



# PRO-POOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE



## WHAT IT IS (DEFINITION)

Climate change is not a distant or abstract challenge. For millions of people living in poverty, **its effects are already shaping daily life**, through failed harvests, lost income, growing insecurity and forced migration. Over the past five years, Pro-Poor Climate Resilience has been a focal policy theme at Woord en Daad. Together with partners, we have explored how climate change affects the most vulnerable, what strengthens their resilience, and how sustainable livelihoods, education and stewardship of creation can go hand in hand.

Pro-Poor Climate Resilience refers to strengthening **the abilities and resources of people living in poverty to cope with, adapt to, and where possible benefit from the effects of climate change**. At Woord en Daad, this concept starts from the lived realities of vulnerable households and communities in the Global South, who

are disproportionately affected by climate change despite having contributed least to its causes.

Climate change impacts **ecosystems, societies and economies simultaneously**. Increasingly unpredictable weather, droughts, floods and environmental degradation undermine livelihoods, food security, income stability, education and social cohesion. Pro-poor climate resilience therefore requires **a systems approach**, recognizing how environmental, social and economic drivers interact and how power relations and institutions shape people's vulnerability and capacity to respond.

In practice, pro-poor climate resilience focuses primarily on **adaptation**: enabling households and communities to absorb shocks, reduce risks and recover sustainably. This includes measures such as climate-smart agriculture, livelihood diversification, nature-based solutions, climate-resilient value chains, access to water, early-warning systems and climate education. Mitigation efforts, such as

sustainable land use or circular production, can be included where they directly support adaptation and livelihoods.

Grounded in its Christian identity and **stewardship**, Woord en Daad combines local action with awareness raising and policy influencing in the Global North, aiming to ensure that the voices, rights and perspectives of the most vulnerable are reflected in climate policies and partnerships.



### LESSONS LEARNED

Over five years of learning and practice, Woord en Daad and its partners have gained a clearer understanding of what it takes to strengthen pro-poor climate resilience in meaningful and sustainable ways.

First, **climate change is never a standalone issue**. Its impacts unfold through interconnected environmental, social and economic systems. Effective responses therefore require an approach that looks beyond single interventions and considers livelihoods, ecosystems, institutions and power relations together. Climate Risk Assessments (CRAs) proved especially valuable in making these dynamics visible and creating a shared understanding with partners.

Second, **resilience starts with people's realities**. The most effective interventions build on local knowledge and priorities, focusing on adaptation at household and community level. Practices such as climate-smart and regenerative agriculture, livelihood diversification, nature-based solutions and climate education have shown that it is possible to reduce vulnerability while strengthening income security and dignity.

Third, **learning is as important as action**. Tools and frameworks only create impact when they promote dialogue, ownership and practical follow-up. The real value of CRAs and other tools lay not primarily in the reports themselves, but in the conversations they enabled and the concrete choices they informed.

Fourth, many **climate-resilient practices were already present** within existing programmes. Making these more explicit helped build confidence, a stronger track record and clearer positioning towards donors and partners.

Finally, climate resilience is a **long-term commitment**. It requires sustained partnerships, flexibility in project design and alignment with policy and market developments.

Addressing climate vulnerability is not about quick fixes, but about enabling people to face an uncertain future with greater resilience, opportunity and hope.



### WHAT WE TAKE WITH US GOING FORWARD

Looking ahead, Woord en Daad builds on a strong foundation: pro-poor climate resilience is not a standalone theme, but a core element of how we understand poverty, vulnerability and opportunity. The pressures of climate change, environmental degradation and instability continue to shape people's ability to earn a living with dignity. For this reason, the learning and experience gained under Pro-Poor Climate Resilience naturally connects to and **is taken forward within the new focal policy theme 'Enabling Dignified Livelihoods'**.

We link climate resilience to livelihoods, human dignity and long-term self-reliance. Strengthening people's capacity to absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions and pursue sustainable income opportunities remains central. The tools, partnerships and practical approaches developed over the past years form a strong foundation for this next policy period.

