**NEWS ARTICLE**

Women play a vital role in enabling climate resilience in local communities

**02 August 2023:** Promoting gender equality and empowering women is not only an issue of justice and human rights, but also a key strategy for effective climate change mitigation, adaptation, and community resilience. “Women play a crucial role in climate change and resilience and supporting local community development and empowerment,” says **Mookho Monnapula**, Climate Adaptation Specialist at leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm [Zutari](http://www.zutari.com).

In May, Monnapula took part in a panel discussion at the [Africa Women Summit](https://africawomensummit.org/) at the Century City Conference Centre in Cape Town. The main theme was the role of women in sustainable development and how to enhance their skills to make a significant contribution in this space.

“We need to create an inclusive environment for women to drive more climate-resilient solutions. Women represent a powerful force for change because they are often farmers, traders, educators, and leaders in most communities in Africa,” comments Monnapula.

“They are the custodians of indigenous knowledge, provide for their families, and function to contribute to a broader policy framework. However, their role has always largely been ignored, including their status as powerful agents of change.”

Monnapula says leveraging the experience of women at a community level is important to assist with unpredictable climatic events and climate resilience. “We already have women in local communities managing natural resources to mitigate this situation, so the question is how do we bring that information into our climate risk assessments and policies.”

As an engineering consultancy, it is important for Zutari to home in on problem areas. “We work in the context of specific local communities. We bring solutions that are informed by science or engineering, but we also strive to integrate the social dynamics of these communities into our approach. The concept of inclusion is really important, especially as women are perceived as being more vulnerable, yet also extremely powerful.”

Monnapula stresses that concepts like sustainable development and climate resilience have to take the human element into account by co-creating impactful engineered solutions. In her role as a member of the climate change team at Zutari, she examines climate data to ascertain its potential impact on infrastructure projects under development. This includes identifying vulnerabilities in communities due to climate change and leveraging our advisory services to help formulate proactive climate change adaptation policies.

A step in the right direction for South Africa in this regard is to begin to consider climate risk as part of an environmental impact assessment study. “It is such a dynamic and evolving field. There are constant challenges and differences from one project to another. You have to be innovative and come up with solutions that are context specific.

“The ability to impact people through engineering and science is crucial. If you keep on working through communities and engaging with people, and focusing on how your work can bring about a positive impact, that is quite rewarding and keeps me motivated,” concludes Monnapula.

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**To download hi-res images for this news article, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Zutari link to view the company’s press office.

**About Zutari**

As an engineering and advisory firm, we believe infrastructure has unparalleled potential to create enduring impact. Never more relevant, this potential can be realised only if we plan, design, deliver and manage infrastructure in ways that maximise its value. Our work in water, transport, energy, resources, and built-environment infrastructure does just this – helping to nurture thriving communities, growing economies, and healthy environments.

At Zutari we understand that radical impact doesn’t just happen; it requires more of us to connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted.

**We connect differently**. Our broad collective of in-house experts connects across traditional disciplines to provide integrated results. We collaborate with clients, partners, and end-users, leaning into diverse perspectives to create superior solutions - together.

**We work smarter**. Our people lead the industry. We draw from deep technical skills, accrued over decades, and embrace the transformative power of digital technology to find simpler, better, and more innovative ways to deliver value.

**We stay rooted**. Few can rival our local capacity and understanding. Building on solid foundations, now 90 years in the making, we are trusted to shape locally relevant solutions through our extensive footprint in Africa and the Middle East.

At Zutari our people connect differently, work smarter, and stay rooted. Working in this way, we reliably deliver impact through infrastructure, making the world a better place – one project at a time.

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