



FLOODS RESPONSE: KWAZULU-NATAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL – SHELTER AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Final Impact Report

PROJECT SUPPORT	TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATED (EXCL. VAT)	TOTAL EXPENDITURE TO DATE (EXCL. VAT)
<i>JoJo tanks, mobile toilets, tents</i>	R7 000 000	R5 560 344
<i>Grief and trauma counselling</i>	R2 000 000	R1 812 228
TOTAL	R9 000 000	R7 372 572

01

SOLIDARITY FUND FLOOD RESPONSE MANDATE

The Solidarity Fund brings together government, business, and civil society to help South Africa respond to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a resolution from its Board of Directors, the Fund expanded its mandate to include disaster relief response for the benefit of all victims of any disaster in South Africa, where such relief may be required. This response includes the provision of humanitarian relief, including food, water and sanitation, emergency health care services, shelter, and other support services

After severe flooding devastated large swathes of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and the Eastern Cape in April 2022, the Fund responded to the government's request to assist with the flood response efforts and set up the Solidarity Fund Flood Response.

The impact of the floods has been profound. Approximately 444 deaths, 40 000 displaced people and 13 790 totally or partially destroyed homes were recorded in KZN. While the crisis in Eastern Cape is on a smaller scale, the impact on these mostly rural, socio-economically deprived communities is no less devastating. Over 3 000 families, 1 943 homes, and countless livestock, crops, and farming equipment and infrastructure were destroyed as a result of the floods. Across both provinces, access to health, education, food, transportation, and water and sanitation services have been interrupted due to the extensive damage to infrastructure and supply chains.

As part of its flood response, the Fund, following a board resolution and support from relevant donors, redirected some of its resources and raised additional funds to fund seven projects. These projects focused on supporting those displaced by the flooding by providing food and essential products, integrated shelter services, and psychosocial support.

02





SHELTER AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The Solidarity Fund partnered with the KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council (KZNCC) to support 350 households displaced and impacted by the floods. These families had lost their homes possessions, and in some cases even friends and family.

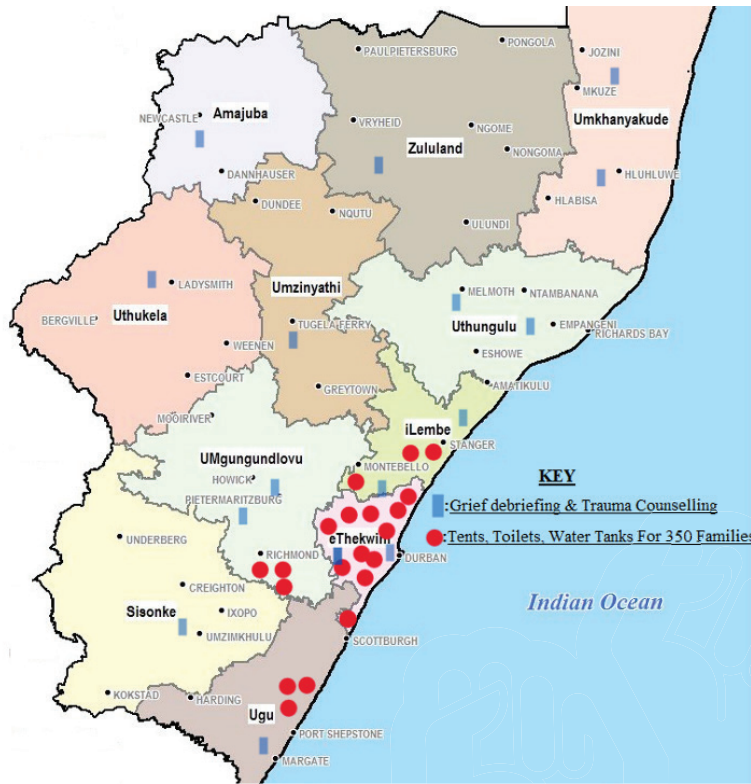
The KZNCC support focused on the procurement and installation of JoJo water tanks, chemical toilets, and canvas tents to provide interim shelter and security for displaced families. To help survivors deal with the intense trauma of their experience, KZNCC also provided psychosocial support to individuals, families and communities impacted by the floods.

03

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

-  **350 families** (1 198* people) directly benefitted from JoJo water tanks, chemical toilets and canvas tents for interim shelter and security. (*Average of three family members per family).
-  **548 faith leaders** trained in grief debriefing and trauma counselling
-  **1 500+ individuals** supported with trauma counselling
-  More **positive outlook and inspired** families and communities

Areas where KZNCC flood interventions were implemented



SHELTER SUPPORT PROJECT

Through this project the KZNCC worked to help provide temporary shelter and restore the dignity of the survivors of the floods by providing tents, water for domestic use, and ablution facilities for 350 families with an average of three family members. The project's local coordinators negotiated with landowners to determine the ideal locations to site the temporary shelters. The project was implemented in the following areas.

Shelter project implementation areas table

DISTRICT	SPECIFIC AREAS
<i>Ethekwini Municipality</i>	Ezimbokodweni/uMlazi, Phoenix, Inanda, Mzinyathi, Ntuzuma, Verulam, Ndwedwe
<i>Ugu Municipality</i>	uMzinto
<i>Illembe District</i>	Maphumulo
<i>uMgungundlovu District</i>	Bishopstowe, Hopewell (Ward 3 and Ward 4)

Thousands of families were displaced by the floods, with livelihoods likewise lost or impaired. The people in the community or church halls woke up to the reality of having to live in overcrowded church halls, with some churches having 450 people packed into a hall. These difficult conditions in some halls brought a number of added challenges to survivors, including lack of privacy for families and a lack of family life. Exposure to public indecency – smoking cigarettes, substance abuse, etc. – also grew the longer people lived in the halls.

To help mitigate this displacement and overcrowding, **the project provided tents to house families in need, and those that could no longer endure the living conditions in halls. JoJo water tanks and water purification tablets were procured to ensure clean water for domestic use, and chemical toilets were installed to ensure high standards of hygiene and sanitation were maintained. Mattresses were also provided to help improve living conditions for families in living in the tents.**

These provisions contributed to emotional comfort, and a sense of social cohesion and security for the affected families.

Project beneficiaries were determined on a first-come, first-served basis. Upon announcing the project's initiation, 350 beneficiaries instantly registered. Beneficiaries were required to sign a contractual agreement acknowledging that the land where the temporary shelter was erected belonged to the landowner, and that the project materials belonged to the project, and could not be sold.

STRATEGIC NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

At the initiation of the project consultations were held with various stakeholders and strategic networks established with the following key partners:

1. Municipalities – Disaster, Security and Human Settlement Departments
2. Traditional leaders
3. Councillors
4. Non-governmental organisations working on housing - Habitat For Humanity (HFH) and Built Environmental Support Group (BESG)
5. Religious leaders – KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders Group and KwaZulu-Natal Inter-religious Council

6. Grassroots Ecumenical Organisation – Diakonia Council of Churches, Southern KwaZulu-Natal, Ilembe District Council of Churches, and Midlands Christian Council church fraternals.
7. Landowners

BESG, through its civil engineering department, supported the project through technical advice and support in the setting up of tents, tanks, and toilets, including on the layout of the identified land in cases where it had to be prepared through a TLB.

Landowners' have made their land available for at least seven months, renewable in February 2023.

SHELTER PROJECT IMPACT

The project secured partnership agreements with landowners near respective halls and neighbourhoods of affected areas to set up temporary shelter for flood victims for a renewable period of seven months. Partnership agreements were also agreed with councillors and traditional leaders to support water refills for the water tanks at identified sites.

- **Partnership agreements** were concluded for **14 communal sites and 110 private sites**.
- **350 families** benefitted from the installation of **350 tents, 136 toilets, and 195 water tanks** at the identified sites, and were provided **1 400 mattresses**.
- **Provided toilet chemicals** and **water purification tablets** to all sites for hygiene and sanitation purposes.

The table below shows the number of tents, tanks, toilets, and mattresses delivered and installed per site. Due to various circumstances some water tanks, toilets, and mattresses that were delivered were not installed or used. The supplier is reimbursing the Solidarity Fund for all unused items.

RESOURCES DELIVERED AND INSTALLED AS OF 15 SEPTEMBER 2022								
Location	Tents		Tanks		Toilets		Mattresses	
	Delivered	Installed	Delivered	Installed	Delivered	Installed	Delivered	Installed
Buffelsdraai	6	6	6	6	6	6	24	24
eTafuleni	12	12	10	10	9	9	48	48
eTafuleni 2	7	7	5	5	0	0	28	28
Hopewell	0	0	54	0	54	54	0	0
Machobeni	4	4	2	0	0	0	40	40
Ndwedwe	50	50	17	10	20	20	200	200
Ndwedwe 2	50	50	15	10	20	20	200	200
Ntshisekelo	8	8	2	0	5	5	36	36
Ntuzuma F	24	24	4	0	0	0	80	80
Riet River	15	15	10	10	13	13	60	60
Umzinto	0	0	7	7	7	7	28	28
Mkhabela/ Eskebeni	31	31	10	10	20	20	124	124
Bishopstowe	4	4	4	4	4	4	16	16

RESOURCES DELIVERED AND INSTALLED AS OF 15 SEPTEMBER 2022								
Location	Tents		Tanks		Toilets		Mattresses	
	Delivered	Installed	Delivered	Installed	Delivered	Installed	Delivered	Installed
Phoenix	12	12	10	8	9	9	0	0
Lindelani/ Ntuzuma A	50	50	10	10	0	0	300	200
Waterloo	22	22	5	5	0	0	80	80
Ezimbokodweni	0	0	10	8	10	10	0	0
Individuals	55	55	31	0	0	0	70	70
Total	350	350	212	103	177	177	1 334	1 334

The table below shows the reimbursements from partners to the Fund.

BUDGET HEADING	REFUND TO SOLIDARITY FUND
<i>JoJo tanks, mobile toilets, tents</i>	R1 237 157
<i>JoJo tanks, mobile toilets, tents</i>	R180 825
<i>Grief and trauma counselling</i>	R187 772
<i>Other integrated shelter</i>	R21 674
Total refund	R1 627 428,25

This project has contributed dignity, hope, and safety and restored family life to the 350 families affected by the floods. By moving these families into temporary shelter, the project has also **helped to reduce overcrowding** in the community and church halls.

By helping to uplift and ease the suffering of families affected by the floods, the project has helped to bring renewed hope and trust in the spirit of fellow human beings to assist in times of darkness. The spirit of cooperation, solidarity, networking, and partnership among various stakeholders was ignited, and this continues into the future.



In the picture above, Bishop Nathi Zondi is speaking to beneficiaries at Riet River during a visit of the site together with other faith leaders and delegation from KZNCC.



In the picture above are tents which were installed at Ntuzuma A Hall.



Local volunteers, Dr Phumlani Majola, Bishop Gerald Goba, and two of the soldiers who helped set up the tents on the first day at Mkhabela, Mzinyathi, where dozens of beneficiaries reside.



Tanks which have been installed at Ntuzuma A Hall for the 50 families residing inside.

SHELTER PROJECT CHALLENGES AND MITIGATIONS

CHALLENGE	MITIGATING ACTIONS
Public authorities were unavailable to ensure collaboration at the start of the project, in keeping with their initial commitments at meetings just after the disaster.	Making personal visits rather than relying on emails and phone calls helped ensure cooperation, especially by councillors who now ensure water supply and refuge collection.
Signing contractual agreements with landowners took a bit longer than anticipated.	Effective and regular communication and regular meetings with local leaders ensured that land was made available as landowners understood the situation more.
The slow delivery, especially of chemical toilets and JoJo water tanks, slowed the project pace.	Alternative suppliers were identified with limited stock, but this assisted in speeding up the project completion.
At times political interference delayed the implementation of the project as politicians sought to politicise the project.	Communication effectively clarified the project's purpose and ownership and dissociated it from party politics and campaigning.
In some cases, beneficiaries were refused by public authorities to use tents inside the halls while, at the same time, not making provisions for their use outside the hall.	Floodlights were supplied to ensure night security and live in a context free from insecurity because of lack of light.
A significant challenge in implementation had to do with space. Whereas we had initially planned to allot each family a tent, tank, and toilet, space limitations were such that communal sites could not mostly accommodate individualised tanks and toilets. This resulted in the reduction of installed tanks and chemical toilets.	The solution was to instead accord toilets and tanks communal status so that all families in each site could use any toilet and any tank. So, a place of 50 families, such as Ndwedwe, share ten communal water tanks.

SHELTER PROJECT LESSONS LEARNED

When working with politicians on community projects, it is important to consistently clarify the nonpartisan nature of the project to communities, to avoid any misconceptions. Ensuring adequate budgeting and availability of stock from the project inception to avoid implementation delays and be able to fully implement planned activities.

GRIEF AND TRAUMA COUNSELLING PROJECT

The trauma experienced by floods survivors from the irreversible loss of loved ones, material property, livelihoods, and self-worth, can not be underestimated. Many are dealing with deep anger, emotional distress, and poor self-esteem. This led some people in the halls and tents to act strangely, or refuse to eat, or to isolate themselves from their peers. Others started drinking heavily or turned to drugs. Many men in the halls were reported to be so irritable that they turned violent without provocation. Evidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) could be seen in the halls and tents.

The cramped communal living in the halls also added to the emotional trauma, especially among women and children. Some survivors also showed signs of suicidal ideation with a significant number of men started their narration with “... *it is better to die than live like...*” KZNCC has been supporting communities with counselling sessions at Sunday services, as well as at life events such as marriage, examinations, birthdays, anger, birth, and death. The project team knew it had to adapt a different approach to help support community members through this difficult experience.

At the start of the project the Solidarity Fund undertook several trips to the affected areas to assess the situation, including the extent of the damage and the numbers and age groups of the affected people. Meetings were held with local authorities, project beneficiaries, and faith leaders in the surrounding areas as part of the assessment, and to obtain consent for the planned counselling from project beneficiaries and to seek support from the local leadership.

Counselling activities took place in the following districts and areas:

DISTRICT	SPECIFIC AREAS
<i>Ethekewini Municipality</i>	All the community halls All the tents
<i>Ugu Municipality</i>	
<i>Illembe District</i>	
<i>uMgungundlovu District</i>	

MOBILISATION AND TRAINING SESSIONS

KZNCC **mobilised 40 clergies per area** and prepared training sessions. The ministers mobilised were already experienced in providing counselling and bereavement services. They were transported by Kombis to central venues for briefing before the training. The training was conducted by a team of experienced theologians with post-graduate training in tertiary education.

The **success of the clergy training has attracted interest from other clergies across the province and other provinces**, with a request for KZNCC to offer **similar training** and deployment in provinces such as the Eastern Cape and Limpopo.

COUNSELING PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	OUTCOME
To have an impactful well-coordinated initiative.	A coordinator was contracted to manage the rollout of planned activities.	An efficient and effective implementation with a positive impact on the affected individuals and families.

Seven local area coordinators in six district municipalities, facilitating local work.	Seven coordinators based in the affected communities are contracted.	Achieved reaching out to the people on the ground at short notice and offered support to the affected families.
To ensure that facilitators, psychologists, and counsellors reach out to those in need of support.	Special group and one-on-one counselling were offered as requested through the Indlebe hearings for counselling.	This focussed more on individual therapy and offered social, emotional, and psychosocial counselling.
To engage other stakeholders for strategic support and duplication prevention.	Networking and partnership meetings took place.	Collective action was taken involving Healing of Memories Institute, Church Unity Commission, Ecumenical Organisations, and individual clergy to ensure greater impact.
To equip 400 clergy, so that they have capacity to adequately address trauma and grief without worsening the situation.	Training took place in the targeted areas.	Increased capacity of 400 clergy to conduct grief debriefing, trauma counselling and pastoral support.
To ensure that provincial leadership have fieldtrips and visibility, offering support.	Church leaders were mobilised, organised, and deployed for exposure visits.	Provincial leaders understand the context better and can offer full support to the initiative going forward.
To promote awareness and support of the program through media.	The internal and external communication with stakeholders and beneficiaries helped clarify the work undertaken.	Well informed communities, as well as local leaders and well supported initiative by all stakeholders.

NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The KZNCC was the lead partner for this project. Consultation meetings were held to build strategic networks with organisations that could bring value to the project. Strategic structures brought on board for networking and partnership include:

- The KZN Church Leaders Group
- Southern KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council
- Harry Gwala District Christian Council
- Midlands Christian Council
- Ilembe District Christian Council
- Tugela-Amajuba-Mzinyathi Christian Council
- Zululand Regional Christian Council

In addition, KZNCC lobbied the Office of the Premier and the Department of Social Development to deploy social workers to support counselling sessions.

IMPACT OF THE TRAUMA COUNSELLING PROJECT

- **350 families received counselling support**, decreasing stress and trauma levels. Some individuals and families have begun to do their daily chores and have begun adopting a routine.
- Safe spaces for counselling were created where beneficiaries could elaborate on the painful experience they endured, which was the start of their journey towards healing and wholeness.
- As part of the counselling methodology, the well-trained counsellors validated the narrations through empathetic listening, and the **beneficiaries telling their experiences** of loss, injury, grief, and anger **showed a sense of healing and relief** as they shared with an empathetic audience.

- Being in front of others helped most wounded people elaborate their stories. As they spoke, they found the words to express themselves, and their narrative took shape. As they said, the incoherent succession of events, perceptions and feelings that characterised the original event was reorganised into a coherent narrative of **conquering distress, depression, and despondency.**
- The project helped the **beneficiaries to be more resilient** because they “bounced back” after a bad experience. They found in themselves and others the capacity to overcome the effects of flood adversity.
- Through this project, the **clergy upskilled their counselling skills** and can attend sessions with due professionalism. The clergy affirmed that they had a renewed need to deal with the current situation by assisting people affected by the floods.
- The counselling sessions attracted the attention of **faith leaders who have requested advanced training to cope with more severe cases of trauma**, continued depression and grieving by those who still have not found their loved ones.
- **Many women** who feel they bear the sole responsibility for the family **have been empowered** to be stronger in delegating their responsibilities. The training helped them realise that working with other women will increase their capacity to make a difference in the community and their own families.
- **Youth indicated that they see a ray of hope in their lives** and will soon be ready to rebuild their homes without waiting for the government, civil society, churches, or humanitarian organisations to work and rebuild for them.
- Many children, already vulnerable, were made even more so through the loss of their parents to the floods. These children are not only traumatised. They are terrified, destitute, and orphaned. The counselling activities **helped to identify these children and focused counselling sessions provided to support them. They were also connected with social workers and organisations who support children in distress.**

Furthermore, the counselling sessions were successful in promoting the following critical social issues:

- Helped to restore social cohesion and a sense of belonging.
- Contributed to the reduction of communal tensions because of the overcrowding.
- Promoted positive thinking and personal and family progress among beneficiaries.
- Helped victims deal with the problems of loss and isolation.
- Contributed to the provision of emotional support and social security and assurance.
- Contributed to developing a sense of hope and meaning in life.
- Promoted the facilitation of sharing of emotions and coping mechanisms.

Creative therapy for children on healing through the storytelling of folklore, African music and African dance was a plan hatched during the implementation process. This work with Gcinamasiko Foundation (keep traditions) attracted both children and parents to participate and contributed to re-igniting a sense of family life to the almost dysfunctional families.

These therapeutic hope-inspiring sessions **were done in community halls, church halls and schools, reaching 500 children.**





Sample training session for clergy in Ntuzuma.



Photo gallery of clergy, male and female trained on counselling at Richmond.



Counselling session with affected women in Phoenix.



Healing of Memories session for women from Hopewell Sites in uMgungundlovu.



Dr Gcina Mhlope (middle) in a group photo with happy pupils after a dance and traditional storytelling therapy session.

TRAUMA COUNSELLING PROJECT CHALLENGES AND MITIGATIONS

CHALLENGE	MITIGATING ACTIONS
For most African families, the concept of counselling by a stranger is alien.	It took some time and consultations for people in the community halls to accept and consent to the concept of counselling.
The counselling for children was after school when children were hungry and tired after a long day at school.	The counselling proceeded even after the children were tired. The vibrant presenter managed.
The issues raised in the processes are complex, with layers and deep and would require long-term counselling and support.	KZNCC listened to this query and requested church leaders to come on board and offer long-term counselling support.
Request for ongoing training by clergy.	KZNCC acknowledged the request as important and will seek funding to conduct the training requested by the clergy.
Counsellors need debriefing sessions because they are traumatised and burdened by the heavy stories from victims.	Senior clergy and retired bishops have been approached requesting them to offer support to the counsellors.

CONCLUSION

The devastating and traumatic impact of the floods and resultant displacement left thousands in need of shelter and trauma counselling support. The Fund's support has helped to alleviate some of this need by supporting 350 families with shelter, clean water, and sanitation.

Trauma and grief counselling support has helped many to begin see a light in the darkness and a glimmer of hope to rebuild their lives. The response of the church leaders to be part of the counselling team was overwhelming. 3 180 faith leaders and faith-based activists from all the 11 districts of KwaZulu-Natal have expressed interest in being part of this programme that has the potential to transform the province by offering to counsel those in need of healing, hope and inspiration.

KZNCC is humbled by this response and is exploring options to extend and grow its capacitation of faith leaders, ready to contribute to the healing processes and transformation of the KwaZulu-Natal province.

