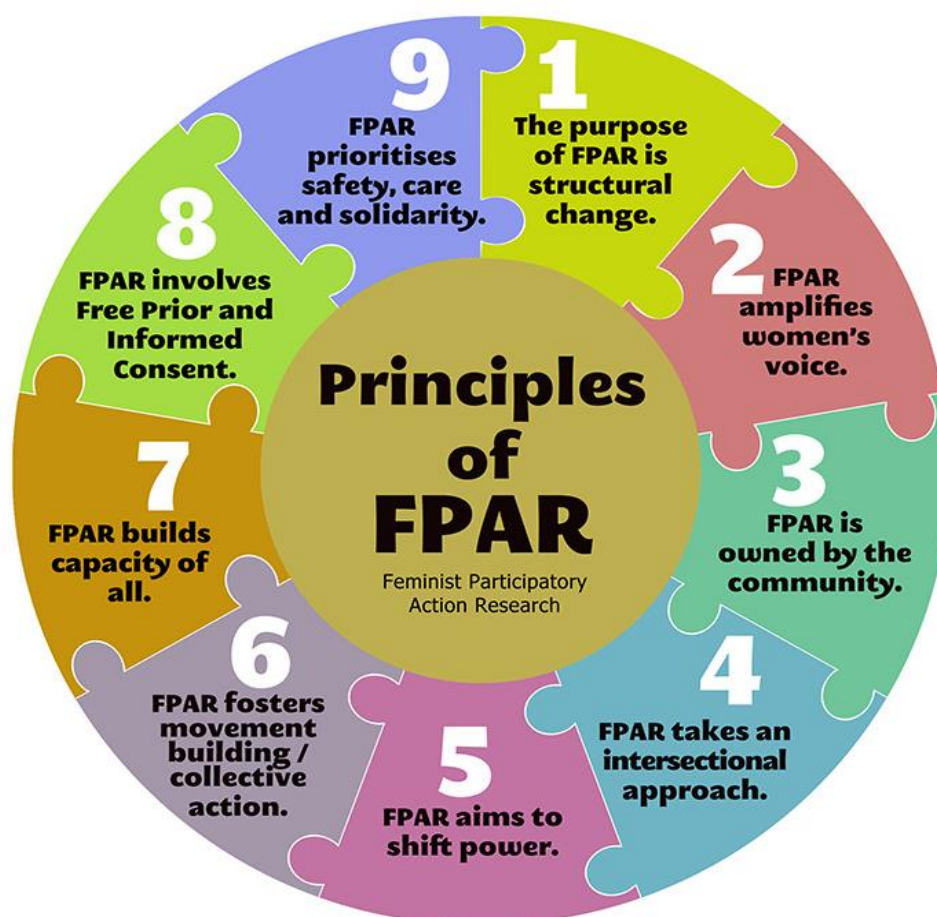


Source: APWLD 2020a.

Within its Theory of Change, APWLD uses Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) to mobilise and strengthen grassroots women's movements to pursue gendered transformational climate justice. For APWLD, the historical responsibility for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions - and the climate crisis - lies with the industrialised

countries of the Global North. Demanding an end to patriarchy and climate capitalism as well as implementing accountability and redress are at the core of achieving climate justice for grassroots women in this region. APWLD identifies nine principles of FPAR (see Figure 2) that guide its work with grassroots women to demand climate justice.

Figure 2: Principles of Feminist Participatory Action Research



Source: APWLD 2020b

In 2017-2019, nine women's rights organisations in Asia participated in APWLD's Climate Justice-FPAR programme (CJ-FPAR). CJ-FPAR supports young women researchers (YWRs) and their mentors [3] to undertake participatory research with their communities on gendered issues of climate injustice and generate knowledge that empowers collective advocacy for enhanced climate ambition and women's human rights. The CJ-FPAR theme for 2017-2019 was 'Climate-Induced Displacement', supporting communities previously displaced or facing displacement, either voluntarily or forcibly, as a result of climate change. Participating countries included Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. In each country, YWRs and women in their communities used FPAR to document the interrelation between gender injustice and climate change with the aim of demanding action by policy-makers and stakeholders. They produced national reports sharing findings on how FPAR tools were used to mobilise grassroots women as climate advocates to effect positive change in their communities.

At the end of the programme, a participatory evaluation was facilitated to assess the impacts and effectiveness of CJ-FPAR to build knowledge on the role of FPAR in promoting

collective feminist action for climate justice. The evaluation framework considered the domains of change outlined in APWLD's Theory of Change (Figure 1) and the nine principles of FPAR (Figure 2). Drawing on the CJ-FPAR process and evaluation findings, this article discusses the effectiveness of FPAR tools in building collective feminist movements and strengthening advocacy of grassroots women for climate justice. We begin with an overview of FPAR and describe the process and context of CJ-FPAR and the evaluation methodology. We then examine the impacts of CJ-FPAR in mobilising grassroots women for climate justice. The article argues that FPAR is an effective political tool for activism in the demand for a system change, as demonstrated by the empowerment of grassroots women's movements in the struggle for climate justice in the nine study countries. In doing so, the paper fills knowledge and conceptual gaps in both climate justice and the FPAR literature.

Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR)

Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) is a methodology of women's movements to generate knowledge and empower action for structural change (Chakma 2016). FPAR involves organic cycles of action and reflection that combine participatory research and political activism (Reid & Frisby 2008). Traditional power relationships between 'researcher' and 'subject' are subverted with a democratic process of inquiry and action that is designed and implemented by participating women as 'co-researchers' (Godden 2017). This deliberate shift in power enables collective ownership of knowledge and action (Wickramasinghe 2010).

FPAR is strongly informed by Freire's concept of *conscientization* whereby citizens engage in critical dialogue to understand systemic injustice and mobilise as activists (Freire 1989). FPAR specifically privileges the voices and rights of grassroots women and seeks to transform existing structures of patriarchal power that marginalise women across their diversities (Lykes & Hersberg 2012).

FPAR is a key methodology for APWLD to foster autonomous women's movements for social change, including feminist climate justice movements. APWLD (2020b) explains that it integrates FPAR into its Theory of Change to empower women by amplifying their voices and fostering their agency to demand change to systems of oppression, particularly patriarchy, globalisation, fundamentalisms and militarism. Importantly, 'the participants are not subjects on whom research is conducted but rather the subjects of the inquiry who set the agenda, participate in the data collection and analysis, and control the use of the outcomes, including deciding what actions to take' (APWLD 2020b).

There is a growing body of evidence that FPAR is an appropriate and effective methodology for marginalised women, such as poor and indigenous women, to examine and document their social situation and demand their human rights [4]. Existing literature highlights several aspects of FPAR that enhance the architecture and actions of women's movements.

FPAR focuses on relationships and nurturing collective solidarity, with an intersectional feminist lens that honours women's diverse experiences and needs. Feminist ethics nurture a space of collective care and prioritising continuous free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) (Brydon-Miller 2009). FPAR adopts and strengthens collective activist processes with democratic and inclusive decision-making (Chakma 2016). The use of participatory and creative methods in FPAR supports co-researchers to gain skills and knowledge and build collective ownership of the research process and findings (Riley & Scharff 2013). Furthermore, FPAR data includes creative expression through drawing, photography and

film, storytelling, performance and role-play, poetry, dance and music - methods that enhance inclusion and accessibility in the research process (Knowles & Cole 2008). FPAR generates knowledge *and* action, and women document their expertise to empower collective activism for a better world (Reid, Tom & Frisby 2006).

Criticisms of FPAR, on the other hand, consider a perceived lack of a credible 'professional' approach when using participatory methodologies with disadvantaged peoples (Duraiappah, Roddy & Parry 2005), the risk of tokenistic application of participation (Godden 2017), and ethical issues such as power imbalances and safety (Gatenby & Humphries 2000). However, there is very little evidence of the effectiveness of FPAR to mobilise women against the climate crisis beyond the experiences of APWLD. As such, the CJ-FPAR evaluation findings provide a unique insight into collective feminist action for climate justice, contributing to a further development of the theory and practice of FPAR.

Overview of APWLD's Climate Justice - Feminist Participatory Action Research 2017-2019

APWLD's CJ-FPAR included YWRs and mentors from nine women's rights organisations in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. These organisations ('FPAR partners') were selected based on selection criteria aligned with the goals of APWLD and its CJ-FPAR programme.

The 12 stages of CJ-FPAR:

- Stage 1: Call for applications in Asia Pacific and establishment of contracts with successful partner organisations [5] from nine countries.
- Stage 2: Each of the nine partner organisations hired a YWR (paid) to lead the FPAR and select a mentor (unpaid) to support the YWR.
- Stage 3: *First Regional FPAR Training* (5 days) for YWRs and mentors. Women learned about FPAR, climate change and its impacts; Globalisation, Fundamentalism, Militarism and Patriarchy (GFMP); Development Justice; strategising FPAR projects with power mapping, critical pathways, and Theory of Change; and digital tools, safety and ethics.
- Stage 4: YWRs conducted *Pre-Research Consultation* with their communities to discuss CJ-FPAR, establish research protocols, develop an impact objective, design research questions and data collection methods, undergo power mapping and develop a critical pathway. Most YWRs formed women's groups to undertake FPAR together.
- Stage 5: YWRs documented the *Research Design*.
- Stage 6: *Second Regional FPAR Training* (5 days) for YWRs and mentors to prepare for participatory data collection and analysis. Women learned about feminist facilitation, participatory research methods, and media monitoring.
- Stage 7: YWRs implemented *participatory research* with women in their communities. Methods such as focus group discussions, social mapping, drawings, interviews, surveys, and story-telling documented women's experiences of climate change.
- Stage 8: *Third Regional FPAR Training* (4 days) for YWRs and mentors to prepare for advocacy. Women learned about participatory analysis, feminist advocacy and campaigning, digital story-telling and advocacy planning.
- Stage 9: YWRs wrote a *Narrative Report* of research findings.

- Stage 10: YWRs and their communities engaged in *advocacy and campaigning* to demand action for climate justice. Advocacy strategies included meetings with government officials, protests, petitions, participating in decision-making spaces, media, lobbying, workshops, trainings and events.
- Stage 11: YWRs wrote an *Advocacy Report*.
- Stage 12: YWRs and mentors attended the *Final CJ-FPAR Reflection Meeting* (2 days) with participatory evaluation activities to reflect on experiences and impacts of CJ-FPAR.

After the two-year programme, women's movements continue their activism for climate justice, informally supported by APWLD.

Table 1 presents an overview of the nine FPAR partners and their community contexts and climate-related issues, and their CJ-FPAR movement building, advocacy and outcomes (more information is available in APWLD's CJ-FPAR 2017-2019 Regional Report).

Table 1: Community contexts, actions and outcomes of women's CJ-FPARs, 2017-2019

Country and CJ-FPAR partner	CJ-FPAR community	Gender and Climate Justice issues (documented by women in CJ-FPAR)	CJ-FPAR movement building, advocacy and outcomes
Bangladesh: Maleya Foundation (Maleya)	Rakhine indigenous women from 13 villages in the coastal areas of Taltoli, Barguna and Barishal.	Marginalised indigenous communities depend on traditional subsistence agriculture and forests for food. Frequent cyclones and increasing land salinity cause food insecurity, pollute drinking water and cause health issues such as stomach ailments, respiratory diseases, fatigue from overwork, and skin diseases for women workers in fishing and shrimp farming. Communities are forcibly displaced to cities, town or across borders looking for better opportunities but experience exploitation generating insufficient incomes in new insecure livelihoods (daily wage labour, selling handmade products, rearing farm animals, small shops). Increased domestic care work prevents women from accessing education.	Women began attending community meetings, demanding inclusion and recognition of their human rights in unions and upazila (local government). 13 Rakhine women's groups were formed. NGOs and government supported women to demand gender-responsive, inclusive and non-discriminatory measures to foster sustainable alternative livelihoods.
Cambodia: Highlanders Association (HA)	Indigenous Punong women from Kbal Romeas village who are resisting forceful displacement by the construction of Lower Se San II hydro dam owned by Cambodian	The dam was constructed to provide electricity to five Cambodian provinces and sell excess to neighbouring countries. It covered 36,000 hectares and blocked two rivers and wetlands causing severe environment degradation and forced displacement. The project had no meaningful consultation or consent from affected indigenous peoples, and women were excluded from discussions about dam construction and the 'planned' relocation. Affected villagers were forced to relocate, but 20% (58 households) resisted and remained in their ancestral village, stranded without road	Punong women who were relocated and those remaining in Kbal Romeas documented the negative impacts of the dam construction and its contribution to climate change. They mobilised with indigenous women in other villages to resist future planned dam developments and demanded participation in decision-making spaces to ensure that indigenous peoples' continuous FPIC is transparently undertaken. In Kbal Romeas,

	Royal group, Chinese Hydrolancang International Energy and Vietnam Electricity (EVN).	connections or basic public facilities such as schools and government offices. The construction of the dam inundated parts of the village, drowning forest deities, pagodas and the cemetery, blocking access to the forest to collect timber and food, and destroying the river biodiversity. The remaining community faces military and state persecution for defending their forest, rivers and livelihoods. The relocated villagers lacked access to clean water and could not farm or raise animals on the new land. Children were forced to leave school to work for construction companies, and villagers were forced to buy water, electricity and food. The community's subsistence and traditional livelihoods have been destroyed and the village identity is divided.	villagers successfully advocated the government to build roads and a clean water supply, reopen the school and reinstate teachers' salaries, register land and reopen the health centre. However, their demands for compensation for loss and damage are ongoing.
India: the North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS)	Women in three <i>Panchayats</i> (local village councils) covering 12 villages in Sadiya sub-division, eastern most corner of Assam.	Erratic rainfall, flooding, erosion and unseasonal weather changes have reduced agricultural production, depleted natural resources and deepened poverty. Companies and investors are buying land from the poor. Large numbers of men migrate to find work in Arunachal Pradesh and other states, while women are sole earners and carers of children and elders, increasing their domestic and agricultural work burden. Many women cannot meet their basic daily needs and they do not own land or resources. They borrow rice from neighbours or take loans, accruing debt they cannot repay. With lower nutrition intake, women suffer body aches, stomach pains,	Women mobilised to participate in local government welfare processes such as seed distribution, monetary support for the girl child, and to amplify their voices in village development plans. Women are now invited to public Panchayat hearings to give their inputs on cases of human rights violations and corruption, and identify entitlements and benefits for villagers. In domestic violence cases, these women help police with the investigation, providing counselling and seeking justice. They demanded government support to develop an alternative livelihood through sustainable

		menstrual irregularities, and eye problems. There is no healthcare facility and domestic violence is increasing.	agriculture, and created a yarn bank and weaving collectives for women to increase their income.
Myanmar: The Community Care for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CCERR)	Ethnic Hakha Thar farming community displaced by Cyclone Komen in 2015 and resettled in the suburbs of Hakha, the capital city of Chin State.	The ethnic Hakha Thar resettled community lacks infrastructure such as proper housing, roads, water supply, and medical clinics. With no regular income source, these farmers must find alternative work such as government employment and apprenticeships. Hakha Thar Nu Bu women are mainly uneducated but skilled in agriculture. In the resettled communities, they do not have land to farm so are forced to find alternative sources of income while managing their increased domestic care work. Poor waste management, pollution and hazardous materials are leading to health problems. In this very conservative Christian community, women are not given equal standing or rights compared with men, and women are excluded from decision-making processes such as land allocation and community meetings.	Hakha Tha Nu Bu women formed a community-based organisation with 400+ members and collaborated with other marginalised ethnic groups in Chin state to demand basic facilities to improve their living conditions. They used media and theatre to promote their plight, resulting in local and State authorities being inclusive of their needs in national climate policies. The State has also given women land to build an office to continue their work.
Nepal: Chetana Mahila Samuha (CMS)	Local women in Jogidaha village, Udaypur District in Nepal's inner Terai region.	The region is extremely vulnerable to heavy rainfall and long dry spells causing recurring floods, erosion and the destruction of natural habitat and productive farmland. It is difficult to grow crops and rear cattle (the primary livelihood), and riverbanks are increasingly used for grazing. The rivers are widening, causing regular inundations of the small remaining agricultural land. Chronic unemployment has forced over 70%	Women held workshops in 65 locations to increase community knowledge about climate change. They mobilised women's groups, the local development committee, and the Greenery Defenders' Group to undertake mass plantings on riverbanks and discuss and plan climate-related issues and solutions (such as

		of men to migrate outside Nepal to find work. Women's increased labour includes agricultural and domestic work, fetching water and collecting firewood.	erosion control) with local authorities. Women demanded that government provides technology, information and funding for local adaptation.
Pakistan: Roshni Tariqiyati Tanzeem (ROSHNI)	Local women in five villages in Ghotki district.	The five villages are surrounded by oil and gas extractive industries, sugar and rice mills, and fertiliser and cotton factories. They experience pollution, severe deforestation, recurrent floods, erosion, and prolonged summers, which causes crop disease and decreased production. Entrenched patriarchy, religious fundamentalism, tribal laws, feudalism and corruption deprive women and girls of basic education, health care, community spaces, participation in household and public decision-making, and property rights. Women work long hours in the fields (in harsh heat) under the demands of landowners, and cannot supplement their income with other activities. Previously absent diseases (tuberculosis, hepatitis, malaria, diabetes) have become increasingly common, especially among pregnant women and children.	Women increased their awareness of the relationships between environmental destruction, climate change, their health and social status. They undertook collective action to restore their forest (through tree planting) and promoted sustainable agriculture. Women also started participating and engaging in discussions with village elders on gender discrimination, climate protection and on holding polluting industries accountable.
Sri Lanka: We Women Lanka (WWL)	Grassroots women in the resettled area of Meeriya Badhdha in the Poonagala State.	A landslide in 2014 forced community members out of their community to resettle in lands and houses they do not own. They lack basic services and infrastructure such as clean drinking water, toilets, waste disposal, a health centre, a school and public transport. Most work as labourers in a small tea estate. The lack of public transport means they cannot work elsewhere. Women and girls are at risk of violence when	Women formed an advocacy group and participated in local meetings demanding improved living conditions, reduced gender-based violence, land ownership rights and improved livelihood opportunities. They also advocated for including women's demands in development plans, including the provision of

		collecting water and bathing. Women do not feel safe in their new homes and are reluctant to leave children at home while working.	basic services (such as water) to reduce women's burden and vulnerability.
Thailand: The Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT)	Indigenous women of Ban Mai Mor Wa Khee, a hilly Karen village in Chiang Mai province in Thailand.	The village suffers from severe water shortage due to increasing heat, with health effects for villagers including dehydration, fatigue, fainting, and new diseases (skin blisters, high blood pressure, asthma and headaches). The main livelihood is farming and raising domestic animals, but crop yields are decreasing, growing time has lengthened, and there are new plant diseases and frequent landslides. Women are excluded from decision-making spaces. Thai climate policies mandate land acquisition for reforestation purposes, leading to the eviction of indigenous communities from their lands. Women working in small-scale farming in forests are vulnerable to arrests and experience increased poverty and domestic violence.	CJ-FPAR women developed leadership skills, identified strategies to address the impacts of climate change on women, and fostered allies with other activist groups and leaders. They demanded that local authorities build, clean and restore village wells to address the water shortage, gaining community recognition to lead and make decisions. The community now engages with authorities to use indigenous local knowledge to plan long-term, sustainable water solutions that include women, widows, youth and poor people.
Vietnam: Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development (ADC)	Cho Moi district of BacKan province, a remote mountainous region in Northern Vietnam where the majority identify as indigenous Tay people.	Tay women follow strict patriarchal cultural norms, are relegated to domestic duties and depend on small scale agriculture for their livelihoods. Unseasonal weather patterns with heavy rains cause floods and landslides, extreme temperatures, long dry spells, and drought; adversely affecting crop production and animal husbandry. Tay women are constrained from achieving positive livelihood outcomes by using their indigenous knowledge in agriculture due to	Tay women formed a community collective for organic banana farming to prevent pesticides and prevent soil erosion. Women now participate in local commune meetings to inform local development plans. They seek to revive and adapt traditional practices to adapt to climate change and contribute to national climate policies.

		increased use of chemicals, the severe impacts of climate change and limited access to information and asset control.	
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CJ-FPAR evaluation methodology

During the 2-year CJ-FPAR, Edith Cowan University (Australia) partnered with APWLD to facilitate a participatory evaluation of the process. An FPAR methodology examined the CJ-FPAR impacts, with the following key questions co-designed by CJ-FPAR partners:

- What are the impacts of FPAR on women's movements and organising for climate justice in Asia?
- What are the strengths and challenges of APWLD's CJ-FPAR approach?

The CJ-FPAR evaluation involved various methods [6]. APWLD and Edith Cowan University staff conducted nine baseline and six [7] endline interviews with YWRs and mentors from each partner organisation, with questions on programme impacts as per the domains defined in the APWLD's Theory of Change. Document analysis was then conducted on available reports: nine Narrative Reports and two Advocacy Reports authored by FPAR partners [8]. A two-day Final Reflection Workshop was held with 18 participants representing six CJ-FPAR teams and APWLD staff. The workshop included participatory and creative activities to collectively reflect on the impacts and learnings of CJ-FPAR, including drawings, presentations and storytelling.

The data were analysed through the lens of the APWLD Theory of Change, which centres on autonomous feminist movements as the key mechanism to achieve and sustain women's human rights, with climate justice as the thematic focus of the FPAR process. The CJ-FPAR evaluation was approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 8561).

Findings

The evaluation [9] found that CJ-FPAR was highly effective in mobilising women, especially those from low-income and indigenous groups, to collectively demand climate justice. The evaluation findings are presented across the domains of capacity building; knowledge, tools and resources; advocacy; movement architecture; the enabling environment of solidarity and accountability; and challenges in implementing FPAR.

Capacity building

Prior to CJ-FPAR, technical knowledge about climate change, climate justice and development justice was limited to only a few people in the participating communities, usually through programmes specific to disaster relief. Women had extensive traditional knowledge to adapt to climate change but did not identify it as such. CJ-FPAR teams also reported that women's understanding of their human rights was shaped by conservative religious and cultural norms. At the conclusion of CJ-FPAR, approximately 1,000 grassroots women across all nine countries have gained knowledge on their human rights, the climate crisis, environmental and climate justice, patriarchy and development justice. The evaluation identified effective processes for women increasing their knowledge: meetings, forming women's FPAR groups and actions, trainings, and tools such as Power Mapping. As NEADS (India) reported:

The women came to understand what climate change / climate justice is, and how it impacts their lives and how it connects to their lives. They were observing impacts on agriculture and livelihoods

(NEADS YWR, speaking at Final Reflection Meeting, 17 February 2020, Chiang Mai).

Similarly, CMS (Nepal) reported,

The women in the community had no knowledge or information on climate change or its impact in their livelihoods. After the FPAR, armed with knowledge of GFMP (globalisation, fundamentalisms, militarism, patriarchy), the women successfully demanded an increased role in decision making positions within the local government authority

(Endline Interview with CMS YWR and mentor, 17 February 2020, Chiang Mai).

CJ-FPAR participants now understand the impacts of global warming by relating it to the daily lived realities of grassroots women across the region who represent the largest informal sector of small-scale agriculture, fisheries and unpaid domestic care work. They learned that these women bear the brunt of climate change through food and water insecurity, loss of livestock and crops, environment degradation, poorer health and higher mortality rates compared with men. The CJ-FPAR data showed how climate change deepens poverty through loss of livelihoods, displacement, forced migration and conflict; increases violence against women and forces child marriages; and destroys cultural and heritage sites.

The data also shows that prior to CJ-FPAR, most teams had some understanding of community politics and climate change policies, although generally women were not encouraged – and sometimes actively discouraged – from participating in local decision-making. The evaluation evidence demonstrates that through CJ-FPAR, women in Cambodia, India, Myanmar and Nepal now have a fuller understanding of political systems, policies and human rights laws and mechanisms, particularly as they relate to climate change.

Most CJ-FPAR teams reported women gaining new knowledge, skills and confidence in climate justice movement leadership, advocacy, campaigning and public speaking, and some documented women's increased negotiation and decision-making skills:

By actively participating in CJ-FPAR activities such as meetings, trainings and workshops, [women] are equipped with necessary skills and a large amount of knowledge on climate change and climate justice, thus, they become more confident. A noteworthy observation of their confidence is that they are now ready to present in public and share what they have learnt and express their views confidently in meetings

(ADC (Vietnam) Narrative Report).

The evaluation also found that women involved in CJ-FPAR have increased their confidence and skills to organise community events such as International Women's Day activities, lead peer trainings and climate change adaptation projects, and communicate through radio, storytelling, films, photography and theatre. Due to exposure to CJ-FPAR, local media in Cambodia, India, Myanmar and Pakistan have improved their capacity to report on climate change issues. Furthermore, while the Baseline data suggested that some CJ-FPAR teams already had research skills, none had previous experience of FPAR. All teams now report well-developed FPAR skills and intend to continue using FPAR to tackle climate injustice.

Knowledge, tools and resources

The evaluation data indicates that CJ-FPAR supported women to document local experiences of climate injustice to inform their advocacy. All CJ-FPAR teams used focus group discussions, interviews, workshops, social mapping and storytelling to gather data with their community. They also used power mapping, theory of change and critical

pathways to plan their climate justice projects and their advocacy strategies. Tools such as social mapping supported women to engage in decision-making about local resources (Cambodia), identify climate justice allies (India), and understand local climate hazards (Nepal).

CJ-FPAR teams produced reports and publications documenting women's experiences of gendered and climate injustices in their communities, with photos, video clips, case studies and stories. Women reported a feeling of ownership of the FPAR process and identified themselves as authors of their own lives. Community women also acknowledged being more comfortable in expressing their own opinions on climate change and sharing stories without fear or intimidation.

The evaluation found that CJ-FPAR's creative tools such as storytelling, street theatre, posters, wall paintings and billboards enabled women to share their experiences and increase community consciousness of climate change and gender. All CJ-FPAR teams facilitated trainings (such as FPAR and climate leadership training) for women, communities and stakeholders, and used organising tools such as media campaigns, documentaries, and petitions to advocate for climate justice. Women also created public spaces and community events to encourage solidarity.

Advocacy

Prior to CJ-FPAR, participating organisations supported local communities through meetings to assess their needs and advocate where appropriate. CJ-FPAR teams now report increased involvement in climate justice decision-making and increased participation in climate-related meetings. Most CJ-FPAR communities have engaged in climate justice advocacy with local community leaders and local government. There is also evidence of male leaders in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Pakistan and Vietnam actively encouraging women's participation in local level decision-making spaces, as well as listening to and supporting their demands.

Hundreds of women in all nine countries are now actively involved in decision-making spaces in government, communities and climate-related projects. Notable successes include the formation of new local government advisory committees led by local women, such as in Nepal. As CCERR (Myanmar) reports:

FPAR has given more space to women who are not traditionally favoured to be in leadership positions, including discussing and deciding community welfare

(Myanmar Narrative Report).

In most of the participating countries, women are now advocating for climate justice at higher levels of government, such as Ministers and MPs. Advocacy strategies include monitoring, campaigning, lobbying, memorandums, writing letters, petitions, conducting workshops and trainings for stakeholders, and events. CJ-FPAR teams organised advocacy events such as International Women's Day events (some for the first time), public meetings, '16 Days of Activism' activities, marches, speaking competitions, street drama, Indigenous food activities, kitchen garden competition, a 'no plastic' campaign, celebration of national and international days, and mobile workshops. The evaluation evidence suggests that all participating FPAR communities now actively engage in advocacy about issues related to climate justice, Development Justice and environmental justice, and most participating communities now actively lobby against corporations and governments.

Advocacy through CJ-FPAR has resulted in numerous commitments and actions by decision-makers. Some notable outcomes include:

- Land was allocated to build a women's space in Myanmar.
- Government officials in Pakistan committed to holding local industries accountable to act more responsibly to reduce emissions and curb pollution.
- In Cambodia, the community successfully lobbied the government to build roads, reopen a health centre and school, pay teachers, and secure water supply.
- A yarn bank for weaving was established (with government support) as an alternative income source in 12 villages in India.
- Local governments budget were allocated for environmental projects in Nepal.
- Women are actively involved in climate-related policy development (such as agricultural adaptation and disaster management) with governments in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Movement architecture

Before commencing the programme, CJ-FPAR teams and organisations reported some engagement in community organising; but movement work lacked climate strategy, did not focus on structural change, and was somewhat disorganized. The evaluation data indicates that CJ-FPAR has strengthened the feminist climate justice movement within participating countries.

CJ-FPAR strengthened the institutional architecture of new and existing organisations, local governments and communities. This occurred through strengthening knowledge, skills and capacity within organisations; building networks, relationships and alliances; and increasing women's confidence and organising experience. For example, in Pakistan, community-based organisations and civil society organisations formed a feminist forum and took actions such as the Global Strike for Women and petitions regarding reforestation. In Nepal, women successfully advocated local governments to set up Natural Resources Management Committees to make action plans for local climate change issues, with 45% membership of women.

The evaluation also found that in every participating country, CJ-FPAR has mobilised women to engage in community organising for climate justice. As women increase their consciousness about globalisation, fundamentalisms, militarism and patriarchy, and the relationship with climate change and their lived experiences, they are motivated to engage in collective action. This is demonstrated in Bangladesh:

The discussion during the FPAR process made many women realise that resistance is the only way to survive... The women realise that they need to take a proactive approach in negotiating support services and alternative livelihood opportunities

(Maleya Foundation (Bangladesh) Narrative Report).

Through CJ-FPAR, more than 50 new women's groups and networks for climate justice have been formed across all participating countries (Thailand is unreported). Examples of new groups include forest user women's group, a women-led natural resource committee, women's weaving groups, local women's action groups for climate change adaptation and advocacy, and regional feminist advocacy networks. The women's groups engage in grassroots feminist climate justice activism, and provide solidarity, a platform for advocacy and a safe environment to learn and share. Local women's groups are now connecting with

and influencing other movements and allies to increase consciousness and action regarding climate change, climate justice and women's human rights. Alliances have been developed at local, national, regional and international levels with neighbouring communities, other women's groups, environment organisations, youth groups, indigenous peoples' groups, aid organisations, various levels of government and national networks.

Solidarity and accountability

CJ-FPAR appears to have been very successful in enhancing solidarity within communities, between organisations, with other movements, and between FPAR teams and countries. The data show an increased awareness of a common struggle and structural climate injustices. All CJ-FPAR teams report that their feminist climate justice consciousness-raising activities have enhanced women's profile in their communities.

Furthermore, women in all CJ-FPAR projects have increased understanding of the structural challenges of patriarchy and climate change, and the need for stronger voices for gender equality. NEADS (India) reports,

We have been able to achieve the beginning of a process of social change through which we want to address the major contemporary global issues of climate change and Development Justice. We recognise that poverty and marginalisation have its roots in inequalities of gender, class, caste, ethnicity, language, physical abilities and others

(NEADS (India) Narrative Report).

The evaluation data show that CJ-FPAR has also increased a culture of accountability through changes in the power balance between women's movements and government. Elected representatives now share information and uphold their promises, and grassroots voices on climate justice are being heard. CJ-FPAR teams report that dialogue and consciousness-raising with decision-makers and stakeholders on climate change and women's rights issues has broadened the support and funding of women-led climate initiatives from community leaders and government representatives. HA (Cambodia) states,

The authorities are more open to space for the community to discuss and solve issues. They tried to meet with the community to solve the problem by face to face among two parties

(HA (Cambodia) Narrative Report).

Other reported changes in power dynamics include men in Cambodia and Pakistan helping with household responsibilities to enable women to participate in CJ-FPAR activities; increased respect for women from male leaders; and reconstruction of traditional power imbalances. ROSHNI (Pakistan) states:

Though at this stage, the shift of power is very rare, however, men have recognized the girls' education and have allowed girls to go school in one or two villages

(ROSHNI (Pakistan) Narrative Report).

Challenges with FPAR

Despite numerous positive impacts, the evaluation data also highlight several challenges in the CJ-FPAR journey. All partners share that women's work and domestic responsibilities leave them little time to participate in climate justice activism. Furthermore, patriarchal

attitudes are pervasive, posing safety and security risks for women engaging in protests and activities to assert their human rights. Many women faced resistance from authorities either initially or throughout the CJ-FPAR process. Some government officials refused to talk to women, actively hindering their requests for information and their rights to advocate for climate justice. The significant risks of harassment, government intervention to silence women, arrests and honour killings are a real threat in this region. Some men expressed concerns about being overpowered by women. One CJ-FPAR team (anonymous) reported,

In the community, the males who are so much accustomed with the mindset that 'only men can be leaders' are getting worried, frustrated when observing the current CJ-FPAR activities in their communities. Some even attacked the participants personally.

Participating women reported needing to reassure men and build their confidence in the CJ-FPAR programme. Teams identified the need to engage with men and gain their support in order to mobilise women:

Most of the reactions showed by male community members were that of the traditional thoughts of incapacity of women being leading the movement. Some of them had showed reluctance of involving their women in such type of work and had an opinion that their women might be disobedient and others feared the type of resistance in terms of leaving homes without their permission or taking more informed decisions regarding their social and economic rights

(ROSHNI (Pakistan) Narrative Report).

Women in Cambodia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka report that their CJ-FPAR projects were hampered by restrictions in movement due to weather, distance and transport, closed access to some communities, and barriers to women's mobility within and outside their community. Government processes were also found to be complex, and it was difficult for most CJ-FPAR teams (Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam) to access government information due to incomplete records, very slow response and government instability. All CJ-FPAR teams report challenges in communicating with community leaders and government officials.

Discussion

This section analyses the evaluation findings through the lens of APWLD's nine principles of FPAR (Figure 2). The findings demonstrate the power of FPAR in mobilising women's movements to document their own knowledge about gender and climate injustices and be empowered by this knowledge to demand action and change.

Principle 1: the purpose of FPAR is structural change

CJ-FPAR is nestled within a long history of women's and climate justice movements demanding human rights, ecological rights, and the transformation of systems of globalisation, fundamentalisms, militarism and patriarchy. It is unrealistic to expect large-scale structural changes within two years. Notwithstanding, the CJ-FPAR evaluation findings indicate some shifts within localised power structures of climate injustice. Women across CJ-FPAR are now actively participating in male-dominated climate-related decision-making spaces, often for the first time. The findings reassert existing literature that women must understand their rights for these changes to happen (Naples 2003).

The data, however, also highlights that it is difficult and often dangerous for women to challenge patriarchal structures for climate justice; yet women persist. The evaluation findings demonstrate that through gaining a stronger understanding of climate change and women's human rights, and collectively organising as agents of change, women can take control of their roles, knowledge and management of natural resources in developing feminist solutions to climate change. CJ-FPAR has helped contribute to localised changes in structural injustice; strengthened by the herstories of women's movements paving the way.

Principle 2: FPAR amplifies women's voices

The findings indicate that through CJ-FPAR, women have documented their lived experiences of climate change and amplified their voices about their rights and demands. It is significant that women are publicly participating in community and government decision-making spaces where they were previously silenced, are informing policies and planning processes, are being heard in the media, and, as several CJ-FPAR teams say, that men are now listening. The findings strongly indicate that by collectively communicating their demands to decision-makers, women are achieving outcomes from their advocacy.

Furthermore, the CJ-FPAR evaluation findings suggest that in many spaces, women from particularly marginalised backgrounds are being heard, including indigenous women, dalit women, women with low educational levels, poor women, women living in rural areas and women of all ages. This is not consistent across all projects, but the evaluation findings suggest that APWLD's CJ-FPAR model, especially the engagement of YWRs, generally supports women from diverse backgrounds and experiences to participate and be heard.

Principle 3: FPAR is owned by the community

The CJ-FPAR evaluation findings suggest that the FPAR processes have, for the most part, been owned by the community. Identifying everyone who engages in FPAR as a 'co-researcher' encourages shared power (Kirby 2011), and the findings suggest the CJ-FPAR process enabled shared leadership, participation and responsibility in communities. Various aspects of the CJ-FPAR model encouraged community ownership, such as pre-research consultation meetings for community women to input into the research design, and women's involvement in data gathering and advocacy. The formation of women-led groups, feminist community organising, and advocacy were also generally owned by communities. Some women (in Cambodia, India, Nepal, Vietnam) also have ownership of localised climate solutions such as alternative livelihoods, adaptive agricultural projects, and community spaces.

However, as is common in FPAR (Godden 2017), it was sometimes difficult for YWRs to completely devolve all decision-making to communities and enable a purely participatory process. YWRs and mentors often had increased responsibilities in the data collection, analysis and reporting, a delineation that is understandable when the YWRs are fairly new to research themselves. Furthermore, the production of critical pathways and research plans within CJ-FPAR regional meetings (in English language) may have also created difficulties for YWRs to include their communities in decision-making.

Principle 4: FPAR takes an intersectional approach

The evaluation findings suggest that most CJ-FPAR teams considered intersecting identities when planning their FPAR, and prioritised diverse participation of community women.

Consciousness-raising on women's human rights and climate change assisted women to understand the complexities of climate injustice and intersectionality.

However, to fully embrace intersectional feminist values, future CJ-FPARs need a stronger emphasis on collecting, analysing and reporting research data through an intersectional lens to disaggregate research findings about gender and climate change according to age, class, ethnicity, disability and other characteristics (Tolhurst et al. 2012).

Principle 5: FPAR aims to shift power

The evaluation findings indicate that CJ-FPAR supported power to be shifted in various spaces. At the individual level, it appears that many women have increased their knowledge and skills, with increased self-confidence to demand their rights and claim their power. In households, some men are assuming more domestic labour responsibilities so that women can participate in CJ-FPAR work. At the community level, many women now actively participate in and lead groups, community spaces traditionally dominated by men, and collective processes to demand women's human rights and climate action. At an organisational level, some women have increased decision-making and leadership roles, and there is some evidence of organisations having a stronger feminist approach.

Furthermore, by using FPAR, traditional power relationships between researchers and communities have shifted, with community women having increased power in the research process. At the governance level (local and national), some women gained access to decision-makers and strongly make their demands for women's human rights, and in some instances, these have been achieved. As argued elsewhere (Lykes & Hershberg 2012), FPAR supports women to collectively challenge and shift entrenched patriarchal practices and structures of power.

Principle 6: FPAR fosters movement building and collective action

The evaluation findings overwhelmingly demonstrate that CJ-FPAR has ignited, grown and strengthened women's movements for climate justice in all nine participating countries. Undertaking participatory research about gender and climate change has helped women to understand their shared, common struggles, and build a community of feminist climate justice activists. It is significant that for many women, CJ-FPAR was the first time they participated in collective action. As CCERR (Myanmar) states in their Narrative Report, 'Through this research, they have learned to see themselves as not just helpless victims of the landslide, but they see themselves as persons who can change things'. The CJ-FPAR process appears to have built solidarity and supported women to work collectively for long-term structural change, a key goal of FPAR methodology (Reid et al. 2006).

Principle 7: FPAR builds capacity of all

The evaluation evidence demonstrates that CJ-FPAR significantly strengthened the capacity of individual women, communities, organisations, movements and governments. Kirby (2011) identifies the emancipatory potential of participatory partnerships, and CJ-FPAR enabled women to collectively have a greater understanding of climate change, patriarchy, women's human rights, politics and policy, and structural change; and to be upskilled (and be impactful) in conducting research, negotiation and decision-making, movement-building, public speaking and advocacy for climate justice.

Principle 8: FPAR prioritises Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of all

FPIC is a key aspect of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Food and Agricultural Organisation 2016). In CJ-FPAR, actions that promoted FPIC included participatory design of the project, providing ongoing information about CJ-FPAR to community members, seeking consent (verbal or written) from women in data collection, and navigating local community structures to safely advocate for climate justice.

Principle 9: Safety, care and solidarity is essential

The evaluation findings indicate that CJ-FPAR partners are committed to safety, care and solidarity. Despite strong solidarity between women, organisations and movements, there is some concerning evidence of safety issues for women within CJ-FPAR. All forms of activism for women human rights defenders can be dangerous, and there are many examples of harassment, abuse, arrest and assassination of women human rights defenders in Asia (Global Witness 2019). While CJ-FPAR actively sought to support partner organisations to undertake their climate justice projects in a way that promotes safety and care of women and communities, some safety issues still occurred. Ongoing risk assessments and strategies are necessary to promote women's safety in climate justice activism.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that FPAR is a potent tool for grassroots women to feel empowered, build movements and take action to pursue climate justice. APWLD's CJ-FPAR programme has enabled many significant changes in the lives of women in Asia. Women have developed new knowledge, skills, and resources to demand climate justice; they have formed new women's groups, networks and alliances; are participating in climate decision-making; and actively lead climate change adaptation activities, such as handicraft enterprises and sustainable production of crops. Women's strategic advocacy to local and national governments has some enormous achievements such as the development of community infrastructure, budgetary allocations for climate resilience, inclusion of women in formal decision-making, and policy changes. In various spaces, women have gained more power and have increased autonomy, independence, and realisation of human rights. A key lesson from the evaluation is that APWLD's FPAR approach is very effective in supporting these changes, but assessing and promoting the safety of women, girls, and community members is necessary at all stages during an FPAR process.

To conclude this article, we share a final statement from the NEADS (India) YWR:

The greatest learning for me is that I know about climate change and global warming - that Earth is getting warmer, we are having more floods, or we are not getting winter at all... Through CJ-FPAR, I learnt about climate justice and how climate change is impacting women and children a lot and how climate change is directly affecting violence against women in my community... I made the community people and stakeholders aware of the violence that affects women such as trafficking. Due to all the learnings, and the capacity I was able to build, I am able to talk about climate change and climate justice at the State and regional level in my country.

(YWR, India, speaking at the Final Reflection Meeting, 17 February 2020, Chiang Mai).

Notes

1. The 5Fs call for a just and equitable transition that challenges the gendered division of labour; promotes energy democracy and agroecological farming practices; debunks 'growth and profit' to promote investments in the commons; provides a social wage; demands the dismantling of all trade rules within and outside the World Trade Organisation that prevent climate action; establishes a Global Tax Body that ends tax competition and evasion; secures innovative sources of public finance to redistribute wealth; and ensures gender equitable participatory democracy.
2. Development Justice is a transformative framework that aims to reduce inequalities in national, regional and global development agendas.
3. Young Women Researchers are under the age of 35 and work closely with the communities. They are selected by mentors, women representatives of the FPAR partner organisations in-country. The YWR and mentors engage, participate and support communities on their FPAR journey.
4. Some relevant literature regarding feminist participatory action research and social movements can be found as follows: Chakma 2016; Godden 2018a; Godden 2018b; Hayhurst, Sundstrom & Arksey 2018; Lykes 2010; Ponc, Reid & Frisby 2010; Sewell & Harris 2016; Tolhurst et al. 2012.
5. The nine partner organisations are: Maleya Foundation, Bangladesh; Highlanders Association (HA), Cambodia; North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), India; Chin Committee for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CCERR), Myanmar; Chetana Mahila Samuha (CMS), Nepal; Roshni Tarqiyati Tanzeem (Roshni), Pakistan; We Women Lanka (WWL), Sri Lanka; Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT), Thailand; and, Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for mountainous Region (ADC), Vietnam.
6. Due to travel difficulties and changes for some organisations, not all partners participated in all components of the evaluation.
7. Six out of nine partners were able to attend the *Final CJ-FPAR Reflection Meeting* (2 days) where the endline interviews were conducted.
8. Only two advocacy initiatives were completed at the time of preparing the evaluation report.
9. The CJ-FPAR evaluation report is unpublished; however, the CJ-FPAR Regional Report can be found at <https://apwld.org/our-programmes/climate-justice/>

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