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Evaluation of disaster risk management in flood prone areas: a case study of Bramfischerville

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2017

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/24197

Mkhulisa, Nhlanhla Nsizwa Patrick (2017) Evaluation of disaster risk management in flood prone areas: a case study of Bramfischerville, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://hdl.handle.net/10539/24197>

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Abstract

Throughout the 21st century, floods have caused major disasters in urban areas worldwide and especially in Africa. Several factors influence the ability of government to manage flood disasters through the phases of, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery at a local level. The vulnerability of poor communities to flood disasters exacerbates the impact of the flooding on their livelihoods. The inability of governments to communicate effectively with communities about preparedness strategies for flood mitigation has resulted in much damage in urban areas. The study used semi-structured interviews with Disaster Management officials and community members involved in flooding to evaluate the Disaster Risk Management in Bramfischerville. The fieldwork took place in Bramfischerville that was affected by the 2009 floods. The research revealed that the 2009 Bramfischerville floods were caused by heavy rains, the building of RDP housing on a floodplain and ineffective implementation of Disaster Management strategies by the CoJ. This research argues that in order to understand flood disasters, cooperation between all stakeholders involved in Disaster Management is vital in knowledge accumulation. The 2009 floods had negatively impacted the livelihoods of people in Bramfischerville. Their houses were damaged and they had difficulty traveling to work and school. In this view, the costs associated with floods are continuously being a debt for the people living in Bramfischerville. This research found that the disjuncture between the community and the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) officials exacerbates the negative impacts floods have on people's livelihoods in Bramfischerville.