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How have you been affected by flooding?

My community has been severely affected by flooding which sweeps away our homes, the land and also damages infrastructure. This and the trauma take away everything you have. What motivates us is our needs and wants in our lives. We have the need of a shelter that makes us mobilise ourselves into creating WhatsApp groups for the early warning system for flood prevention measures (for those who are living on the edge of the river). Some put tyres and sand next to their houses, some build high foundations to prevent flooding, and some planted some trees next to the river.

Key actions and impact

We've led community discussions open for everyone to have a voice. We have also created a WhatsApp group as an early warning system that helps the community prepare their belongings, and evacuation plans that reduce flood related damages. We also make noise and warn others of flooding by word of mouth (like through shouting) to wake those sleeping or alert those next to the river, that there will be more rain than usual. We need to be vigilant and keep checking up on our neighbours.

Challenges and lessons learned

A lesson learned is to never build near the river. It is also important to restore and rebuild after a disaster. Infrastructure damage disrupts essential services, electrical, drainage systems, and roads, and leads to lack of access to resources. Adaptation around flooding depends on building trust with local organisations and neighbourhoods. Collaboration among UKZN, NGOs, the municipality, and communities has been crucial for disaster management and building resilience.

Call to action

It's important to implement advanced early warning systems to save lives and reduce damage. Municipalities must include people from communities, specifically those that can alert the community on where to evacuate. Educating local communities focuses on building resilience and adapting to climate change and practicing our indigenous knowledge, for example, knowing when to cut the trees and when not to cut. Infrastructure development such as stormwater drainage systems is also needed. Everyone should engage their communities and collaborate with local leaders.

"We hope for a flood resilient community. Together, we can build a resilient future."

MEET THE CHANGEMAKERS

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