

Case Study 3 - “Voices of Lusikisiki”: ABCD in a multisector stakeholder context

Together with the Zutari Consortium, Zutari’s Social Impact Engineers and Africa!Ignite used the ABCD community engagement process, empowering communities to identify and develop their assets, skills, knowledge, and talents to stimulate active citizenship and support sustainable development.

Image 8.3 – Zutari community engagement, Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape



The Zutari Consortium was appointed by The South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) to oversee the design and construction of the national route and associated local access roads of the N2 Wild Coast Road development. The Consortium partnered with Africa! Ignite, to implement the SANRAL Legacy Programme – a community engagement and development project for communities along the new road, which took place within villages situated along the new N2 road section, between the Lingeni Intersection and the Msikaba Bridge, adjacent to Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

The construction of the new road is creating thousands of direct and indirect jobs. However, even these several thousand jobs cannot adequately address the needs of job seekers in the area. Unemployment remains the main driver of unrest and community action against projects in the Wild Coast. SANRAL’s Legacy Programme is aimed at creating broad buy-in for the N2 Road construction project by maximising the long-term social and economic benefits of the new road in surrounding communities.

By investing in proactive community engagement and development, the risks associated with community unrest were reduced, and resulted in well-informed and committed stakeholders, as well as broad buy-in and endorsement of both the N2 road construction project and the associated Legacy Programme. Phases 1 and 2 have supported 14 communities to identify and use human, physical, natural, social and agricultural assets to create sustainable businesses that will benefit from the traffic and tourism that the new road will bring.

The consortium used the Spectrum of Engagement underwritten by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). The spectrum categorizes the intensity of engagement in the finest

detail, which determined the level of engagement with different groups. Throughout the project, engagements moved flexibly across the entire spectrum. We continually informed communities and actively consulted with stakeholders in ways that shaped and directed the Legacy Project. We directly involved communities in setting project priorities, and in identifying community assets. Most importantly, we collaborated with communities, working as a single team to prepare funding presentations and create business support (WowBiz) centres. Communities were and will continue to be empowered through mentoring, training and on-the-ground business support.

Using the ABCD method, the community members in the Lusikisiki area developed social networks, discovered assets and used these to identify and start small- and large-scale initiatives for the benefit of the whole community, with a view to sustainable long-term empowerment.

The life skills programme taught local community champions to believe in themselves and find their voice. It is only once community members realize who they are, that they can be successful, and take ownership of their lives. The internal growth that the champions have gone through is evident to see. They are confident to apply for jobs, start their businesses and even stand out in a competitive market. Some of these champions were absorbed in private businesses or the government sector and others started their own enterprises.

Images 8.4 and 8.5: Examples of community enterprises & activities, Lusikisiki



Zutari has been instrumental in integrating the ABCD methodology into engineering infrastructure projects, fostering sustainable and community-driven development. By focusing on existing community assets Zutari empowers communities to actively participate in their own development.

This approach involves engaging community members through interactive and participatory activities, allowing them to identify their assets and determine how these can be leveraged in the context of the project. By doing so, communities gain a sense of ownership and are better equipped to sustain the benefits of the infrastructure in the long term.

Key Aspects of the Programme:

- **Community engagement:** The programme emphasizes active participation from community members, encouraging them to identify and utilize their strengths to drive development initiatives.
- **Sustainable development:** By focusing on existing community assets, the programme aims to create long-term, self-sustaining growth that aligns with the community's unique context and needs.
- **Collaborative partnerships:** The initiative fosters partnerships between various stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and private sector entities, to ensure a holistic approach to development.

Impact and Recognition

Zutari's application of the ABCD methodology has led to significant community empowerment and sustainable development outcomes. For instance, the "Voices of Lusikisiki" project, linked to the N2 Wild Coast Toll Road, received accolades for its exemplary collaboration and impact, highlighting the effectiveness of the ABCD approach in large-scale infrastructure projects.

Zutari was also recognised as a leading consulting engineering and infrastructure advisory firm receiving global recognition for its involvement in the N2 Wild Coast toll road development. It won the Member-at-Large Award in the Project of the Year Category and an Honourable Mention in the International Project of the Year category at the 2023 International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values Awards, competing against Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Latin America and the USA.

For a visual overview of Zutari's application of the ABCD methodology, you can watch the following videos:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W57f_ZMMLps
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gs44Cq1LDQ>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbzikQy5FmE>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plQSA4UGUrg>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LU2RzQ9rpZM>
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ2UoBBB2JY>
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFIE1qcETFw>