



# BUILDING FLOOD RESILIENCE IN MONTENEGRO

## IMPACT BRIEF ON THE FLOOD RESILIENCE PROGRAM

2018 - 2024

By leveraging the [Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities \(FRMC\)](#) framework, the program engaged deeply with local populations to build resilience and integrated their insights and experiences into both local actions and national strategies. Local voices and lessons learned were documented and shared to support policy influencing and scaling up through the Red Cross network.

The [Red Cross of Montenegro](#) is an integral part of the disaster management system in emergency situations and takes action in disaster preparedness and response, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation. With the aim of strengthening community resilience and reducing the impact of floods, the Red Cross of Montenegro, together with the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies \(IFRC\)](#), formed part of the [Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance](#) (the Alliance).

Flooding is the most common climate hazard in Montenegro, causing significant economic, ecological,

social and health damage every year. For the rural communities located near Skadar Lake in the Zeta Municipality, fluvial floods caused by heavy rainfall pose a substantial concern, particularly for agriculture and livestock.

Through the Alliance, the Red Cross of Montenegro has implemented evidence-based resilience building interventions with individuals, families, local leaders and communities and has scaled up best practice and influenced national policies and strategic plans.



## Individuals and families integrate flood resilience awareness and actions into their day-to-day lives.

- First aid, DRR and health trainings.
- School-based resilience building actions.
- Distributions of First Aid kits, emergency backpacks and risk awareness materials.
- Key messages and risk awareness raising.

*After the different workshops and trainings conducted, we saw that people's general knowledge on first aid was much higher and this was something that was very satisfying to see.*

Kristina, Disaster Management Assistant,  
Red Cross of Montenegro

**+31,000**

## lives improved

*New mindsets and behaviours, infrastructure and policy that have a sustained positive impact on people's lives.*

**+100,000**

## indirect reach

*Estimated population that benefit from community interventions, scaling up and influencing initiatives.*



Activities carried out in rural communities and with municipal and national actors.



## Communities and local authorities prioritise environmental management and flood protection infrastructure for enhanced flood resilience.

- Repair of flood protection wall to protect families, assets and livelihoods.
- Cleaning of drainage canal to ensure unobstructed water flow and reduce blockages that worsen flooding.
- Green islands for waste management to reduce obstructions and contamination during floods.



*In addition to the infrastructural importance, these initiatives also had a positive impact on the awareness of citizens and changes in behaviour regarding waste and attitudes towards protecting waterways.*

Mihailo Asanović, Mayor of the Municipality of Zeta



## National policies prioritise community needs, priorities, and capacities in relation to flood resilience.

- Strategic contribution to national plans, policies, strategies and dialogues, including primarily the National Disaster Risk Assessment and the Risk Management Capacity Assessment.
- Regional institutional and inter-institutional knowledge exchanges.

*We are able to be the voices of the communities in a way that we transmit the needs and priorities of the community.*

Nataša Uskoković, International Relations Advisor,  
Red Cross of Montenegro



## INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

As part of the Alliance, the Red Cross of Montenegro has undertaken a process of institutional learning, and the past five years has had an important impact on institutional relationships and ways of working.

- Strengthening of a new local Red Cross branch in the Zeta Municipality.
- Increased capacities related to resilience building in Red Cross branches and volunteers.

- Successful model of collaborative approach with local authorities.
- Enhanced position in national dialogues and initiatives.
- Effective program management in the context of external constraints, such as Covid-19.

*The actions we carried out in community helped to raise the visibility of the Red Cross at the local level and expanded the public perception of the possibilities of what the Red Cross can do.*

Jelena Dubak, Secretary General,  
Red Cross of Montenegro

### Mujo's story

Mujo lives in the community of Ponari, alongside a tributary of the Moraca River. He works as a farmer, selling his produce, including potatoes, watermelon and paprika at the local market. When the level of the river rises, his income and livelihood are at risk. During the historic floods of 2010, Mujo's family was evacuated along with the majority of the population of Ponari. The flood water destroyed crops and caused significant damage to homes and other infrastructure in the community.

Through the Red Cross of Montenegro's collaboration with the Zeta Municipality, people from the community came together to discuss the needs of the community. As result, First Aid trainings and materials were shared to raise awareness of risk and increase skills within the local population. The community's aging and damaged flood wall was repaired, reinforced, and enhanced to withstand even bigger floods in the future. Mujo says *"this will protect the community from future flooding"*. Protecting lives and livelihoods is key to increasing community flood resilience.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The successful development of the Flood Resilience Program in Montenegro has marked a pivotal improvement in community resilience. However, as climate risks continue to grow it is important that our approaches remain dynamic and innovative; leveraging the lessons learned from previous experiences.



Understand and communicate how the program's work contributes to the bigger picture.

- Seek systemic change by building resilience in different ways and at different levels.
- Leverage large-scale awareness-raising campaigns and media coverage to share key messages.
- Position resilience-building actions within the broader national agenda.



Ensure people are at the core of resilience-building actions.

- Build trust and credibility by providing early tangible benefits to the community.



Develop strong relationships with key local stakeholders.

- Find alignment between the Red Cross mandate and existing stakeholder priorities.
- Build ambition gradually by starting with small-scale collaborations.
- Formalise partnerships through written agreements with clear roles, responsibilities, and time frames.



Leverage organisational strengths for scaling up and sustainability.

- Utilise First Aid training, simulations and awareness raising activities as entry points to engage community and set a foundation for resilience building actions.
- Prioritise the training of Red Cross staff and volunteers to empower future action on climate resilience.
- Leverage the position of the Red Cross in national dialogues and policymaking to ensure local voices are heard.



The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance is a multi-sectoral partnership focusing on finding practical ways to help communities in developed and developing countries strengthen their resilience to flood risk.

Find out more: [www.floodresilience.net](http://www.floodresilience.net)



READ THE  
FULL  
REPORT  
HERE