

RESEARCH PROGRAM: Climate, environment and health (SG-CEH)

Policy Brief | Project SG-CEH-08

Issues and Strategies related to Climate Change, Health, and Agroecology: Experiences and Contributions of the Women's Group in the Uruguay Agroecology Network

Country: Uruguay

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The challenge

Climate change affects rural areas and the health of populations that depend on food production in different ways. In Uruguay, women engaged in agroecological farming face water stress, extreme weather events, production uncertainty, and a care burden, with direct effects on their physical, mental, and emotional health. However, these impacts and the contributions of agroecology and the work of rural women remain insufficiently recognized in public health and climate change policies.

What was done

- Organization of regional participatory workshops (in the central-southern, eastern, western, and northern regions of the country) with women involved in agroecology.
- Collective identification of challenges, as well as adaptation, mitigation, and transformation strategies related to climate change and health.
- Forums for cross-sectoral exchange with stakeholders from academia, the health sector, education, government, and civil society.
- Systematization of experiences and development of guidelines and recommendations for public policy.
- Development of a shared conceptual glossary to facilitate transdisciplinary dialogue.

Main findings

- Climate change affects human and ecosystem health, with a significant impact on the mental and emotional health of rural women.
- Agroecological women play a central role in food production, land stewardship, and the sustainability of life, yet their contributions are largely unrecognized.
- Agroecology provides key strategies for climate adaptation, food sovereignty, and health promotion.
- There are gaps in rural women's participation in decision-making spaces and in their access to health services appropriate to their circumstances.

The approach

The project adopted a transdisciplinary and ecosystem-based approach to health (eco-health), grounded in a dialogue of knowledge among academia, the health sector, public institutions, and the RAU Women's Group. It prioritized gender equity, active participation, and the co-construction of action-oriented knowledge, linking climate change, health, and sustainable agri-food systems.

Impact and application

- The project's results provide concrete inputs for:
- Developing inputs to strengthen the National Agroecology Plan and health and climate change policies with a gender and territorial focus.
 - Evidence to support educational, communication, and outreach strategies targeting decision-makers and the general public.
 - Strengthening the RAU Women's Group as a collective actor with greater advocacy capacity.
 - Contributing to the design of intersectoral actions that integrate health, agroecology, the environment, and social equity.

Key lessons

- Addressing climate change and health requires systemic, participatory, and gender-sensitive approaches.
- Knowledge dialogue enhances the relevance, legitimacy, and application of knowledge in public policy.
- Agroecology is a transformative strategy for health, climate adaptation, and sustainability.
- Highlighting and strengthening the role of rural women is key to a just and resilient transition.

Key message

Integrating agroecology and the knowledge of rural women into health and climate change policies strengthens communities' ability to adapt, their food sovereignty, and their well-being, through equitable, locally-based, and sustainable approaches to the climate crisis.



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