



# CUIDAR

Cultures of Disaster Resilience  
among children and young people

## A CHILD-CENTRED DISASTER MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPE

Produced by the EU Horizon 2020 project  
CUIDAR: Cultures of Disaster Resilience among Children and Young People

@CUIDARProject

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Heatwave mitigation measures drawn up by Portuguese children

*If we want to work with children and young people, we have to accept their rhythms and their approaches... We adults have to accept our own limitations and the capacity of young people to build, to be full citizens.*

Delegate of the Spanish Forum for Urban Prevention and Safety (2017)

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## Introduction

In finalising our Horizon 2020 project: 'Cultures of Disaster Resilience among children and young people' (CUIDAR), one of the more sobering findings has been that within policy and practice in disaster risk management, the perspectives of, and contributions of young people continue to be overlooked. Yet they have much to contribute, as we will show.

Through CUIDAR (a Coordination and Support Action) and our practical engagements with children, young people and disaster risk management actors, we have begun to find ways to address this problem. CUIDAR started from the premise that under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (OHCHR, 1989), children and young people have the right to be heard on matters that affect them. We are concerned that awareness of this Right amongst disaster risk reduction and management actors remains low.

We explored a range of specific risks identified by groups of children and young people in Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the UK in order to understand the role they play, or could play, in addressing those risks. We have used what they found and shared with us to build a Framework for child-centred disaster risk management, presented here. We have learned so much from the young people about how they see risk, what they need to help them become resilient, how 'adultist' plans should change and how authorities need to listen.

In CUIDAR, we have worked with two versions of 'culture'. First, we regard children themselves as a cultural group by virtue of being disenfranchised from emergency planning matters, which in turn gives them a particular perspective on disaster. Second, 'childhood' itself is often universalised, yet of course, children embody all the cultural differences and diversity found in society as a whole.

During the life of the CUIDAR project Europe has seen major disasters, including the earthquakes in Central Italy where there was heavy loss of life in Amatrice; the traumatic Grenfell Tower fire in West London, the devastating forest and wildfires in Portugal and deadly flash floods on the outskirts of Athens. These come against the backdrop of the war and climate change related migrant crisis and the arrival of huge numbers of refugees into Europe.

We believe that this Framework will be a very positive and constructive addition both to the European Commission's wider Secure Societies project, and to the domain of disaster management and risk reduction generally. Your response to this Framework is invaluable to CUIDAR and to the communities with which we have engaged, and vital in order to create culturally sensitive disaster planning in a changing and increasingly diverse Europe.



Children investigating risk of Seih Sou forest fires in Thessaloniki, Greece

## CUIDAR's Aim

To enhance the resilience of children, young people and urban societies to disasters and to enable policymakers and practitioners working in the field of disaster/emergency planning and risk reduction to meet children and young people's needs more effectively.

## Objectives

- ▶ To better understand the risk perception, disaster needs and capacities of children and young people in urban societies.
- ▶ Increased awareness and understanding amongst disaster practitioners and policy makers of children and young people's needs in disasters.
- ▶ To develop more effective communication between disaster planners/responders and children and young people in urban contexts.
- ▶ Improved disaster management, policies and practices that take into account the unique needs of children and young people in urban disasters.

## THE FRAMEWORK

### A set of steps for policy and practice to build child-centred disaster management plans

CUIDAR proposes that successful risk reduction requires adults actively to reach out to children to ensure they are heard in the emergency planning process. This includes disaster preparation, response, reconstruction and recovery. How to do this?

This Framework consists of:

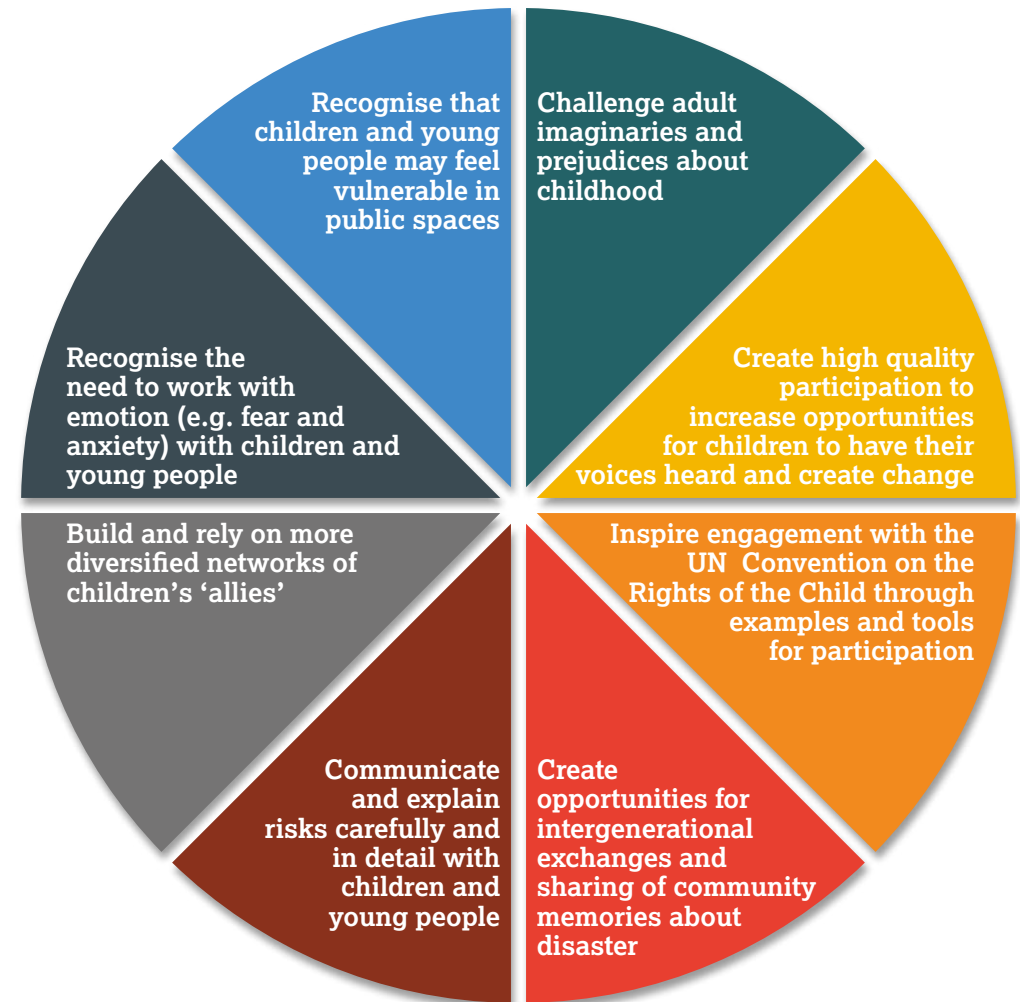
**WATCH:** CUIDAR International film, '[Transforming Disaster Planning – a child-centred approach](#)'

**LEARN:** This written report

**ACT:** How you respond in our Finale event and in using our [tools and resources](#) via our [website](#).

We have identified the following practical steps for building a child-centred disaster management Framework. Each one of these steps flows directly from our interactions with children and young people in the partner countries. Whether creating new plans or reviewing existing ones, these steps, if followed, will result in inclusive and culturally sensitive plans relevant before, during and after disasters.

## CUIDAR FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING CHILD-CENTRED DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLANS





## Challenge adult imaginaries and prejudices about childhood

CUIDAR began by reviewing the state of knowledge of this field, to lay the foundation for our subsequent practical work with children and stakeholders. We needed to know:

- What disaster risk reduction and resilience building programmes addressed to children and young people currently exist for urban contexts?
- What is the role of the different actors, from civil protection agencies to schools and voluntary institutions, in designing or implementing these programmes for children and young people?
- How are children and young people involved in disaster management and to what degree do they participate?
- What assumptions are made about children and young people in disaster management? Are issues such as cultures of disability, social class, disadvantage, gender, ethnicity and marginalisation taken into account in disaster management, and if so, how are these perceived?

Our [Scoping Review](#)<sup>1</sup>, examined sources from three main categories:

- 1) Policies, practices and programmes relating to children's involvement in disaster management in each partner country
- 2) EU and nationally funded projects
- 3) Scientific literature

Our full review details all three areas. However, in relation to the question about involvement and participation, it uncovered very little evidence of children participating meaningfully in emergency management or community resilience work in the partner countries. Only 20% of the actions, programmes and plans addressed to children and young people involve either adult-initiated shared decision-making with young people or were led and initiated by children or young people.

*Children and youth are agents of change and should be given the space and modalities to contribute to disaster risk reduction, in accordance with legislation, national practice and educational curricula.*

(Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030)

Only this 20%, therefore, can be considered participative according to Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation (Hart 1992; Hart and Schwab, 1997). It was against this background that we started our fieldwork.

What seems to inhibit the participation of children and young people in this field are what we term adult imaginaries or prejudices about childhood e.g. where children and young people are seen as a homogeneous, passive and intrinsically vulnerable group. Ageism/adultism is also present in the idea that there are specific issues or topics that should not be discussed with children, because these are difficult, harmful or complicated. Disaster can easily be considered a disturbing topic, or one that is not particularly appealing or interesting to children. CUIDAR clearly challenges these perceptions by making them visible and through our Framework, turning them into a matter of debate and political concern, especially for professionals working in the field.

We have found examples of the agency of children and young people in a disaster situation, echoing the findings of Fothergill and Peek following Hurricane Katrina (2015). Policymakers and practitioners can use these examples and find cases of their own.

It is clear from our work that age, gender, education, disability, geography or culture modulate the ways in which children and young people can engage before, during and after disasters and emergencies. CUIDAR found that children and young people do have an interest in disasters and that because these topics are considered inappropriate for children, so they become more important to them. We show that it is possible to talk about these issues with children and young people, if one adapts to their age, interest, rhythm and creates the conditions for them to ask about what they consider relevant, i.e. taking a child-led approach. Such dialogues are of great interest to important potential allies in the field of risk reduction and disaster prevention, such as children's news programmes like [BBC Newsround](#)<sup>2</sup> in the UK and TV3's [InfoK](#)<sup>3</sup> in Catalonia. However, it is essential to be aware of the ethical issues implicated here (see Note on Ethics below).

<sup>1</sup>[www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en/project-outputs](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en/project-outputs)

<sup>2</sup>[www.bbc.co.uk/newsround](http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround)

<sup>3</sup>[www.ccma.cat/tv3/super3/infok](http://www.ccma.cat/tv3/super3/infok)

## Create 'good' and 'high quality' participation to increase opportunities for children to have their voices heard and to create change

Participation and genuine involvement take time and effort to achieve. Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992) moves from 'Manipulation' at the lowest rung to 'Child-initiated shared decisions with adults' at the highest rung. CUIDAR advocates creating 'good' and 'high-quality' participation (upper two rungs of the ladder). This means beginning by attending to the topics which children themselves identify. But it also means foregrounding recognition. This, as some CUIDAR stakeholders noted, is not about 'catching up with' children and young people or 'speaking their language'. Recognition is a much more complex and difficult process where one appears as a member of a community, with links and attachments to it and with the possibility of participating as an equal in its common life. As was clear in most of the feedback from children themselves, the more we work to create a space of recognition the more they appreciate and engage with participation.

Recognition also means being sensitive and responsive to the differences, to the diversity of childhoods, concerns and forms of communication they have. Participation means being open to different forms of knowledge (e.g. tacit, experiential and explicit), and without discarding lay forms of knowledge in favour of expert knowledge. This is particularly important in the field of disasters where expert knowledge is so dominant.

For our large-scale consultation with children, we carried out a series of purpose-designed workshops: [Dialogues with Children](#)<sup>1</sup> with a total of 552 children and young people aged 6-18, in the five CUIDAR countries. All the groups were gender balanced with the exception of Italy, where workshop participants were mainly girls\*. We worked with children from diverse backgrounds and settings, engaging with them meaningfully, over time. Participants reflected a wide range of cultural and socio-economic contexts, coming from areas of both high and low levels of deprivation and social exclusion, urban, coastal and rural locations. Our groups included children from ethnic minority communities and some groups included migrant children.

\*This may be because the Italian CUIDAR workshops took place within informal youth groups and not school mixed classes.

<sup>1</sup> [www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en/project-outputs](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en/project-outputs)

### **CUIDAR worked with 552 children and young people aged 6-18 in five countries**

In Greece, workshops also included deaf, hard of hearing and children with vision disabilities. We reflected that while children in general have been excluded from disaster and emergency management plans and processes, there are additional cultures of exclusion: gender, levels and access to education, urban and rural, refugees, out-of-school children, street children and others.

Detailed guidance for these workshops was drawn up by Save the Children Italy for use by all partners and is available as part of the *Dialogues with Children* report. This covers all aspects of how to create enabling environments for children to be heard and detailed advice about forms of interaction that are non-threatening which afford opportunities for children to inform themselves, and gain confidence in their ability to articulate their concerns.

CUIDAR's building blocks approach, (starting with children's rights, working with groups of young people over time, facilitating engaging, child-friendly learning and action-taking), was found to be significantly more impactful than a traditional 'broadcast' approach in which information or instructions are delivered to children as

awareness raising. We found that 'non-traditional' methods' worked best, e.g. field trips, engaging community speakers, games, modelling, community mapping.

In the workshops, children were

able to talk about what disaster meant for them and how they viewed risk. They identified hazards that affected their lives. These included living with risk from toxic chemicals, forest and wild fires, earthquakes, heat waves, flooding, conflict and multiple risks faced by poor housing or school environments. Children discussed and researched these hazards, becoming informed and confident for subsequent stages of CUIDAR. Often this began with mapping exercises, which enabled children to take ownership of their environment and identify places that mattered positively or negatively in their lives.



Investigating chemical risk, Sant Celoni, Spain

## Inspire engagement with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child through examples and tools for participation

CUIDAR noted widespread unfamiliarity with the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1999) and few actors: practitioners, experts, teachers, even children themselves, are aware of the rights afforded by the Convention, in particular children's right to participate as enshrined in Article 12. For this reason, CUIDAR staff developed partnerships with different specialised trainers and organisations that have strong relationships with children with special needs. We found that specialists were more likely to be familiar with children's rights. Yet once the Article 12 Right was explored specifically with children and adults alike, a door opened for them to start seeing disaster risk reduction as a core matter of concern. In the UK, children found the idea of 'rights' very empowering, giving them 'permission' to speak and make sure they were heard. It started to become clear that children's involvement can enhance and improve emergency planning. In this way, Article 12 can provide a foundation for building a child centred Framework, especially if concrete examples are used to demonstrate the effectiveness of children's involvement in disaster risk reduction.

The Scoping Review, the Dialogues with Children and the input from our [International Advisory Group](#)<sup>2</sup> helped to provide such examples, many of which came from outside Europe.

Public administrators in local government, leisure, sport, cultural services, schools, and other key actors, are well placed to disseminate Article 12 and effective ways to implement it. We believe that participatory approaches to disaster and emergency planning will benefit from a wider awareness of children's rights as they foster democratic engagement with civil protection. Practitioners working at the local/regional level can use Article 12 as a starting point for implementing the CUIDAR Framework and go on to use some of the practical tools and resources developed through the project.

*I think they should give more opportunity to the young people's opinions, because although they think we are immature and that we are going to say outlandish things, it is a lie, there are many young people that are very mature.*

(Young Participant, Portugal)

*We want to be informed about how to react before, during and after the earthquake and we need to pass this knowledge on to the other members of the deaf community.*

(Young Participant, Greece).

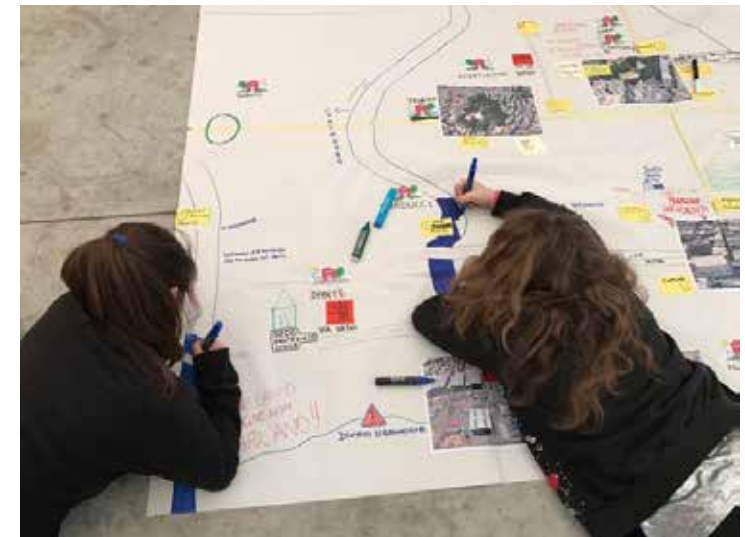
*We children remember things better than adults do!*

(Young Participant, Spain)

Working with marginalised children poses challenges for participation since many have internalised their marginalisation and oppression and may have difficulty feeling qualified to participate. Through the Dialogues with Children, we saw how children's perspectives about emergency situations, the risks and their impact uncovered dimensions that were being missed by adult oriented plans and practices.

We learned that:

- ▶ Children want to learn more about risks and emergencies, children's rights and how to manage emotions, such as fear and anxiety during and after disasters.
- ▶ They want emergency planners/responders to ask children's opinions, to create child-friendly emergency information on websites, adverts, booklets and videos with safety tips for children, and to increase visit to schools and youth centres. Children want emergency practitioners to make this information accessible for people with disabilities whether children, family members or neighbours.
- ▶ Children strongly express a willingness to support their communities, their families and their peers, to help others and take action to reduce risk.



CUIDAR Workshop:  
mapping our town and the places that matter to us, Italy

<sup>2</sup> [www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en/project-advisory-group](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en/project-advisory-group)

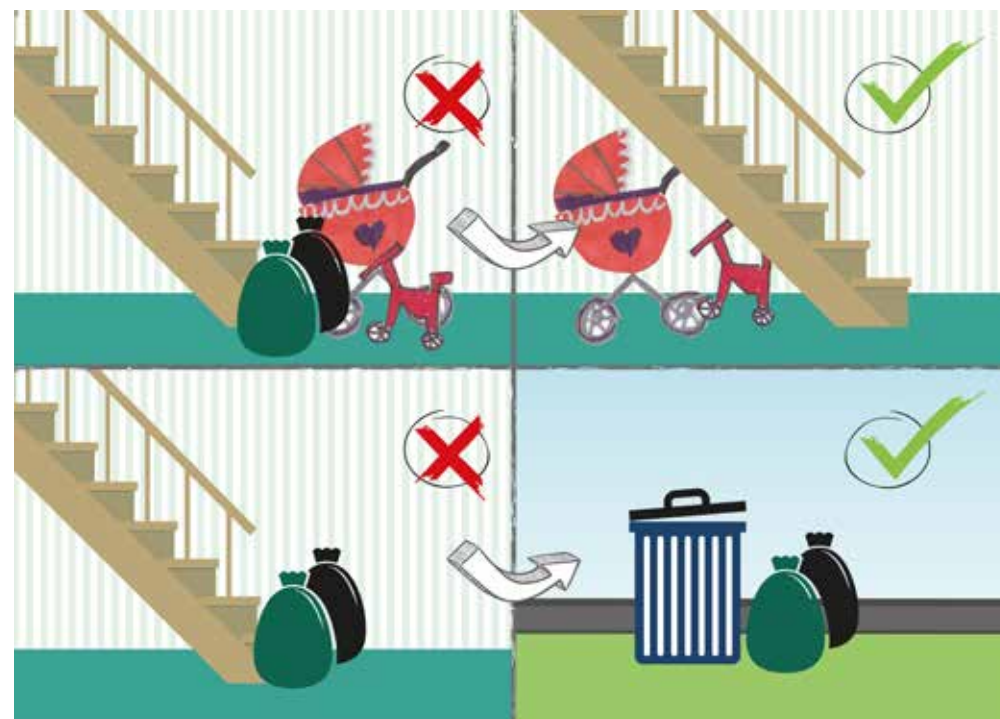
## Create opportunities for intergenerational exchanges and sharing of community memories about disaster

Intergenerational exchanges and sharing of memories about disaster are a rewarding way to encourage participation and link strongly with recognition as outlined above. These practices are also crucial to raise awareness about risks, especially those that are less frequent, and to help children get to know their communities, environments and landscapes. They introduce a sense that before, during and after are all important phases of disaster and as such, they encourage thinking about prevention and resilience. Intergenerational exchanges may be key to challenging prejudices about children and young people as either vulnerable and in need of protection, or mostly self-centred and uninterested in other social groups.

As CUIDAR shows, children have a strong interest in knowing about and learning from other social groups, as they are highly aware and concerned about their families, neighbours, and groups they know about that have perceived vulnerabilities. Children demonstrated eagerness to help care for their communities. A key step then in building the Framework is to facilitate such exchanges and to underline the need to add a more communitarian 'touch' to emergency planning and disaster management.

For example, in Concordia, Italy, young people explored their own memories of the 2012 Emilia Romagna earthquake, producing a video about the destruction in order to challenge policymakers about reconstruction issues. They spoke about how they missed their old school, the theatre and the church. They were still attending a temporary school which they argued was inferior to their old one; memories of particular local places were important to them culturally and they felt left out of decisions about reconstruction.

Other groups chose to map their local area, with the support of two older people from the community, via a 'historical calendar', in order to understand the range of existing risks, before choosing which ones to research more closely. In Gandesa, Spain, children interviewed their grandparents who had memories of the Battle of the Ebro in the Civil War, and prevention of conflict became an important theme. In Glasgow, Scotland, young people living in tenement blocks were concerned about fire risk, particularly for family members who did not understand English, so they prepared a booklet about fire prevention which communicated messages solely through pictures.



Children working with CUIDAR demonstrate fire safety through pictures, Glasgow, Scotland



## Communicate and explain risks carefully and in detail with children and young people

**Mutual Learning Exercises<sup>1</sup>** were conducted in 22 CUIDAR events to bring children's knowledge and perspectives about risk and hazard, developed through our Dialogues with Children, into contact with professionals and stakeholders from disaster management. It can be seen from the CUIDAR International film,

**Transforming Disaster Planning - a child centred approach** – a child-centred approach that co-working with e.g. civil protection officials was very important for children and young people as they could witness evidence of mutual interest. When discussing and finding common solutions with stakeholders, young people realised how much the CUIDAR process had enhanced their knowledge about disaster risk reduction and their skills and abilities. They realised that much of what experts, civil protection officials and others were saying about preparedness and mitigation was in fact familiar to them and that they could contribute new information and a fresh perspective to the debates.

We found that the avoidance of formal, plenary settings helped to support gender equality, particularly when the aim is to create sharing of knowledge between adults and young people. Working in small groups is important when dealing with highly diverse populations and issues around language skills. In these exercises, designed by Save the Children UK, it was important to allow the children to choose their own particular roles, helping to develop equal exchange with adults. The lack of child-friendly, inclusive materials, planning processes and communication strategies in disaster management was observed in almost every Mutual Learning Exercise. This was a clear example of the need for improvement in stakeholders' capacity to involve children in this area. As can be seen from the project film, young people felt empowered by organising and leading these events and were able to interact with adults as peers, discussing topics on which they too had some knowledge or expertise. They enjoyed searching for solutions towards a common objective.



Representing risks,  
Spain

***I enjoyed  
this activity  
[Manifesto  
workshop]  
because the  
adults involved  
were very direct  
talking to us.  
They didn't  
treat us just as  
children, but also  
as experts.***

(Young Participant,  
Italy)

Children and young people's awareness of their rights was heightened, and they showed increased confidence to participate effectively in decision-making processes in order to reduce risks.

Children contributed their advice for instance, on what methods and services would be appropriate for them and their peers, outlining what would work and what would not, suggesting ways they could contribute to preparedness, response and resilience building. This set up a positive, equalising foundation for further collaboration and co-design, building partnerships with new 'allies' that had great potential to strengthen the work of the professionals and services, as well as the resilience and awareness of the young people.

## Build and rely on more diversified networks of children's allies

The need for more children to learn (more) about emergencies and risk in a school-based setting was clearly acknowledged by participants across several sites. Previously, children were largely unaware of the emergency planning, response and recovery structures within their country context or ways to develop policy to improve these.



Building alliances  
with stakeholders,  
Spain

While schools are central and common to children's lives in Europe and important allies in the field of disaster risk reduction, they can also serve to limit children's participation. Schools labour under the weight of curricula demands, pressures on time and resources, and to some extent, myths about knowledge and authority.

<sup>1</sup> [www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en)

CUIDAR has witnessed the value of engagement with other educational/non-educational actors. It's clear that there are many other important actors and organisations encouraging and implementing children and young people's participation: from cultural institutions to leisure initiatives, from youth councils to community associations and these can be other nodes in the resilience-building network. CUIDAR recommends the importance of building and relying on a more diversified network in disaster education, where schools play a significant role but also enrolling other important sites of education and inspiration.

Pledges and accountability mechanisms are key to ascertaining and following up on changes mooted during the Mutual Learning Exercises. Where pledges were made and accountability pathways established, changes happened at a more rapid and frequent rate. New alliances began to emerge.

The possible solutions put forward by children constitute evidence that they continue to be a valuable, untapped resource for addressing problems that plague stakeholders. For instance, when stakeholders experience challenges in communicating their messages and how to get these seen and heard, children and young people are well placed to offer creative solutions. The Mutual Learning Exercises showed that children have the capacity to understand that policy change requires time and effort; and that to many policymakers and stakeholders CUIDAR's approach is innovative and requires new ways of working.

Through holding national level **Awareness Raising and Communication Events**<sup>1</sup>, more alliances were formed. These events were a series of child-friendly meetings in each partner country aimed at communicating the key findings from the previous stages to policymakers involved in disaster management regionally and nationally. These events were Designed by the Open University of Catalonia, each event was staged as part of a longer strategy where key actors, such as policymakers or mass media, were gradually sensitised before and after the event, and using different forms of engagement. Most of the stakeholder participants were public representatives from civil protection, emergencies, risk and resilience and security at local, regional and/or national level. Others were first responders (fire and rescue, coastguards, police), and experts involved in disaster risk reduction (earthquake experts, emergency psychologists and communication experts).

<sup>1</sup> [www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar/en)

***I think this has highlighted a hugely important aspect of community resilience work that I will take back and share with my colleagues and consider ways we could support such initiatives.***

(Community Resilience Officer, UK, 2017)

***It has made me see from another point of view how to tackle the planning of emergencies in our institution.***

(Deputy Director of Civil Protection, Catalonia, Spain, 2017)

***The event was a great opportunity to learn and enrich our knowledge about children and children with disabilities and reflect on our own role in order to enhance their access and participation in activities related with issues of disaster risk reduction.***

(Disaster Professional, Greece, 2017)

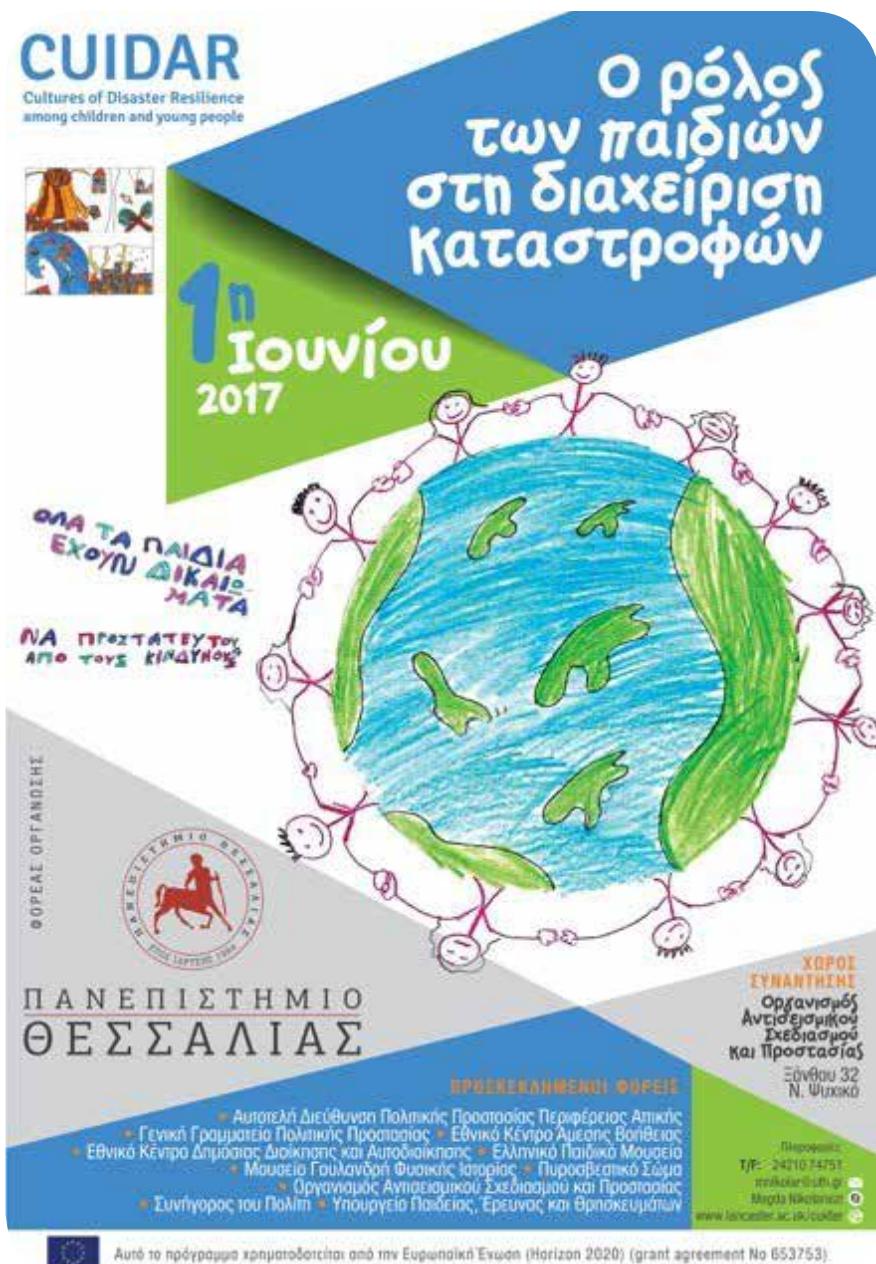
There was significant participation from organisations devoted to risk education (environment agencies, associations and NGOs) plus representatives of educational and social services (at national, regional and local levels); teachers and experts in children's rights.

As a result, many stakeholders committed to change the way they work, such as creating mechanisms to listen to children's perspectives and proposals. This is particularly important both when designing emergency plans and when adults later find they have to speak with children about difficult disaster situations. They also underlined the need to improve communication strategies with children and young people using information technologies and local youth councils or groups. In some cases, stakeholders stated their intention to implement some specific ideas developed through CUIDAR, such as developing a school emergency plan or creating child-friendly spaces following a disaster.

Stakeholders remarked that to implement changes such as adopting a participatory approach, they also needed to find new ways of collaborating, sharing knowledge, skills and good practices and making these kinds of initiatives sustainable. This might involve creating new networks: between different sectors and types of expertise, between those involved in disaster risk reduction and with children and young people involving schools, public and private sector actors and research. For instance, a few days after one of the Italian events, the Marche regional Youth Ombudsman implemented one of the commitments agreed that day: an agreement between his institution, the regional government, Marche municipalities and Save the Children, to promote a culture of child protection and participation in emergency planning. Now this can be replicated at national level and in other Italian regions.

In Spain, two of the stakeholders announced that, following CUIDAR's identification of the problem, the Barcelona fire service is working on a new training session for its 'Prevention Room' specifically about forest fires (previously this session only concerned urban fires). Similarly, in Gandesa, forest fire prevention and management measures have been stepped up since local children started to work on that topic.





CUIDAR Poster advertising the Greek national Awareness Raising Event



CUIDAR Poster advertising the Portuguese national Awareness Raising Event

## Recognise the need to work with emotion (e.g. fear and anxiety) experienced before, during and after disasters with children and young people

Emotions such as fear or anxiety about disasters are common and recognising the importance of this allows younger and older people to make a connection. It was clear from CUIDAR work in all partner countries that emotions are central to understanding people's engagement with disasters, especially fear and how to manage it. This finding needs to be shared with the disaster professionals, and should be incorporated in their training, practice and forms of communication. It also needs to feature in schools, given their importance in the provision of spaces and activities to individual and collective processing of feelings and emotions.

Managing emotions and feelings was a topic that arose both among children and young people who had experienced disasters but also among those who want to be prepared. Through a variety of activities, the children expressed their feelings about disasters and how it is common to be afraid of hazards. However, the children understood and wanted to communicate the message that people can reduce their fear through 'acquiring knowledge and taking action', together with others.

See how groups of young people from Sant Celoni and Lorca in Spain for example, discuss this issue in the [CUIDAR International film](#). Here are some recommendations about this that the young people developed.

*When you are prepared and you know what to do you reduce the risk and you stay safe. The knowledge and the action save lives.*

(Young Participant, Greece)

*It's very interesting they have chosen the topic of how to manage fear, and I have realised that the population is not prepared: we need to communicate more effectively because the way we have been doing it – leaflets – does not work.*

(Deputy Director of Civil Protection, Catalonia, Spain, 2017)

*The information about how to manage fear that we give to young people has to be clearer and simpler, using more active methodologies (role-playing, participative talks...) so they are allowed to give their point of view too.*

(Emergency Psychologist, Spain, 2017)

## Help with managing emotions such as fear and anxiety in an emergency

Psychologists and counsellors should give talks about this topic in schools, in a child friendly or interactive way. This could include using role-playing activities, simulations and drills, using real-life or virtual reality tools. 'Risk experts' should explain the steps being taken to bring risk under control. In case of accident, give support to children and young people with specific sessions to deal with the fear they have experienced; include advice about ways to deal with fear in case of emergency within e.g. school plans.

## Resilience and care

Create a young persons' peer support group that can be activated in case of a disaster; look for allies or supporters to help make their voices heard; create new solutions based on experiences (i.e. use direct experience in planning).

CUIDAR demonstrates need for further research into the relationship between emotion and disasters. This includes:

- ▶ How fears affect children's 'sense-making' of a disaster
- ▶ How to use emotions as a proxy to identify and map hidden social dimensions of disasters, such as social exclusions and vulnerabilities
- ▶ How to redesign preparedness drills and emergency plans from an emotional perspective
- ▶ How to use emotion and affect to rethink pedagogical tools and participatory methods for disaster management

In addition, placing emotion more centrally in emergency planning may also help to value the often under acknowledged role and importance of social workers, psychologists and counsellors and in disaster management.



## Recognise that children and young people may feel vulnerable in public spaces

While CUIDAR has demonstrated children's skills and capacities to contribute to disaster/emergency planning, it needs to be recognised that young people have particular vulnerabilities in the event of a disaster. We found this from our Scoping Review where studies highlighted difficulties in reaching 14-18 year olds. In consulting with young people directly however we learned how productive and strategic is to work with teenagers in the field of disasters. Working with two different groups in Spain for example, allowed us to identify the lack of preparedness measures for public spaces. Young people told us one of their main concerns is what to do if an emergency takes place when they are in public spaces (e.g. streets or squares). That is, when they are 'alone', i.e. not accompanied by an adult, and away from home or school or places where they, or 'someone', usually knows what to do. They pointed to preparedness blind spots, but they also challenged the way experts and professionals usually address this.

As young people make clear, they don't want to encourage an over-regulation of public spaces. On the contrary, they want to keep these as spaces of autonomy, independence and self-regulation. However, they told us they need more information about what to do in the event of an emergency so they can actively contribute to making public spaces more resilient.

Young people are seldom designers of public spaces, which tend to be the domains of adults. In our workshops participants were invited to think closely about where they lived; using drawings, aerial photographs and 3D shapes, they enjoyed making representations of their environment. Young people would go out around their local area noting particular features such as places they liked to congregate or places they found hazardous. This has the effect of strengthening children's spatial knowledge and allowing them then to re-draw their environment according to their own interests and needs. In this way, their observation skills were enhanced and this underpinned some of recommendations they made to emergency planners.



CUIDAR workshop:  
young people in  
Genova, Italy,  
on a participatory  
mapping exercise  
in town

## Key Messages

We now know that supporting children's right to participate in disaster management enhances disaster resilience and that this involves: working with children's needs and abilities; working with children's fears and anxieties and working across generations.

- ▶ The CUIDAR Project has made an important connection between exploring children's rights and enabling their participation
- ▶ CUIDAR has then connected children's rights with practices for enhancing and building disaster resilience, both for children and wider society
- ▶ CUIDAR has demonstrated that risk education (for children and adults) must take account of the cultural diversity of children and young people

Children want to know about risk

Children want to know what to do in public spaces

Children want to play a role in building community resilience

### POLICYMAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS MUST:

- Recognise children's right to be involved in disaster management
- Work with children locally, regionally, nationally
- Co-create child-centred disaster management plans
- Promote disaster education

## Note on Ethics

Ethical considerations were vital to all the work undertaken during the CUIDAR project. Organisations should consult their own guidelines but also respect the points below.

Clear ethics and safeguarding guidelines will ensure children and young people can be safely involved. This involves allowing children and young people the right to be heard safely. Children are valued as contributors to emergency planning and community resilience, but this must be ethical and children must be protected without undermining their rights and their development as active citizens.

Information must be accessible and clear for children, their parent(s)/carer(s) and other organisations involved in disaster risk reduction. This includes creating accessible consent forms and separate forms for permitting visual images to be recorded that acknowledge children and young people know their rights about their recorded images. A clear data protection process for material generated should follow the 2018 [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#)<sup>3</sup> requirements.



<sup>3</sup> [ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr)

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