



# CUIDAR

Cultures of Disaster Resilience  
among children and young people

## Report of Work Package 4: 'Mutual Learning Exercises'

## Document Information

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of ‘mutual learning’, as used in the CUIDAR context, is an effort to put children’s rights into practice and a way to transition between the dialogues and the national events. Instead of more traditional formats like lectures, panel discussions or debate, Mutual Learning Exercises don’t have active and passive participants. Everyone can be the expert in the room -- either by experience, study or length of time interacting with the subject matter. Everyone is a participant who can question, probe, present and inform. The Mutual Learning Events should be interactive, participatory and focussed on listening and learning between everyone involved so common goals and perspectives can emerge. In a sense, mutual learning exercises are a way to create a level playing field that aim to give children their proper place in dialogue about events that affect their lives.

Many of the activities which took place in Work Package 3 (Dialogues with Children) built a foundation of knowledge and confidence from which the children could then comfortably interact on their chosen subject matter with adults. Work Package 4 (Mutual Learning Exercises) is the ‘bridge’ between key CUIDAR Work Packages (WP3 and WP5) in terms of how we build and showcase children’s voices and participation in order to ensure they’re heard by the right people. CUIDAR’s Mutual Learning Events ultimately have to build the type of critical mass of exposure, proof of concept that children’s participation adds value and insight and buy-in from key stakeholders to lead to effective influencing. It also underscores the importance of local influence and grass-roots change, acknowledging that these types of changes in both practice and policy often are best piloted at a small-scale so the blueprint for replication is easier to adapt and understand. This is then carried forward into Work Package 5, the National Awareness Raising Events, to establish a continuum that can achieve influence on a much larger, national scale using the skills and methodologies learned within Work Packages 3 and 4.



The ethos of these events is squarely centered in the rights-based approach emanating from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Ensuring this is a well-understood foundation by all participants is a critical step prior to the Mutual Learning Events (MLEs) to ensure adult participants understand, respect and acknowledge children's rights and role in the MLEs. The shape and level of children's participation in the MLE correlates with the level of sensitisation achieved with adult participants, otherwise, there is a risk that the event will not only be tokenistic but unsafe for children to effectively participate. CUIDAR partners have therefore spent a great deal of time working with both children and adults in order to prepare them effectively for the work.

## Summary Page

PARTNER COUNTRY	Number of events	Locations	Event topics (summary)	Children's age range	Approximate number of children at each event	Approximate duration of events	Attendee role (summary)	Examples of outputs
Portugal	2	Loures, Albufeira	Flooding (x2)	4th grade and 9th Grade	11 to 26	2 hours	Attendees included: The Mayor, the Councilwoman in charge of Education, Coordinator of the Socio-educational Action of the Department of Education, representative from the Fire Department and the Fire Department Commander, representatives from the National Guard, Commander of the local Civil Protection Service, Councilwoman in charge of Civil Protection, officials from the Civil Protection Service, President of the Paderne Parish Council, representative from the Maritime Authority Representative, teachers and headmaster of participating schools, coordinator of the schools cluster, members of the schools cluster, a representative of the parents association of the 4th grade school, some parents and children's family members	Suggestions included: experts provided detailed answers to the children's questions, suggested distributing the children's flyer to all the school classes in primary education (1st to 4th grade), holding a litter cleaning competition and a wider parameter for litter clear up, peer training younger people on safety procedures at school, road maintenance and safety updates, increased drills and preparation for children in schools, increased pressure to fix heation/electric switchboard issues in the school.
Spain	4	Barcelona, Gandesa, Sant Celoni, Lorca	Forest fires (x2), Chemical accident risk, Earthquakes	9-18 y.o.	18 to 30	9am-2pm	Attendees included: Teachers, local Firefighters, Forests Engineer, Press Officers, the Education Officer of the Nou Barris City Council, director of Primary School, local historians, Civil Protection Reginal Director, Mayor, Regional Education Inspector, Psychologist from the Medical Emergency Group in the Firefighters of the Catalan Government, Safety, Health & Environmental Manager, the Enterprises & Employment Officer, Civil Protection Officer, Education & Culture Officer, Journalist, local Councilors	Suggestions included: learning from local people and the local history, protecting the forest from rubbish, installing thermal cameras to detect potential fires, increased communication and dissemination tools about forest protection and what to do in case of a forest fire including using social networks (instagram), practicing drills, developing a video game to learn how to behave in case of a forest fire, organising psychological support sessions, increase transparency by chemical industries, disseminate City Council and Civil protection social network accounts, create a website about chemical risk, do talks in secondary schools and organise visits (in person or using virtual tool), disseminate the Civil Protection emergencies app, hanging informative posters in city's crowded places, creating a Social support organisation and peer-support groups, collating "lesson learned" from past experience, encouraging family communication plans, including information in different languages on the City Council website
Italy	4	Ancona, Crotone, Genova, Concordia	Earthquakes (x2), Floods (x2)	11 -18 y.o.	9 to 20	2 hours	Attendees included: the Municipal Head of Social Services and social policies department, Official from the Social Services and social policies department, the Municipal Head of Civil Protection department, the municipal officer responsible to draft the Municipal emergency plan, regional Ombudsman, representatives of national and local organization for environment protection, sensitization, and environmental education, representatives of citizens groups/associations, representatives of the local Red Cross, representatives of local youth associations, parents and teachers, Major from Crotone, the Municipal Head of Environment department, Head of the regional Civil Protection Agency	Suggestions included: the young people's website to be linked with municipality website, arranging a follow up meeting with the Ombudsman, young people and Regional Counselor and the Mayors of the municipalities of the Marche region (87 municipalities), increased engagement and willing to engage and sensitise others, commitments to spreading event's messages amongst colleagues, youth empowerment
Greece	4	Athens (x2), Volos, Thessaloniki	Fire (x4)	10-14 y.o.	10 to 27		Attendees included: Representative of the local fire station, Representatives of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, Psychologist at Directorate for international relations, volunteering- education and publications, Manager at Directorate for international relations, volunteering- education and publications, special education teachers, a social worker, members of the Hellenic Rescue Team, employees in the Municipality of Thessaloniki, foresters from the Forestry of Thessaloniki, representative of the Club of Special Forces	Suggestions included: stakeholders design workshops and will visit the school once a quarter to educate children on natural hazards, their potential disasters and their treatment, jointly design an event to inform society about all these issues, implement an emergency plan before, during and after the earthquake, and reiterated this emergency plan in order to understand it completely, increase educational activities in risk reduction issues, informing families, other students and community, measures of prevention, information about the needs of people with disabilities, increase collaboration between different authorities and services.
UK	8	Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Swansea, Croydon, Thanet, Salford, Rochdale	Emergency preparation and response, flooding (x4), fire (x2), civil unrest	7-11 y.o.	15 to 35	2-3 hours	Attendees included: Local Resilience forum members, Emergency planning officers from local council, representatives from British Red Cross, Head teachers and class teachers, housing association representatives, community group representatives, energy officer, policemen and women, fireman and women, members of parliament, interpreters, representatives from energy companies, representatives from local councils, transport police, ambulance service	Suggestions included: pledges to encourage colleagues on engagement with children and share the communications tools more widely, take direct action on preparedness (check smoke alarms, fit sprinklers etc), create social groups (children's clubs), school plans to visit parliament, shared the needs of children and their concerns, share lesson plans with local governments and collectives, collaborate with children to create lesson plans

## 2. Methodology

CUIDAR'S Mutual Learning Exercises were devised to meet the following objectives:

-  To enable practitioners and policy makers to gain understanding and insight into children's priorities and perceptions of risk in urban contexts and their capacities, taking into account different cultures.
-  To engage in more effective lines of communication between children and young people and enable them to influence local/regional disaster management strategy, empowering children to realise their right to be heard.

In order to achieve these, it was acknowledged by CUIDAR partners that a great deal of flexibility and cultural adaptation needed to be built into the framework, largely owing to the different cultural and political contexts of partner countries and different contexts for appreciation of children's rights and the children's agency within Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policies and practices.

To do this, the Work Package leader (Save the Children UK) referred to national, regional and international guidelines as to how to best involve children in discussions about the issues that affect them and elevate their voices to influence those who hold decision-making power to resource and guide policy and practice implementation towards this end. As noted in the CUIDAR Scoping Exercise (WP2) many of the resources which best do this are most often found outside Europe. There was an abundance of child-centred DRR resources and consultation guides emanating from the African and Asian continents, but few stemming from a euro-centric perspective. Though child and youth-led movements are not unknown within the European experience, there is a marked lack of child-led disaster risk reduction work.

Drawing on those guidelines mentioned above, as well as broader recommendations used to facilitate community dialogue within the developed world such as 'So You Want to Consult With Children'<sup>1</sup> and 'Consultations With Children In East Africa For the World

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.streetchildrenresources.org/resources/so-you-want-to-consult-with-children-a-toolkit-of-good-practice/>

Humanitarian Summit<sup>2</sup>, Save the Children UK created the Mutual Learning Event Framework (see Annexe 1) and guidance for the benefit of CUIDAR partners. The Mutual Learning Exercises were interpreted as a direct follow-on from WP3's Dialogues with Children guideline 'Share Ideas and Advocate'. This was helpful to build continuity for participants, facilitators, stakeholders and schools/youth groups. Many of the ideas and skills children learnt within the CUIDAR workshops are carried forward into WP4, particularly the emphasis on how to communicate, to whom and via which methods.

It was necessary first to create a definition and shared understanding amongst all CUIDAR partners about what the project meant by a 'mutual learning exercise/event'. This was unfamiliar terminology to most partners so it was important to establish this clarity and expectation before setting out the substantive Work Package. The definition used is as follows:

*Mutual Learning Events are the way we bring together various groups of stakeholders to enable a process of collective analysis to help unlock ideas concerning a specific issue or theme, and to find realistic solutions and recommendations by all involved.*

This was meant to help foster an enabling, safe space that encouraged exploration, creativity, co-design and ultimately, trust. The following three key stages during the events were identified and agreed upon in order to achieve the overall objectives of the work package:

### **1. In-depth interactive, thematic dialogue**

**1<sup>st</sup> Aim:** Theme Introduced and analysed: challenges identified

**Approach:** Explore the theme chosen by the children and how it has affected the community in the past. Identify patterns or trends. Assess level of preparedness currently existing

**2<sup>nd</sup> Aim:** Challenges discussed and solutions proposed

**Approach:** Surface common and unique challenges and then move to identify the resources (human, information and financial) to address them

### **2. Mutual questioning and investigation**

**1<sup>st</sup> Aim:** Solution options discussed and prioritised

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/somalia/resources\\_16942.html](https://www.unicef.org/somalia/resources_16942.html)



**Approach:** Uncover innovative ideas and solutions and facilitate consensus around a selection of solutions to the challenge identified.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Aim:** Solutions chosen and implementation discussed

**Approach:** Solutions will be discussed to canvas opinion of children and emergency planners focusing on what's urgent, needed and achievable. The chosen solution is made in a democratic, child-led way with input from emergency planners; implementation plan is agreed and discussion should focus on how to plan/work on it further

### 3. Exposure to viewpoints, experiences and expectations

**Aim:** Mutual Evaluation and Feedback: Next steps

**Approach:** Commitment to addressing the identified problems (issues)/gaps in a participatory manner; forming informal/formal social contracts between children and emergency planners; establishing mechanisms for accountability that can be child-friendly and child-led (ownership) and help aid sustainability

## 3. Main Findings

There are five main tasks that made up Mutual Learning Exercises. It is against these which reporting is constructed below.

### 3.1 Provision of the Learning Exercise Format

Understanding the context within different partner's countries is crucial to establish as detailed in the Work Package 3 report. Within this section we describe the qualitative and quantitative information provided to us by CUIDAR partners about ways they adapted the Mutual Learning Exercise guidelines to their own contexts and why they needed to make certain adaptations. We also provide some detail about the groups of children and stakeholders with whom partners worked and information about what additional work they needed to undertake to enable transition from the WP3 Dialogues and adequately prepare for mutual learning with stakeholders.

#### *Context and scene-setting*

In Italy, partners worked in four main areas: Ancona, Crotona, Genova and Concordia. In Ancona, the youth group choose to work on earthquake risk since they had been affected by the August 2016 Central Italy earthquake. As a communication tool to act as

a vehicle for their needs and ideas during the Mutual Learning Event, they produced a mobile-friendly website with a child-friendly version of the Municipal Emergency Plan ([www.pianoallamano.it](http://www.pianoallamano.it)). They had worked on this Plan during the Dialogues workshops; it is a document that is meant to be useful to protect the population during emergency situations but appeared to be almost completely invisible to the local population and difficult to understand for children and young people.

In Crotona, the youth group CUIDAR worked with decided to focus on floods and the importance of school safety during floods, since their city and schools are often affected by flooding causing closures and damage to the poor infrastructure of school buildings. As a final product to show and discuss during the Mutual Learning Event, they produced a video clip about a 'flash mob' they performed to sensitise the local community and their peers about this issue along with a leaflet to distribute during the flash mob to reinforce their messages.

The Genova youth group, composed by younger children (11-14 years old), prioritised the risk of landslides and floods that affect their neighbourhood, since the city is chronically and seasonally affected by strong rains. As a communication tool for the final event, they created a foldable paper map (like a tourist map) showing the risk zones, resources, strengths and vulnerabilities of their neighbourhood. They wanted to distribute the map to the community members and their peers, to help them recognise the safe places in their local areas, know where the emergency services (civil protection, hospital, fire fighters, etc.) are located and to enhance their resilience.

In Concordia CUIDAR worked with a group of children from the local secondary school (13 years old) and during workshops they prioritised earthquake risk since their village was hit by the strong 2012 Emilia Romagna earthquake. As a final communication tool in WP3, they produced a video showing the ruins the earthquake left, especially the old school, the former theatre and the main church. In the video, they tell the audience about their memories of these places and ask policymakers what plans they have for these buildings. They wanted to know if the local administration was planning to

reconstruct them (especially, they wanted the policymakers to restore their old school which they prefer to the current temporary one) or what other options they have, since the population and the young people strongly felt they were still not informed about these decisions that strongly affect their lives.

In the UK work was carried out across all four nations in eight different sites, all of which experience elevated levels of deprivation. Parts of Belfast, Northern Ireland have significant levels of poverty and a long history of civil unrest and conflict. CUIDAR worked within a primary school examining the theme of emergency preparedness and how this could be made more child-friendly. In Scotland, the project worked in Craigmillar, a deprived pocket of Edinburgh, within a youth group setting, the only site in the UK not held in a school. This youth group comprised new migrants and first-generation Scots, adding a lens of additional diversity and perspectives. The children here were approx. age 7-8 and though their community does not have a history of flooding, the children chose to focus on flooding as it was the topic to most caught their interest when discussion recent news stories in the UK. The site in Glasgow was a primary school where there are no native Scottish students. The population of the CUIDAR group here was almost entirely Roma, Romanian or Slovak. The area is known for being a place of high deprivation, with increasing racial tension and a marginalised, socially excluded population. The students focused on the issue of tenement fires within their community.

In Swansea, Wales, primary school students discussed the issue of flood and the community's previous experience with this event. Being close to the coast and in an area of very high deprivation, students worked closely with the Local Resilience Forum to stage their Mutual Learning Event. The two sites in the North of England, Salford and Rochdale, were primary schools in areas with high rates of poverty and deprivation and a history of flooding affected as recently as 2015. Two primary school sites in the South of England were Croydon which has a history recent flooding and Thanet where there is a high rate among the population of English as an additional language.

The University of Thessaly worked in three cities situated in the north, central and south part of Greece, namely in Thessaloniki, Volos and Athens. Specifically, in Athens two special educational settings were involved. In the first setting there were 10 children from two grades who had visual disabilities among whom there were also children with additional disabilities. In this school, children discussed about several disasters and focused on fires. In the second setting 8 children were involved who were deaf among whom there were also children with additional disabilities. Students attending the first and the second school live in different places in Attica but also from other areas near Attica. In this school children discussed about earthquakes. It is important to stress that Greece is among the most exposed countries in Europe to earthquakes. The children chose to mainly investigate the risk of earthquakes. In general, Greece is an earthquake-prone country. For example in Athens, there was an earthquake in 1999 but the children did not have direct experience of it. In Volos, CUIDAR workshops were carried out with students who attended the first grade of a primary school, one of the oldest and most historic in the city which was also affected by an earthquake many years ago. The first grade of that school was selected because a student with visual impairment (low vision) attended this class. In Thessaloniki, primary school students were from a special and general educational setting. The schools are co-located and all the students were from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. All children, both hearing and hard of hearing, participated together in CUIDAR. Regarding the background and the risks of Thessaloniki during the last decades there were some cases of disaster as for example a severe earthquake in 1978, a fire in the tanks of Jet Oil Company in 1986 that has been characterised as one of the biggest industrial accidents in Greece or widespread flash floods in 2006 in the wider area of Thessaloniki. Also, in 1997 there was a fire in Seih Sou which is the only and very important forest which surrounds the city of Thessaloniki. Furthermore, the Great Thessaloniki Fire of 1917 destroyed two thirds of the city of Thessaloniki, leaving more than 70,000 homeless. The fire burned for 32 hours and destroyed 9,500 houses within an extent of 1 square kilometer. The children chose to investigate the fires and talked about fires that affected the city in different ways. Seih Sou is a forest within the city and Jet Oil company is also located in the city. Also, the fire in Thessaloniki affected the centre of

the city and because of this fire the centre of the city was rebuilt. and the children also discussed relevant issues regarding the protection of the forests. In all the aforementioned sites in Greece, the children investigated and discussed issues regarding the ways of protection and response in cases of disasters for children with disabilities and the needs of hard of hearing children.

Portuguese sites included firstly Albufeira, a coastal city in the Algarve with about 13,646 inhabitants, many of whom are recent migrants. However, the city doubles its population in the summer months due to tourism and holiday homes. Albufeira is prone to coastal erosion resulting in the collapse of cliffs onto beaches and flooding; events that occurred in 2009 and 2015 with several fatalities. ICS worked with the local civil protection authorities (including the councilwoman in charge of this area) in selecting two groups from different schools of the locality: a 4th grade class in Escola Básica de Caliços (24 pupils), and a group of 10 9th grade students in Escola Diamantino Negrão, who volunteered to participate in the project. The 4th grade class was balanced in terms of gender, with 13 girls and 11 boys. The class mixed students from the 3rd and 4th grade, with ages ranging from 9 to 12 years old. 16 pupils were Portuguese, while the remaining had other nationalities (Ukraine, Moldavia, India and Equator). Two boys were from Roma families. Most children came from a socioeconomically disadvantaged background, and some faced language barriers. The group of 9<sup>th</sup> graders was more homogenous. The Mutual Learning Event was jointly organised with the local Civil Protection Service in Albufeira.

The second site was Loures, a suburb of Lisbon with 27,769 inhabitants, containing both urban and rural parishes. In terms of climate change risks, the main concerns are flooding and heat waves. The last major flooding event took place in 2008, although major floods that occurred in 1969 still echo in the memory of Loures' citizens, due to the high number of fatalities. Partners worked with two groups from the same school cluster of the locality: a 4th grade class in Escola Básica nº1 de Loures (26 pupils), and a group of 11 9th grade students in Escola Básica Luis Sttau Monteiro. As well as in the Albufeira case, the 9th grade students belonged to different classes and participated in

the workshop on a voluntary basis. The children who participated in the workshops and consultation included migrant children descending from Roma families, Bulgaria, South Africa, Cape Verde and Brazil. The Mutual Learning Event was jointly organised with the Department of Education of the Loures Municipality.

In Spain, they organised 4 Mutual Learning events, one with each of the groups of children and young people previously involved in WP3. The first group included children aged 9-10 from a primary school located in Ciutat Meridiana, a neighbourhood in Barcelona city's outskirts. Children chose working on forest fires because their school was very close to a forestry area, and they had already seen small fires there. The second group was composed by children aged 11-12 from the primary school in Gandesa, the main village of a rural region in the South of Catalonia. They chose forest fires as the risk to work on because they are close to important forestry areas and they saw it as the local risk that they could make the most contributions around. In the third group young people aged 15-16 participated from a Secondary School in Sant Celoni; they chose working on chemical risk when they realised that their town is next to the second most important chemical industries' concentration in Catalonia. Finally, the fourth group was composed by young people aged 15-18 who belonged to several associations linked to the Youth Council in Lorca, a city in the South-East of Spain that had an important earthquake in 2011.

### *Identifying and Inviting Stakeholders for mutual learning*

Stakeholder mapping/identification had largely taken place during WP3 however some supplementary work happened in the planning stages for the Mutual Learning Events. This step is crucial in the process as children should be encouraged to assess for themselves who/which are the influencing powers within their community. For example, in Greece during the workshops in Athens, students mapped and identified actors involved in emergency situations. They watched and studied videos, read articles from newspapers and talked about the role of every actor involved in emergencies. They decided to meet firefighters, members of the Greek rescue and disaster team and representatives of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, the Ministry of the

Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. In Thessaloniki, the children wanted to meet members of the Hellenic Rescue Team, representatives of the Municipality of Thessaloniki or employees of the Forestry of Thessaloniki. Additional meetings were important ahead of the Mutual Learning Events so they could be informed about the special educational needs of specific students.

*Themes of respective Mutual Learning Events*

PARTNER COUNTRY	THEME (TOPIC) OF THE EVENT
<p><b>Portugal</b></p> <p>Loures</p> <p>Albufeira</p>	<p>Climate change-related disasters</p> <p>Children and young people in Loures specifically decided to explore the risk of flooding in their locality.</p> <p>Flood risk reduction and a final proposal to organise civil protection youth clubs in schools.</p>
<p><b>Spain</b></p> <p>Barcelona</p> <p>Gandesa</p> <p>Sant Celoni</p>	<p>The group realised they were at risk because of their closeness to a forest area, and they wanted adults (experts, local politicians and the community) to help them to organise a party to "reclaim" the forest (clean and make a different use of it). Partners divided that topic in 3 topics: i) Designing the Forest party; ii) Forest fires: prevention &amp; recovery; iii) Communication and dissemination of the Forest party.</p> <p>Children wanted to know how to react and what to do in case they had to face a forest fire and they were not accompanied by an adult. This topic was split in these topics: i) Forest fires: fear and resilience; ii) Children and forests, past and futures; iii) Self-protection and communication campaigns for children about forest fires; iv) Forest management and fire prevention.</p> <p>Young people at this site wanted to know how to deal with their emotions in case of a chemical industry accident and to develop a communication plan for the population. They worked on this topic divided in 3 groups: i) Emotional management in an emergency; ii)</p>

Lorca	<p>Communicating the chemical risk; iii) Getting to know the chemical industries.</p> <p>Based on their experience during the 2011 earthquake, young people wanted to learn more about preventive practices to deal with emotions and care practices during an earthquake. They worked on this topic divided in 3 groups: i) Resilience and care; ii) Emotions management in an emergency; iii) Communicating earthquake risk and emergencies.</p>
<b>Italy</b>	
Ancona	Earthquakes. This group was directly affected by the 2016 Central Italy earthquake.
Crotone	Floods and school safety during floods.
Genova	Landslides and floods.
Concordia	Earthquakes.
<b>Greece</b>	
Athens (1 <sup>st</sup> site)	<p>The topic discussed was fire but more specifically there was a focus on children's rights, children's opinions and feelings about natural hazards and civil preparation and disability issues.</p> <p>Fire, Understanding emotions and earthquakes.</p>
Athens (2 <sup>nd</sup> site)	Fire.
Volos	Prevention of Forest Fires, characteristics of the forest of Seih Sou, measures of prevention and the importance of the forest of Seih Sou for the people of Thessaloniki.
Thessaloniki	
<b>UK</b>	
Belfast	Emergency preparation and how to deal with emergencies.
Edinburgh	Flooding.



Glasgow	Fire safety and prevention of tenement fires.
Swansea	Fire.
Croydon	Flooding.
Thanet	Civil unrest – emergency preparedness, resilience, risk assessment and management
Salford	The children discussed the effect of floods and how children across the borough could be better catered for in emergency. They topics such as; keeping children informed, ensuring their rights were met and being able to participate in recovery. The themes were identified by the children during the CUIDAR Workshops and included access to child-friendly information and the right to be consulted with.
Rochdale	Primarily the discussions were linked with the emergency – Flooding, but some discussions covered the more generic aspects of Communication about Emergencies in general.

#### *How partners made adaptations to the WP4 Guidelines*

We found that most partners made minimal adaptations to the suggested framework and its broad parameters afforded flexibility to account for context and capacity of partners. Where there were variations, this was largely due to time constraints or to ensure further accessibility appropriate to the context. In case of Greece, there was the need for adaptations or other provisions of access to the learning process for children with disabilities. Specifically, for children with visual disabilities including the ones with additional disabilities a wider range of educational tools (see pictureXXX) were used such as tactile material, texts in Braille, haptic maps, videos with audio description. In the case of children who were heard of hearing or deaf, communication or interpretation in Greek Sign Language took place and a variety of visual tools were used including concept maps, pictures, videos, computers. Furthermore, in all cases, many

experiential and participatory activities took place. Mutual Learning Events were child-led and only when an explanation was needed were they adult-led.”



Fig 1:



Fig 2:



Fig 3:

Below, we highlight the experiences of the Spanish CUIDAR partner, detailing their own slight adaptations to the framework and how this was implemented across their four Mutual Learning Events.

### SPOTLIGHT: Spain

*Challenges discussed & solutions proposed:* partners included this activity as part of the preparatory sessions. First, children and young people were reminded of the challenges they had identified through Work Package 3 sessions, and then they carried out a 'group think' in small groups about potential solutions. (In the case of Barcelona, since it was hard to have many ideas, they also thought up potential questions to ask the stakeholders). Later, they grouped the solutions into categories, matching them with each of the stakeholders' expertise areas, who had access to that list before the Mutual Learning Event. This way, everybody knew the proposed solutions to be discussed beforehand.

*Introduce & analyse the theme:* Similarly, all the people involved, children and young people and stakeholders, knew about the theme in advance. However, we wanted children and young people to introduce it with their own words to the invited stakeholders. For this reason, all groups of children and young people arranged (in the preparatory sessions) a small introduction to the Mutual Learning Event, answering in small groups these questions: Who are we?; What have we done in CUIDAR project up to now?; What is our message (theme and challenges)? They were allowed to use/create any material they considered important for this presentation: power point/prezi presentations; short video-clip; poster exhibitions; etc. At this stage, we focused only on children and young people's claims about the theme. However, since that work had been previously done in Work Package 3, they could get back to it, if needed, during the Mutual Learning Event.

*Solutions discussed & prioritised:* this was the core activity of the Mutual Learning Event and it was undertaken in small groups. It was at this stage that partners included the activity of prioritising and choosing the solutions. Each small group had to agree on a list of prioritised solutions regarding the topic assigned to them and write it down in a dartboard poster they had on the table. It implied writing down each agreed solution on a post-it, and then, situating them in a circle of the dartboard: pasting the urgent ones in the very centre, the

achievable ones in the middle circle, and the needed ones in the external circle. We followed this methodology with all the groups except with the younger ones (Barcelona): in this case, instead of discussing and prioritizing the solutions, partners decided to use this time in small groups to let children ask questions to the stakeholders in order to develop and improve their ideas, and collect them in drawings. When finished, all groups shared their work in plenary, pasting their results (dartboards or drawings) in a visible wall.



Fig 4: Sant Celoni's young people with the 4 dartboards behind them, before starting the plenary discussion

*Solutions chosen & implementation discussed:* instead of doing it in small groups as suggested in the framework, they decided to do it in plenary, trying to elaborate a common list of solutions, including all topics discussed in small groups. The floor was open for any adult or children and young people to make suggestions or ask questions. In some cases, either we did not have enough time to go implement the script or it was difficult for children and young people to envisage solutions. Even stakeholders had difficulties as they are not used to thinking about integrated solutions (including different areas and approaches).

*Mutual evaluation & feedback:* instead of closing the process with commitments, social contracts or accountability mechanisms, partners reframed this as a final stage with two stages: firstly, we gave adults and children and young people time to share their thoughts and feelings about their experience in the Mutual Learning Event; and in a second stage, adults and children and young people made separate evaluations.

### *Additional Group Work*

Nearly universal feedback from CUIDAR partners indicated that extra meetings were necessary to help smooth the transition between the Dialogues workshops and the Mutual Learning Events for both children and stakeholders. This has since been identified as a gap that should be planned for (if the CUIDAR process was to be repeated) in advance and filled with suggested activities and guidelines to help steer to process at this crucial stage.

### 3.2 Sharing ideas of risk and resilience

Partners provided information about how the topic chosen by children in their workshops was discussed and what tools were used to discuss this equally amongst children and adult participants.

We set out the analysis of this section of the Mutual Learning Event (MLE) into five key stages and areas: 1) How the topic (or theme) was introduced to stakeholders and the wider audience participating in the Mutual Learning Event 2) Challenges and solutions discussed surrounding the theme chosen 3) Solutions prioritised by children and stakeholders together 4) What solutions were chosen as possible to implement and how 5) Mutual evaluation and feedback of the event.

#### *How the topic (or theme) was introduced to stakeholders*

When analysing the sharing of ideas, it also became apparent that setting the correct tone for the MLE right from the start is hugely important. For example, in Albufeira the Mayor and the Civil Protection Council Woman opened the event and in Loures, the event kicked off with a brief introduction by the Councillor responsible for Education, who greeted the children present and acknowledged their willingness to reflect upon what to do in a disaster situation, a concern shared by the community. She stressed that children have a unique point of view that can help families to be better prepared for these situations:

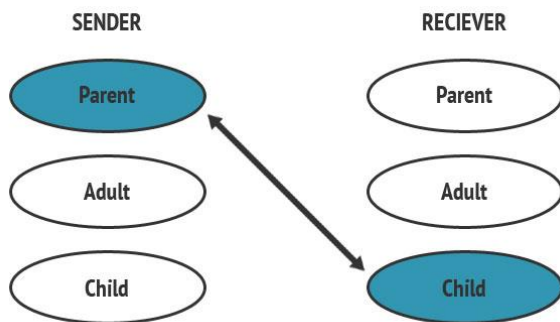
*I'm sure this project will allow that you and your families can be better prepared in these situations. I know you have been very creative and I think this is a very important project for all the forces, for all municipal departments and all involved.*



Fig. 5: Picture of the welcome speech in the school event in Concordia with the Mayor

In almost all situations, the topic of discussion was preceded by an adult (often the facilitator, a key stakeholder or a teacher) or the children themselves setting the scene for effective dialogue and child participation to be central to the Mutual Learning Event.

Children and young people often introduced updates from the workshops and their chosen topic through media highlighted in the WP3 Report. These largely included dramas, games, story-telling, video, interactive technological display, general presentations and art-based communication tools like drawing, models etc. The power



of children presenting material to stakeholders in this way cannot be understated. One of the benefits of this is the nearly immediate shift in what Berne<sup>3</sup> termed 'transactional analysis'. If children and young people can set the stage in such a way as to shift the adult,

'expert' stakeholders from their 'adult' or 'parent' state and into their 'child' state, the messages suddenly become much easier to hear and digest.

#### *Challenges and solutions discussed surrounding the theme chosen*

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade site in Loures chose to focus on the vulnerabilities of their school buildings and surrounding areas to extreme weather events, such as storms and cold waves. The children pointed out the obstruction of gutters with litter, the holes in the path that led to the school entry, the inadequate construction of the playfield (that flooded when heavy rain occurs), and to deficiencies in the conservation of school premises and lack of heating in the classrooms (making them extremely cold in winter, as was the case during the workshops in Work Package 3). The children asked for a new electricity switchboard that can heat classrooms and for renovation construction works, and proposed to raise awareness among younger students for the need to adopt safety behaviours when in school, in order to protect oneself from various risks, and to organise a litter cleaning competition. The Councillor in attendance recognised that the school has been having infrastructural problems for a while, recalling the time when she herself studied there. In the Mutual Learning Event, CUIDAR partners in Spain chose to focus more on solutions than the challenges. These were created in the preparatory sessions both with children and young people and stakeholders so as to be discussed more easily during the MLE. Discussions took place in 3 or 4 small groups, each one including: 3 to 6 children and young people (depending on the location), 1 or 2 stakeholders, and a CUIDAR member as a facilitator. To ensure a balanced participation of adults and children, all of them knew in

<sup>3</sup> Berne, E. (1961). *Transactional analysis in psychotherapy*. New York: Grove Press.

advance the solutions they had to discuss about and the discussion was moderated by CUIDAR members.

### *Solutions prioritised by children and stakeholders together*

In Crotone, part of the MLE was structured in work group and the participants were divided in two round tables and invited to discuss and find common ideas on two main questions: “*what can I do to prevent flood emergency risk? Build a Decalogue of good practices*” and “*how to involve young people in the institution decision making process*”. On the last question participants prioritised the following needs: 1) to create youth forums; 2) create clubs to make institutions communicate with young people; 3) set a ‘day of participation’ every year organised by the municipality; 4) make projects in schools; 5) create the conditions for young children to speak and make their ideas listened through more participation projects; 6) create synergies with public institutions and young people through projects that put them in contact with Mayors and schools. On the question of “*what can I do to prevent flood emergency risk? Build a Decalogue of good practices*” participants prioritised: “communication”, “attention to people with vulnerabilities”; “trainings on emergency”; “knowledge of risks”; “training on self-protection in emergency”; “legality” (since many buildings are constructed with poor materials, and there are mafia interests); “update of emergency municipality and school plans”; “report illegal practices” (related to the previous point on legality). In Ancona, the main theme chose by young people and discussed was children participation and how to engage children and young people in policy making. The main solutions were identified in enhancing training and information, using existing territorial tools, making activities in school and using technologies to narrow the gap between adults and children. This last point was matching with the final presentation of the website were the CUIDAR youth group create a child-friendly version of the Municipal Emergency Plan as a concrete solution to narrow the mentioned gap and to help the Municipality to spread among children, young people and families the MEP, a valuable tool for self-protection.

In Lorca, partners also focused more on prioritising solutions and identifying how likely they were to be implemented in the following way:

Needed: 1) Social support organisation: help parents and their children in case of an earthquake. 2) Clear guidelines about how to behave during an earthquake if you are in the street

**Achievable:** 1) 'Future is now' approach -->more preparedness: doing drills; identifying meeting points, safe ways and spaces to go (knowing where to go!), training people in self-protection measures, doing talks in diverse formats (individual, for small groups, in schools...) and that puts you in place. 2) Creating peer-support groups, especially in more isolated areas and neighbourhoods 3) Raising awareness about the potential risk: looking for other people's empathy by using videos that include real images, and real stories and testimonies 4) Asking officials (i.e. police) about any information, for avoiding rumours that generate uncertainties and check institutional social networks' accounts 5) Learn from past experiences 6) Avoid phoning that may block the phone lines, and use social networks

**Urgent:** 1) Looking for potential allies for awareness rising: mass media, other YP that have lived a disaster, the Youth Council. 2) Family communication plan: everybody should know the family's meeting point even if there is no chance to talk about it during the crisis 3) The City Council webpage should include information about it in different languages

**Greece:** Children from Thessaloniki chose to investigate the risks of fires in the forests. The children used as a case study a fire that was happened in the forest of Seih Sou in Thessaloniki in 1997. Although this forest is the only one around the city of Thessaloniki the majority of the children have never visited the forest before. Children wanted to be informed about the benefits of the forest the risks of fire in a forest and the ways of before, during and after the fire. They also expressed the idea to visit the forest during an educational visit. The visit in the forest of Seih Sou was implemented with the collaboration of the Forestry of Thessaloniki. During this process the children mentioned the importance of educational activities for children regarding the forest of Seih Sou and issues of risk reduction. For this reason they communicated with a Centre of Environmental Education. Also they asked to visit the Municipality in order to communicate their ideas and ask for more educational activities in issues of risk reduction as well as prevention measures for the forest of Seih Sou. During their visit in the Municipality of Thessaloniki and their discussion with the employees of the project "Resilient City" the children also proposed them collaboration with their school based on the experience of CUIDAR project. All key solutions were deemed simultaneously as 'urgent', 'needed' and 'achievable'. Specifically, in one of the schools in Athens the children considered as 'urgent', 'needed' and 'achievable' to make an emergency bag, to perform earthquake simulation exercises, to carry out earthquake preparedness exercises.

The children worked a lot as a group. They did group work and then presented the results of their work either in quads or in front of the plenary. Children made presentations to other



children and two rescuers from the Greek rescue and disaster team, who came to school, as the children had expressed their desire to speak with a rescuer.

In the school that children with visual disabilities attended the focus was more on solutions than challenges, on children's rights, feelings and opinions and on disability issues.

Children presented their rights and talked about them. They discussed the way that adults know and respect children's rights. More specifically children focus to significant rights such as the right to access information and knowledge, the right to participate, the right to express their opinion, and also the right to be heard from adults, who must respect children's rights and take into consideration children opinions and needs when they make plans about civil protection. Children expressed their suggestions about how all together we can be prepared taking into considerations children's needs and especially the special needs of children with severe visual impairments and find solutions for adult-children cooperation. During the final event but also when the representatives from the General Secretariat of Civil Protection visited them children presented disabilities issues to sensitise made suggestions about the way that adults and policy makers can consider the needs of children and include them in further planning.

### 3.3 Sensitisation of practitioners to children's needs and rights

It comes as no surprise that the lack of child-centred or child-led disaster risk reduction measures within regions has led to a professional stakeholder group in the CUIDAR partner countries that is often ill-equipped (or lacking in the confidence) to work with children and sometimes, keep their best interest and capacities in mind whilst discharging their duties. Early on, the sensitisation of emergency planners, civil protection staff and other stakeholders that would come into close contact with the children was gauged as very important. According to the PLAN Toolkit<sup>4</sup> (regularly consulted by WP3 and 4 leaders), sensitisation not only helps to ensure a better, mutual understanding between all parties but also helps to give better footing to the project's success as new initiatives and new actors or agents of innovation and change (in this case, children) can often be perceived by the status quo as something to resist or discount. Sensitisation can also help pave the way to better collaboration across the board and can clearly show various parties how to work towards a solution that they all understand. Initially, the concept of sensitisation as it related to CUIDAR was quite

<sup>4</sup> <https://plan-international.org/publications/child-centred-disaster-risk-reduction-toolkit>

one-sided; we needed to ensure stakeholders were well-versed in children's rights and children's unique needs in order to ensure they could effectively engage with the children and young people during the Mutual Learning Exercises and other component pieces of the project. However, as CUIDAR partners enacted this stage of the project, we learned how important this also was for the children themselves to gain insight into how to effectively understand the stakeholder's points of view and how to utilise this information to better influence for their agendas in their communities. In a sense, we found it was important to 1) give children a role in the sensitisation of the adults as this led to better outcomes and 2) it was important for sensitisation to be a two-way process and not merely something that is 'done' to adult stakeholders.

Partners described ways in which they and the children interacted with adult participants ahead of the MLEs to ensure shared understanding about the children's role and wider rights in this process and examine the stakeholder's own parts to play. We sought to define the process of the sensitisation of stakeholders within three broad pillars: preparation, expectation setting and roles and responsibilities. As alluded to above, this expanded organically to sensitising the children as well.

The first element of sensitisation was preparation. This anticipated that both children and adult participants would be prepared in advanced of the Mutual Learning Exercises via different methods depending on the assessed level of need (e.g. training, transition meetings, current levels of preparedness) based on the context and individual level of exposure to children in the stakeholder's professional life, and on children's levels of confidence in interacting with practitioners on the subject matter. This varied widely across stakeholder groups and countries. For example, Portuguese partners ran one of their Mutual Learning Events in Albufeira, a place the city's Mayor identified as being very open to children's participation.

The specific introduction and discussion of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was also strongly suggested as a central part of the preparation process for stakeholders. Within this, it was suggested that partners highlight the concepts that underpin children's right to voice their perceptions and

opinions and reach an agreement that these rights are understood, respected and realised in the process going forward. In all cases this was done either in documentation sent to stakeholders ahead of the event and/or in the event itself.

#### **Sensitisation: A Case Study from Spain**

CUIDAR's Spanish partners held specific preparatory sessions for stakeholders. After a first point of contact by phone and/or e-mail and sharing with them basic information about the project (preliminary outputs of Work Pack 3 and the objectives of the Mutual Learning Event) all stakeholders were invited to a joint preparatory meeting per location (or individual, when not possible). In this meeting, they were handed additional information (the final program of the events, the specific topics to be discussed and what we expected from them). Partners highlighted the relevance of Article 12 of the UNCRC and how it situated them as adults working with children. Accordingly, to keep the child-focused prominence, children and young people presented themselves in their own words during the Mutual Learning Event. Partners also remarked in these preparatory meetings with the stakeholders that the MLE was co-organised with children and that they were not invited to do any talks or speeches for the children but instead to help them during the event and have a dialogue.

During these meetings, some stakeholders talked about feeling unsettled due to their lack of experience working with children, while others expressed how positive and inspiring it was. To help them to focus in on what partners expected and keep children and young people in the centre, stakeholders were given three basic preparatory tasks for the Mutual Learning Event: 1) think about how you can present yourself and your job in a child-friendly manner; 2) think about the solutions your children and young person's group has made in your area of expertise (or the questions they have prepared for you); 3) think about any questions you would like to pose to children and young people that may be useful for your work. Partners emphasised that all adults should try to keep 'behind' children and young people during the event, allowing the deliberate space to lead, however, in the third instance, they wanted to give stakeholders the chance to have a moment to be free to ask questions so they could experience the relevance of working directly with children and young people, to take them into account, as a way to improve this skill and ultimately, make their job more effective.

All these dynamics helped stakeholders to feel more comfortable during the Mutual Learning Event, and enabled CUIDAR facilitators to ask questions and suggest interventions that they knew could be relevant for children and young people. In those cases where

facilitators did not have the chance to do this kind of preparatory meetings (even individually), it was noted that stakeholders were not so participative in the plenaries, demonstrably felt more insecure, and were more prone to do long interventions and talks (monologuing) rather than actively listening and/or behaving in a more child-friendly tone. There were also instances where 'unsensitised' stakeholders corrected and/or completed children and young people's interventions if they felt they were wrong or inaccurate. Thus, preparatory sessions were key to changing conventional stakeholder's roles as 'instructors' to a more egalitarian and dialogical attitude with children and young people. This is evidence of a proof of concept that the type of sensitisation described above directly leads to better outcomes for mutual dialogue with children and young people.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that not all participating stakeholders were invited to these preparatory sessions: in all cases, facilitators invited City Council politicians but when they agreed to participate, it was often with time restrictions. In these cases, partners had brief meetings with them (or short presentations via phone and e-mail) where they shortly presented them the project, the Mutual Learning Event concept and invited them to attend it. In these cases, facilitators did not ask these stakeholders to participate in the small groups, but only to do a short welcoming or closing speech, while having the opportunity to be present and listen to children and young people and ask some questions in the final plenary. In all cases, they stayed only during part of the Mutual Learning Event and filled these expectations. However, in the case of Sant Celoni and Lorca, their interventions also added interesting information, since they had important experiences in relation to the subject matter at hand. In the first case, the current City Mayor was the doctor in charge of emergencies at the hospital during the chemical accident (a toxic chlorine cloud) that took place in the city back in 1996, and he shared this experience with young people present. Similarly, in Lorca, the City Councillor for Urbanism, Environment and Post-earthquake recovery had this same position during the earthquake in 2011 (she was the Resilience Councillor) and could explain many things that children and young people did not know of and what the City Council had to do during the event.

**A case study from Greece:** CUIDAR's Greek partners held preparatory sessions for stakeholders. At first, contacts were made by phone and e-mail and in some cases meeting also took place between the facilitators and the stakeholders to discuss regarding the mutual learning events in CUIDAR. To help stakeholders to focus on children, the four basic tasks for the Mutual Learning Event were explained: 1) think about how you can present yourself and your job in a child-friendly manner; 2) think about the solutions your children

and young person's group has made in your area of expertise (or the questions they have prepared for you); 3) think about any questions you would like to pose to children and young people that may be useful for your work 4) think about disability issues.

Various stakeholders visited the schools and there was an agenda and structured activities to ensure equal participation between adults and children.

All these preparation activities help stakeholders to feel more comfortable during the Mutual Learning Event and behave in child-friendly, actively listening and taking into account children's needs.

### *Preparation*

Making sure that both children and adults were properly prepared to take part in mutual learning is key to a successful event as was the introduction of Article 12 of the UNCRC and adult participants seeing the value of children's participation in action. It is key to an effective preparatory session with adults that they are invited to work with children in this participatory way. Adults need to change their own image as the ones who explain, towards the children and young people's preferences: being open to answer any question and about any topic that children may propose, and listening to their proposals in order to take them seriously. Feedback received from CUIDAR partners indicated that despite children and young people wanting to share their ideas and proposals, they often give more value and credibility to the experts' advice when talking about risk and disasters management. Similarly, it is very important for stakeholders to listen to what children and young people have to say, as straightforwardly as possible. That is why preparatory sessions for children and young people are key in this respect so they can focus their messages in ways that can be better understood and interpreted. Below, we highlight examples that showcase best practice in preparation (for both children and adult stakeholders) from all of our partners.

In Volos, and in one of the schools in Athens, the facilitators met the various practitioners and discussed the project with them especially, how the importance of having child-led events was central to the ethos of the upcoming Mutual Learning Exercise. The children's young age was emphasised to highlight the importance of how

language should be used whilst at the event. For example, it was stressed that simple words and examples were far more appropriate than professional jargon. As one of the children in Volos and also many children in Athens had visual disabilities it was highlighted to stakeholders to ensure that any presentations, photographs or texts they wished to use were large enough or in Braille to ensure equal accessibility of the information. Explicit reference to Article 12 and the UNCRC was made which led to an agreement by all parties that the voice of the children should be heard. Fortunately, stakeholders had previous experience visiting schools and interacting with children but not with children with special needs. In Athens, children who were deaf were prepared for the discussions with the stakeholders and the type of questions that they could make. Adults were also prepared for the discussions as they had been informed by the facilitators about the CUIDAR project, the content of the workshops where children participated and the specific needs of the pupils.

In Glasgow, the way children were prepared was done in two sessions. The first explored who would be coming to the event. Using cut-out shapes, names and roles were placed on the shape enabling the children to visualise the stakeholders. There were grouped into emergency services, community, school, parents/children. Children then came up very quickly with questions for the stakeholders. This group of children was comprised entirely of migrant/Roma children and so language accessibility needed to be taken into consideration when doing the preparation exercises. Adults were prepared in different ways: facilitators visited parents with interpreters to encourage them to attend but only two parents did so for a short period of time. Stakeholders were prepared in both meetings and phone briefings, and every delegate received a summary of the project, a sensitisation briefing, and an agenda in two emails – one to save the date and one the week before the event. Facilitators also briefed them on what the children had done so far and which topic they focused on, as well as a profile of the group and how this event could relate to the work of stakeholders. Article 12 was introduced in this email as well. There was a short welcoming briefing before the start of the event and adults were briefed on the profile of the participants and reminded to use simple language. The agenda and objectives were gone over for the day and it was

further explained how this event related to the events at Grenfell Tower and how the school and facilitators were keen not to worry children unnecessarily given their topic centred around tenement fires. The introductory email also explained the purpose of the event, including objectives and ways of working. An opportunity for a face-to-face meeting was given to all delegates but due to time constraints this took only place for two attendees. No face-to-face meetings were requested but they could have been repeatedly offered had there been more time.

In Albufeira, the team set up a meeting with the Civil Protection Municipal Committee, in which the project was presented, as well as the goals of the MLE, and invited them to participate and to engage with the children and young people. Almost every member came to the Mutual Learning event and the whole Committee was very supportive throughout the whole process. Facilitators in Loures organised a meeting with the Coordinator from the Department of Education and together they visited the space where the Mutual Learning Event was to be held. Both the Department of Education and the Civil Protection Department had collaborated with the project before, during and after the workshops, so it was felt they were prepared for what was going to happen in the event. The Department of Education proved very supportive of the project and signaled a growing awareness of the right of children to have a voice and be heard in the public sphere. Although the Civil Protection Service collaborated with the project during the entirety of the process, the higher levels of command and the Mayor didn't demonstrate the same level of engagement to the project's objectives, perhaps due to lack of time. This highlights how the process of sensitisation isn't formulaic; no two stakeholders will go on the same journey and care must be taken to anticipate this.

The Belfast site had previously participated in a programme called "Rights respecting School" run by UNICEF so there was a foundation of knowledge with the young people from the beginning. The primary School was deemed to be "clued in" with the language of children's rights and the children appeared to have a strong grasp of what children's rights were and why they're important. The group had a particularly strong grasp of the importance of their views being heard and respected by adults, they also recognised

that there were many children whose rights are not respected or supported. Before attending the MLE there was a briefing document that was sent out alongside the invitation to all potential invitees. This included 'dos and don'ts' that helped promote participation. Before the attendees entered the school hall, there was a second short introduction and sensitisation by a member of Save the Children staff.

In Italy, preparation with children began with the first WP3 workshops, CUIDAR facilitators explained the project in detail including the local and national event that would take place at the end of the workshop sessions. Children and young people were very motivated about the possibility to show their work to adults and interact with them, especially adolescents who understand the value of this meeting and the chance they have to meet different stakeholders and policymakers, especially the Mayor and the Councillors. Part of the last workshop sessions aimed to produce the communication tool that helped take into consideration this interactive level, especially once young people were asked to think about who they wanted to show the product to and the audience this would be targeted towards. Step-by-step, the facilitators prepared the children for these discussions. Two extra sessions were aimed to prepare the youth group for the Mutual Learning Event and a big part of it was also to collect young people's expectations and discuss among the group if the expectations were achievable or not and if not how this could be mitigated. A slightly different approach was taken with the preparation of stakeholders in Italy, especially for policymakers. Partners produced an invitation letter in order to sensitise the attendees about the nature of the event and spell out what to expect from the Mutual Learning Event, since it was very difficult to meet with them before the event. The invitation letter included general data like the date, the venue, the agenda and details about the CUIDAR project but also specific information about the group of children and young people who participated in the project and what exactly a Mutual Learning Event is (and what to expect). The invitation letter did not include any detail about Article 12 but this topic was one of the first discussed at the Mutual Learning Event.



In Spain, preparatory sessions with children and young people were held in all locations, either in their schools or at their youth centre. The objective was to review the work done in Work Package 3, to ask doubts and reinforce learning, and then prepare for the Mutual Learning Event. Partners thought through possible experts to be invited with the children and facilitated the children to create their presentations for the event (who are we? what have we done? what is our message?) Thinking through possible topics to discuss with/to ask to each of the experts was also a large focus of the preparation. Before the day of the Mutual Learning Event, all children and young people knew the programme (timetable, contents, and objectives), their roles during the event (working in small discussion groups, taking pictures, writing a report...) and the participating stakeholders who were due to attend.

### *Expectation setting*

Expectations of both stakeholders and children varied over the five partner countries. All teams worked to manage and set expectations based on the contexts in which they were working. The first step towards doing this was open and frank dialogue to help establish where various stakeholders were in their thinking. For example, in the 1<sup>st</sup> site in Athens, stakeholders revealed that they expected they would simply inform children about natural hazards and their treatment. Facilitators explained that what they needed to happen was interaction with the children that fostered a conversation, a dialogue, and meant stakeholders were listening to the opinions of the children, working to include them in their design and to support similar actions as well as to cooperate with the children to disseminate knowledge. The 2<sup>nd</sup> site partners ran in Athens reported that many of the practitioners did not know what to expect from their contact with the children, as they had not been in contact in the past with deaf or hard-of-hearing students. For example, the rescue workers had never before met deaf individuals, so they did not know what to expect. In case of Thessaloniki the children had sent e-mail to the Hellenic Rescue Team in order to invite them to their school. The children wanted to have the opportunity to meet members of this team and share their ideas and their knowledge with them. The members of the Hellenic Rescue Team had planned to make a presentation in order to inform children about the benefits of the forest, the risks of

fire in a forest and issues regarding right action in case of fire (e.g. how to escape in case of fire or the steps “stop, drop and roll” when someone’s clothes catch on fire), etc. During this learning event in school the members of the Hellenic Rescue Team were impressed of children’s active participation, their knowledge, their questions and their ideas which have been shaped and revealed during the workshops of CUIDAR. To help set expectations, the majority of partners sent detailed information ahead of time to key invitees including CUIDAR leaflets, documents or reports to stakeholders (along with the invitations) describing the processes of ‘mutual learning’ and results of the workshops, including the measures proposed by the children thus far related to the topic chosen.

In Glasgow, facilitators asked stakeholders to note their expectations on a flipchart displayed at the refreshments table at the event and also designed a survey monkey survey where a question around expectations was asked retrospectively. Stakeholders responded that they expected to ‘hear the view of children’, that they ‘didn’t have specific expectations and came with an open mind’ and that ultimately, they expected to ‘speak to children about their understanding of the relevant issues and their link to the health hazard and fire risk’ showing that stakeholders had been prepared on the technicality of the topic and to listen and hear the children’s perspectives. The emphasis in all partners’ Mutual Learning Events on a child-led methodology also underscored the expectations for external stakeholders. The Italian CUIDAR partners state that “the dynamics in place and the way in which the Mutual Learning Events were run, especially the fact that were completely child-led, confirmed or changed any expectation that attendees had about the event. We could see how attendees felt comfortable in the different methodologies adopted during the event, sometimes CUIDAR facilitators had to support the young people to manage some adults, especially during the small group work, but in general the stakeholders adapted their behaviour to the situation empathizing with the young participants.”

### 3.4 Provision of local/regional Mutual Learning Events

Each CUIDAR partner was required to run at least two Mutual Learning Events. Below is a table laying out the number held across the project.

CUIDAR PARTNER	NO. OF MUTUAL LEARNING EVENTS	LOCATIONS
SPAIN	4	Barcelona Gandesa Sant Celoni Lorca
PORTUGAL	2	Albufeira and Loures
GREECE	4	Thessaloniki, Volos, Athens (3 sites)
ITALY	4	Ancona, Crotona, Genova, Concordia
UK	8	Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Swansea, Croydon, Thanet, Salford, Rochdale
Total	22	

*Attendance:*

In nearly all cases, the children that participated in Work Package 3 workshops were all the same children attending the Mutual Learning Events. It should be noted that not all children had specific roles within the event itself.



Fig 6: Children and stakeholders at one of the Portuguese

MLEs

Attendance of stakeholders generally showed good uptake of those professionals and adults which children worked to identify in the stakeholder mapping during the planning phase of the event. This is a testament to understanding the local context as it related to the specific theme discussed by each group (a skill honed in Work Package 3) and the power of children leading on invitations. Partners in Italy fed-back that when attendance was uncertain, they relied on conveying the message that children wanted

and requested attendance to ensure a 'yes'. This was particularly successful for those in greater positions of authority.

*In general, the stakeholders invited were reluctant to confirm the invitation and we had to call or write them emails several times to receive their confirmation. In the end, half of the invited participated including the strategic stakeholders and policy makers (like the Mayor or Municipal councillor) in positions of power to make changes. We stated that young people wished them to participate.*

Below is a snapshot of the typical make up of stakeholders attending a Mutual Learning Event, regardless of 'theme' or type of disaster chosen:

- Department of Education staff
- Council members
- Town/City Mayors
- Civil Protection staff
- Teachers/Headteachers
- Other students (those who have not taken part in CUIDAR)
- Resilience Officers
- Local members of Parliament
- Members of the Parents Associations
- Emergency planners
- Local Red Cross groups/representatives
- Regional Ombudsman
- Local/community group representatives
- Psychologists
- Technical staff (i.e. fire fighters, forestry specialists etc.)
- Parents

#### **SPOTLIGHT: Thessaloniki**

All 26 children participated in the Mutual Learning Event in Thessaloniki. This included both children with and without disabilities hailing from a Primary School and from a Special School of Hard of Hearing Children. Three were hard of hearing students (two boys and one girl). In order to ensure the equal participation of all children, the teachers used differentiated material for the hard of hearing students and encouraged all children to participate together and equally to all activities.

The stakeholders were two members of the Hellenic Rescue Team, employees in the Municipality of Thessaloniki, foresters from the Forestry of Thessaloniki, employees from the G.S.C.P. (for example psychologists), other students and teachers of the school, parents and representatives of other educational authorities. All of them had different specialties

and roles in their organisations but all were relevant with the “theme” of disasters and more specifically, with fires and issues of prevention and resilience. The members of the G.S.C.P. also had experience in issues of children's protection.

Also invited were children's parents, other students and teachers of the school, the Coordinator of the University of Thessaly and representatives of various authorities and services (educational authorities, Forestry of Thessaloniki, etc). All of them interacted with children in various ways (e.g. workshops during the event). Parents of the hard of hearing students also attended and were supportive, wanting to know how they can be prepared in case of risks.

### *The Venues:*

Within the Work Package 4's Mutual Learning Exercise guidelines, the space in which the event was to be held had one stipulation, that it be an ‘environment able to aid effective participation from children and other stakeholders’. In essence, the venue needed to be an enabling and safe space that children were empowered to choose and feel comfortable in. Initially, it was thought that schools were a less than ideal choice for a Mutual Learning Event. We feared that schools held traditional notions of learning that would make it difficult to achieve. However, reporting shows that schools were often the safest space identified by children and facilitators and one from where they were able to access tailored and reliable support. As a result, it is the most frequently chosen venue for a Mutual Learning Event to take place. For example, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> school in Athens (the visit of the Rescuers-Volunteers, occurred at school, which was an intimate place for the children.

Type of Venue	Number of MLEs held in type of venue
Museum	1
School	6
Local Government Buildings	5
Library	2
Youth Space	2
General conference venue	3
Practitioner/Stakeholder sites: (Fire Station etc.)	2
Other – (neighbourhood festival)	1

*We chose the venue to be the students' school, because the children are familiar with the space. They also played the role of the host. Also, because the stakeholders will enter the children's field, they will see their work, they will see the students in their environment, and we believe that they will raise awareness about child rights and disability issues. Greek CUIDAR Partner*



Fig 7: Young people in Swansea hold their Mutual Learning Event at the city's council chambers

Though it was suggested that when and where possible children be empowered to choose the venue, this was often not possible due to time pressures and the complexities of the logistics of planning the event.

### *Facilitation*

A central question was around the facilitation of the event and whether or not children had been able to co-facilitate any/all parts of the event but also whether or not other facilitators had been able to build relationships with children and key stakeholders that would enable a good foundation for productive dialogues. In nearly all cases, the Mutual Learning Events were mainly led by either the children and young people or were facilitated by the CUIDAR facilitators/partners. In some instances, like in Ancona and Crotona, children were consulted with about whether or not they preferred an external facilitator to be brought in for the event. However, children stated they were more comfortable with CUIDAR facilitators leading parts of the event. In the case of Greece, the facilitators were often a team of persons since the teachers of the children were always involved as well as as well and they had accompanied the children to all events and activities. During the activities the children's teachers translated into the Greek Sign Language. The translation into the Greek Sign Language was made by an apprentice

student of Greek Sign Language during the visit to the Museum of Children's Emotions in Athens.

Effective facilitation is one of the key ingredients needed for a successful dialogue. Ideally, all facilitators would be experienced educators with specific knowledge in participative processes and group facilitation, would be able to create a safe space for young people to express their views and needs and would be willing to get involved actively in the discussion.

#### Reflection on the facilitation role in Italy:



Fig 8: Picture of the venue room during the project presentation in Ancona

*"During the small group round tables, the CUIDAR facilitators supported the CUIDAR youth group to express their views and needs freely in front of the stakeholders and also supported the adults to interact with the young people. At the beginning this process was a bit slow, the stakeholders took a while to understand their role and the young people were a little bit shy. After a while and , with the support of the CUIDAR facilitators*

*and the CUIDAR staff (coordinator and officer), who in the first stage helped them to promote the discussion, they started feeling more confident and start talking and interacting with the adults in a constructive and respectful way and so did the adults, respecting children's point of views and discussing a way to try to reach a consensus on the topics that arose.*

*Also, the stakeholders, at the beginning of this activity, were a little reluctant to expose themselves but after the first moments they felt more relaxed and understood what was expected from them. Despite some cases where some local experts were very active and start talking too much without respecting the timings, in general, all the adults were very respectful of their roles and those of the children. The CUIDAR facilitators helped to keep participants within their boundaries and promoted the discussion. Everyone listens to understand and gain insights about others' different perspectives and information."*

### SPOTLIGHT of a Mutual Learning Event: Belfast, Northern Ireland

As a community that has faced civil disorder as part of “The Troubles”, the young people felt that the community had unique and relevant experience of the type of emergencies likely to affect them. However, the young people agreed there was very little consideration or evidence that informing and supporting children was a priority in emergency response. Therefore, they wanted adults to hear this directly and to understand why one of their key calls to action was to have a child-friendly leaflet on what to do in an emergency situation. The Mutual Learning Event in Belfast was split into two sections: The first was a presentation to over 100 children at the primary School. To ensure equal participation, the first 45 minutes was a presentation solely by the Primary 6/Primary 7 class. This allowed the children to present their ideas without interruption and allowed them to tell their own story. The work of CUIDAR participants was showcased and this encouraged peer learning within the setting. The second, was a smaller-scale dialogue event where 15 of the children who participated in the project interacted with over 30 adults, including, parents from the community, Emergency Planning Officers from Belfast’s City Council and designated Emergency Preparedness Group and representative from the British Red Cross. There was also attendance of 10-20 adults from the local community who were interested in hearing children’s views on emergencies, some of these included parents of pupils who lived in the local area. They discussed agreed topics of 1) How do we engage with children to have their views heard 2) The CUIDAR project and how it worked in the school 3) The child-friendly leaflet. Table-based conversation was kept going by the groups themselves, with some of the children floating from small group to small group to share their experiences with different people.

The children were supported by a classroom assistant as one of the children had learning difficulties. She provided ongoing one to one support for the duration of the event. The class teacher also supported the children with the presentation, and the event was introduced by the Headteacher.

The young people had planned to have three elements to their Mutual Learning Event. These were: 1) a presentation using PowerPoint that outlined their learning journey as a group 2) a drama presentation that they felt would explain the terms of emergencies,



disasters and how to be prepared better for younger children 3) distribution of the leaflet that they had designed.

The children decided all aspects of the event as it was their event. Ownership was taken from the beginning and set the tone for the day. Discussions were self-facilitated with both children and adults contributing to the conversation and engaging in dialogue. This informal approach ensured that there was no pressure, there were some nudges from facilitators to encourage all the children to speak or to clarify points however, the children were confident enough to talk about their experiences. The programme was inherently child-friendly as it had been conceived by the children. Adults were assigned roles but the children were really seen as 'the creative directors' of the leaflet, of the play and of the presentation.

The main facilitator of the programme was Debs Erwin, a youth work consultant with extensive experience of engaging with children and young people both locally and also internationally. Debs was chosen as her skills, experience and ideas of how to translate the CUIDAR project framework into the local context was deemed to be meet the criteria. She worked in partnership with the teacher who taught the class and therefore had a strong relationship with the children and the project.

The stakeholders mentioned above noted different messages to take-away from the event. The British Red cross representative felt that the format used to engage and equip young people was something that he would be taking to his organisation as a model of effective practice and requested that the session plans used for CUIDAR be sent to him to share as a learning resource. The representative from the Emergency Preparedness Group requested that the project be shared with his colleagues and felt it could be used with other schools in his area. He requested a meeting to ensure opportunities can be explored. The representative from Belfast City Council was interested in the leaflet that was produced and determined it should be cascaded to other children throughout Belfast. He is currently seeking funds to have additional copies of the leaflet printed and disseminated to other children through appropriate channels.

The children fed-back that they found the day daunting, especially those that had made speeches as part of the PowerPoint presentation to their peers. Though they found this tough, one participant noted that they "really loved having juice and buns and talking to

the bigwigs from the council". They listed their top hope for the event was that other children should see and like their leaflet: this looks likely to be accomplished.

### 3.5 Communication of key findings from the events

Partners reported on the key outputs from their Mutual Learning Event's small group and plenary discussions as well as actions and pledges made during the event. In some cases, there were solid outcomes and evidence of successful influencing building momentum for Work Package 5's national events. However, in all instances we saw and heard a crystallisation to the commitment to listen to, value and seek children's perspectives and opinions and an increased awareness in the value of working with children and producing child-friendly material in both policy and practice. As a project, we must emphasise the equal weighting of importance of both the specific, technical outcomes and the wider outcome related to increasing awareness and uptake of methodologies relating to children's participation in local emergency planning. We highlight these below.

#### *Communication about the Mutual Learning Events*

In Portugal, a report summarising the work done by the CUIDAR project in the municipalities of Albufeira and Loures, describes the workshops with children and the Mutual Learning Exercises. This report was distributed to the participants in the Work Package 5 event and was also sent to Portugal's national advisory board for the CUIDAR project. The Portuguese partner also sent a two-page synthesis of the main results from Work Package (Dialogues) and WP4 (Mutual Learning Exercises) with all the invitations to the Work Package 5 (National Awareness Raising) event. The guest list included all municipal civil protection services (305), coordinators of the Child Friendly Cities initiatives, the National Authority for Civil Protection, the Ministry of Education, the National Council for Education, all institutional members that have collaborated with CUIDAR activities, as well as interviewees from Work Package 2 and some press members.



Fig 9: Display of

the children's work from Portugese MLEs

In Greece, similar actions took place, because during the WP5 event all activities related to WP3 and WP4 including the learning events were presented and also discussed with the guests, which included representatives from several organisations (e.g. the Earthquake planning and protection organization, the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious affairs, Museums). Also, the children from all schools prepared presentations regarding the WPR and the WP4 activities and presented them to their parents, students from their schools that did not participate in the workshops and other guests that were invited at school

#### SPOTLIGHT: Spain

Spanish CUIDAR partners did not discuss dissemination strategies of outcomes, actions and pledges during their Mutual Learning Events as there was an understanding amongst the children, young people and adults that this would start in earnest during preparation for WP5 (National Awareness Raising). However, they were able to make some efforts to disseminate Mutual Learning Event's outputs via mass media. The only location where no media attended was Barcelona. The local Sant Celoni's radio station interviewed young people, stakeholders and CUIDAR staff, and the Civil Protection Press Officer (participating as one of the stakeholders) published a tweet via the Civil Protection twitter account; in Gandesa a regional TV covered the Mutual Learning Event as news; and in Lorca, three online newspapers published a note about the Mutual Learning Event.



Fig 10: Sant Celoni's local radio station interviews (from left to right) the Catalan Civil Protection Press Officer, the CUIDAR team leader and the Chemical Industry Safety, Health & Environmental Manager participating in the MLE



Canal 21, a regional TV channel, interviews CUIDAR team leader.

### Actions and pledges: A selection from various sites

Country (site)	Actions/pledges from Mutual Learning Events
UK (Thanet)	<p>Work with community wardens to ensure that other schools in the area can access Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) videos and similar engagement.</p> <p>School plan to visit Westminster and influence the local MP.</p> <p>Stakeholders agreed to make resources child-friendly.</p> <p>Deliver communications using a range of style (drama, music, art etc.) beyond written documents.</p> <p>Engage better with technology when engaging with children.</p>
Spain (Barcelona)	<p>The Press Officer of the Catalan Government Firefighters of the offered their YouTube channel to upload the children's video agreed in the small group.</p> <p>The Forestry Engineer stated she would share their risk map (done during WP3 and included in their exhibition for the MLE) with their colleagues to make them aware of their work.</p> <p>The local Firefighter invited children to go back to their Prevention Room and show</p>

	<p>them all the things they usually do in there, as well as to visit the Park.</p> <p>The teachers from the Forest School invited them to visit.</p> <p>Their school director committed herself to do all the necessary arrangements to organize the Forest party next year.</p>
UK (Salford)	<p>The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) has submitted funding bids to do more resilience work in schools. They are putting together child-friendly information and would like to run it past the children in the school first.</p> <p>AGMA has already raised some of the children's ideas at a global resilience forum ran by the UN in Mexico</p>
Italy (Ancona)	<p>A representative of the Ombudsman of the Marche Region expressed interest in knowing more about the project and sharing the project results with the Regional Counsellor and the Mayors of the 87 municipalities of the Marche involved in the Central Italy earthquake. She committed to organising an event and has since contacted the CUIDAR coordinator to organise a meeting with the municipalities (due September 2017). The CUIDAR coordinator shared the information with the Ancona youth group and together they decided that a representative will be present at the event and will present the project and their final communication tool (the web page) to the audience.</p> <p>The Municipal counsellor Head of Social Services and social policies department committed to sharing the Piano alla Mano web site within the municipality web page in order to disseminate the tool.</p>
Italy (Concordia)	<p>The youth group wanted to know if the local administration was planning to reconstruct some of the places they were used to attending, like the old school which they preferred to the temporary one, the local theatre and the main church and which other options they have, since the population and the young people</p>

	<p>were still not informed about these decisions that affect their lives.</p> <p>The Mayor recognised the importance of sharing information about reconstruction projects with the local community and children and young people and welcomed children's questions. At the end of the event, he explained the Municipality projects and plans for the buildings children mentioned in the video sharing these information in front of all the school students and teachers.</p>
Italy (Crotone)	<p>The Mayor emphasised the importance of involving children in the decision-making process. The main gaps brought to his attention were related to the poor conditions of school buildings, which in case of floods are at risk and need maintenance. The Mayor publicly welcomed their concern and together with the Head of the Regional Civil Protection Agency he said he will engage with the youth group to disseminate the new Municipality Emergency Plan in the school.</p>
Greece (Volos)	<p>The representative of the fire service offered to make corrections to the school fire safety measures after discussion with children. He committed to demonstrating the right way to evacuate the school in the event of a fire.</p>
UK (Glasgow)	<p>Three children explained how their parents are not able to make sure fire/smoke alarms work or generally read fire safety advice. Fire services offered to do a home fire safety test in their homes. For this, parents would have to phone them which the children felt they wouldn't do because they can't read the information and didn't feel able to speak on the phone in English. Between children, fire services and the school it was agreed that a translated letter was to be sent to the parents advising of the visit on an opt-out basis.</p>
UK (Swansea)	<p>After visiting the different stations set up by children and over the buffet lunch of the event, there were key personnel from the fire service, the police and the emergency planners discussing better ways to communicate and to include young people's voices in decision making. The discussions</p>

	<p>lead to young people being asked if they would attend a focus group.</p> <p>The emergency planners have requested a toolkit from CUIDAR so that they can run this programme again with their reengagement officers in schools.</p>
UK (Belfast)	The representative from Belfast City Council was interested in the leaflet that was produced be cascaded to other children throughout Belfast. He is seeking funds to have additional copies printed and disseminated to children through appropriate channels.
Greece (Volos)	The representative of the fire service offered to act in order to improve the school fire safety measures after discussion with children. Also, he realized that it was important for children to know how to evacuate the school in the event of a fire.
Greece 1 <sup>st</sup> site in Athens	The representatives of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, committed to make accessible material for children with disabilities and visit more special educational settings as well as to cooperate with the children and inform the community.
Portugal (Albufeira)	The most specific proposal came from the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade group, who proposed to create Civil Protection Youth Clubs. The proposal was welcomed by the local Civil Protection Council Woman, and the Civil Protection talked to the youngsters to exchanged ideas about what could be done.
Portugal (Loures)	The most specific proposal put forward was the suggestion of the Coordinator of the Loures School Cluster to distribute the 4 <sup>th</sup> grade flyer to all the school classes in primary education (1 <sup>st</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> grade), suggesting also that the Municipality distributed it to all the primary schools in Loures. The proposal was well received and implemented one month later. The 9th grade school coordinator is considering implementing some of the participants suggestions about peer training in the next school year.

### Key Outputs: Some examples from partners

In Swansea, it was deemed that the children's voices were important and needed to be heard. The event showed that, interestingly, those in key roles within the Council and within the emergency services such as police, fire, ambulance services thought that what they were doing was enough in terms of listening to the children's voices, but the event highlighted that there was clearly a gap in their planning and procedures and this was something they all pledged to examine. All attendees promised to ensure that in future planning they would consult with children as this event had made them realise that they had not previously taken their opinions into account. A stakeholder from Natural Resources Wales said that he'd taken away "how amazing children are with learning about the type of thing we would usually try to shelter them from" and he was keen to include children as key stakeholders in their decision making going forward.

In Portugal, the most specific proposal put forward was the suggestion of the Coordinator of the Loures School Cluster to distribute the 4<sup>th</sup> grade flyer to all the school classes in primary education (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade), suggesting also that the Municipality distributed it to all the schools of primary education in Loures. The proposal was well received and implemented one month later. Regarding the 9<sup>th</sup> grade proposals on renovating the school buildings and accesses, holding a litter cleaning competition and peer training younger people on safety procedures at school, no firm commitments were made during the event. However, partners later learned that the municipality covered the potholes in the school path and that the school is considering implementing the competition and peer training.

In Edinburgh, the Head of Policy for Resilient Scottish Communities, took an interest in the method of engagement when working with young people and stated that Local Authorities could be far more effective at creating a dialogue with young people. She has since been granted permission to share the CUIDAR UK WP3 guidelines with all local authority Community Resilience Officers in Scotland to be shared: 1) on Ready Scotland's *how to resource* and 2) in YouthLink Scotland's Toolkit currently being developed to enable youth workers to build resilience among young people.



### Highlighted Quotes

*Had a wonderful visit today with kids from Craigmillar and Niddrie who are taking part in Save the Children UK's Take Care programme. The programme helps children become more resilient to emergencies and disasters. These kids made a comic book about keeping safe in a flood. They did a fabulous job!*, Ash Denham, Member of the Scottish Parliament

*Working on this project has helped us build a dialogue with the children and have conversations about the things that worry them, bullying and relationships with other children and families within their communities kept cropping up and it's helped us shape our future work with the children.* Lorraine Grady, Manager – Multi-Cultural Family Bases (Edinburgh)

*You are like a kind of guardians of the forest you have next to you: it and everything that lives there are very lucky, because you want to take care of it. We congratulate you because it is amazing what we have seen and the work you have done.* - Forest School teacher in Barcelona

*All the work you have done is very, very, very important for the firefighters, because our society only thinks of fires when they see the smoke, and then they want a firefighter to go there and turn it off. That children like you are working on this subject is very important to us because we can also learn a lot from you.* Catalan Firefighters' Head Press Officer.

*These kinds of activities are interesting so we can know how young people access the information, and gaining some clues about how we can improve our communication strategies.* - Civil Protection Press Officer, Sant Celoni

*Young people can improve whatever we decide.* -participant in Lorca

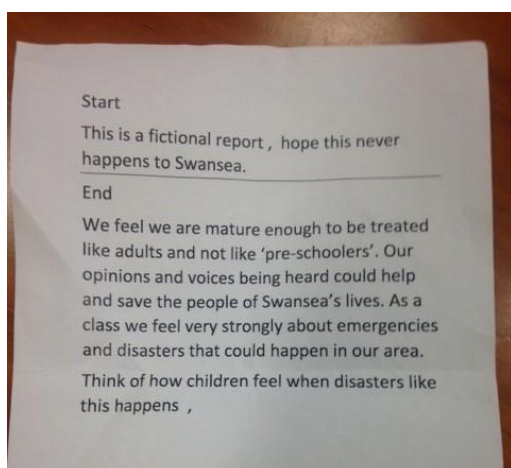


Fig 11: A part of the presentation of key messages in Swansea

### *Points of learning from partners*

The Italian partner reported that the Mutual Learning Event had been a ‘test run’ for the WP5 National Event, in order to understand what can be done better and which strength the event format could take on. For example, it was agreed that a key strength of the MLEs was both the presentation of the UNCRC and Article 12 and the CUIDAR project’s aims and goals. Stakeholders understood clearly how the young people had benefitted from the project. Moreover, the small group, round table methodology was something useful to replicate at national level and that the leading of this activity could be done by the young people along with the facilitators.

In Volos, an important challenge was the early childhood setting as well the diverse needs of the children with disabilities. In many cases, due to the age but also, due to low access to information the concept of the community was not perceived beyond family and school. It was also difficult to invite stakeholders to school or to move children out of school due to the legislation of the education system of Greece, which in the future, if it was more flexible, would facilitate the visit of other stakeholders as well. Another challenge in case of Greece was to prepare or facilitate the stakeholders in order to communicate with the appropriate way with children with disabilities including those with multiple disabilities.

In Spain, it was noted that the children enjoyed working in the smaller group settings better and were able to pay closer attention than in plenary or larger groups. It was also found to be useful to split themes into different topics and areas of expertise, because it helped focus the discussion for both children and young people and stakeholders. The challenge is to merge them all and come up an integrated approach or an implementation plan that involves different areas of expertise/action. It was also noted that it was important for children and young people to address the negative aspects of the topic (risk, disaster, fear...), as it helps them to become aware of its relevance, but also the positive aspects of the topic (capabilities, resilience, learning, sharing...) so they feel empowered to act upon it.

### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Most sites did post-event evaluations with stakeholders and children in order to judge how well expectations were met, what outcomes were achieved, what was learnt across stakeholder groups and how the general experience of co-creation and mutual dialogue was perceived.

#### **SPOTLIGHT: UK (Glasgow)**

Facilitators conducted a post-event survey of stakeholders. Of the responses gathered, it was found that:

- Increase in awareness of benefits of consulting with children was reported by 100% of respondents. While most respondents had a prior awareness of the importance of engaging with children, one respondent had a very low awareness of this and the event has increased this significantly, with a 75% likelihood to engage children in future work.
- All respondents felt that they received sufficient information prior to the event.
- Three respondents fed back on which part of the day they found most useful and this was evenly split between children demonstrating their work, question and answer session and pledges.

A reported outcome of the event was a link created with the Housing Association and the school to engage with children next term on waste management and recycling. This was a topic which was linked, as waste management is a significant issue in this overcrowded area and recycling information is not provided in accessible ways. This poses risks of fire, injury and infestations/diseases.

Suggestions were to have a wider range of ages represented and a larger group of children attending the MLE.

There was evidence of mutual learning between different agencies too, as reported by one respondent who was now more aware of community engagement of emergency services and how the school could proactively improve the home environment of their pupils. Another respondent mirrored this by explaining how partnership working was facilitated by the event and how fire safety and referrals for home fire safety visits will be made by their organisation. Furthermore, the idea of conveying important information through simple visuals and engaging drawings was well received by a respondent, which was mirrored in discussions where this idea was taken up by various organisations for developing more accessible information on a variety of issues to those that do not have English as a primary language and/or do not have high literacy skills.

### SPOTLIGHT Portugal:

Facilitators created an online survey (mostly open questions) targeted at teachers, stakeholders and 9<sup>th</sup> grade participants, performed focus group evaluations with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade children and also had a post-event discussion with 3 participants from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (the other were unable to participate). A few months after the MLE they interviewed the school coordinator in order to assess if the recommendations made by the youngsters were followed through.

Children from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade feedback that they enjoyed the MLE and they felt glad that people appreciated their work, particularly the video they produced of their work and recommendations. Two out of the three focus groups with children stated they felt a bit frustrated because they couldn't present their posters in more detail (the time constraints of the event unfortunately didn't allow for that). The children also noticed that the 9<sup>th</sup> grade presentation had technical difficulties and that they were not as well prepared as themselves. They were surprised and appreciated the snacks at the end of the MLE. One of the groups stated that they felt they participated more during the workshops than during the MLE event (with regard to having their ideas listened to). One of the participants stated that she would have liked to talk a little more in the event in order to emphasise the message that adults should respect and listen to children more.

The 9<sup>th</sup> graders stated that the MLE was better than they expected. Most of them reported subjective feelings of enhanced self-confidence, and reported to have learned a lot about disasters and about how to proceed in a flood situation. They also liked meeting new people. In general, they stated that the event gave them a lot of opportunity to express themselves.

*I enjoyed being part of a project that not only helps me, it helps thousands of people.*

*The impact I think is great but for our age there are certain points that should be more interactive.*

Teachers also enjoyed the event, declaring that they themselves acquired new knowledge about disaster risk management, and that the children were very enthusiastic. They suggested that future projects should include simulation events and visits to risk areas.

Among the stakeholders, one stressed how well prepared the children were in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade on the topic of disaster risk reduction, and stated that is important to change




mind-sets in this respect. Another highlighted the pedagogical character of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade video. Both remarked how interactive the session was, allowing for proper dialogue. Finally, both suggested that the project should involve more children in other contexts.

Stand-out quote:

*We always learn. We always learn from each other. And in fact, being able to participate in a session like these with children in grades 4 and 9 is really a unique learning experience. This is fabulous! It is here that one must begin, by listening to these children, because their naiveté conveys to us what purity is! Their honesty, frankness, therefore, is where we can take, in fact, a ... I will not say experience, because they have no experience, of course, but a honesty about things, about which we can reflect. [Operational Commander of the Municipal Civil Protection Service]*

## 4. Key Messages and Conclusions

*Key findings and trends of the CUIDAR project's Mutual Learning Events:*

-  Co-working was very important for children and young people to witness evidence of mutual interest in learning and partaking in dialogue. Discussing and finding common solutions with stakeholders, CUIDAR participants realised how much the project enhanced their knowledge about disaster risk reduction and their skills and abilities, that what experts, civil protection officials and other attendees were saying about preparedness and mitigation measures was not new to them and that they could contribute new information and a fresh perspective to the debates. Also, this helped enhance their self-esteem and motivated them to look for more participative events with adults, effectively enhancing their self-efficacy in the power of their own voice.
-  Working in small groups works best when dealing with highly diverse populations and issues around lack of language skills. Avoiding plenary sessions and letting these children choose their own particular roles that they own worked really well.
-  The lack of child-friendly, inclusive materials, planning processes, communication strategies was noted in almost every Mutual Learning Event as something that was either completely missing or where the knowledge base of stakeholders need to be significantly capacity-built.

- ✚ In general, CUIDAR participants learnt more from the whole process (i.e. the entirety of the project and its methodologies to date) rather than from a single attendee or expert. They felt empowered from organising and leading the events, and were able to interact with adults as peers discussing topics they too were experts on, searching for solutions towards a common objective. Across the board there was feedback that children and young people's awareness of their own power and rights was heightened, and that they had increased confidence to participate effectively in decision-making processes that reduce risks.
- ✚ The need for more children to learn (more) about emergencies and risk in a school-based setting (especially in the UK) was clearly stated by several participants across several sites.
- ✚ Children were largely unaware of the structures within their country context to respond to emergencies and legislate policy to better enable response. Empowerment comes as much from understand where the balance of power lies as it does from participating in power-based structures. Children should be made aware of this within the education context.
- ✚ Pledges and accountability mechanisms are key to ascertaining and following up on changes mooted during the Mutual Learning Events. During CUIDAR's MLEs, there was a mixed approach by partners regarding whether or not they used the 'pledge' mechanism to track changes and follow up on their implementation. Noticeably, where pledges were made and accountability pathways established, changes happened at a more rapid and frequent rate.

### Management of Emotions: A recurring theme

Work Package 3 identified that managing emotions and feelings was a topic that arose in many groups across the project, both among children and young people that experienced disasters but also among those who want to be prepared.

We saw this theme continue into the Mutual Learning Events, especially in Sant Celoni and Lorca where children discussed and introduced solutions to this issue.

In Sant Celoni, these solutions were: i) *Emotions management in an emergency*: psychologists should give talks about this topic in schools for young people, in a funny and

interactive way (read child-friendly), for instance, using role-playing activities, simulations and drills, using a real-life version or with virtual reality tools; 'risk experts' should explain that there is no need to be afraid because risk is under control; in case of an accident, giving support to children and young people with specific accompanying sessions to deal with the fear they have gone through; include advice about how to deal with fear in case of emergency, in the security protocol of action.

In Lorca, these solutions were: i) *Resilience and care*: create a young persons' peer support group to be activated in case of an earthquake; look for allies to make their voices be heard; create new solutions based on past experiences (i.e. use the expertise of experience in planning). ii) *Emotions management in an emergency*: learn how to deal with fear in case of an earthquake, if you are unaccompanied by adult and in case you are at home or in the street; learn how to deal with your fear in order to help other people around you.

The stakeholders reflected positively and with interest on the above:

*"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"* [Civil Protection Local Officer]

*"The information about how to manage fear that we give to YP 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."* [Emergencies Psychologist]

The importance of the 'process' of WP4's mutual learning and dialogues between children and adults must be seen as equally valuable to the outcomes of said influencing. The impact of this is often going to be built on cumulative interactions that must be well prepared for and well facilitated.

Creativity and innovative thinking were widely displayed during the Mutual Learning Events. The possible solutions put forward and highlighted 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 with how to communicate their messages and how to get people to see and hear these, children and young people are well placed to offer creative solutions to this

problem.

As mentioned several times above, preparation was key to the success of the mutual learning. However, no amount of preparation can replace knowing both the participants and the context well. This is where facilitators, children and stakeholders must challenge themselves to understand the heterogeneity and nuances of their community and the issues that they face. Once this is done, adaptation and flexibility can be built into the preparation that is so vital for this process to succeed.

Children have the capacity to understand that policy change requires time and effort and that this Mutual Learning Event is but one step towards a future goal where children's full participation is realised. Children are aware of the speed at which practice and policy change take place, but are also aware that their work is innovative and that to many policymakers and stakeholders, this is a new way of working that requires practice.



## 5. ANNEXE 1- Framework for the Mutual Learning Exercises

### What is a Mutual Learning Event?

Mutual Learning Events are the way we bring together various groups of stakeholders (in this case, children/young people and local authority emergency planners, police and fire services; schools and local voluntary response organisations) to enable a process of collective analysis to help unlock ideas concerning a specific issue or theme, and to find realistic solutions and recommendations by all involved. The basis of this will be:

- in-depth interactive, thematic dialogue
- mutual questioning and investigation
- exposure to viewpoints, experiences and expectations

Instead of more traditional formats like lectures, panel discussions or debate, Mutual Learning Events don't have active and passive participants. **Everyone is the expert in the room** -- either by experience, study or length of time interacting with the subject matter. **Everyone is a participant who can question, probe, present and inform.** The Mutual Learning Events should be interactive, participatory and focussed on listening and learning between everyone involved so common goals and perspectives can emerge.

The Mutual Learning Events are a direct follow-on from Section 3 of Work Package 3's Workshop Framework (Share Ideas and Advocate). In this, children identified stakeholders and planned and structured what they wanted to see for their events in their region. They also chose a theme upon which to focus their work, advocacy and future discussions. Participation is key to making the Mutual Learning Events work for children and ensuring they are equal and creative participants. They will enable children to fully take part in, and in some cases lead, meaningful conversations that have real impact.

### What has to happen?

- ☒ This is a direct follow-on from the workshops in Work Package 3 and should happen roughly 1 to 3 months after the end of these workshops.
- ☒ Child should be supported and empowered to choose their fellow participants at the Mutual Learning Events through a participative discussion and a soft power analysis (details below) either in or after the workshops.
- ☒ There should be *at least 2* Mutual Learning Events per country and these should last no more than 4 hours or half a day. Anything longer than this will likely be too long for the children.
- ☒ Emergency planners and other civil protection staff are sensitised and supported to engage in dialogues with children prior to the Mutual Learning Events by staff that have interacted with the children and facilitated the workshops.
- ☒ Children from the workshops are brought together with local emergency planners, civil protection staff, parents, teachers and share their ideas of risk and resilience about a specific topic.

- ☒ All participants should be introduced to Article 12 of the UNCRC and the concept of children's right to voicing opinions on decisions that affect their lives at the start of every Mutual Learning Events. From this, a statement of what attendees agree they want to achieve at the event should be produced by every Mutual Learning Event.
- ☒ The key outcomes of the Mutual Learning Events are communicated to key actors who are chosen by the children and via a method chosen by the children.
- ☒ A post-event evaluation is held with children to capture their feelings and thoughts about how the event went and to inform them about the next stage of the project and how their work will be taken forward.

## Prior to the event: Suggestions for optimising the Mutual Learning Events

### Power/Stakeholder Analysis (please see an example on [page 118](#) of PLAN's Child-Led DRR Toolkit)

This is part of the WP3 framework which invites children to have role in mapping key actors and stakeholders as well as investigating who has the power of decision-making in their context. This will need to be carried out in a participatory, engaging way which allows for child-led research and investigation. This should be paired with partners own networks and pre-existing relationships with local actors/stakeholders.

**Objective:** To identify the most influential actors and power brokers in the local context and how they relate to one another, the community and the children.

Tools to use:

- Relationship mapping tools — power mapping, venn diagrams

**Guidance questions:** *(these are just a guide of main areas for children to explore and feedback on)*

Who are the most influential people, groups, organisations and institutions within the context?

Are there any other people, groups, organisations or institutions from outside the context that have influence on the community?

How do these groups work or interact with one another?

Which ones stand to gain from participating in the event with children?

## Sensitisation And Support Of Emergency Planners/Civil Protection Staff

This is a critical step prior to the Mutual Learning Events (MLEs) to ensure adult participants understand, respect and acknowledge children's rights and role in the MLEs. **The shape and level of children's participation in the MLE needs to directly correlate to how well-sensitised adult participants are, otherwise, there is a risk that the event will not only be tokenistic but unsafe for children to effectively participate.**

Below are some useful guides to help steer you in giving adults what they need to create and sustain a safe, enabling environment within which mutual learning takes place. **We strongly recommend you read the pages noted and reference these frequently when pulling together your MLEs.** Particularly, the document *So You Want To Consult With Children?* is a useful tool.

Resource library:

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/globalplatform/entry\\_bg\\_paper~26274kug.pdf.part.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/globalplatform/entry_bg_paper~26274kug.pdf.part.pdf) (Pages 163-164 contain interesting feedback on Focus Discussion Groups (FDGs) and how these were approached, including managing adult presence)

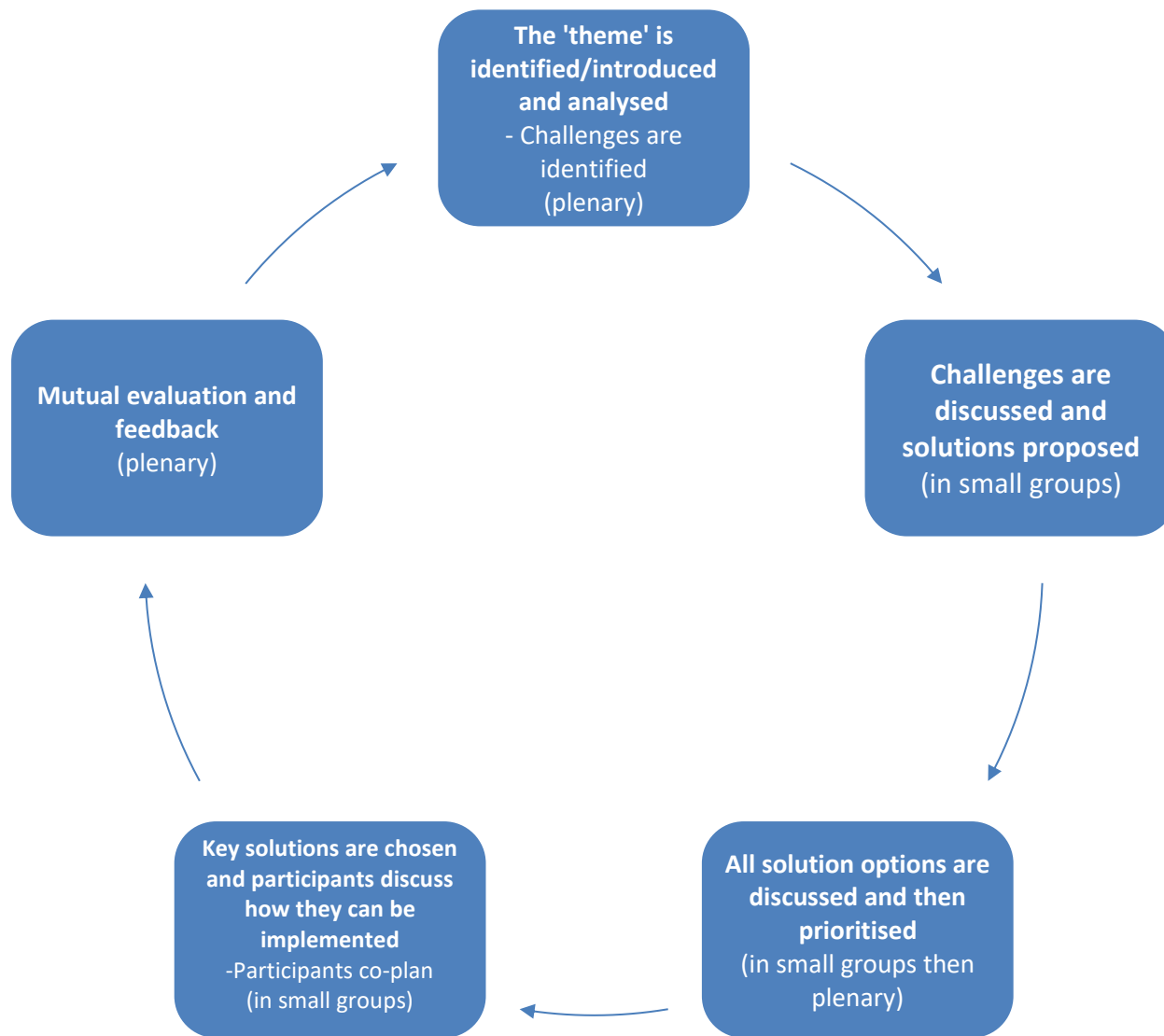
*So You Want To Consult With Children?* Save the Children Child Participation Working Group (Section beginning on page 57–

<https://www.streetchildrenresources.org/resources/so-you-want-to-consult-with-children-a-toolkit-of-good-practice/>)

*Consultations With Children In East Africa For The World Humanitarian Summit* [https://www.unicef.org/somalia/resources\\_16942.html](https://www.unicef.org/somalia/resources_16942.html)

*After Yolanda: What Children Think and Recommend*

<https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/After%20Yolanda%20What%20Children%20Think%20Need%20and%20Recommend%20Joint%20Agency%20Report.pdf>



<b>Aim 1</b> To enable practitioners and policy makers to gain understanding and insight into children's priorities and perceptions of risk in urban contexts and their capacities, taking into account different cultures.		<b>Aim 2</b> To engage in more effective lines of communication between children and young people and enable them to influence local/regional disaster management strategy, empowering children to realise their right to be heard.		
Theme Introduced and analysed: challenges identified	Challenges discussed and solutions proposed	Solution options discussed and prioritised	Solutions chosen and implementation discussed	Mutual Evaluation and Feedback: Next steps
<b>Objective:</b> Explore the theme chosen by the children and how it has affected the community in the past; Identify patterns or trends; Assess level of preparedness currently existing	<b>Objective:</b> Surfaces common and unique challenges and then moves to identify the resources (human, information and financial) to address them	<b>Objective:</b> Uncover innovative ideas and solutions and facilitate consensus around a selection of solutions to the challenge identified.	<b>Objective:</b> Solution options will be discussed to canvas opinion of children and emergency planners focusing on what's urgent, needed and achievable; The chosen solution is made in a democratic, child-led way with input from emergency planners; implementation plan is agreed and discussion should focus on how to plan/work on it further	<b>Objective:</b> Commitment to addressing the identified problems (issues)/gaps in a participatory manner; forming informal/formal social contracts between children and emergency planners; establishing mechanisms for accountability that can be child-friendly and child-led (ownership) and help aid sustainability

## How should children be involved?

Many of the concepts in WP3 have already built a foundation of knowledge and confidence from which the children can comfortably interact on their chosen subject matter and with others. WP4 is the 'bridge' between WP3 and WP5 in terms of how we build and showcase children's voices and participation in order to ensure they're heard by the right people.

Whilst the framework acts as a guide, it is not prescriptive. As an example, children should *at the very least* be empowered to:

- co-facilitate where appropriate
- lead on identifying and inviting stakeholders
- choose the venue
- plan the agenda
- choose how the content of the discussion is to be captured/recorded

Children must be at the centre of every part of this event and that role should be championed and respected. Children should again be reminded of the fact that there are international laws that support them and their right to ask policy-makers that their views and opinions be taken into consideration.

More detailed guidance on how to ensure children are given the right foundation to effectively participate in every part of the Mutual Learning Event (from planning to post-evaluation) is included in the resource *So You Want To Consult With Children?*<sup>5</sup>.

### Key questions And Considerations For Facilitators Of The Mutual Learning Events

	Do any children show the aptitude or interest in facilitating the event alongside you?
	Have facilitators been able to build relationships with children and key stakeholders sufficient enough to establish a good foundation for shared inquiry?

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.stretchchildrenresources.org/resources/so-you-want-to-consult-with-children-a-toolkit-of-good-practice/>

	<p>Is the environment able to aid effective participation from children and other stakeholders?</p> <p><b>Key considerations:</b>          Is the schedule for proposed activities convenient for children?          Is there a mix to suit all styles of children’s interaction and learning (i.e. large groups, small groups, one-on-one conversations)?          What steps have facilitators taken to ensure a ‘safe space’ for <b>dialogue*</b> to happen?</p> <p>*Dialogue – everyone listens to understand and gain insights about others’ different perspectives and information; the space, format, facilitators and attendees allow all views to be expressed; questions are posed from a place of curiosity and NOT from a place of challenge; from this new information and consensus emerges that helps develop and deepen the understanding of all involved whilst informing clear actions to take forward.</p>
	<p>Are anticipated outcomes from the event going to be visible to children? How? Set expectations and accountability from the start.</p>
	<p>How will the event planning, implementation and evaluation processes include children and enable their participation?</p>
	<p>What can you anticipate might hinder children’s participation?</p>

### Evaluation And Reporting Back To The Work Package Lead

Every Mutual Learning Event should be followed by a post-event evaluation that is activity-based.

The final report on WP4 is due **October 2017** thus we would need final feedbacks by **September 2017**. We will be organising separate catch-ups once all the Mutual Learning Events start in earnest in **October 2016**.

Key things we need from all partners *prior* to beginning their respective Mutual Learning Events are:

Who’s coming?
What are the topics of discussion?
When will they be scheduled to take place?

Who will be facilitating?
What are the goals/outcomes you/the children want to achieve?
How will the children be involved?
How have adult participants been sensitised?

Key things we need from all partners *after* their respective Mutual Learning Events are:

What was the 'statement' that attendees agreed they wanted to achieve from the Mutual Learning Event?
How many attended? Who (job titles/role)?
Photos from the event; Presentations; Posters; Meeting minutes; Capture of the discussion; Capture of the post-evaluation with the children; Feedback from the emergency planners/civil protection staff
Actions or pledges that were made
How any actions/pledges will be followed-up (what ideas did children have to stay engaged on the topic with the key actors?)