

WISER EWSA team sees firsthand the effects of flooding in Kanyama

Friday 2 February 2024

The WISER EWSA team went on a guided tour of flooding hotspots in parts of Kanyama outside Lusaka, Zambia on Day 5 of Testbed 1. Led by Red Cross and community observers, the walkabout opened the team's eyes to the lived experiences of residents, corroborating some of the information that came up during discussions at the community hub earlier in the week.

Many passageways between residential houses and streets were still flooded from the last time rain fell in the area. Residents either used stepping stones fashioned out of discarded building blocks or waded their way through the flooded streets to get around. Protective shoes made of rubber or "gumboots" emerged as footwear of choice. However, it appeared very few residents owned a pair.

Elsewhere, water canals running parallel to some streets and on the doorsteps of many homes brimmed with stagnant and dirty water, with plastic waste and debris blocking the culverts. With learning suspended on account of the recent cholera outbreak and related fatalities, the township was naturally bustling, with children of school-going age playing on the banks of the canals while older women sold fresh produce and other food items from streetside stalls.

Meanwhile, rain clouds gathered overhead before letting rip, flooding the streets yet again. The WISER EWSA team, which had concluded the expedition and was making its way back to base, was forced to huddle under an abandoned shelter before taking refuge in a local butchery to keep dry.

Earlier, a group of 15 community members and 10 observers had sat for a detailed presentation from Mr Kenneth Sinachikupo of the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD). Mr Sinachikupo covered the legislative mandate of the ZMD and the products and services the organisation has on offer in a presentation that seemed to be a hit with the audience.

At the testbed Operation Centre in the ZMB offices, the nowcasting group focused on the predicted convection over Luapula, Northern, Northwestern, Copperbelt and Western provinces. This rainfall was following a similar pattern to that that had been produced over Days 1 to 4 but was predicted to be of lower intensity.

The day's activities at the centre had begun with a smaller team than in the previous days. This as senior members of the team had been invited to a meeting with the Minister of Green Economy and the Environment, Hon. Eng. Collins Nzovu, MP. It was a successful meeting, which saw Minister Nzovu commending the project. He encouraged the ZMD to carry on with efforts to improve forecasting and nowcasting for the country, and to apply for funds to do so.





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