

## Dhuratë e Kryqit të Kuq Shqiptar

Ne ndihmë të komunitetit për  
përballimin e përmbytjeve



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# A JOURNEY OF FLOOD RESILIENCE IN ALBANIA

## 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 [Albanian Red Cross](#) is the oldest and largest humanitarian organization in Albania. With the aim of strengthening community resilience and reducing the impact of floods, the Albanian Red Cross, 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 and damaging climate hazard in Albania where pluvial floods,

caused by heavy precipitation, impact lives and livelihoods. As well as regional and national-level influencing actions, the program targeted six rural and peri-urban communities in the counties with greatest flood risk in Albania: Shkodra, Fier and Vlora.

In the past five years, the program in Albania has generated significant impact on flood resilience by scaling out to spread resilience practices and models to more communities, scaling up to advocate for shifting policies and programs at the sub-national and national scales, and scaling deep to shift institutional approaches, culture, and beliefs.



Communities have greater awareness of risk, know-how and empowerment to take action and are more organised to support the local population in the face of flooding.

- First aid, DRR and health trainings.
- Local and national risk awareness campaigns.
- School-based awareness raising activities.
- Community response teams.

*Communities feel much more confident in their own actions ... we can see that the local population, from young generation till the elderly people, is informed and empowered to take action on flood resilience.*

Saidi Bushaj, Project Lead, Albanian Red Cross

**+150,000**  
**lives improved**

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

**300,000**  
**indirect reach**

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



Activities carried out in rural and peri-urban communities and with local and national actors.



Local flood protection infrastructure enhances community resilience to floods.

- Repair and raising of flood protection wall to protect local market and households.
- Construction of reinforced evacuation bridge.

*We saw that the dominant need was the evacuation of people, livestock, and agricultural equipment from the agricultural area to the residential area. We're happy that through this project, we were able to make this a reality.*

Sokol, Albanian Red Cross volunteer



Local voices, needs and priorities are integrated into national policies related to flood resilience resulting in a more cohesive, organised and effective civil protection system.

- Local advocacy for investment in flood resilience.
- Influence of subnational and national policies.
- Bringing diverse actors together towards the development of an Early Warning System.

*We facilitated a channel for the community's voice to be heard and to influence policy discussions at national and subnational levels.*

Fatos Xhengo, Coordinator of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Program, Albanian Red Cross

# INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

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

- More structured and intentional approach to Disaster Risk Reduction activities.
- Strengthened Red Cross branches that can continue to build resilience at the local level.
- Introduction of the concept of resilience to the Red Cross and to the wider national context.
- New methodologies and ways of working provide successful models of resilience building.
- Increased engagement with communities as long-term collaborators rather than beneficiaries.
- Greater openness and accountability to community needs and priorities.

## Neki's story

Neki has been the local leader of the Darëzezë community for more than a decade. He is enthusiastic and determined to seek opportunities for his community to grow and develop. In 2017, heavy uninterrupted rainfall led to rising river levels that caused flooding in communities in the counties of Vlora and Fier, including Darëzezë where community members sought to evacuate agricultural equipment, products, and livestock from the lower lying areas of the community across the river to higher ground. However, the rising river levels damaged both the vehicle and pedestrian bridges available to the local population. As Neki expressed, *"if we had had the opportunity to evacuate our products, more than half of the community would have found it easier to recover, but huge losses greatly delayed the recovery time."*

Strengthening local infrastructure to facilitate evacuation, particularly related to livelihoods, was identified through the resilience measurement process as a key priority by the local population.

In collaboration with the Municipality of Fier and the Ministry of Defence, the Albanian Red Cross supported the construction of a wider, higher, and more robust bridge to enhance the opportunity for evacuation in the case of floods. Neki reiterated the success of this project, *"in normal times, almost all surrounding communities that work in agriculture use this bridge for daily use. In flood-prone times, this bridge is sure to help all farmers evacuate themselves, livestock and all other products that are cultivated in that area."*



# RECOMMENDATIONS

The successful development of the Flood Resilience Program in Albania 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.

- Build resilience at multiple levels with individuals, families, local authorities, and national stakeholders.
- Leverage large-scale awareness-raising campaigns and media coverage to share key messages.



Prioritise interventions that are community-led, tangible and sustainable.

- Apply resilience measurement and vulnerability assessments to support evidence-based intervention design.
- Prioritise communities' preferred solutions for greater engagement and acceptance.
- Collaborate with communities as partners.
- Balance awareness and capacity building interventions with tangible flood resilience measures.



Engage with local authorities to increase the scale, implementation, and sustainability of the interventions.

- Build and nurture relationships with stakeholders with proactive and consistent communication.
- Explore opportunities for cofinancing with local authorities to ensure project sustainability.



Leverage organizational strengths for scaling up and sustainability.

- Leverage the position of the Red Cross in national dialogues and policymaking to ensure local voices are heard.
- Strengthen local Red Cross branches and share best practices widely.



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)



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