

“Whatever happens in the world,
whether in my country, in my city
or in my neighborhood,
happens to me. For this reason,
I must participate in decisions
that affect my life”

(Herbert de Souza, Betinho)

Support



Print and finishing
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Climate Change and Poverty



How local communities see the problem



FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE
MUDANÇAS CLIMÁTICAS

www.forumclima.org.br

***The purpose of the FBMC** – Brazilian Forum on Climate Change, created by a decree in June 2000, is to raise the awareness of society and mobilize it to take a position on problems derived from climate change resulting from greenhouse gas emissions and similar issues. It is also intended to assist the government in considering climate-change related issues in the various steps involved in public policy-making processes.*



www.coepbrasil.org.br

***COEP** – Committee of Entities Against Hunger and For Life, was created in 1993 by sociologist Betinho with the aim of mobilizing organizations around projects to fight hunger and extreme poverty. Today, it is active in all the Brazilian states and in 20 municipalities. In 2009, it turned the climate change topic into the focus of the sensitization and mobilization actions promoted by its national social mobilization network, which includes over 1,100 organizations, 10,000 people and 115 communities, 46 of which are located in the Brazilian northeastern semiarid region.*

Initiative: Brazilian Forum on Climate Change

Coordination: COEP

Partners: CERESAN-UFRJ / IPEA / IVIG-COPPE-UFRJ

Supporters: CNPq, OXFAM and Advisory Board to the Office of the President of the Republic

CLIMATIC EVENTS AND POVERTY

Working Group on Climate Change, Poverty and Inequalities

It is a consensus today that populations with a low human development index, which are already facing extremely unfavorable socioeconomic conditions, are the most exposed to the impacts of extreme climatic events. Brazil, like other countries, has been suffering the adverse effects of these events, such as, for example, floods in different regions of the country in recent years and an intense drought in the Amazon region in 2005.

With the aim of including the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations in the national debate on the issue, the Working Group on Climate Change, Poverty and Inequalities was set up within the Brazilian Forum on Climate Change, under COEP's coordination.

The activities of the Group began with the Survey "Climate Change, Social Inequalities and Vulnerable Populations in Brazil: Building Capacity." The main objective of this analysis is to develop a social technology focused on processes designed to promote the readiness and responding capacity of communities that are vulnerable to the consequences of extreme climatic events. It is also intended to draw a first profile of practices, action proposals, challenges and difficulties facing large Brazilian organizations to address the issue.

Building a cooperation project

Considering the innovative and multidisciplinary character of the Survey, COEP sought to establish a cooperation process with renowned researchers and institutions in the fields of science, social mobilization, and project development. For this purpose, it invited the following partners to implement the proposal:

CERESAN – Reference Nutrition Center of the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), which is responsible for the Populations sub-project, focused on regional impacts and vulnerabilities faced by populations.

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IPEA – Institute for Applied Economic Research – Social Responsibility Coordinating Board of the Directorate for Social Studies, which is in charge of the Enterprises sub-project, focused on voluntary actions of organizations for addressing climate change in vulnerable communities.

The survey also relies on the participation of COPPE / UFRJ – Federal University of Rio de Janeiro through IVIG – International Virtual Institute for Climate Change and is supported by CNPq - National Scientific and Technological Development Council, OXFAM, and the Advisory Board to the Office of the President of the Republic.

State and municipal COEPs, local universities and other teaching and research organizations that are partners in other COEP initiatives are also being involved in implementing different actions.

CLIMATE CHANGE

How Local Communities See the Problem

The high penetration of the COEP network, which involves over 100 urban and rural communities throughout the national territory today, made it possible for a preliminary survey on the climate issue and some of its consequences to be carried out with local residents of those communities.

This survey, which was carried out in July 2009, was intended to provide inputs to the work being done in connection with the survey “Climate Change, Social Inequalities and Vulnerable Populations in Brazil: Building Capacity” by providing an initial vision of low-income communities on the subject.

Of the 78 communities covered by the survey, 46 (59% of the total) are located in the semiarid region and are covered by the Semiarid Community Program (focused on rural communities) developed by the National COEP. The other 32 are covered by other Programs and Projects implemented by state and municipal COEPs.

In this first approach, a small questionnaire was applied to capture the perception of the residents of these communities on issues such as:

whether climate change is happening or not, who is in charge of addressing the problem, how they feel that they are being affected by climate change and what changes have already occurred in their communities.

In the semiarid region, the survey was conducted by Community Development Agents; in the other localities, it was carried out by the state/municipal COEP of the region.

Altogether, 78 communities were covered by the survey and 410 of their residents filled out its questionnaire.

SEMIARID COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Communities covered by the survey - 46

Number of Respondents - 290

State	Number of Communities	Number of Respondents
AL	3	18
CE	5	30
PB	10	62
PE	5	30
PI	8	47
RN	12	85
SE	3	18

OTHER PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Communities covered by the survey - 32

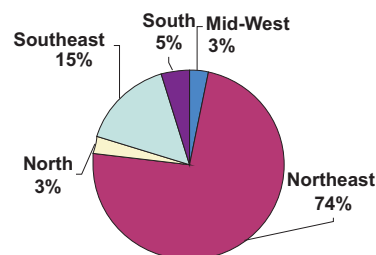
Number of Respondents - 120

State	Number of Communities	Number of Respondents
AC	1	8
AM	1	1
CE	5	6
ES	1	1
GO	1	3
MG	3	7
MS	1	8
MT	1	2
PA	1	1
PB	1	1
PE	1	1
PR	2	3
RJ	6	53
RN	1	4
RO	1	1
RS	3	17
SC	1	2
TO	1	1

GENERAL INFORMATION

Of all respondents who filled out the questionnaire, 74% (303) live in the northeast region (290 of whom are covered by the Semi-arid Community Program and 13 by other programs) and 15% live in the southeast. 11% of the respondents live in north, south and mid-west regions. All the respondents from the northeast region live in rural areas, while the majority of those from other regions live in cities.

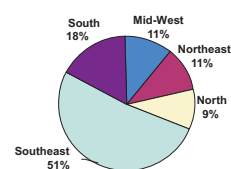
Respondents by Region



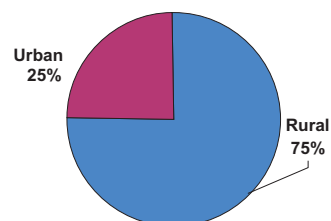
Semi-arid Community Program



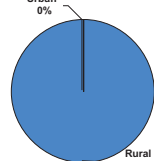
Communities covered by other projects



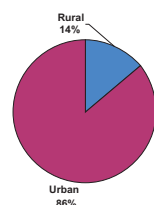
Respondents by Rural x Urban Zone



Semi-arid Community Program

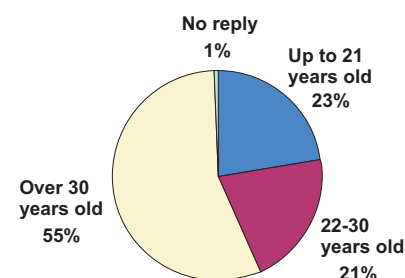


Communities covered by other projects

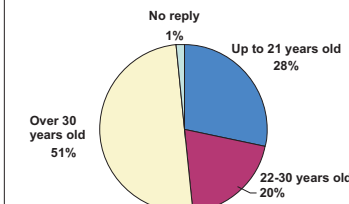


As for the age of the respondents, 55% are over 30 years old, 21% are in the 22-30 age bracket and 23% are less than 21 years old. 56% of them are women; among the respondents covered by the Semi-arid Community Program, the number of males and females was virtually the same.

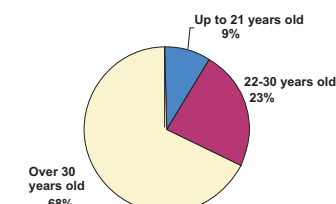
Age of the Respondents



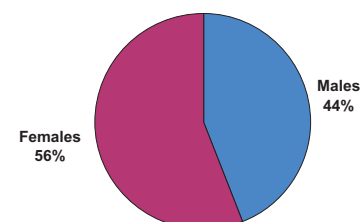
Semi-arid Community Program



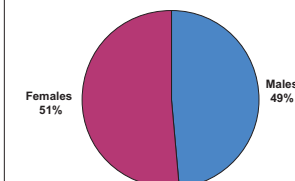
Communities covered by other projects



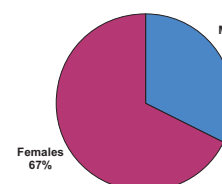
Respondents by Gender



Semi-arid Community Program

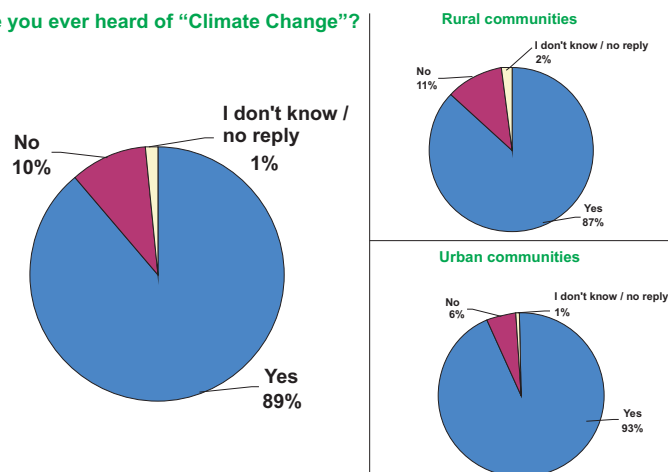


Communities covered by other projects



About 90% of the respondents had heard about the topic of climate change; in urban communities, this percentage is a little higher than in rural communities.

Have you ever heard of "Climate Change"?

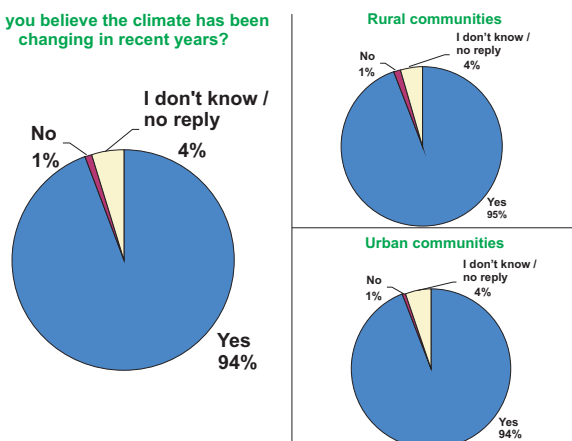


PERCEPTION OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE

In relation to climate change through the years

94% of the people who were interviewed believe that the climate has been changing through the years. This perception was virtually the same both in rural and urban communities.

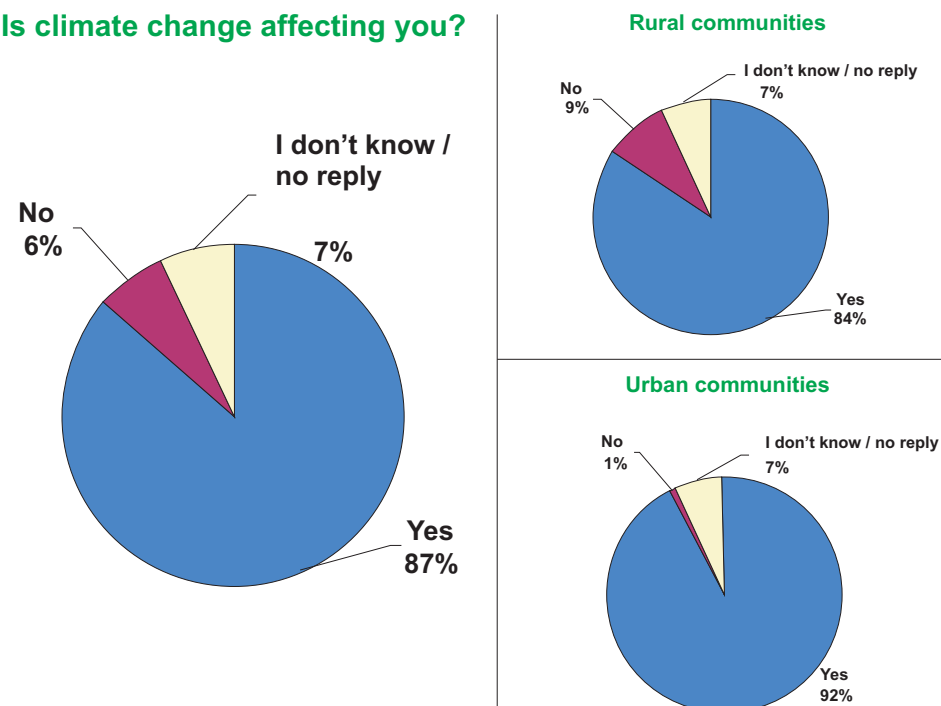
Do you believe the climate has been changing in recent years?



Effects of Climate Change

87% of the respondents believe that climate change is already affecting them and the perception of this effect is a bit more intense in urban communities.

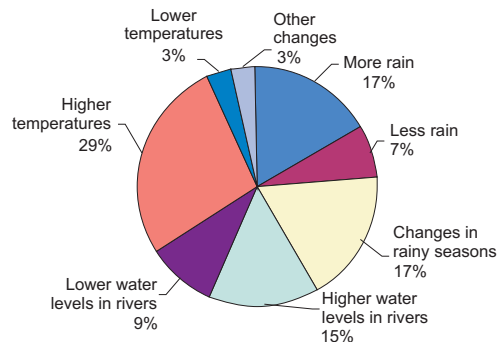
Is climate change affecting you?



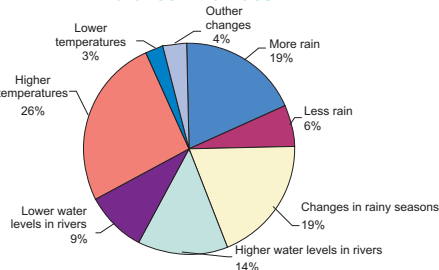
What has Changed?

In response to this question, for which multiple answers were possible, 29% of the respondents reported that they were experiencing higher temperature; 17% had observed changes in rainy seasons; 24% had observed variations in rainfall; and 24% had observed variations in water levels in rivers. The perceptions are different when one considers those of urban and rural communities separately.

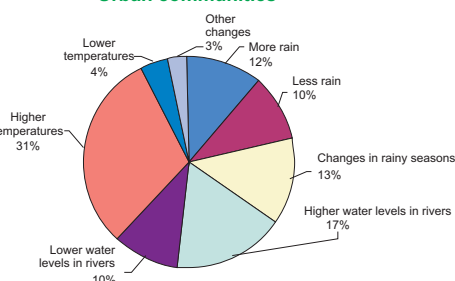
If yes, what do you believe has changed? (multiple answers)



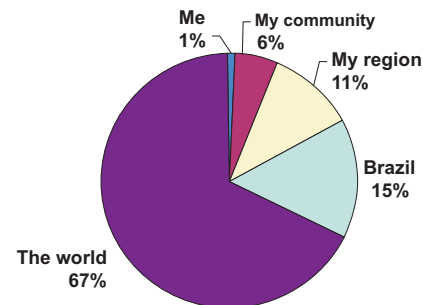
Rural communities



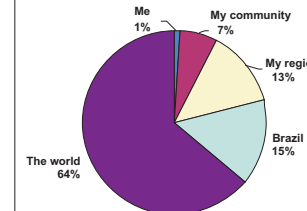
Urban communities



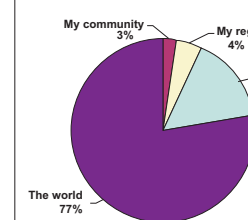
Who is being affected by these environmental problems?



Rural communities



Urban communities



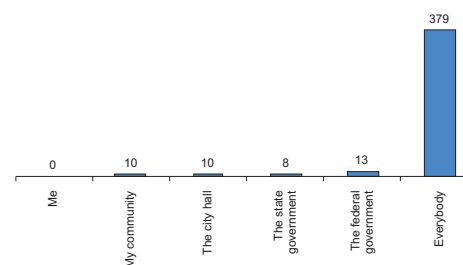
Who is Responsible for Addressing the Issue?

In response to this question, for which multiple answers were possible, almost all residents of both urban and rural communities indicated that everybody is responsible for addressing environmental problems.

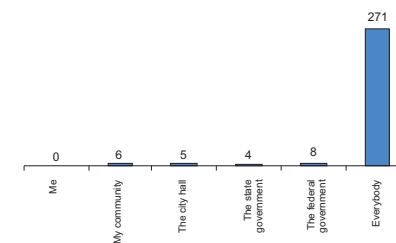
Population Affected by Environmental Problems

67% of all respondents believe that the problems that were identified affect the world population at large and this percentage rises to 77% in urban communities. Among the remaining respondents, 15% believe that it is a Brazilian problem, 11% believe it is a regional problem, and 6% believe it is a community problem.

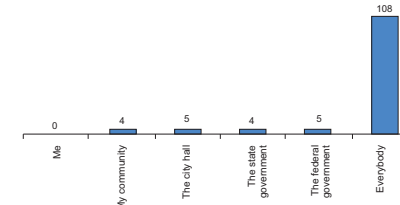
Who should address these problems? (multiple answers)



Rural communities



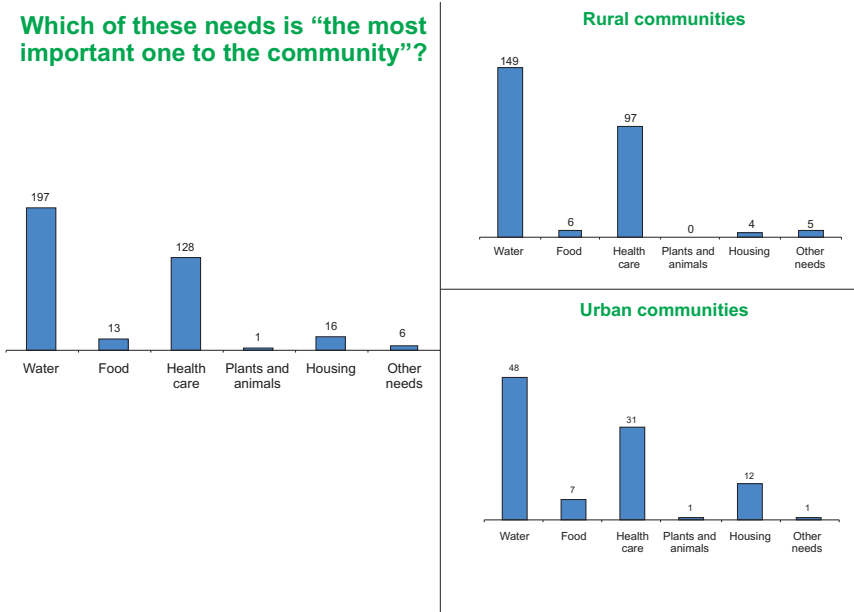
Urban communities



Importance of Certain Needs to the Community's Quality of Life

For respondents in both rural and urban communities, the most important need is the availability of water, followed by health care. In communities of the semiarid region, no differences are observed when these needs are assessed from a gender perspective.

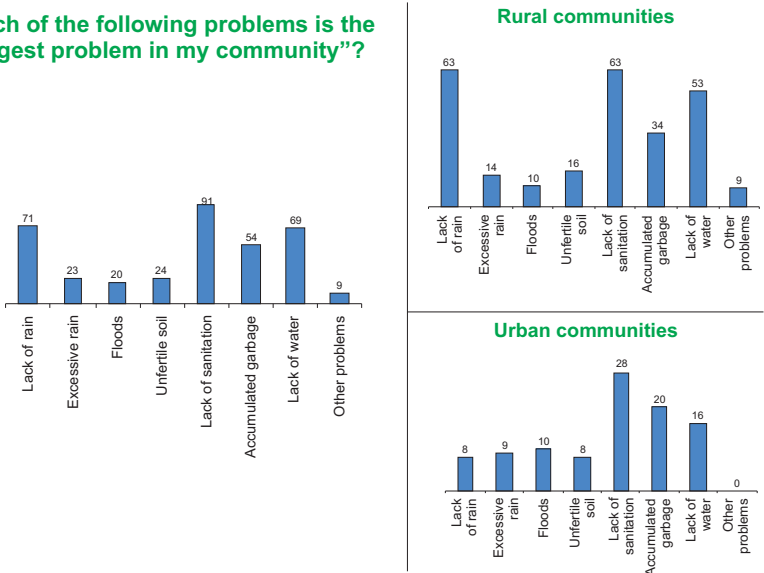
Which of these needs is “the most important one to the community”?



What is the “Biggest Problem in the Community”?

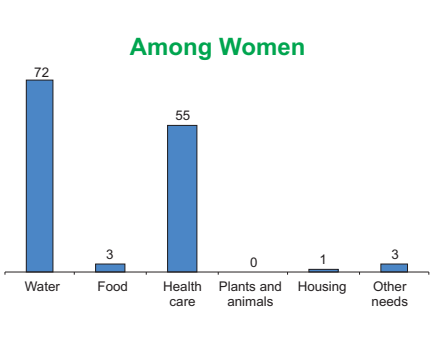
In rural communities, the perception of the respondents is that the main difficulties they are facing are derived from lack of sanitation and rain, followed by lack of water and accumulated garbage. In urban areas, the biggest problem is lack of sanitation also, followed by accumulated garbage, lack of water and floods. In rural communities, the results are a little different when the gender issue is taken into account.

Which of the following problems is the “biggest problem in my community”?

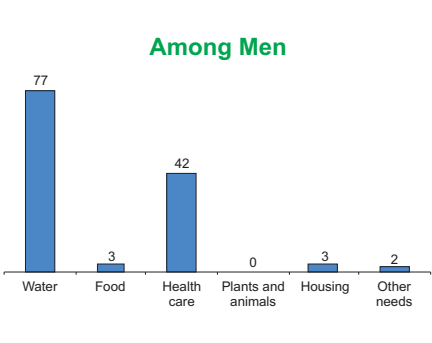


Semiarid Community Program

Among Women

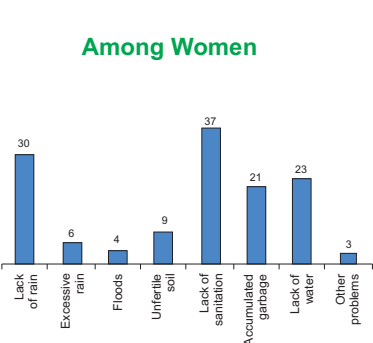


Among Men

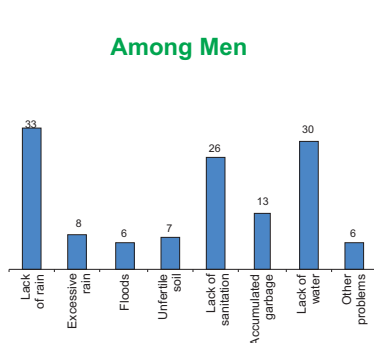


Semiarid Community Program

Among Women



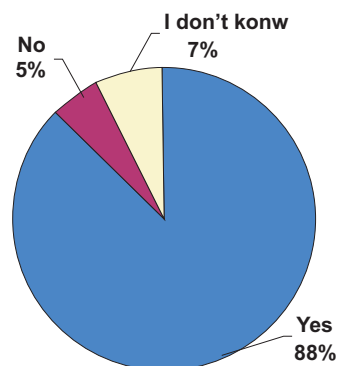
Among Men



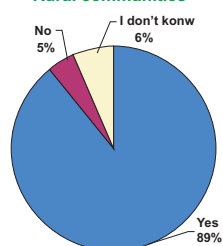
As for the “Main Problems X Climate Change” Relationship

Of all respondents, 88% believe that all the problems that were mentioned have to do with climate change, and this vision is a little stronger in rural communities.

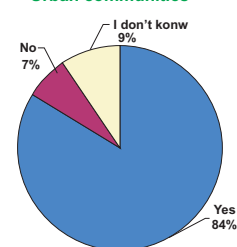
Do you believe that these problems have to do with climate change?



Rural communities



Urban communities



CONCLUSION

The survey carried out in some of the communities covered by COEP actions made it possible to draw a first profile of their perceptions of the climate change topic and to identify the most impacting issues and problems for their residents.

The survey is the first step of a mobilization process for carrying out the survey “Climate Change, Social Inequalities and Vulnerable Populations in Brazil: Building Capacity”. However, the results presented here are only preliminary and refer to a rather small sample of residents of communities in which the actions of COEP are in different stages of development (for example, it has been active in the semi-arid region for more time than in urban communities).

Based on the answers, it can be inferred that the residents of these communities are already concerned with environmental problems. There is a certain consensus that problems caused by the lack of sanitation facilities and accumulated garbage are important. Residents are also concerned with water availability and rain-related problems (lack of rain or excessive rain).

Although no confirmation of climate change could be provided at this stage, the perception of the communities shows that the issue is already present in their daily lives and that, according to them, it should be addressed by everybody and not only by governments.

This first survey shows how important it is to strengthen the capacity of communities to build an agenda of initiatives focused on climate change prevention and adaptation, as well as to strengthen their active participation in the dialogue with governments for drawing up appropriate public policies to address the issue.