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“Right now, we can take small, wise and **locally informed actions**, working together using our agency and different knowledges, to collectively build more resilient and sustainable cities.”

## MEET THE CHANGEMAKERS

#1

*This is part of an infographic series profiling key role players who are working with the INACCT Resilience project in supporting resilience building.*

### How have you been affected by flooding?

Since 2019, the floods have been so significant and so disruptive, that they have reframed my research questions and methods. I spend most of my time working on the preparedness and future planning of our city in response to floods, to reduce the trauma, fear and loss they produce, and the way they reverse hard earned development gains.

### Key actions and impact

I work on strengthening relationships between the state, citizens and universities to collectively address social and environmental vulnerabilities and build resilience. I am part of applied research teams creating inclusive climate resilience frameworks for informal settlements, peri-urban areas and non-sewered sanitation systems in Durban. This research supports innovative environmental governance in the city, which includes investment in nature and river rehabilitation programmes. In partnership with municipal officials and community members, I have established a community-based flood early warning system which has been successful at the local scale and will be scaled up across the city, as our learning about this system evolves and is verified. I work closely with eThekweni Municipality and communities across the city, and collectively, our work shapes both policy and practice.

### Challenges and lessons learned

The major challenge faced is that hard earned resilience building efforts are undermined by the state's lack of capacity, for reasons beyond the control of committed state officials, to implement interventions locally and at scale, that can reduce vulnerability and risk. By sticking together in coalitions that are formed, we slowly but surely work together to overcome challenges, making small gains, building capacity amongst ourselves, and never giving up.

### Call to action

Flooding is one of a range of disruptors that undermine the wellbeing of people and the environment. While these disruptors impact significantly on cities, the call to action is to reduce structural and spatial inequality (socially, economically and politically) and the degradation of the environment, as this is what produces vulnerability, which combines with hazards to create disasters. We can only address this call over the longer term by building a just and transformed society, but right now, we can take small, wise and locally informed actions, working together using our agency and different knowledges, to collectively build more resilient and sustainable cities.