

# TELL YOUR STORY: INTERVIEW WITH CARLA ANDREA RUIZ PHILIPPS

*The Women4Climate Tell Your Story campaign aims to champion the role of women as agents of change in the climate space, highlight their climate projects and tell the inspirational stories behind them.*

Carla Ruiz's project 'Wayru Peru' was born during a hackathon in 2020, when Ruiz and two of her friends, Ana Isabel Alvarado and Catherine Romani, developed the idea of a portable shower that could improve the quality of life for vulnerable families living in human settlements in Peru.

Together, the three women won the hackathon and received financial support to launch the pilot project for their idea, which marked the start of their journey learning about climate justice, innovation and sustainability.



*Catherine Romani, Ana Isabel Alvarado, and Carla Ruiz (from left to right), the three co-founders of Wayru Peru.*

Once created, thirty people located in different settlements across the capital were tasked with testing the portable shower. Ruiz recalls Rina, a mother and one of the first users of the portable shower. With the shower, Rina reduced the amount of money she spent on water, increasing the quantity of food she could buy for her family. She used the shower for five months before moving settlements and is now willing to get one that she can keep. However, like most people living in human settlements, she must first be able to afford the shower.



*Beneficiaries of the portable shower in a human settlement in Peru.*

The portable shower allows residents to reduce the amount of water they use, as well as the costs associated with buying water – as residents often have to purchase bottled water from large trucks in the settlements, which can cost up to six times the usual value of bottled water elsewhere. Based on Rina’s experience, Ruiz calculated that by using a portable shower, households could save up to 5,000 litres of water per year. In addition, portable water reduces the frequency of water purchases, freeing up residents’ time, while providing them with a more convenient and comfortable solution.





*Ruiz delivers a workshop to present the portable shower and discuss challenges of hygiene and water scarcity in human settlements.*

In addition to distributing portable showers, 'Wayru Peru' is organising workshops to showcase how their solution addresses the challenges of hygiene and water scarcity. As a result of their participation in the Women4Climate programme, Ruiz and her friends have added the topic of gender justice to the workshop, which the programme has given them the knowledge and confidence to tackle.

Expectations of gender roles can result in women being in charge of domestic responsibilities, including household water management. Women4Climate and the Lima-based Mujeres por el Clima (Women for Climate) programme helped Ruiz and her

friends find their space in a place where the voices and experiences of women and girls have been silenced for too long. Through the programme, the three friends realised the potential impact of encouraging everyone to contribute to climate action and that diversity of perspectives only makes action more inclusive and impactful.



*Presentation of the portable shower to future beneficiaries.*

The Women4Climate mentoring programme has also helped Ruiz and her friends to bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge they learned at university and the practical difficulties of implementing a project on the ground. Ruiz studied Geography and Environment in Lima, Peru, with her studies inspiring her to work on projects at the intersection of social and environmental challenges. Feminist networks are also a great

source of inspiration for Ruiz, Alvarado and Romani, who turn to female entrepreneurs to start developing the machines needed to build the components of the portable shower, thus creating local jobs, lowering production costs, and permitting people like Rina to buy the product.

Beyond the immediate improvement of living conditions in human settlements, Wayru Peru also has a ripple effect in the wider political arena. By working with both the presidents of the human settlements and the representatives of the municipality, it connects all the stakeholders and helps to build trust between the city and the residents.

Ruiz said: “Overall, this programme underlined the fact that we are three young women entrepreneurs at the beginning of this journey. It helped us to realise that there are more people like us, and those little ideas can become big and make huge differences all over the world.”

Learn more about Ruiz’s work on: [website](#) or [LinkedIn](#), or [Instagram](#)

[To learn more about gender mainstreaming in inclusive climate action approaches, take the free Women4Climate 4-week online course, “Developing Skills for Women Leadership in Climate Action”](#)

