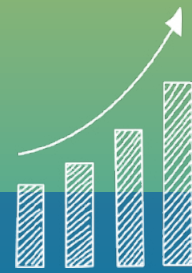


Progress Report Year 6

Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Phase II




progress /'pra:gres/

noun

- 1 the process of improving or developing, or of getting nearer to achieving or completing, something
- 2 movement forward or toward a place

Follow us:

 floodresilience.net

 [@floodalliance](https://twitter.com/floodalliance)

Year

6



Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. Achieving our people impacted target | 4 |
| Policy influence: Albanian Red Cross – 143,000 impact beneficiaries | 5 |
| Government adoption of good practice: Mexican Red Cross – 76,400 impact beneficiaries | 6 |
| Improving government understanding and ability to take action: Mercy Corps Indonesia – 1.3 million impact beneficiaries | 7 |
| 3. The Alliance impact beneficiary journey | 8 |
| How do we count community impact? | 8 |
| How do we count advocacy impact? | 8 |
| 4. Achieving our financial impact target | 10 |
| Piloting an innovative parametric insurance scheme – Practical Action Nepal | 12 |
| Committed government DRR budgets – Concern Kenya | 13 |
| Funding EWS via a public-private partnership for resilience – ISET-Vietnam | 14 |
| 5. Beyond the numbers | 15 |
| Cyclone Freddy demonstrated Alliance communities in Malawi are more resilient – Concern Malawi | 15 |
| Using risk scenarios for early warning – Plan El Salvador | 16 |
| Community empowerment and funding influence – Mercy Corps Nepal | 17 |
| Box 1. Impact through knowledge | 18 |
| 6. What next? | 19 |

The [Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance](#) is a multi-sectoral partnership which brings together community programs, new research, shared knowledge, and evidence-based influencing to build community flood resilience in developed and developing countries. Our vision is that floods should have no negative impact on people’s ability to thrive.

This report presents progress-to-date as of Year 6 of Phase II of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance highlighting the impact and change we are seeing as a result of our community engagement, learning, research, and advocacy work.



Rintoni, one of our aquaculture farmer program participants. In the background is the traditional cultivation practice of using immersion nets, with nets that have been damaged by coastal flooding, Indonesia © Mercy Corps Indonesia Team



A bridge under construction in Mikameni village in Kenya's Tana River County © Lisa Murray, Concern Worldwide

1. Introduction

The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (Alliance) was launched in 2013 with the goal of increasing investment in building community-based resilience through private, public, and government partnerships. Based on the successes of the first five-year phase (2013-2018) of the Alliance, the Z Zurich Foundation extended funding for a second phase, 2018-2024. For its second phase the Alliance ambitiously committed to build the resilience of 2 million people and increase investment towards resilience by USD 1 billion. As of the end of 2023, the Alliance surpassed these goals: our community programs and advocacy have beneficially impacted **3.14 million** people and influenced **USD 1.26 billion** of funding towards resilience.

However, achieving these goals tells only a partial tale of the scale of change we are seeing across the Alliance. After five years of Phase II, Alliance teams are reporting:

- enhanced resilience (and thus fewer losses and damages) in the face of floods;
- communities that are empowered to advocate for their resilience needs;
- government and community adoption of new resilience practices, including nature-based solutions and climate-resilience livelihood practices; and
- donor funding to expand on good resilience practices, such as early warning systems (EWS) and a new parametric insurance scheme.

Alliance teams are also reporting important shifts within the sub-national-to-global policy environments they engage in including:

- mobilization around key global issues like Loss and Damage and the need to increase global adaptation funding;
- local level financing for resilience;
- government shifts that consider ex-ante action as well as emergency response;
- policies and plans that include community-defined priorities for building resilience; and
- governments broadly strengthening their disaster risk governance.

At the root of these changes is our investment in building a common foundation, developing shared tools and approaches, and incentivizing all members of the Alliance to learn and grow in their work. This is supported by our long-term, flexible funding, collaborative model, and rigorous evidence-driven approach. Driven by these facets, Alliance teams have developed useful knowledge which communities, government, and Alliance partner institutions have taken up, and which is leading to measurable successes and/or replication. Together, these elements have allowed us to develop country programs that are tailored to our contexts yet have the agility to leverage opportunities for influence and action. They have also enabled us to deepen and broaden our impact based on shared learning, common tools and approaches, and collective action where possible.

In this report, we share stories about the types of changes that have supported us to exceed our numeric goals, and which show how we have achieved deep, beneficial shifts in thinking and behavior that have led to improved resilience, empowerment, and government action in the communities we work with.



A farmer program participant explaining the function of a manual rainwater gauge to support the implementation of adaptive agriculture © Halimatul Abkoryyah, Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Indonesia CARM and Admin Officer



2. Achieving our people impacted target

Early in Phase II of the Alliance, the Z Zurich Foundation challenged program partners to not just report the reach of our work – via direct and indirect beneficiary counts – but to document the people impacted by our work. As a result, we can now report that since the start of Phase II, the Alliance has impacted a total of 3,144,000 people, exceeding our target by over a million people (Figure 1).

Equally exciting, our 2023 impact total represents impact reported by all the Alliance country teams. This represents a substantial achievement, particularly because the number of people impacted, especially by advocacy, is not something traditionally counted in development programs; to do so has required commitment, learning, and the development and application of new systems. The implications of this are explored in the Alliance impact beneficiary journey section of this report.

Below we share three examples of what Alliance advocacy impact looks like, drawing on some of our larger-impact wins and reflecting a range of different advocacy approaches.

Figure 1. People impacted through our work



Policy influence: Albanian Red Cross – 143,000 impact beneficiaries

As part of a process to align the country's policy landscape with European Union (EU) disaster risk protocols, the Albanian government is developing several different national policies focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR). The development of these policies is significant; as a part of the process, the country is reviewing its DRR priorities and gaps and putting together a plan to address them. Using knowledge drawn from their Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities¹ (FRMC) work, which has helped to identify community priorities and effective pathways for building resilience, the Red Cross – alongside others participating in technical working groups – has been integral in shaping this policy. This work is resulting in tangible benefits for the entire national population of approximately 2.8 million. However, recognizing that many actors and organizations were collaborating in the technical working groups, the Albanian Red Cross team did not want to assume to have directly impacted all 2.8 million. Instead, a scaling factor was used to represent the Albanian Red Cross' role in this work, resulting in an estimated 143,000 impact beneficiaries because of Red Cross engagement.

¹ The FRMC is the framework and tool all Alliance teams use to generate evidence about the ways in which a given area or community is already resilient to floods, as well as providing a guide to further develop this resilience. <https://floodresilience.net/frmc/>



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Albanian Red Cross and the National Agency for Civil Protection, December 2023 © Albanian Red Cross

Government adoption of good practice: Mexican Red Cross – 76,400 impact beneficiaries

In Mexico, the National Civil Protection Agency is responsible for protecting and supporting the population during natural hazard events. Through the FRMC process and working with communities, the Mexican Red Cross identified priorities for strengthening flood resilience in remote communities, including a lack of social capacity to organize action at the local level. Action to address this gap took the form of community brigades – trained volunteer community groups with the knowledge and skills to support their communities in preparing and responding to floods.

The Mexican Red Cross piloted the brigades approach to improve community disaster risk management capacity and provide governments with a community focal point to work with. In 2020, during major flooding in Tabasco, the brigades actively applied their training to respond to the floods and worked with Civil Protection during the response and recovery. Brigade efforts helped reduce impacts and facilitate recovery.

Recognizing this success, the National Civil Protection Agency, through the National Disaster Prevention Center, invited the Mexican Red Cross to help develop the National Strategy for Resilient Communities. The Mexican Red Cross helped integrate the brigades approach into the National Strategy and move it from a response focus to one also encompassing preparedness and ex-ante action. As part of the strategy, a national registry was established to support and track brigades.

To assess the quantitative impact of this success, the Mexican Red Cross identified the number of registered brigades at the time of reporting. Each brigade contains a minimum of ten people and based on the experience of the 2020 floods, it is estimated that each brigade member can provide support to 40 community members. The impact reported by the Mexican Red Cross – 76,400 impact beneficiaries – thus represents 191 registered brigades multiplied by 400 community members served per brigade.



The KANJATA Disaster Risk Reduction Brigade presents at the 'Preparedness and Community Resilience' forum held at the Intercultural University of the state of Tabasco, Mexico, September 2023 © Mexican Red Cross archive

Improving government understanding and ability to take action: Mercy Corps Indonesia – 1.3 million impact beneficiaries

Mercy Corps Indonesia's impact is the result of multiple, inter-related activities designed to improve the government's understanding of flood risk and strengthen its capacity to take action. Alliance knowledge was central to the design, with Mercy Corps Indonesia beginning their work with the development of a technical model that illustrates how current flooding challenges are due to both river flooding and coastal inundation, which is exacerbated by storms, high-tide, and non-climatic factors like land subsidence. Model results clearly illustrated that solutions beyond sea walls and other hard protection infrastructure are needed to address current and growing economic damages. Mercy Corps Indonesia then worked with the government to successfully influence sub-national development policies to include provisions for addressing land subsidence and building flood resilience through integrated water resource and coastal zone management, using a landscape-based approach. They also provided technical support for the design of a major dam and reservoir that could serve as an alternative water resource, reducing the dependency on groundwater extraction that is exacerbating flooding in the region.

In parallel with these efforts, Mercy Corps Indonesia also developed a resilient livelihoods approach (RLA), utilizing different ways of working in upstream and downstream communities. Upstream, the focus is to promote conservation principles in agriculture while introducing commodities that are more climate resilient. Downstream, the focus is on aquaculture that simultaneously enables people to adapt to increased flood risk and changing rainfall patterns, increase yields, and increase livelihoods opportunities across the whole supply-chain. Alliance-produced evidence informed this approach and supported the development of original knowledge products, such as "[Tarudi and Muriah's Story](#)", which illustrates how the RLA builds both physical and economic resilience to flood risk.

Using both their technical model and their RLA, the Mercy Corps Indonesia team was able to emphasize the relevance of flood risk to development, rather than solely as a disaster management issue. By helping government actors understand why and how they need to move beyond hard infrastructural flood protection measures, and by supporting the development of actions that both address the root cause of flooding and support adaptation to flood impacts, Mercy Corps Indonesia's work has beneficially impacted the local population of 1.3 million people.



Mercy Corps Indonesia's Executive Director with our aquaculture farmer partner, observing the implementation of a milkfish floating net. The floating net is an adaptive cultivation practice to address the risk of coastal flooding and inundation © Mercy Corps Indonesia team



Local committee members presenting the findings of FRMC in the Sweimeh community, Jordan © Mercy Corps

3. The Alliance impact beneficiary journey

In 2020, we challenged ourselves to count the people impacted by our work. Because numbers of people impacted is not traditionally measured in the humanitarian or development sectors, rising to this challenge took us on a four-year learning journey focused on how to meaningfully and credibly count, assess, and track the impact our work on peoples' lives.

How do we count community impact?

Our first step was to define what impact means in the context of our work with communities, connecting impact to our direct and indirect beneficiaries. Each Alliance country team developed their own definitions of impact tailored to their work and working context. These definitions generally assume that a proportion of the community will be impacted, and that impact will be reflected in changes of awareness or behavior. Some teams, however, tied the counting of impact to depth of engagement or new access to a critical service like an early warning system.

Once definitions were established, each team developed monitoring and evaluation tools – such as impact surveys – for collecting the additional data needed to assess impact. Because such data cannot be collected until interventions are complete and communities have had time to absorb and notice the changes in their resilience, most of the Alliance teams did not run impact surveys until program close-out in 2023. Consequently, this is the first year for which we have impact reported by all Alliance country programs.

How do we count advocacy impact?

The impact of our work with communities and at community level, however, accounts for only one part of what the Alliance considers as “impact”. Recognizing that our goal is not just to build the resilience of individual communities, but to also scale good practices to other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government actors, and donors; to influence policy to better support flood resilience; and to increase the funding going toward activities that build resilience, the other part of our impact is via advocacy. Thus, we also worked to develop an approach for articulating how our advocacy activities beneficially impact people in our program countries and, to the extent possible, to find ways to count the people who benefit.

Measuring the impact of advocacy work by counting individual beneficiaries is an evolving issue for the humanitarian and development sectors. As such, there is no general guidance available on how to go about it. Donors do not typically ask for such quantification. Although there is growing donor interest in finding ways to articulate the impact of advocacy work, the concept is notoriously difficult to enumerate – particularly with rigor, defensibility, and credibility – while also recognizing the collaborative effort and/or external funding that make advocacy successes possible.

Thus, we took an iterative approach, beginning with an assessment step where teams reviewed their advocacy wins to understand:

- Is this advocacy success something for which the impact can be clearly defined?
- If so, is it clear which individuals have been impacted?
- If we know who was likely impacted, can we count them, and does numeric data already exist that could be used in this quantification?

Only with wins where Alliance teams were able to answer yes to all three questions did they go on to develop an approach to measure impact. Because of the wide breadth of activities undertaken by Alliance teams, we developed different methodologies for each of the different advocacy successes.

As with community impact, it is only at the end of 2023 that we are beginning to see multiple Alliance teams reporting advocacy impact; about half of the Alliance country programs are now counting people impacted as a result of advocacy work. A few teams have achieved this within just three years, a remarkable accomplishment and a testament to their ability to learn from other Alliance teams and benefit from the overall Alliance structure. The majority of our advocacy impact, however, represents six to ten years of consistent, strategic engagement.



Alliance coordinator (Seona Dillon Mcloughlin) and project officer (Elvas Munthali) interacting with community members during the inspection of a communal nursery in Mbenje community TIA Mbenje, Nsanje district, Malawi in September 2023 © Stanley Thyoka Phiri-Driverteam



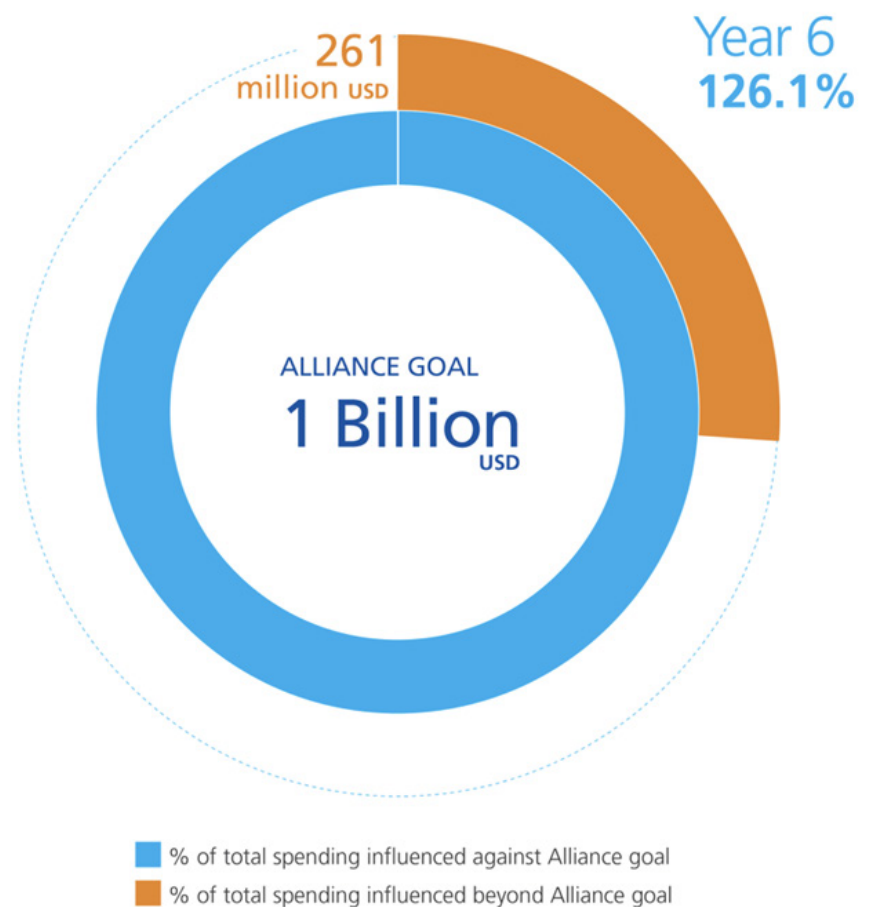
Farmers enrollment in Index-based Flood Insurance, Nepal © Practical Action Nepal

4. Achieving our financial impact target

Since the start of Phase II, we have influenced USD 1.26 billion in funding towards resilience, surpassing our program target of USD 1 billion (Figure 2). This is the result of multiple different efforts at multiple levels including provincial-level commitments to DRR funding; the influence of various national risk management programs; funding commitments on global adaptation policy; and our contributions to operationalizing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’s loss and damage fund.

Nearly half of the money we have influenced has been at the global level. Here, we have engaged over multiple years to influence global dialogues and national commitments to fund adaptation. The Alliance has been working in collaboration with a range of parties, in

Figure 2. People impacted through our work



particular with the United Kingdom (UK) government, which as a result of ongoing engagement with the adaptation sector has been a key driver and champion of increasing adaptation funding at the global level for developing countries. This work resulted in the adoption of the [Glasgow climate pact at COP26](#), which “urges developed country Parties to at least double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation to developing country Parties from 2019 levels by 2025”. The adoption of the Glasgow climate pact was described as a ‘step-change’ by the Global Center on Adaptation; this is also the first quantified commitment for adaptation finance.

Alliance engagement as a part of this influencing effort has been multi-pronged, including:

- Commissioning research on the evidence and analysis of the gaps in adaptation finance and how it is spent, including the [2021 Fair Shares Report](#).
- Emphasizing the multiple dividends of adaptation investment.
- Bringing Alliance country team representatives into international meetings to present and discuss their challenges and needs.
- Leading the BOND Development and Environment Group (now the Climate Action Network UK) - a group of NGOs that lobbied the UK government on all climate issues. The Adaptation Working Group was led in 2021 by an Alliance team member based at Mercy Corps, with participation by individuals at Practical Action and Concern Worldwide.
- Acting as a driving force in the Friends of Adaptation and Loss and Damage Group – an informal technical contact group of civil society and the UK presidency team. Again, multiple Alliance team members from multiple organizations are represented.
- Engaging directly with the UK government on a regular basis.

Estimating the impact of our advocacy work in this global agreement was not straightforward. First, we needed to identify our contribution to this achievement. We recognize multiple actors were working on this, yet we can say that our actions, as listed above, contributed to the commitment made at COP26. Second, we needed to estimate the overall financial gain, including a consideration of whether this commitment will actually be realized in practice and how fast adaptation funding will increase. Our latest figures on adaptation funding² do indeed suggest that donors are increasing their funding and are on track to achieve the doubling commitment. These figures are based on donor-reported funding amounts that have been firmly (and legally) allocated/committed; these are not purely pledges. While we of course do not yet have donor spending figures up until 2025, our figures suggest that the increase in adaptation funding from 2019-2025 will likely meet or exceed USD 70 billion.

Contributing our part to global funding wins is important. We are equally proud of the impact of our spending wins at the local, sub-national, and national levels. In particular, many of our individual funding wins are small from the global point of view, but within their contexts are highly meaningful. Accordingly, we highlight below some of our small or unquantified spending wins of which we are extremely proud and excited.

² From “[A fair share of climate finance? The adaptation edition](#)” (2023).

Piloting an innovative parametric insurance scheme – Practical Action Nepal

Practical Action Nepal has been working for several years to develop an Index-based Flood Insurance (IBFI) pilot project. IBFI is insurance that is tied to a parameter, like an amount of rainfall over a certain period of time; if the parameter is met or exceeded, the insurance policy compensates policyholders a pre-agreed amount. This means that IBFI can provide much needed post-disaster funding very quickly – it does not rely on post-event assessment of loss for individual policyholders, which generally takes months. For small farmers, IBFI can be a complete game-changer in terms of resilience; in 2022, the area covered by Practical Action's IBFI pilot scheme flooded badly enough to hit one of the payment triggers. Payouts were made to policyholders within weeks. Based on this demonstrated efficacy, in 2023 the Nepal Insurance Authority approved the use of the IBFI model in select river basins.

The operationalization of this pilot is exciting, as this type of insurance is widely considered an innovative approach to risk transfer. The successful implementation of this product is now driving a demand for more information. Local governments and cooperatives in project locations have requested more information on IBFI from the project team. The team is also actively working with provincial governments to help them understand the possibilities and limitations of insurance as a risk transfer mechanism in poor, flood-vulnerable communities. Additionally, the success of this pilot created trust in the product; farmers have now invested their own funds to buy into the product, despite the removal of government subsidies.

The success and growing interest in this work has resulted in additional funding support from private and development partners for expansion into additional areas. Practical Action's private sector partner, InsuResilience Solutions Fund, has committed an additional USD 376,000, extending the project to March 2024, and Swiss Re has committed to replicating IBFI in the Bardiya District of Nepal. Practical Action has also secured a small grant from the USAID Tayar project to replicate the scheme in an additional river basin.

While the pilot in Nepal and the additional funding procured to expand into additional areas is, as of right now, a local level win, it is an impactful one. The increased enrollment indicates that with the right incentives, such as easy loss payouts made directly to bank accounts, farmers are happy to try a new financing method. Indeed, many already consider it a preferable option, over indemnity insurance and promises of government compensation. As one farmer noted, "I am happy with the IBFI policy as it is easier than the indemnity insurance policy offered by the insurance companies."



Meeting with representatives of local cooperatives on Index-based Flood Insurance, Nepal © Practical Action Nepal

Committed government DRR budgets – Concern Kenya

In 2023, the Tana River County government committed to increasing the allocation for DRR in the county budget from 2 to 10%. Furthermore, 1.4% of the total disaster budget was allocated specifically to flood preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. This increase in the budget allocation for DRR is a result of Concern Kenya's community advocacy work around the need to increase funding for DRR as well as the need to earmark funds specifically for flood resilience, rather than disasters in general.

While this marked increase in funding is, in itself, a remarkable win, the team was especially excited because it meant that there would be money set aside for the regular flooding events that occur in Tana County. This was a clear departure from the past, where disaster related budget allocations were not specific and could be drawn to meet any form of disaster. Because there was often little or no money left over for flood disasters, humanitarian organizations typically needed to step in and provide flood response. With this budget win, funding has now been allocated for the first time towards flood resilience, and in a way that is both adaptive to the changing contexts of floods and their impacts and aligned with priorities identified by the communities.

This budget change was put to the test in late 2023 to early 2024. While Kenya was still recovering from severe drought, El Niño rains led to flooding in Tana River County. In contrast with previous years, the government was ready: the earmarked funds supported preparation of food stores and rescue training, amongst other protective actions. The government was first to respond by providing evacuation services and food and non-food items to the communities. As a result, communities were better able to cope during floods. Post flood, the government provided recovery services like the distribution of certified seeds to better improve community member livelihoods.



Concern Worldwide staff at the bank of a flooded road in Handaraku, Kenya © Concern Worldwide

Funding EWS via a public-private partnership for resilience – ISET-Vietnam

Quang Tho and Quang Thai communes in Thua Thien Hue, Vietnam are highly flood prone, but lack local flood depth data to complement and add local detail to city-wide flood warnings. Based on discussions with ISET-Vietnam and local partners in Thua Thien Hue province, Watec, a private company specializing in water resources and disaster management technology, agreed to provide nearly half of the cost of installation for two real-time flood gauges for the communes. ISET-Vietnam through the Alliance, covered the other half, and the provincial government agreed to cover the cost of the maintenance contract, ensuring the sustainability of the investment.

Watec installed the towers and will maintain the technology; the data produced by the towers will be integrated into the provincial flood monitoring network and database by the provincial disaster risk management authority to support flood risk management. The data is also being used by ISET-Vietnam and the commune-level governments in both communities to build out broader community flood mapping and risk awareness. This is being done through the creation of maps that translate what different warning levels

at the flood gauge mean for flooding at a variety of locations across the commune.

What is particularly exciting about this success, in addition to the joint private/public commitment for equipment and maintenance, is the functionality these real-time flood gauges provide. The towers monitor flood water levels and sound an alert when water levels reach pre-determined, tower-specific alert levels, sending real-time information to all telephone numbers registered with the system, quickly delivering flood information to affected communities. The gauges are connected to an online database that allows people to access information for different stations both in real time and for historic data. And, unlike many systems, the towers are designed with internal battery systems connected to solar panels, which ensures ongoing monitoring and warning for 30 days, even during power outages. Finally, based on the experience and lessons of this initiative, the provincial government plans to increase the coverage of this network by mobilizing its own resources and support from other actors.



This type of smart flood gauge, installed in Quang Tho and Quang Thai ward, Vietnam can send warning signals and automatically connect to the national hydrometeorological data system © Thua Thien Hue Steering Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control



Temporary shelter belonging to Ellen Mchumanjanje with a raised floor to protect assets and lives from flash floods and crocodile attacks along Shire River in Nyachikadza village, Nsanje district, Malawi © Concern Malawi

5. Beyond the numbers

The capacity for change is not always commensurate with money spent, nor always quantifiable in terms of people impacted. Smaller-scale, local wins may not yet translate to spending influenced or people impacted, but they indicate on-the-ground shifts in behavior that our Alliance teams have reported as impactful for the communities they work with around the world and suggest early indications of bigger change to come.

Cyclone Freddy demonstrated Alliance communities in Malawi are more resilient – Concern Malawi

Alliance-supported activities proved invaluable for communities and governments in Nsanje district in Malawi during Cyclone Freddy in 2023. Work with the Community Disaster Management Committees to advocate to the District Council for improving disaster contingency plans was particularly critical for ensuring better preparedness for Cyclone Freddy. In addition, pre-disaster activities supported by and in collaboration with Concern Malawi – including prepositioning of supplies, infrastructural improvements, improved district-level disaster contingency plans, and the strengthening of EWS – all played a critical role in reducing the risk for communities.

Data produced through a post-event study of Cyclone Freddy's impact, conducted by Concern Malawi, helped the team understand what worked. The study indicated that effective communication of early warning messages was the reason many households were able to evacuate and transfer assets, which resulted in reduced casualties. Communities were also effective in responding to evacuation needs: temporary shelters were set up at schools and vulnerable groups like single-mother-headed households, people with disabilities, and the elderly were prioritized for evacuation and relief. Despite the damage caused by the cyclone, communities are gradually reconstructing their physical assets including schools, community-based organizations and homes, and are constructing flood-resilient housing. In addition, communities were able to contain property crime through community policing and reduce post-flood illness by continued provision of healthcare services by most health posts throughout the district.

Using risk scenarios for early warning – Plan International El Salvador

In areas where early warning systems are absent, communities sometimes have to build their own. In El Salvador, Plan International and the communities they work with identified the need to bolster knowledge on risk monitoring, communication, and disaster response. Plan International set up community-based groups responsible for DRM and response called Community Civil Protection Commissions (CCPCs) and Network of Local Observers and connected them via an inter-community communication mechanism where information is shared throughout the river basin. The Plan International El Salvador team shared knowledge with the CCPCs and Network of Local Observers through trainings on gathering information on rainfall, floods, and overflows in the middle and upper parts of the basin, which is then used to develop risk scenarios linking upper basin conditions with likely intensity and timing of flooding in lower-basin localities. In parallel, efforts were made to improve timely response through effective, real-time communication between flood-prone communities and official response teams. In addition, formal agreements with four local government departments were made, encouraging the interconnection of communities with institutions dedicated to issuing forecasts, which in turn expanded the necessary information for making early warning decisions.

During the 2023 rainy season in El Salvador, this training was put to the test. The San Diego and Majahual communities, which are in the coastal and lower zones of the Amayo, Aquiquisquillo, and Majahual river basins, obtained real-time data from communities in the middle and upper parts of the basin, from which they were able to develop accurate forecasts on intensity and timing of flooding in their localities. In turn, this enabled them to monitor and pre-emptively evacuate risk prone areas, optimizing response times and saving lives.

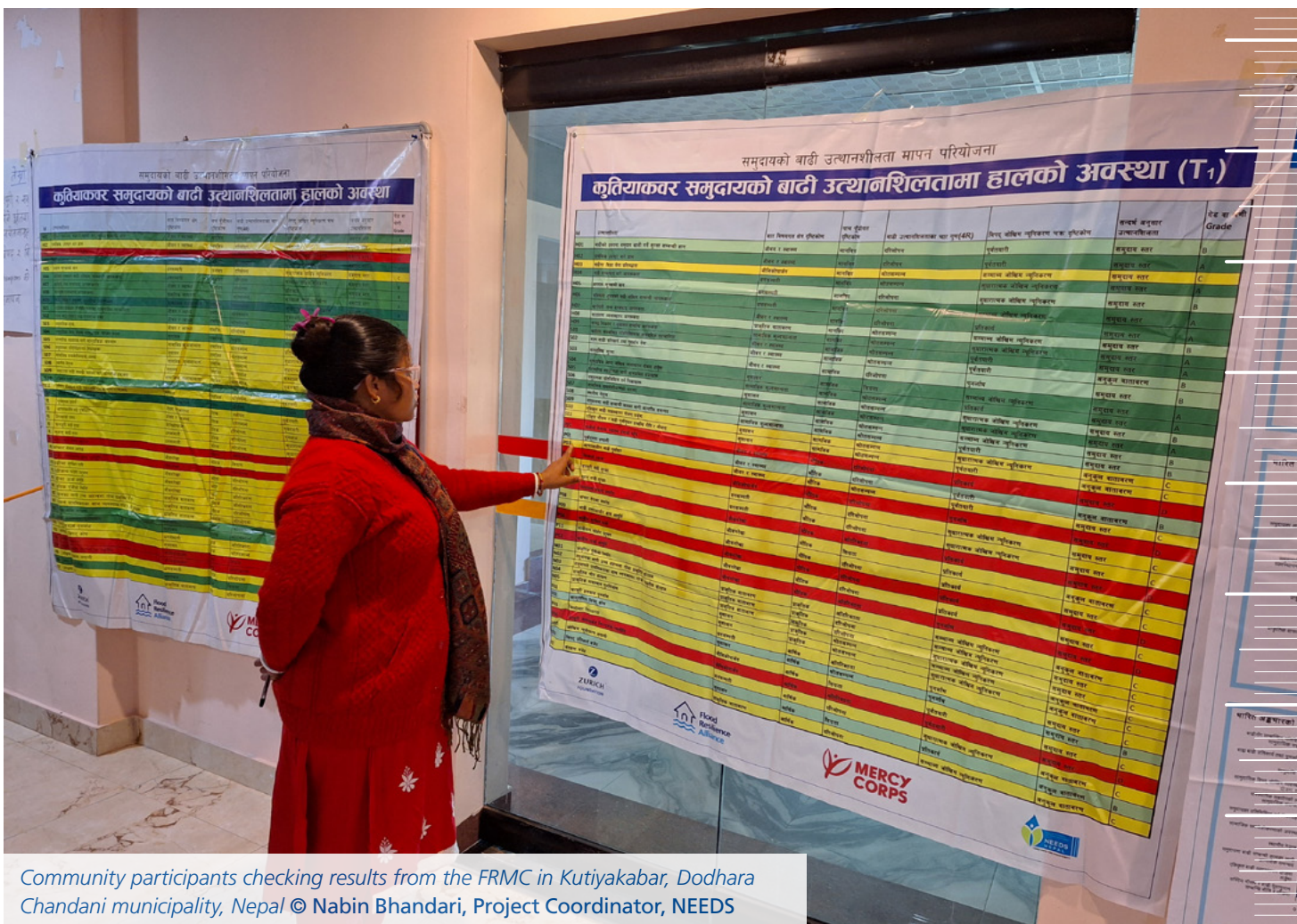


Community leaders work together with specialists from the Ministry of Environment and Plan International to monitor river flows for the EWS, La Libertad, El Salvador April 2023 © Plan International El Salvador

Community empowerment and funding influence – Mercy Corps Nepal

In the right contexts and with the right timing, local level advocacy can result in pivotal changes in policy, planning, and budget allocations. In Nepal, Mercy Corps worked with community advocacy champions to build capacity, skill, and knowledge in advocacy, including developing advocacy plans. The plans served as a helpful guide for the advocacy champions to follow in actively engaging in local participatory policy processes, which resulted in the integration of community rights, voices, and choices into the local development plan. The development plans had a cascading influence on local government budgeting decisions to allocate funds for proposed community initiatives, including USD 26,000 for drainage works, gravelling, and electricity transformer setups. This local government also provided in-kind support for community planting initiatives.

The impacts of these initiatives are evident. The successful implementation of drainage works has effectively resolved pondage and inundation issues, contributing to a safer and more sustainable living environment. The establishment of an all-weather road network has enabled seamless commuting for community members, including to schools, health facilities, and municipal services. With the installation of a new transformer setup, electricity shortages are now less frequently an issue. Additionally, the introduction of safe shelter houses not only provided a secure haven but also created opportunities for vital community services. These spaces now serve as immunization centers, Bal Siksha Kendra (Child Education Center), and hubs for various community social activities, fostering a holistic and thriving community life.



Community participants checking results from the FRMC in Kutiyakabar, Dodhara Chandani municipality, Nepal © Nabin Bhandari, Project Coordinator, NEEDS

Box 1. Impact through knowledge

In previous years, we have explicitly emphasized the role of knowledge in our work; that is, we have leveraged knowledge (including evidence from our programs) to influence key stakeholders to support our work. As our work and our ways of working have matured, the role of knowledge in our work has grown and become integral to achieving impact. While it may not always be explicitly called out, knowledge is a fundamental aspect of how we are achieving broader scaling and impact of all our work. We have attempted to highlight how knowledge has played a role in all of our vignettes above; however, even where the use of knowledge is not obvious or specifically emphasized, it underpins all of these successes. For example, knowledge shared about the parametric insurance experience in Nepal was key in securing buy-in from farmers, government, and additional funders.

Because of the increasing role of knowledge in impact, we are consciously examining and tracking *how and where* our knowledge products have been shared or leveraged. Our tracking illustrates several different trends in our production of knowledge that have resulted in success. These include:

- Addressing a data or policy gap (as with our report on how global failures to address the climate crisis are leading to increased [losses and damages](#)) or providing insights and key learning into a specific event (as with [Cyclone Yaku in Peru](#));
- Partnering with other organizations that can provide additional insight to our own (the working paper, "[A fair share of climate finance? The adaptation edition](#)," is a prime example of this collaboration);
- Drawing from the expertise of Alliance partners (i.e., Practical Action's expertise in EWS and Mercy Corps' focus on climate finance for fragile states) to strengthen our knowledge products; and
- Developing strong dissemination strategies that target a variety of different forums and events for sharing knowledge and products (as we did with our report "[Towards transformative action: The unfulfilled promise of resilient recovery](#)").

Even as we learn from the successes of our previous knowledge products, we continue to push ourselves to use knowledge more effectively and creatively by expanding how we share our knowledge in new and different ways. In particular, videos made up 10% of the products the Alliance produced this year, and many of the most popular products were blogs.



Community consultation for selection of Community Advocacy Champions in Atthaniphanta, Krishnapur municipality, Nepal © Dirgha Ojha, Social Mobilizer, NEEDS

6. What next?

A year out from the close of Phase II of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, we are seeing both quantifiable and not-yet-quantifiable changes that are indicative of deeper shifts in support of resilience. After two phases and ten years of dedicated work, we are excited that the impact of our actions is measurable, and that individuals, groups, communities, and institutions alike across all scales are seeing, experiencing, and creating changes on the ground. We are equally excited that this is the foundation from which we are launching a new 12-year program, which will adopt a broader climate resilience lens and focus more intentionally on systems change and scaling, with the goal of achieving beneficial change for 70 million people by 2035.

This strategy, of intentionally finding the leverage points to shift system behavior and then to use knowledge intentionally to achieve influence and scale results, is one that our most successful teams to date have employed and the reason we have already, a year before the end of our program, exceeded our people impacted target. We are excited to see what we can achieve moving forward using this approach as the foundation of all our work.

In 2025 we will publish a summative impact report looking back at all of Phase II of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, allowing for a bird’s-eye view of Alliance achievements. We will also, in 2025, launch a new Progress Report series for our new program. Watch this space!



For more information,
visit floodresilience.net
or follow [@floodalliance](https://twitter.com/floodalliance)
on social media.

In partnership with:

