

EMCITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, CIVIL PROTECTION AND
CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES**



February 4-5, 2004
Heraklion, Crete
Greece



*These proceedings have been published by
EPC European Project Consulting srl Unipersonale*

*Via Prati, 11
Povolaro di Dueville (VI)
Italy
www.epcsrl.eu*

Curator

*Dr Maria Symeonidou-Sideris
CCI – Community Crisis Intervention
Heraklion, Crete, Greece*

*Copyright © 2024 EPC srl & CCI
ISBN 979-12-210-5226-8*



Co-funded by
the European Union

EM-CITY International Conference

Emergency Management, Civil Protection, and Culturally & Linguistically Different Communities (CALD)

Erasmus+ KA2 Youth, 2021-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000029084

Sunday, 4th February 2024

Venue: Heraklion Chamber, Karouzou room, 9th Koronaiou str, Heraklion, P.C.
71202, Greece

Zoom link for the event: https://bit.ly/EMCITY_Final_Conference

Agenda

09:30 – 10:00	Registration - Welcome
10:00 – 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the Conference “Engaging CALD Communities, Creating Future Volunteers amongst Youth” <i>Mr. Giorgos Stratigis Managing Director – Community Crisis Intervention CCI</i>• Region of Crete <i>Mr Ioannis Leontarakis -Deputy Governor, Civil Protection</i>• Municipality of Malevizi <i>Mr. Menelaos Bokeas, Mayor</i>• EM-CITY Project presentation <i>Dr. Handan Akarsu, Project Manager, EPC – European Project Consulting</i>
11:00 – 12:00	<p>Round Table: Civil Protection in Local and Regional Administrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Despoina Syggelaki, Key-Note Speaker, Former Deputy Mayor-Voluntarism, Volunteering Activities in Heraklion Municipality• «Designing and operating an early warning system at regional/local level» <i>Dr. Konstantinos Lagouvardos, Research Director, National Observatory of Athens (online presentation)</i>• Full Scale Exercise projects as means for Optimizing Regional Civil Protection Systems” <i>Dr. Evangellos Katsaros, Key-Note Speaker, Researcher & Civil Protection Expert, CERIDES Center of Excellence, European University Cyprus</i>
12:00 -12:15	Coffee break



12:15 - 14: 00

- **“The role of food in building stronger and more resilient communities in the face of emergencies”**
Dr.Manuela Massi & Dr.Francesca Borga, Project Managers, EPC – European Project Consulting
- **“Multiculturalism and resilience - The experience of the European project AMARE-eu”**
Dr.Francesca Borga, Project Manager, EPC – European Project Consulting
- **“PERCEPTION: Evaluator & Facilitator in Emergency Planning”**
Nilsson Sussane Project Manager, QueSiTe srl, Chatzipanagiotou Kiriaki Senior Project Manager, Center for Social Innovation (CSI), Schuur Kees, EC-VPL and Krantchev Atanas, National Business Development Network

Questions/Feedback/Results





Co-funded by
the European Union

EM-CITY International Conference

Emergency Management, Civil Protection, and Culturally & Linguistically Different Communities (CALD)

Erasmus+ KA2 Youth, 2021-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000029084

Monday, 5th February 2024

Venue: Heraklion Chamber, Karouzou room, 9th Koronaiou str, Heraklion, P.C.
71202, Greece

Zoom link for the event: https://bit.ly/EMCITY_Final_Conference Passcode: 0000

Agenda

09:30 - 10:00	Registration
10:00 - 11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshop: “The effective training of CALD communities in Civil Protection through EMCITY project” <i>Ms Maria Giampoulaki, Project Manager & Researcher, CCI - Community Crisis Intervention</i>• EM-CITY Training experience <i>Giannis Panagiotis Lamprakis, Civil Protection Volunteer</i>• EM-CITY Training Platform <i>Mehmet Emirhan Kula, INNOGO</i> Round Table: Volunteering Initiatives in Civil Protection and Emergency Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Dimitris Steiakakis, <i>Epidrasis NGO– Heraklion</i>• Mr. George Lamprakis, <i>Armed Forces Reserve Club - Heraklion Branch</i>• Mr. Konstantinos Efthymiopoulos, <i>Head of USAR Department Hellenic Rescue Team – Heraklion Branch</i>• Volunteers in Hellenic Fire Service• Mr. Nikolaos Triantafyllidis, <i>Hellenic Volunteers Firefighters Association, Crete Representative</i>
11:15 -11:45	Coffee break
11:45 - 13:30	Round Table: Civil Protection, Emergency Management through Youth and CALD Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The impact of EMCITY project in Young People and CALD Communities” <i>Facilitator: Ms. Maria Giampoulaki, Project Manager & Researcher, CCI</i>



Table of contents

DAY I: SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS

Welcome by Mr Giorgos Stratigis on behalf of Community Crisis Intervention (CCI)	8
Welcome by Mr Ioannis Leontarakis Deputy Governor on behalf of the Region of Crete	9
Civil protection in Malevizi Menelaos Bokeas, mayor, municipality of Malevizi	10
Seizing Opportunities Within Crises: The EM-CITY Project's Innovative Approach to Emergency Management	13
Full Scale Exercise projects as means for Optimizing Regional Civil Protection Systems	21
The role of Food in building stronger and more resilient communities in the face of emergencies	23
Multiculturalism and resilience: The experience of the European project AMARE-eu	33
PERCEPTION: Participatory EmerGenCy Evaluation in civil Protection: Evaluator & Facilitator in Emergency Planning	38

DAY II: WORKSHOP AND VOLUNTEERS' PRESENTATIONS

Workshop: The effective training of CALD communities in Civil Protection through EMCITY project	53
EM-CITY Volunteers: The EM-CITY Training Experience	55
EPIDRASIS NGO - Heraklion	59
Hellenic Rescue Team	61
Volunteers in Hellenic Fire Service	64

DAY I: SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS

Welcome by Mr Giorgos Stratigis on behalf of Community Crisis Intervention (CCI)

Dear colleagues, Honorable guests, friends,

On behalf of CCI and the EM-City consortium, I would like to thank you for attending our conference today on:

Emergency Management, Civil Protection and CALD Communities

Taking a brief look at the recent past, we have tried and succeeded in creating a voluntary organization dedicated to a different culture, that of civil protection in line with the demands of the future.

We managed that by targeting areas where there is either no clear legislative framework or there is a gap in the way a crisis is managed, so we seek the types of interventions that can make our society more resilient.

This is the context of the EM CITY project where we have created the necessary interventions and networking between civil protection agencies and young people from linguistically and culturally diverse communities, bridging a huge gap.

We worked with our partners, with civil protection agencies (decision making centers and services), with voluntary civil protection organizations, with communities with cultural and linguistic diversity and, of course, with young people from the community as a whole.

We have managed to deliberate, research, and create educational material that we will present at tomorrow's conference that will be a tool for local authorities in the context of a better crisis management, including and partnering in this work all members of our community, regardless of their linguistic or cultural background and especially the young people.

Finally, I cannot miss to emphasize the well-intentioned cooperation with all the public authorities and services, as well as with the voluntary civil protection organizations in the community, which we have the pleasure and honor of presenting their work through a separate presentation for each group.

We are committed to new interventions in the future

We empower our communities

We are creating the next generation of volunteers



Welcome by Mr Ioannis Leontarakis Deputy Governor on behalf of the Region of Crete



Good morning to all and wish every success and useful outcomes of today's conference. Outcomes that will make more efficient the involved organisations but will also enforce the cooperation between all. For the stronger enforcement of Heraklion and the island of Crete in general.

I would like to be present with you today, but unfortunately due to a viral infection I am not able, therefore I am addressing you through your online channel.

Thank you for the invitation to participate and address the initiation of the conference and in particular Mr. Giorgos Stratigis. I will attend your very interesting conference online.

Civil protection in Malevizi

Menelaos Bokeas, mayor, municipality of Malevizi

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the invitation, as well as express my support for the philosophy and goals of your activities, which embody some of the leading universal human values.

I would also like to thank you especially for your choice to include the Municipality of Malevizi, which I represent, in your plans and your voluntary actions in the field of civil protection.

Volunteering and social solidarity are important complementary pillars for ensuring the sustainability of today's complex societies, which are facing unprecedented challenges - from the effects of the climate crisis, wars, poverty, persecution and major natural disasters - at the level of social inclusion policies as well as at the cultural level.

Social cohesion in times of crises and emergencies - risks - natural disasters, is an element of strengthening safety and safeguarding the lives of individuals, distinct communities and society as a whole. Young people, in particular, are called on to play a key role in this respect.

Our country and our Municipality have recently experienced, in the most dramatic way, the effects of natural disasters in many ways: with loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, destruction of the economic existence of businesses and households.

The Municipality of Malevizi and especially the wider area of Gazi-Amoudara-Agia Pelagia-Lygaria-Paleokastro need special attention in the field of civil protection. It is an area that is a natural extension and continuation of the Heraklion urban complex, where they coexist:

- *Forest areas (e.g. the very important forest of Keri)*
- *Protected wetlands and gorges (such as the rare wetland of Almyros and the homonymous gorge).*
- *Industrial sites which are subject to the Seveso Directives in terms of the level and provisions for civil protection.*
- *Development of infrastructure that makes the Municipality of Malevizi an energy hub of international importance.*
- *Large areas of mass tourism development.*

At the same time, the Municipality of Malevizi is characterized by geomorphological and demographic diversity and therefore requires differentiated strategies.

On the wider coastal front of the municipality, there are over 300 businesses operating in the tourist sector. The municipality has more than 13,000 beds in organized hotels and there are also more than 3,000 rooms to let.

What does this mean for civil protection? It is easy to see that during the summer period of the main tourist activity (May to September) the population on the coastal front of the municipality more than doubles. In the five most touristic months, the Municipality of Malevizi, a municipality with a population of 25,734, can accommodate more than 250,000 visitors on its coastal front.

We are referring here to people with different languages, mindsets, habits, psychology, knowledge of the objective conditions, who may potentially have to face the risks of earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, fires, attacks, industrial accidents at any time.

In this context we believe that prevention is a very important factor. Some examples:

- 1. Regular efforts are made (in addition to the continuous awareness and information of citizens) to enable us to reduce, with the means we have at our disposal, the areas with dry weeds and eliminate uncontrolled landfills.*
- 2. To keep the crucial main roads open and accessible.*
- 3. We have determined, by region, the most accessible and appropriate places to gather in case of disasters.*
- 4. We have increased and marked the fire hydrants, as well as the mobile firefighting equipment in case of fire (I would like to thank IPTO-Independent Power Transmission Operator- for the donation of two firefighting units for immediate intervention).*
- 5. We have established two fire stations-bases, for the permanent presence of the service in critical strategic points in our Municipality during the fire season.*
- 6. There is planning for similar parking spots for the ambulance services.*
- 7. We hold frequent meetings and updates - in cooperation with the fire department, police, coastguard, army and volunteers - on disaster prevention and civil protection plans.*
- 8. We participate in all drills and training sessions organized for these purposes.*
- 9. There is identification and marking of dilapidated buildings mainly in the villages.*
- 10. There is the Citizen's Line (everyone can have the application on their mobile phone) through which the Municipality can notify-inform the population, at any time, with a message for any safety issue.*
- 11. Attention is paid to the immediate elimination of illegal landfills.*
- 12. We encourage and support voluntary participation in civil protection issues.*
- 13. Especially for the forest of Keri and other critical points, there is close cooperation with the volunteer team of the Heraklion Armed Forces Reserve Club (LEFED). Coverage of the areas, as well as continuous patrols even at night.*
- 14. Signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between ETVA VI.PE. SA with the municipality of Malevizi and the region of Crete with the aim to explore the possibility of developing an innovative industrial park and the prospect of relocating the heavy industrial installations of the wider area of Linoperamata to the area of Korakia, away from densely populated areas.*
- 15. The Special Urban Plan was vigorously pursued by the municipal authority and is being initiated through the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The area is being shielded and made more resilient with the containment dams (Agia Pelagia and elsewhere), the delineation of streams, flood protection works (with priority in Paleokastro) and urban planning regulations for civil protection.*
- 16. We orient our planning towards prevention and immediate intervention with all the means we have at our disposal.*
- 17. With the specific Urban Accessibility Plan per area we increase the level of protection of vulnerable social groups and people with disabilities.*

The multifaceted information of the vast majority of citizens on risks, on first aid issues, on volunteering, from schools and cultural associations, production bodies, the various collective social representations to the workplace and within companies themselves, are issues that a modern society must prioritize.

The Municipality of Malevizi -which hosts and operates now as the main energy hub of the island with the laying of the large cable and the preparation for the implementation of the electrical and digital connection between Israel - Cyprus - Greece via Crete and the Municipality of Malevizi, the

existence of heavy industrial installations that fall under the Seveso Directive are objectively from the point of view of civil protection in the epicentre.

We are of course at the heart of this, not only in terms of natural disasters and accidents, but also potentially in terms of targeted attacks and sabotage, due to the nature of the facilities and the key sectors they occupy for the economy and the very functioning of state structures.

Our municipality works systematically to improve every year in all areas related to civil protection. Civil protection is an absolute priority, of course, according to the objective conditions and the existing material and immaterial means that we can use.

Thank you again for the support and I wish you good results and good cooperation.

*Activities with volunteers in Malevizi
(from the web: malevizi.gov.gr)*



Seizing Opportunities Within Crises: The EM-CITY Project's Innovative Approach to Emergency Management

HANDAN AKARSU SCARABELLO, PROJECT MANAGER, EPC SRL & SIDES APS, ITALY

Abstract

In an era marked by escalating crises, the EM-CITY Project stands out as a beacon of innovation in the field of emergency management. This article delves into the project's visionary approach, emphasizing the shift from problem-solving to seizing opportunities within crises. It highlights the pivotal role of young volunteers, termed "Interactive Bridges," in enhancing social cohesion during emergencies. Grounded in sociological interactionism, the project explores the dynamics of local communities and leverages anthropological and action research. The comprehensive training module equips these young leaders to bridge gaps, navigate cultural differences, and facilitate communication during crises. With insights accessible through an open-access web portal and mobile applications, EM-CITY empowers communities to respond effectively and fosters social cohesion in the face of adversity.

Key Words: #emergency management #social cohesion #young interactive bridges

Introduction

In an era characterized by an escalating frequency of crises, spanning from natural disasters to anthropogenic challenges, it has become increasingly evident that our conventional approaches to crisis management are in need of a profound reevaluation. These multifaceted and often interconnected crises compel us to seek innovative solutions that extend beyond the traditional boundaries of emergency response. To address the intricate web of economic, cultural, and anthropological factors that underpin these global challenges, we have consciously crafted this project to transcend the confines of problem-solving (Colaianne et al., 2017). Instead, we pivot our focus towards a paradigm that recognizes and seizes the opportunities that crises inherently present.

One noteworthy aspect that distinguishes our project is its departure from a mere emphasis on identifying problems. Instead, we intentionally shift our perspective towards a broader recognition of opportunities within the crucible of crises. This fundamental shift underscores our belief that maintaining the status quo, especially in times of upheaval, is an insufficient response. Crises, in their essence, act as powerful catalysts for advancement, compelling individuals and societies to undergo transformative processes aimed at evolution and improvement. In alignment with the sage words of Albert Einstein, who aptly stated that "crisis is an opportunity for progress," this project adopts this maxim as a guiding principle.

Within this context, the global pandemic has emerged as a unique opportunity for progress, particularly concerning the enhancement of social cohesion. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became evident that Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities faced distinct and pressing needs. These communities often encountered barriers in accessing critical information and resources due to language and cultural differences. Additionally, the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting CALD communities in terms of healthcare access, economic stability, and social support. On the other hand, it became evident that the competences and values of young people played a pivotal role in assisting those with disadvantages within CALD communities and beyond. Their dynamic approach and digital skills were instrumental in bridging gaps and connecting different groups of people in the local area. During times of crisis, young people's ability to mobilize and respond to new information and precautions was invaluable. They not only contributed to the immediate response efforts but also played a crucial role in supporting the long-term well-being of the affected communities. In our quest to enhance social cohesion within the realm of emergency management, a significant realization emerged. We found that actively involving young people in the process was the key to bridging the gap between local communities, including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, and emergency authorities. By empowering young individuals to take on leadership roles, we fostered a sense of unity and collaboration among different groups within the local area. This approach not only facilitated effective communication but also ensured that emergency measures were implemented more efficiently. Young people, with their unique skill sets and willingness to engage, proved to be a vital factor in the successful management of emergency situations.

Methodology

The term "Interactive Bridge" used in the Em-City Project is a concept we have coined to describe young individuals who are eager to volunteer in the emergency management process. It's crucial to delve into how we arrived at this definition. Our theoretical foundation for this concept lies in the field of interactionism, a sociological perspective that offers profound insights into how individuals shape their social realities through interpersonal interactions. This perspective finds its roots in the scholarly contributions of luminaries like George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman (Carter, M. J., & Fuller, C., 2016). Interactionism posits that human behavior and the structure of social order emerge from the meanings individuals ascribe to their actions and the symbols they employ in their communication (Stryker, S., 2001). In essence, "Interactive Bridges" represent the embodiment of this interactionist perspective. They are young people who bridge the gap between various segments of society and emergency management authorities by actively engaging in the process. These individuals possess the unique ability to facilitate communication, interpret actions, and convey critical information effectively. They embody the very essence of how social cohesion can be strengthened during times of crisis, acting as conduits for shared understanding and collective action. In this context, the EM-CITY project was initiated, blending elements of anthropological and action research. The primary aim of this project was to deepen our understanding of group dynamics and interactions within the local community during emergencies. Recognizing that various factors, including background, culture, and language, influence group dynamics among different community groups residing in the same area, understanding and studying these dynamics is crucial to facilitate efficient interactions in emergency situations.

Anthropological research was chosen since it typically adopts a comparative, historical, or ethnographic approach to the study of society and culture (Diah, N. M., 2014). This approach utilizes multiple qualitative data collection methods, which can be useful on their own and complementary to quantitative data in mixed-methods studies. These methods include participant observation, individual interviews, focus groups, and textual analysis (Goldman, R., & Borkan, J. 2013). On the other hands, action research is a systematic inquiry process conducted by and for those taking action. Cultural action research can involve a single person, a group of individuals from the same community, or a diverse group of people with a shared interest in a common problem. Action research consists of a 7-step cycle, including selecting a focus, clarifying theories, identifying research questions, collecting data, analyzing data, reporting results, and taking informed action (McNiff, J., 2013).

Activities and Results

The project engaged with specific local areas, namely Vicenza in Italy, Erzurum in Turkey, Heraklion in Greece, and Nicosia in Cyprus. Project researchers established contacts with local authorities, NGOs, and institutions through associated partners to facilitate engagement with these areas.

The initial research involved collecting information on local communities. Subsequently, three focus groups were planned in each specific local area over the course of the project. Each focus group comprised 8-10 participants, including young people from both non-CALD and CALD communities, representatives of civil protection operators, local authorities, and other local community members. A project team facilitator was present in each group. The first focus group took place between June and September 2022. The focus groups aimed to understand the needs of the local area, the needs and positions of young people within these communities, and more. Following the first focus group, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed for the target group and administered to 87 young people in Greece, 32 in Cyprus, 36 in Italy, and 77 in Turkey, totaling 232 participants. The questionnaire aimed to provide detailed insights into the identified needs, which would inform the development of training modules for young people to prepare them as "interactive bridges/junctions" between local communities, civil protection operators, and local authorities during emergencies. Additionally, each country group conducted research on good practices related to civil protection and emergency response, considering diverse communities. This research provided a global institutional perspective on managing mixed group communities in emergency situations. Subsequently, a draft research report was shared with the target group to solicit feedback, and a second focus group was conducted. The aim of the 2nd focus group was to effectively shape the training module based on the evolving needs of the participants. These needs may change as a result of the communication and network established during the focus group sessions, as well as dissemination activities and other project-related



A focus group in Italy

interactions. This focus group serves as a valuable opportunity to ensure that the training module aligns closely with the practical requirements and preferences of the participants, thus enhancing its overall effectiveness. Based on the results of the research conducted thus far, Result 2: EM-CITY Training Module for Young Volunteers was developed, followed by pilot training. The training program is meticulously structured to empower these young individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to excel in their roles as "Interactive Bridges" during emergencies.

The program commences with an essential **Introduction and Methodology (3-hour)** session, which starts with **getting to know each other and team-building activities (2-hour)**. These initial activities lay the foundation for a cohesive and collaborative learning environment. By beginning with getting to know each other, participants establish a sense of trust and camaraderie within their group. This, in turn, fosters open communication, encourages the sharing of diverse perspectives, and creates a supportive atmosphere for the entirety of the training. Team-building activities further enhance this sense of unity, emphasizing the importance of working together seamlessly as a team. These activities not only strengthen interpersonal bonds but also underscore the significance of teamwork, a skill vital for the participants as they embark on their roles as "Interactive Bridges" in emergency management. Then in the other 1 hour the participants are introduced to the fundamental concepts of emergency management. This foundational module emphasizes the significance of effective communication and collaboration while equipping participants with the research and action methodologies crucial for their roles.

Subsequently, participants delve into a comprehensive exploration of **Civil Protection (4 hours)**, where they gain insights into the structure and functions of civil protection agencies. They acquire an in-depth understanding of the roles these agencies play during various emergencies and familiarize themselves with the established protocols for crisis response.

The heart of the training lies in the module dedicated to the **Role of the Volunteers as Interactive Bridges (7 hours)**. Here, participants receive extensive training on the unique responsibilities they will shoulder as "Interactive Bridges" between diverse community groups and emergency authorities. This module underscores the vital role they play in facilitating communication, bridging cultural divides, and ensuring the specific needs of diverse communities are met in the heat of emergencies.



Project Transnational Training in Cyprus

Then, the program dedicates **2 hours to Cross-Cultural Communication**, recognizing the importance of navigating cultural differences effectively. Participants acquire indispensable cross-cultural communication skills, enabling them to overcome language barriers, understand and respect diverse cultural sensitivities, and foster inclusivity within communities.

Lastly the program includes **1 hour reflection session** that allows participants to consolidate their learning and insights. This crucial session provides a dedicated space for individuals to reflect on their journey throughout the training. Participants have the opportunity to review their experiences, contemplate the knowledge gained, and consider how they can apply this newfound expertise in real-life emergency situations. By engaging in reflective practices, participants can identify their strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring continuous growth in their roles as "Interactive Bridges." Moreover, these reflective sessions encourage self-awareness and critical thinking, empowering participants to adapt and respond effectively to the dynamic challenges they may encounter in their service to the community during emergencies.

These meticulously designed modules span a total of 18 hours, offering participants a comprehensive and tailored training experience that effectively prepares them for their vital roles in emergency management. While the duration of the program can be adjusted to accommodate the specific needs of different groups and communities, the structured 18-hour framework serves as a solid foundation and methodology for trainers. This adaptable approach ensures that trainers have a well-defined structure to guide their efforts in conducting similar programs, allowing for flexibility while maintaining the core components that contribute to the program's success.



The third focus group has recently convened or is scheduled to take place shortly, building on the completion of the pilot training in each partners local areas. Its primary objective is to thoroughly evaluate the impact of the pilot training, discern the effective components, and pinpoint areas that may benefit from improvement. As an integral component of our action research approach, the finalisation of the training module is contingent upon the insights and feedback garnered from this third focus group. This iterative process underscores our commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring that the training module aligns seamlessly with the practical needs and preferences of the participants and the evolving dynamics of emergency management within local communities. The stepwise approach taken in the project underscores the commitment to thorough research,

iterative feedback, and continuous improvement in emergency management strategies that promote social cohesion among diverse communities.

The final research report and the training modules can be found on the partner organisations web sites, Erasmus Plus Results Platform and the open-access EM-CITY web portal which ensures that the knowledge, insights, and resources generated by the EM-CITY project are readily accessible to a global audience.

The web portal serves as an information hub, housing an extensive repository of anthropologically based research reports. These reports, generated through meticulous research, provide valuable insights into the dynamics of local communities during emergencies. They form the informational foundation upon which future studies in the field of civil defense can be built. Additionally, the web portal features a forum where individuals and groups can interact, fostering communication, coordination, and problem-solving among diverse stakeholders.

An essential component of the project's digital infrastructure is the event calendar, which facilitates coordination and direction. It compiles and shares information about various activities related to civil defense and emergency management. This calendar serves as a valuable resource for stakeholders, enhancing awareness and engagement in the field. Moreover, the web portal incorporates a Learning Management System (LMS) module, designed to guide and accredit young volunteers who undergo pilot training. This module ensures that these individuals are well-prepared to assume leadership roles in emergency situations, contributing to effective community response.

In addition to the web portal, the project includes the development of IOS and Android-based mobile applications. These applications offer real-time notifications and information related to emergency situations. Users can access crucial updates, even in areas with limited network connectivity. The applications aim to provide practical and visible assistance to a wide audience during extraordinary circumstances.

Together, the web portal and mobile applications form a comprehensive digital ecosystem that empowers individuals, enhances communication, and contributes to effective emergency management and social cohesion within communities.

Discussion

The EM-CITY Project represents a significant departure from traditional approaches to emergency management by shifting the focus from identifying problems to seizing opportunities within crises. This innovative approach recognizes that crises, while challenging, also present unique opportunities for progress and growth. By actively involving young volunteers known as "Interactive Bridges," the project aims to enhance social cohesion and improve emergency response in culturally diverse communities.

One key highlight of the project is its theoretical foundation in sociological interactionism. This perspective emphasizes the role of interpersonal interactions in shaping social realities and behaviors. The concept of "Interactive Bridges" encapsulates the idea that young individuals can bridge the gap between various segments of society and emergency management authorities by actively engaging in the process. These individuals are equipped with the skills to facilitate communication, interpret actions, and convey critical information effectively, thus fostering shared understanding and collective action.

The methodology employed in the project combines anthropological and action research, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of group dynamics and interactions within local communities during emergencies. This approach recognizes that factors such as background, culture, and language influence group dynamics and are crucial in facilitating efficient interactions in emergency situations. The project's activities have engaged specific local areas, fostering collaboration with local authorities, NGOs, and institutions through associated partners. The research involved focus groups, surveys, and the study of good practices related to civil protection and emergency response. The iterative feedback process has been integral to shaping the training module for young volunteers, ensuring it aligns closely with the practical requirements and preferences of the participants.

The training module itself is a comprehensive and tailored program that spans 18 hours. It covers essential aspects of emergency management, including team-building, cross-cultural communication, and the role of volunteers as Interactive Bridges. The program also incorporates reflection sessions, encouraging self-awareness and critical thinking among participants.

Furthermore, the project's digital infrastructure, including the web portal and mobile applications, enhances communication, coordination, and information dissemination during emergencies. These tools provide real-time updates and serve as valuable resources for stakeholders in the field of civil defense and emergency management.

In conclusion, the EM-CITY Project showcases a forward-thinking approach to emergency management that recognizes the potential for progress within crises. By empowering young volunteers as Interactive Bridges, the project enhances social cohesion and improves emergency response in culturally diverse communities. Its combination of sociological interactionism, anthropological and action research, and comprehensive training modules makes it a valuable resource for addressing the complex challenges of emergency management in today's world. The project's commitment to continuous improvement and accessibility through digital tools ensures its impact reaches a global audience, promoting resilience and unity within communities facing multifaceted challenges.



References

Colaianne, L., Ciardiello, P., & Turchi, G. P. (2017). Restituire responsabilità, promuovere competenze, generare cambiamenti biografici. *Prospettive Sociali E Sanitarie*, 4, 12.

Carter, M. J., & Fuller, C. (2016). Symbols, meaning, and action: The past, present, and future of symbolic interactionism. *Current sociology*, 64(6), 931-961.

Stryker, S. (2001). Traditional symbolic interactionism, role theory, and structural symbolic interactionism: The road to identity theory. In *Handbook of sociological theory* (pp. 211-231). Boston, MA: Springer US.

Diah, N. M., Hossain, D. M., Mustari, S., & Ramli, N. S. (2014). An overview of the anthropological theories. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4(1), 155-164.

Goldman, R., & Borkan, J. (2013). *Anthropological approaches: uncovering unexpected insights about the implementation and outcomes of patient-centered medical home models*. Rockville, MD: Agency for Health-care Research and Quality.

McNiff, J. (2013). *Action research: Principles and practice*. Routledge.

Full Scale Exercise projects as means for Optimizing Regional Civil Protection Systems

**EVANGELOS KATSAROS, CERIDES CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
CYPRUS, CYPRUS**

Dear guests,

We all know that natural disasters appear more frequently nowadays and more intense. Due to climate crisis we can only expect an increase and especially around the Mediterranean sea that suffers the most of the climate change. Impacts are enormous to economies and societies.

Therefore, resilience of our societies is an utmost priority or it should be by the state authorities. Despite this necessity little attention is paid to Civil Protection. Today we will focus on Civil Protection system, that has not attract the attention it deserves and if optimized can significantly improve quality of live and secure efforts for economic and social development and cohesion.

You may assume that the role of Civil Protection is to protect citizens, properties, environment. But what about dignity of people, values of communities, PERSPECTIVES of people and societies? Does the Civil Protection play the role of insurance (seen as horizontal policy) that supports and enriches many other development policies? If not, why not? How can we identify gaps/areas for improvement?

What about exercises? Can we use them for that purpose?

There are various kinds of exercises: drills, discussion based ones, Table Top Exercise, Field Exercises. Most of them can be used to test equipment use, search and rescue readiness, evacuation of a hospital etc. Let us have a closer look at Full Scale Exercises (FSX).

Full Scale Exercises is the closest event we have to simulate real disaster / emergency situation. To benefit from that characteristic they must be planned based a realistic, worst case complex scenario with cascading effects. First window for cooperation with research/scientific entities. Many other window opportunities will be revealed.

VIDEO BALANCE: BALANCE FSX SMALLVIDEO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcxYD9d73Ts>



WHAT YOU CAN SEE? (QUESTION TO AUDIENCE): Professionalism of teams, field coordination, care for citizens, testing new equipment.



WHAT YOU CAN NOT SEE (But it is there in most cases and that should be the rule):

Local Emergency Management Agency LEMA, Liaison Officers, Host Nation Support, Training, Health and Safety and Support of 1st Responders, Training and Exercises, Engagement of local society (citizens, tourism sector, disabled people, cultural heritage monuments, bilateral agreements, emergency logistics, media).

FSX happens ones and that is it. The work done and its (potential) exploitation remains and becomes the base for improvements and future work.

Evaluation, lessons Learnt and Way forward => RESPONSIBILITY OF STATE AUTHORITIES (NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL) TO PROCEED WITH NEXT STEPS.

FSXs projects RAISE QUESTIONS and IDENTIFY CHALLENGES regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of regional civil protection systems (some of them to be presented). For example: Protected areas, industrial zones, location and protection of investments and critical infrastructures, private sector engagement, activation of local communities, emergency logistics, cooperation with research/academic institutes.

Political willingness and Creation of Safety Culture

Full Scale Exercises should not only put emphasis on presenting the skills and competences of the participating forces in managing challenges of specific episodes on a realistic scenario. They can/must become integrated projects that will aim on optimizing regional civil protection systems, creating the conditions for continuous improvement of resilience level. The regional dimension can be enlarged to cover cross border risks. DG ECHO FSXs' projects present an example that must be enriched, adapted and adopted by national and regional authorities throughout Europe. Presenting some of these projects we highlight the path to achieve that aim.

The role of Food in building stronger and more resilient communities in the face of emergencies

MANUELA MASSI, FRANCESCA BORGA, EPC EUROPEAN PROJECT CONSULTING SRL, ITALY

Abstract

This article explores the critical role of food supply chains in times of crisis and emergencies in ensuring sustenance and delves into a crucial aspect of the power of food to build stronger, more resilient communities. Natural disasters, pandemics, and conflicts can disrupt food systems, leading to shortages and increased vulnerability, especially among the most fragile populations. Robust and resilient food supply chains become imperative in ensuring communities have access to sustenance during adversity.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the vulnerability of centralized urban food systems. In response, spontaneous community-led food initiatives emerged globally, showcasing the ability of local communities to take charge of emergency responses. These initiatives not only ensured the supply of food to vulnerable groups but also maintained a sense of normalcy and cultural continuity during lockdowns. As the world moves beyond the pandemic, it is crucial to reflect on the lessons learned and actively engage in efforts to prevent a recurrence of such challenges.

Case studies highlight the positive impact of community-led food initiatives. The London Community Harvest and the Hackney Food Network in the UK exemplify how short food supply chains contribute not only to environmental sustainability but also enhance community resilience. These initiatives, born out of necessity during the pandemic, catalysed changes in urban policies and governance patterns.

Global trends, as seen in Australia's Cairns region, emphasize the integration of short

food supply chain approaches into disaster management mechanisms. Empowering local communities to actively participate in their long-term resilience becomes crucial. The study reveals that investing in community-building activities, such as local food access platforms, enhances communication during emergencies and strengthens community preparedness.

The article also explores the universal language of food in building connections among diverse communities, breaking down cultural barriers and fostering inclusivity and positive social change. Different cases and initiatives are presented in this context: the Social Gastronomy Movement, the



Youth and food – from the web (@focus.it)

case of the Turkish chef Ebru Baybara Demir, the international organization of World Central Kitchen, and the experience of Vicenza Municipality within the H2020 project Cities2030. They all showcase the transformative power of food in disaster relief and community empowerment.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 experience emphasizes the need for meaningful connections between urban residents and the food they consume. Beyond addressing immediate needs, such connections contribute to the sustainability and resilience of communities in the face of emergencies. The article advocates for a proactive approach in embracing locally grown food and community-led initiatives to enhance resilience and preparedness for future challenges.

Introduction

The critical importance of food supply chains in crisis and emergencies situations is widely recognised. This article wants to emphasise **the role of food as community builder and the power of sustainable people-centred food systems to foster stronger, more resilient communities in an uncertain world.**

Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, and wildfires, can disrupt transportation routes, damage infrastructure, and cut off food sources. In pandemics or war situations, disruptions in the workforce and supply chains can lead to food shortages and price spikes, limiting the access to food, especially to the most fragile people in a community. Therefore, **maintaining resilient and robust food supply chains is essential to ensure that communities have access to the sustenance they need during times of adversity.**

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of urban food systems, disrupting global food supply chains and giving rise to a new critical human condition characterized by restricted mobility—a circumstance scarcely experienced by our communities before. In just a few months, COVID-19 brought about the shutdown of half the globe, serving as a stark reminder of the crucial importance of food systems in our lives. The fact that these systems had become highly centralized over time, rendered them highly exposed to falter in the face of shocks. As a consequence, during the most challenging periods of lockdown throughout the pandemic, **several forms of community-led food governance initiatives spontaneously emerged in cities everywhere in the world,** catalysing collective action and providing practical local solutions to address food needs. Some examples are the food delivery services address to elderly or lonely people, local food networks to support local farmers and producers and community food growing by enhancing the activities in the urban gardens. These initiatives were primarily based on the ability of local communities to take the lead of emergency responses related to food management, not only to ensure the supply of food to the most vulnerable groups but also to maintain a sense of normalcy and cultural continuity, helping to overcoming the challenges posed by the COVID-19 experience.

Moreover, these initiatives, in an unexpected manner, triggered changes and raised questions about broader urban policies and governance patterns applied thus far.

Furthermore, while responding to the emergency, they had a good impact on the community resilience, underlining the power of food as community builder.

In this context, the COVID-19 experience has served as an ideal platform for embracing these innovative approaches implemented without previous pilot testing. The main priority and focus have been on urgency responding to problem-solving, to face a crisis of unprecedented gravity and scale ever experiences by human kind in the last century. Communities and institutions have jointly worked

towards a shared objective of delivering swift, flexible, and localized solutions to address this abrupt and largely unfamiliar challenge posed by a global pandemic.

As we move beyond the challenging chapters of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now imperative to elaborate the lesson learned and proactively engage in efforts to prevent a resurgence of such challenges in the future.

Harnessing the power of local Food Systems: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic | Some Case Studies

Studies and articles on the outcomes and lesson learned by the local communities and institutions on facing COVID-19 emergency, populate the web reporting local experiences and good practises experimented all over the world. Among them, we selected some significative experiences which quite well highlight the role of food as a connector between a sustainable, local food system and an inclusive resilient community.

A good example is provided by the **Community Harvest** launched by the London's Capital Growth Network in July 2020. This initiative was meant to provide community gardens with tools, materials and guidelines to improve the food grown locally. Packages of support, *"helped urban gardens and growers (to) increase their production and reach out to people and groups, particularly those who were most vulnerable, including older people, those with health conditions or with disabilities, and people on a lower income. Gardens reached out and built long term relationships with community organisations. Feedback from garden leaders showed that it enabled more people to get involved in community gardens, providing access to nature, and building personal resilience"* (1). Thanks to this initiative, an estimated 5.5 tonnes of hyper-local fresh food was distributed to an estimated 6945 households with recipient organisations including mutual aid groups, food banks, children's centres, a women's centre, elderly lunch clubs and residents of a local housing estate.



© Community gardens – [Capital growth.org/community_harvest](https://capitalgrowth.org/community_harvest)

This experience clearly highlighted the fact that adopting a short food supply chain approach in an urban context can not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also enhance community resilience and preparedness.

The same study analysed the experience of another bottom-up and community-led initiative that gained traction during the lockdown in London: the **Hackney Food Network**. Launched in July 2020, it replaced the Hackney Food Justice Alliance with the aim of establishing a more efficient frontline delivery network. As reported by one of the interviewees that took part in the study, *“The Hackney Food Network was one of the most Innovative solutions established to provide a local food response during the pandemic. It was part of a larger community partnership effort. We are now using a place-based approach so that local groups can share their expertise in the area where they operate with other local organizations. All these organizations did not used to work together. Now, the Hackney Food Network has also started to work in partnership with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and has been able to provide holistic form of support locally combining health and food responses. Specifically, CCGs are developing **neighbourhood-based health services and we are aligning that work with our local place-based food support**. So, we started targeting the neighbourhood level for our service delivery. We have noticed that **this approach improves community cohesion and well-being**. So, the main policy innovation has been moving from a privately commissioned to a consortium and a place-based model of service delivery.* (1)

Currently, this Network is still active, even though the COVID-19 emergency is over. It is collaboratively working with the Hackney institutions to re-frame local food poverty policy advocating for a community-led food governance model that had proven to be more effective during the pandemic emergency.

Drawing from the lessons learned during the COVID-19 experience, there is a global trend to reevaluate the significance of locally grown food and place-based initiatives that enhance community resilience. This trend has also received attention in disaster risk reduction and management agendas across various countries worldwide. It is the case of **The Cairns in the Northeastern part of Australia**, where a study was conducted in 2021 to explore how the short food supply chain approach can be integrated in the disaster management mechanism to support the most vulnerable part of the population and contribute to local resilience improving disaster response. (2)

Through two workshops and a survey, the study aimed to formulate a viable strategy for empowering the broader local community to actively participate in their own long-term resilience. The importance of integrating local food into everyone's lives became evident as a crucial aspect to be addressed concurrently with fostering active community engagement in resilience-building. Key stakeholders, as revealed by the survey, expressed a preference for longer-term sustainable solutions over relying on standard emergency food aid. Simultaneously, the study highlighted that **investing in community-building activities could enhance and optimize communication during emergencies**, particularly in situations where IT communication channels may fail due to multiple or severe disasters such as earthquakes, fires, floods, or wars.

Therefore, raising awareness and knowledge about local food options and supporting social connections with activities and events that can foster community building, are seen as good practices to improve the communities' resilience during different type and severeness of crisis and emergencies.

From the survey circulated within this Australian study, emerged that in the broader context of disaster management, the day-to-day use of a local food access platform or hub (i.e a local producer market place) would provide a place in which community members can engage with local producers and can benefit from visible and tangible interactions that strengthen and make more visible the community understanding and preparedness for hazards. As the crucial role played by food in building and reinforcing community bonds during the COVID-19 emergency was clear to many, **some food-related activities and policies can be used to increase preparedness of local communities and resilience to emergency situations.**

In summary, the COVID experience highlighted the essential need for individuals residing in urban areas to **reestablish a meaningful connection with the food they regularly consume.** This connection is recognized as a key element - within a broader approach - aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the system and enhancing its resilience in the face of emergencies.

Community Building through Food

The language of food is universal and has the capacity of breaking down cultural barriers and highlight things that diverse community living in the same area have in common.

“Food helps to debunk the stereotypes and prejudices some communities might have about others (...) Sharing our food and sharing our stories can build bridges” writes Kalpna Woolf in her book *“Eat share and love”* (3), a compilation of 91 different recipes collected by Bristol’s inhabitants speaking 51 different languages. In 2015 the writer, founded a community-focused social enterprise in Bristol (91 Ways) whose main aim was to encourage genuine connections with neighbours from other cultures using the convening power of food to bring the community together, celebrating each other cultural heritage. Nothing is more representative of a community than food, which also encourages sharing of personal stories, memories and cultural understanding.

Aside local initiatives like 91 Ways in UK, at international level stands the **Social Gastronomy Movement** a worldwide network of more than 400 associations and outstanding professionals in the field of food. The movement’s primary objective is to harness the power of food to transform individual lives, foster more inclusive communities and create positive social change. Nicola Gryczka in a short article that could be considered as a manifesto for this international movement, very well synthetize this concept: *“Food has an extraordinary ability to transcend cultural boundaries, break down barriers, and bring people together. It is a universal language that speaks to our basic human need for nourishment, but it also holds the power to foster understanding, create connections, and bridge differences. Throughout history, food has played a vital role in cultural exchange, diplomacy, and community building. In a world often divided by differences, sharing a meal can become a transformative experience that promotes empathy, celebrates diversity, and strengthens the fabric of our society”* (4).

A remarkable member of the Social Gastronomy movement is the Turkish Chef **Ebru Baybara Demir**, winner of the prestigious Basque Culinary World Prize in 2023. *“I am someone who is concerned about being part of the solution, and for that purpose, I have a tool like gastronomy in my hands,”* she said interviewed by ShareAmerica (5).

Working mainly in a Turkish area that hosts many Syrian refugees, the chef has a specific social gastronomy approach which interconnect cultural exchange and humanitarian relief **using gastronomy as a link and a force for integration**, empowering women from both countries

dismantling prejudices and showing the riches of cultural exchange. In response to the Syrian civil war and the Turkish economic crisis, Demir has developed numerous humanitarian projects to aid female refugees and impoverished Turkish women. In partnership with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Demir founded in 2016 the Turkey's first gastronomy school—the Harran Gastronomy School and continues to educate refugees through the “*Kitchen of Hope*” project which teaches culinary arts to female Turkish and Syrian refugees with funding from the World Food Programme (WFP).

When earthquakes struck Turkey in February 2023, she moved to Hatay, the worst-hit province, and set up kitchens operated in students' dorms or government buildings that fed survivors by the thousands. For six months following the disaster, she took care to ensure that the dishes met a standard she herself would appreciate. Drawing from past experiences, she recognized that, **beyond merely having a meal on the table, the quality of the food is crucial, especially for those enduring hardship and pain.** National favorites like kuru fasulye, a white bean stew, were dispatched to survivors, along with local Hatay delicacies, including harissa, a meat porridge traditionally served on special occasions.



Ebru Baybara Demir preparing meals for Syrian and Turkish earthquake victims © www.cibotoday.it

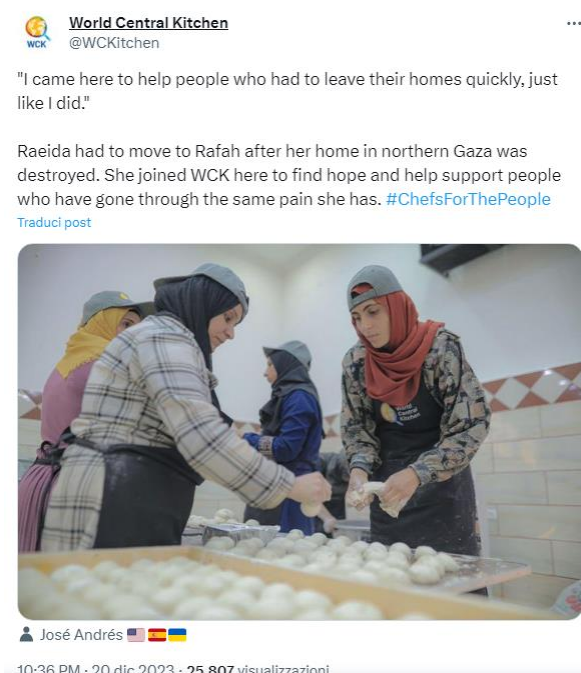
Same approach is at the base of the **World Central Kitchen – WCK** (6), a worldwide network of professional chefs and other civil society associations. It is a non-profit organization based in US and born thanks to the initiative of the Chef José Andrés during the earthquake in Haiti in 2010.

The new model for disaster relief created by the World Central Kitchen is based on the assumption learned on the ground that **emergency is not just about feeding people in need, but is also about listening, learning and cooking side by side with the people impacted by a crisis.**

This is what José Andrés names the “*comfort food*” the core value of this humanitarian network very active across the globe. “*Deploying our model of quick action, leveraging local resources, and adapting in real time, we know that a nourishing meal in a time of crisis is so much more than a plate of food—it's hope, it's dignity, and it's a sign that someone cares.*” (Jose Andres, founder of WCK).

In the same way, the renown Romanian Chef Adrian Hădean (7), operating in the framework of the WCK, managed to make over 2000 meals daily for the Ukrainian refugees at the border points with Romania, trying to engage the refugees in the meal preparation whenever possible. This approach aimed not only to meet their immediate needs but also to empower them, preserving their dignity and mental well-being during this dramatic situation.

In the current dramatic situation, Gaza citizens are also directly involved in the meal preparation with the support of the volunteers and organizations of the WCK network. The rescue operations are decentralized across Gaza to establish as many community kitchens as possible and ensuring it takes less time for meals to get from the kitchen to Palestinians in need.



Posts of World Central Kitchen on "X"

In 2017 the WCK launched the **WCK's Food Producer Network** (8) to help smallholder farmers, fishers and related businesses to revitalize their operation after the Maria Hurricane in Puerto Rico. Through the three pillars of grants and loans, capacity building and networking, volunteering and agritourism, the FPN highly contributed to improve the local economy and the capacity of local communities to produce their own food and, in doing so, increase their resilience against future disasters.

The project Cities2030 and the experience of Vicenza

In the last three years, the City of Vicenza and EPC- European Project Consulting srl have been involved in a Project titled "Cities2030 – Co-creating resilient and sustainable food systems towards FOOD2030" funded by the European Commission within the Horizon 2020 programme framework. Within this project in Vicenza's area, two interesting initiatives linked to food and community interactions, have been piloted and tested working on the integration of culturally and linguistically different communities (CALD) around the concept of food.

In the “**Ethnic Dinners**” culinary traditions were used to engage and promote communication between the mainstream community and the CALD communities that are leaving in the same area.

This initiative originates from the collaboration between different the local authority and civil society organizations, including the Red Cross, engaged in several inclusive and solidarity activities at local level, including the Red Cross. A group of women from Perú, Morocco, Leban, Iran and Nigeria were selected among participants of ongoing training courses for Assistant Chefs organized by a local NGO in cooperation with the Social Services of Vicenza Municipality. These courses aimed at supporting these women in developing their own professional career in the food sector, improving their employability and integration into the community. Each of them was asked to prepare a dinner adopting their original national recipes to the ingredients available locally on a seasonal basis.



Vicenza Food lab - ©Cities2030.eu

Thanks to the support of local restaurant owners and neighbourhood associations, four Ethnic Dinners have been organized in the period from March to June 2023. They received a lot of attention and became quite popular in town, involving more than 300 participants, and confirming the interest towards the universal language of food.

Incorporating the “wordly cuisine” into the concept of urban sustainable food system was the innovative part of this initiative which established a space for knowledge sharing and collaboration among women from culturally and linguistically different communities.

Recipes from very distant countries and cultures found a common reinterpretation in a more sustainable approach, as the aspiring chefs had to choose among local ingredients to prepare their “ethnic” plates, minimizing food waste and advocating for a diet centred on seasonality and local products (km0 and short supply chain). What emerged were the similarities more than the differences among the recipes proposed and the people who prepared them.

Another interesting initiative that is implemented by the Municipality of Vicenza and that was crucial in times of crisis during the worst period of the pandemic, is the **Solidarity Market** for food surpluses collection and redistribution for people in need.

Like many other similar examples around the world, this solidarity market has been established not only with the aim to promote re-use and re-distribution of food surpluses, but also to gather in the same hub other services to foster the inclusion of the most fragile people in the local community.



Vicenza Solidarity Market - @www.crivicenza.org

The Solidarity Market gives the people the opportunity to choose the own food according to their nutritional needs including allergies, intolerances, cultural preferences, and dietary choices. Additionally, it hosts workshops aimed at fostering social inclusion and empowerment, along with offering additional services such as an Employment Desk. The initiative not only cultivates a sense of belonging but also promotes solidarity, contributing to the reduction of disparities. By enhancing community resilience and preparedness, the Solidarity Market, as emphasized in the Australian study analysed before, it could serve as a central hub during emergencies. In such situations, it becomes a focal point for first aid, assistance, and various forms of support, ensuring a more effective, rapid and holistic response to those most in need.

Conclusions

Food possesses an extraordinary ability to transcend cultural boundaries, dismantle barriers, and bring people together. Its intrinsic power extends far beyond its role as sustenance. Food is a common ground which not only addresses our fundamental human need for nourishment but also holds the transformative potential to foster understanding, create connections, and bridge differences among diverse communities. At the same time, when it comes to the food grown locally within a community, the resilience demonstrated during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the pivotal role of local food system to build stronger and more adaptable communities that can better cope with this kind of crisis and disruptions in the ordinary food supply chain.

Moreover, growing food within a community, it is not just a matter of food supply. It can encompass diverse dimensions of sustainability. It can be a valuable option from an economic and environmental point of view, but it can be also considered from a social perspective. In the example reported of the London case, the community garden in the urban area have not only provided food to people living in the area, but it has also facilitated social cohesion and inclusion in times of crisis and emergencies.

By acknowledging these two interlinked elements it is recommended to develop disaster risk management strategies that not only ensure access to sustenance during crises but also promote community building and cultural continuity.

In doing so, we lay the foundation for a more holistic and effective approach to disaster preparedness, embracing the potential of food to nourish not only our bodies but also our shared human experience.

References

- (1) Dr C. Turcu, Ms .Rotolo (2021). Disrupting from the ground up: community-led and place-based food governance in London during COVID-19",
- (2) K.Reis, C.Desha, S.Campbell, P.Liddy, (2022) "Working through Disaster Risk Management to Support Regional Food Resilience: A Case Study in North-Eastern Australia",
- (3) Priyanka Raval, (2022).Bridging cultural divides in a global city, one meal at a time,
- (4) Nicola Gryczka, (2023). "The power of Food: bridging differences and Building Connections" Social Gastronomy Movement
- (5) Share America, (2023). "How a chefs' soul kitchens' aided Turkiye's earthquake recovery"
- (6) World Central Kitchen (WCK), (2010), World Central Kitchen (wck.org)
- (7) OK Magazine, (2022) EXCLUSIV Chef Adrian Hădean: "Reușim să facem peste 2.000 de porții zilnic pentru refugiați, dar suntem pregătiți să atingem repede 5.000 de porții zilnic, dacă va fi nevoie" (okmagazine.ro)
- (8) Food Producer Network, (2027) World Central Kitchen (wck.org)

Multiculturalism and resilience: The experience of the European project AMARE-eu

FRANCESCA BORGA, MANUELA MASSI, EPC EUROPEAN PROJECT CONSULTING SRL, ITALY

“The resilience of a city is grounded in its capacity to not leave any citizen behind, in particular groups that are considered most at risk due to economic, social, cultural and linguistic factors.”

In 2017 EPC – European Project Consulting srl, together with a social cooperative from Bologna working with migrants, started the elaboration of a proposal to be submitted to the European Programme for Civil Protection prevention projects.

The initial idea originated from a dialogue with the operators of the Lai-momo cooperative. In the days immediately following the strong earthquake that affected Emilia Romagna in 2012, these operators had worked within the shelter camps established by the civil protection system. That experience highlighted the urgency of paying more attention to the specific needs of diverse and multicultural social groups in emergencies. This is seen as a necessary step to enhance the overall resilience of local communities.

A few years and a global pandemic have passed since then, but some key elements of that activity remain highly relevant. Throughout Europe, territories are increasingly investing in strengthening their adaptation capabilities to climate change, learning how to coexist with natural disasters, constructing in locations and manners that consider the potential for disasters, and also approving policies, regulations, and plans for enhancing resilience.

At the same time, migrant flows, tourism, and social transformations have led to the expansion of multicultural societies and an increased presence of non-native people in our communities. However, in the event of disasters, not knowing whom to contact, how to respond, where to find updated information, and lacking awareness of risks as well as available resources can result in greater vulnerability to severe consequences. This is precisely what often occurs among non-native individuals in many cases.

The main goal of **project AMARE-eu – Adoption of Multicultural Approaches towards Resilience Enhancement in the EU**, was to provide citizens, communities and Civil Protection operators with increased awareness, tailored skills and concrete instruments for involving and informing those who, due to linguistic, social, economic, and/or cultural factors, in case of disaster are more exposed to marginalisation and social exclusion, and therefore are at more severe risk.

The project was implemented by a transnational, multi-sector partnership composed of organizations active in the field of natural disasters, cultural cooperation, smart and resilient policies, local development, and integration, together with four pilot cities characterized by the presence of citizens of different cultural backgrounds and high risks of disasters. Thanks to these diverse and complementary expertise, a tool to be applied "in peacetime" was developed, aiming at helping communities to increase their resilience through increased inclusion and stronger relations with citizens.

The toolkit includes indications, practical examples and resources, mainly intended for public administrators and Civil Protection officers wanting to improve their capacity to consider, and, most of all, to involve non-native citizens in dealing with emergencies.

As effectively explained by Silvia Festi and Sara Saleri from Lai-momo¹, the first fundamental indication that we can give to decision makers and emergency operators is to act on prevention, involving the entire territory.

Involving means making the territory active, receptive, starting from its main actors: institutions (administrative bodies, health services, schools, civil protection, etc.), NGOs, civil society organizations, informal citizens groups. When considering non-native and foreign people, the involvement process must start from an informative action: we should remember that people coming from other countries or with different background can also have a different perception of risks and different awareness of the threats a territory is exposed to. Recent events have highlighted the significance of raising awareness and conducting informative activities for native populations as well. In many cases, due to societal and climate changes, we may not be fully aware of the risks we face.

The initial step involves providing information: how does the emergency plan work? what should I do or don't do in case of an alert? and during an emergency? This is achieved through the organization of activities, events, and training sessions, as well as the creation of dedicated informative materials that are multilingual and adapted to various needs. Additionally, for a more long-term perspective, it is crucial to establish a communication network capable of reaching all components of the community.



To be able to reach also non-native and foreign citizens, AMARE-eu partners suggested to start from mapping and connecting the services, public and private, that provide formal or informal support to non-native citizens and persons in marginal conditions, from religious associations to language schools, homeless shelters, cultural mediators, etc. They could be the “nodes” of a network able to reach all community components.

However, as the COVID-19 experience clearly taught us, this is surely not an easy task. Different sub-communities trust on different – and normally separated – sources of information. Even technology and social media are used differently from people with different origins, and in many cases, language is still a significant barrier. For this reason, a real success can be achieved only if we manage to involve non-native citizens not only as recipients, but also as active co-actors of the process. For example, through the organisation of participatory

¹ Silvia Festi, Sara Saleri, “Emergenza e intercultura: dove siamo oggi?”, in «Africa e Mediterraneo», vol. 28, n. 91, 2019, pp. 35-39 <https://www.africaemediterraneo.it/it/numeri-rivista/emergenza-comunita-resilienza/>

dialogues instead than purely informative events, by involving delegates of non-native communities in emergency plans preparation and/or revision processes, and in the preparation and distribution of informative materials, or by recognising and valorising existing informal people-to-people communication channels. Finally, the formal training and involvement of people with different cultural and linguistic background in Civil Protection teams and emergency management protocols it is clearly highly recommended.

As for the emergency and response phase, also in this case the AMARE-eu project tried to identify some guiding principles and practical suggestions that should be kept in mind when operating in a multicultural environment. The experience of Emilia-Romagna earthquake, for example, has shown how non-native citizens tend to have a greater need to stay in shelters, and for a longer time, missing other types of personal relations and support networks. For the same reason, these people are often more fragile in emergency situations, because they are more disoriented, and have needs that are often not explicitly considered by emergency management procedures.

Language and communication difficulties, for instance, are indeed a primary concern. Further challenges may arise from differences in dietary and religious practices, as well as differences in the management and organization of family and community spaces, along with interpersonal relationships. Moreover, non-native individuals



often exhibit lower levels of knowledge and trust in public institutions compared to native citizens. There could be people in an irregular situation or who live in conditions of social marginalization. Particular attention is also required by second generation children and teenagers, who are often asked to act as interpreters for their parents, exposing them to a pressure that can be excessive for their age. Finally, activating a dialogue with embassies and consulates may also be necessary to provide foreign individuals in the affected areas with the opportunity to return to their countries of origin, if they wish to do so.

Generally speaking, having personnel of migrant origin among emergency management workers or in support teams is indeed beneficial for enhancing acceptance and trust among non-native citizens towards Civil Protection and, more broadly, the emergency management system. However, it is crucial to be aware of the challenges posed by the presence of non-native and foreign citizens during emergencies. This awareness allows us to train our operators and enhance procedures to address their specific needs.

Multiculturalism can indeed be seen as something that enriches our lives and can help us discover—or create—more inclusive and open solutions, benefiting not only the 'culturally and linguistically different' community but the entire society.

For example, making greater use of visuals and infographic materials replacing or accompanying the written text for emergency communication, it would simplify the general understanding not only for foreign people, but also for people with reading difficulties and sometimes for those with visual impairments.



Giving space to participatory processes and community-led initiatives, also within the framework of emergency prevention and preparedness actions, will contribute to increasing awareness and trust among citizens of any origin. Similarly, during emergency and post-emergency phases, having the opportunity to involve citizens (of any origin!) not only as "passive beneficiaries" of support services but as co-actors in the recovery process—such as giving them the chance to volunteer alongside civil protection operators or to self-organize certain (non-critical) activities—is not only beneficial for improving integration but is also, above all, a way to valorise people and help overcome difficult moments.

Finally, it's worth emphasizing that, in many cases, the transition phase between the emergency and the return to normality (post-emergency) can provide an opportunity to foster dialogue and collaboration among various components of the community. This can lead to the creation of networks and relationships that extend beyond the emergency moment, helping to overcome stereotypes and enhance the community's capacity to face new challenges in the future.

More ideas, suggestions and concrete examples of how to increase the resilience of cities by taking into account the multicultural dimension of our communities can be found on www.amareproject.eu/documents-resources/.

AMARE-eu project – Identity Card

Title	AMARE-EU Adoption of Multicultural Approach towards Resilience Enhancement in the EU
Period	01/04/2018 - 31/05/2020
Funding Programme	Union Civil Protection Mechanism – Preparedness projects
Project total budget	€ 449.965,49
EU contribution	€ 337.474,13
Project Partners	EPC - European Project Consulting srl Coordinator (IT) City of Vejle (DK) PREPARED International UG (DE) ASSFAM - Groupe SOS Solidarités (FR) Lai-momo - società cooperativa sociale (IT) AICCRE Veneto (IT)
Pilot Cities	Catanzaro (IT) - Heraklion (GR) - Rotterdam (NL) - SKOPJE (NMK)

References and Resources

AMARE-eu – A Multicultural approach to Resilience: www.amareproject.eu

Oltre l'emergenza: come si costruisce una comunità resiliente? AMARE-eu final event (online) in Italian, https://youtu.be/5qY8hYK3_h8

Africa e Mediterraneo – special issue on Emergency and Resilience: <https://www.africaemediterraneo.it/it/numeri-rivista/emergenza-comunita-resilienza/>

Silvia Festi, Sara Saleri, “Emergenza e intercultura: dove siamo oggi?”, Africa e Mediterraneo, vol. 28, n. 91, 2019, www.africaemediterraneo.it/public/newsite/2018/09/Festi-Saleri-pdf_compressed.pdf

F. Borga, C. Demartis, G. Munaretto, “Città multiculturali e resilienti”, Africa e Mediterraneo, vol. 28, n. 91, 2019, www.africaemediterraneo.it/public/newsite/2018/09/Borga-Demartis-Munaretto-pdf_compressed.pdf

Anna Louise Kristensen, “Social Resilience and Co-Creation: the Experience in the City of Vejle”, Africa e Mediterraneo, vol. 28, n. 91, 2019, www.africaemediterraneo.it/public/newsite/2018/09/Kristensen-pdf_compressed.pdf

DG ECHO - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/index_en

DG ECHO – Civil Protection in Europe, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection_en



PERCEPTION: Participatory EmeRgenCy Evaluation in civil ProtecTION: Evaluator & Facilitator in Emergency Planning

**KYRIAKI CHATZIPANAGIOTOU, CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION (CSI), CYPRUS;
REMY BALTIERY, GALEVV, ITALY; SUSANNE NILSSON, QUESITE SRL, ITALY**

Abstract

This paper introduces the dynamic Erasmus+ project, "Participatory Emergency Evaluation in Civil Protection Planning" (PERCEPTION), focusing on the innovative Evaluator and Facilitator in Emergency Planning (EFEP) professional profile.

As emergency response roles evolve, underscored by the challenges of the global pandemic in 2020-2021, PERCEPTION aims to address the demand for professionals skilled in crisis assessment, collaboration with public authorities, and proactive response strategies. Following a comprehensive three-step methodology - Analysis, Development, and Implementation - PERCEPTION strategically examines EU/national contexts, experts' qualifications, volunteer services, training courses, and innovative methodologies.

The EFEP profile encompasses operating in local contexts, understanding civil protection plans, identifying complementarities, and facilitating assessments using participatory approaches. The success of PERCEPTION is contingent on understanding the EFEP profile's context and its subsequent course implementation. The partnership strategically selected course topics, forms, and methodologies based on the desired competences, placing emphasis on the changing role of emergency experts. The selection process carefully vetted 46 participants from six European countries, prioritising motivation, interest, and previous volunteer experience. National and regional context analyses were pivotal in exploring civil protection systems, emergency planning, safety management, and volunteering services. These findings informed the development of a concise, blended training course comprising four units: Emergency Management Planning, Social and Environmental Impacts, Facilitation, and Participatory Evaluation. Each unit delves into crucial aspects such as risk analysis, environmental impacts, facilitation tools, and systematic evaluation methods.

Utilising the results of PERCEPTION can profoundly impact the field of emergency management and civil protection. The project not only equips aspiring EFEP professionals with the necessary skills but also contributes to the broader community. The results can be leveraged to enhance the responsiveness of crisis management units, strengthen collaborations between public authorities and communities, and improve overall preparedness strategies. In essence, PERCEPTION's outcomes pave the way for a new breed of professionals adept at navigating post-emergency scenarios and shaping the future of civil protection planning. The detailed application and selection procedures, coupled with national context analyses, offer valuable insights for stakeholders seeking to replicate or adapt similar initiatives, fostering innovation in emergency management education and practice.

Keywords: emergency planning, professional profile, civil protection, evaluation, facilitation

Introduction

PERCEPTION is a three-year Erasmus+ programme that aims to create a professional profile for individuals involved in post-emergency planning in order to improve preparedness and response between authorities, local organisations and the citizenry so as to minimise the impact of future disasters. PERCEPTION ran in Bulgaria, Italy, Cyprus, Spain and the Netherlands between October 2020 and October 2023.

PERCEPTION's objectives encompass addressing the insufficient post-emergency planning improvement and community involvement following a disaster through the development of a new professional role: the Evaluator & Facilitator in Emergency Planning (hereinafter EFEP).

The role of the EFEP was inspired following years-long experiences by the participating organisations (GALEVV, QueSiTe srl, CSI, EC-VPL, IPF and NBDN) which identified major gaps in the post-emergency planning. The objectives PERCEPTION aimed to achieve through the creation of this new professional profile are:

1. Mutual recognition of the EFEP) qualification among all partner countries through certification at Level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
2. Provision of work-based training to young individuals (18-35 years) through a multilevel, multidisciplinary and immersive training activities.
3. Enhance employment opportunities for young people through the creation of the EFEP Professional Curriculum, fostering job opportunities within non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local authorities, private companies or as self-employed.
4. Creation of dialogue formats to reduce the gap between regional and local public authorities and the private business sector, specifically in the field of safety when an emergency occurs as well as the emergency planning phase.
5. Increase awareness and sensitivity on matters of safety, risk prevention and climate change.

Through a three-step methodology, the PERCEPTION partnership took on the task to develop this new profile in theory and apply it in practice. More specifically, PERCEPTION was conceptualised and implemented around three main axes:

a. Analysis: This stage examines and identifies European Union (EU)/national contexts, experts' qualifications, local volunteer services functions, available training and specialisation courses, and identifies innovative training methodologies, tools and approaches to support the professional profile development and the consequent training scheme.

b. Development: This stage builds on the outcomes of the analysis results and mainly deals with defining the common competences and the profile definition. Based on the qualifications identified and which correspond to this new professional profile, a thorough and interdisciplinary Training Curriculum was developed.

c. Implementation: All material developed in the two previous phases, namely, the EFEP Professional Profile, the comparative analysis of EU and national contexts, and the EFEP Training Curriculum were rolled out in practice through an intense and comprehensive training programme in all partner countries.

a. Analysis

This phase entailed desk and field research in Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Cyprus and the Netherlands which aimed to provide an understanding of:

- existing civil planning and protection structures,
- emergency services, and search and rescue volunteering initiatives,

- available educational and capacity building opportunities in the field of Risk Management, Emergency Planning and Civil Protection,
- expertise level and desired qualifications for individuals in relevant fields,
- current state and analysis of real-life case studies in emergency management.

The PERCEPTION program implemented a comprehensive analysis, engaging experts as mentors to provide valuable insights throughout the process. The collaborative effort involved active communication with mentors in partner countries, leading to the identification of gaps in post-emergency management and the essential competences required. The analysis also acknowledged limitations concerning available resources and time.

To gain a nuanced understanding of each country's situation, the partnership conducted desk research on the functioning of civil protection systems and their interaction with occupational health and safety (OSH) systems. This included an exploration of the European Civil Protection Mechanism and the European Agency addressing occupational safety issues (OSHA), all within the framework of the EFEP profile.

The analysis then extended to national contexts associated with the EFEP profile, evaluating professional deficiencies in the emergency assessment phase and identifying areas for improvement in participatory planning. This encompassed civil protection and crisis management, assessing emergency planning and management approaches, business continuity management, and showcasing case studies and best practices at local, regional, and national levels.

Additionally, the partnership delved into national contexts related to safety management and planning within workplaces, with a specific focus on high-risk areas. This examination aimed at evaluating emergency management approaches and identifying case studies at the local and regional levels.

In a final phase, the analysis explored the functions of national volunteering services in the field of Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid. This focused on the training provided to volunteers within their sending organisations, offering a baseline understanding of potential participants. The comprehensive analysis informed the program's development by incorporating diverse perspectives and insights across various facets of emergency management.

The results of all national context analyses are available here: <https://perception-eu.com/efep-professional-profile/>



The EFEP Profile

In case of natural disasters and humanitarian crises, it is required that experts/teams are able to assess what worked well in the emergency response as well as identify the mistakes that occurred during crisis management effort. These experts/teams need to (inter)act with public authorities, local actors and stakeholders, and thus, their role is crucial in post-emergency. In this phase, new

strategies can be developed in order to improve preparedness and response to a future crisis by learning from past mistakes.

The EFEP profile aims to contribute to the process of post-emergency management, and encourage a participatory civil protection and safety approach for enterprises in risk areas with the aim to support faster and better recovery, whilst reducing future disaster impacts.

The EFEP profile is aimed at covering this gap for facilitation and evaluation in post-emergency and offers this opportunity in terms of employability and innovative vocational education & training (VET) to young individuals.

Thus, the main characteristics of this new professional role entail, inter alia, the ability to:

- Act as a link between the emergency manager and the stakeholders (a. enterprises, b. public bodies that are responsible for applying measures in case of emergency, and c. the representatives of the people who need assistance)
- Act as a central coordinating figure between various actors both in the creation of plans that can reduce the impact of future disasters and in the post-emergency analysis of what went wrong and what could be improved in the emergency plans.
- To operate in local and entrepreneurial contexts and to have a good knowledge of civil protection plans' application and safety measures in enterprises/factories located in risk areas.
- To provide a service (as part of a team or on an entrepreneurial basis) to companies and/or public bodies to offer an outside perspective to existing processes of emergency planning.
- To contribute to the drafting of emergency plans by acting as a link between the various public and private stakeholders, and to mediate between parties and help to assess response efforts and potential to improve.
- To manage the pre and post-emergency evaluation (prevention, post-emergency analysis) and to be active during, pre, and post-emergency.



To adequately fulfil this role and demonstrate such competencies in the field of risk management, two competences were given special attention, namely, evaluation and facilitation. Evaluation is a key concept in achieving the above, and thus, expert evaluators can become a key professional role in post-emergency planning.

Evaluation is a key concept to achieve the above, and thus, expert evaluators can become a key professional aspect of post-emergency planning. As such, they can assess crisis management

approaches and identify strategies to prevent future disasters or alleviate their impact, making this process part of the civil protection planning. Another key element to achieve this is facilitation, which is the ability to apply participatory approaches aiming at building a constructive relationship between citizens, enterprises and local/regional authorities after an emergency has taken place.

Another key competence EFEPs need to possess is facilitation so as to ensure they can adequately adopt a participatory approach in the post-emergency context. Facilitation can lay the ground for a multi-stakeholder approach in improving emergency response plans, improving communication and adopting plans that take into account local idiosyncrasies, dynamics and interests. Communication is also a central component of facilitation that supports the use of effective communicative approaches.

By equipping aspiring EFEPs with tools to strategically and tactically evaluate and facilitate emergency response, they can be in a position to:

- Assess crisis management approaches
- Identify strategies to prevent future disasters or limit their impacts,
- Integrate this process as part of the civil protection planning.

By investing in the facilitation skills of an EFEP, the individual will be in a position to:

- Build collaborative relationships with stakeholders and actors responsible and affected by emergency situations.
- Plan, guide and facilitate group processes.
- Maintain professional knowledge and be transparent with challenges, plans, and course of action.
- Introduce the concept of active participation, e.g. the ability to apply participatory approaches aiming at building a constructive relationship among citizens, enterprises, and local/regional authorities.

The EFEP can transversally read and see complementarities and synergies among the 2 levels (internal and external emergency planning/management) and ease their assessment and understanding using a participatory approach, which can support recovery and reduce future disaster impacts.

The main characteristics and competences of the EFEP profile were identified and analysed in the comprehensive EFEP Professional Profile based on the findings of the desk and field research carried out in all partner countries.

Core competence: Know and understand the legislation and specific reference fields	
Ability	Skills/Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ describe national planning systems in civil protection, their potential impacts, and safety in workplaces, ○ contextualise aspects of the legislation to specific territorial features, ○ identify hazards/risks and their potential impacts, ○ contextualise legislative aspects to specific territorial features. 	<p>Knowledge of basic legislation and regulations at local/regional/national/EU levels in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ civil protection, ○ safety, ○ risks (natural and human-induced, including health risks such as pandemics) and ○ their potential impacts; main profiles involved in an emergency context inside and outside enterprises and public authorities; existing tools and documents to manage emergencies and safety in workplaces.

Core Competence: Engage Stakeholders	
Ability	Skills/Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understand their perspective, needs and the potential they have to become part of the evaluation process. ○ select and involve relevant stakeholders and group of leaders who will support the participatory evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ participatory approach ○ application of appropriate facilitation methods, tools and approaches
Core Competence: Analyse and understand the context and what occurs during a crisis in terms of management.	
Ability	Skills/Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assess and analyse what happens in the “management room” before/during an emergency at local and enterprise level, ○ evaluate impacts of assessment of emergency management and its impact on participatory planning. ○ evaluate best approaches to implement. ○ evaluation synthesis (response-levels, country/regional levels, multi agencies evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understand the principles of classifying, assessing and analysing risks (type, origin, level of impact and likelihood) ○ understand needs and expectations of enterprises (workers, entrepreneurs, etc.) and territories affected by a negative event; social analysis, ○ communication and negotiation ○ ensuring high transparency ○ civil protection and ○ internal and external emergency planning techniques ○ disaster preparedness <p>Type of analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High level (themes/multiple program context) ○ Protracted crisis (many projects at the same time /context) ○ Multi-agency/actor response
Core Competence: Design and plan an evaluation and report to the client	
Ability	Skills/Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ analyse a crisis programme, ○ design an evaluation plan for a participatory evaluation, ○ collect and analyse credible, feasible, and culturally appropriate evidence, ○ interpret data, ○ justify conclusions, ○ give feedback to management and to relevant stakeholders, ○ understand how individual and collective behaviours impact communities and affect the impact of climate change in territories in review, ○ adapt knowledge to emergency planning context, focusing on local administration, enterprises, and the citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concept of an evaluation plan ○ Participatory evaluation ○ Need, expected effects, activities, resources, stage, context, logic model of the evaluation. ○ Purpose of the evaluation, users, uses, questions, methods, questions, agreements ○ Standards, indicators for measurement and criteria, sources, quality, quantity, logistics ○ analysis/synthesis, interpretation, judgment, recommendations
Core Competence: Conduct an evaluation and report on the emergency planning,	

management and evaluation	
Ability	Skills/Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transversally analyse and see complementarities and synergies among internal and external emergency planning/management, in communities and enterprises, set up participatory processes involving both management and evaluation, identify and analyse impacts and consequences in crisis management and organisation, and analyse social data, involve relevant stakeholders in the participatory evaluation, be transparent with clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> technical planning and control, methods to set up processes, indicators, measures, and participatory evaluation processes, communication, problem-solving techniques.
Core Competence: Transfer assessment outcomes (and facilitate a participatory approach to produce civil protection/safety plans for companies in risk areas)	
Ability	Skills/Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify what worked well, mistakes that occurred, and what can be improved, evaluative evidence in the decision-making process, support and involve civil protection and public authority bodies and private enterprises, transfer outcomes to managers/operators involved during and after these events to understand how to better deal with a similar emergency in the future, evaluation dashboard: evidence from different evaluation sources and communicate it in a single report/table/screen, making it easier for decision-makers to access and evaluate all relevant evidence, implement training/working plans, facilitate/set up a participatory approach and processes, involving local and transnational stakeholders and institutions when necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project management, facilitation approaches, civil protection planning approaches and techniques, logical decision-making processes, complex systems analysis, activities/people coordination strategies networks building with institutions, research bodies, economic entities, statistical meta-analysis and qualitative approaches.

b. Development

Upon defining the main competences, the next step was to develop educational material that cultivates the knowledge and skill that correspond to the EFEP professional profile job requirements. The added value in terms of skills to be acquired focuses on analysis capacity, synthesis capacity, critical understanding, the ability to manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, decision making in unpredictable contexts, taking responsibility for managing professional

development of individuals and groups, attitude to work in a group and as an individual to accomplish time-bounded work, and problem-solving through solution-oriented approaches.

The training material was divided into four segments, namely:

1. **Local Classes Training:** Each partner organisation was tasked to contribute to the development of training material spanning a total of 48 hours with the aim to educate aspiring EFEPs on matters that touch on the knowledge and skills that are required to undertake the role of an EFEP. The structure of the local classes trainings included theoretical knowledge, real-life scenarios, self-assessment exercises, role-play, case studies analysis and application of facilitation and evaluation methods and approaches.
2. **Entrepreneurship Webinar:** NBDN, the partner organisation based in Bulgaria, was tasked to develop, coordinate and deliver a 4-hour webinar on entrepreneurship. The aim of this webinar was to introduce EFEP trainees across Europe to the world of entrepreneurship and support them in conceptualising various job formats this role could take in the labour market (e.g. consultant, freelancer).
3. **Virtual Exchanges - Case Studies Development:** This activity is complementary to the local training material and aims to support EFEP teams in all partner countries to identify, analyse and evaluate a local/national case study related to an emergency incident. Under this task, which was coordinated by EC-VPL in the Netherlands, all EFEP trainees with the support of their respective mentor and trainer were guided to examine a past incident, identify the type and level of response, errors that were made in the emergency response and eventually to come up with solutions/recommendations on how similar incidences could be better managed in the future.
4. **Ten-Day Capacity Building in Italy:** GALEVV and QueSiTe were responsible to organise a comprehensive and experiential ten-day capacity building in Torre Pellice, Italy, in June-July 2023. This activity aimed to give the opportunity to all participating EFEP trainees to travel to Italy and directly engage with local actors in emergency planning operating in the area (fire brigades, local authorities, civil protection), examine and evaluate real emergency plans, facilitate discussions on how emergency responses can be improved, and get a better grasp on how the EFEP role can be applied in real-life contexts.

c. Implementation

Upon defining and developing the EFEP profile and the capacity-building training material, the partnership launched local efforts to recruit individuals as EFEP trainees. The profile of the trainees had several criteria in order to have a consistent group in terms of background and interests, including, professional or volunteering involvement in the emergency/risk management and humanitarian sector, a B1 level in English, and either be a student, unemployed or semi-employed person aged between 18-35.

Local classes

The PERCEPTION training curriculum was delivered in the format of local classes in Cyprus, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain between February and June 2023. A total of 43 participants completed the training in anticipation of the ten-day capacity building in Italy, including a team of graduate students of the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences. Below is an outline of the classes delivered:

Unit 1: Emergency Management Planning

Topic 1: Emergency Planning: EU & National Context

Topic 2: Risk Analysis

Topic 3: Emergency Management Planning Process

Unit 2: Social & Environmental Impacts

Topic 1: Environmental & Social Connections

Topic 2: Types of emergencies and their impact on the environment and the communities

Topic 3: Zero Risk Concept

Unit 3: Facilitation

Topic 1: Facilitation as an EFEP

Topic 2: Communication & Mediation Tools

Topic 3: Facilitation through Participatory Approaches

Unit 4: Strategic Evaluation

Topic 1: Introduction to Strategic Evaluation

Topic 2: Organisational Evaluation Capacity

Topic 3: Methods & Tools

Topic 4: Systemic method to study emergency response

Topic 5: Communication with Stakeholders

Entrepreneurship webinar

The Entrepreneurship webinar was attended by EFEP trainees from all participating countries and aimed to provide an entrepreneurial aspect to the EFEP professional role. The webinar covered topics such as: Decision-making skills for Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Marketing, LEAN Entrepreneurship and Best Practices in the field that align with the EFEP employability opportunities. Participants were also divided in groups to discuss and analyse case studies and present them in the plenary.

Virtual exchanges - case studies development

The case study development in all partner countries was at the centre of the preparation phase ahead of the ten-day capacity building in Italy. To support the EFEP trainees across the partnership in developing and analysing a case study, they were provided with an outline to use as a guide in the six dedication sessions that were to be held in parallel with the local classes.

Below is a brief outline of the six virtual exchange sessions that were implemented in all partner countries:

SESSION 1 – Analysing the context

- Identify elements that qualify the three risk components: vulnerability, exposure and hazard.
- Describe the territory.
- Consider social-economic and/or other kinds of vulnerability. List elements you identified.

SESSION 2 – Describing the event (what impacts does it generate?)

- Identify direct/instantaneous impacts and indirect/long-term effects.
- Identify some cascading effects.
- Outline the effects on people, housing/habitat and society.
- Outline the impact on critical infrastructures.
- Outline the impact on the environment and ecosystem services.

SESSION 3 – Managing the crisis

- Is it a forecastable event? Is there an alarm system in place?
- Identify a prevention phase (before the event) and a response phase (during the event). Which actions have been taken in these phases?
- Which are the priorities to address?
- Communication: tools, messages, targets.
- Can you find a similar event in the newspaper/web?

SESSION 4 – Analysing the emergency plan

- What should be the structure of the plan?
- What kind of information should be included in the plan?

SESSION 5 – Identifying the relevant stakeholders (who's who)

- With whom should the plan be shared? Which are the relevant stakeholders?
- How should the plan be shared with different stakeholders? What kind of information should be shared with each group of interest?

SESSION 6 – Set up the participatory evaluation process.

- How can we improve emergency planning?

The last session was held online with all EFEP trainees. Each national group presented their case study and findings, receiving feedback from other EFEP trainees.

Ten-day capacity building in Italy

During the ten-day training in Italy held in June - July 2023, participants got involved in study visits in an area highly or potentially highly affected by a disruptive event and with different typologies of enterprises in its boundaries. Participants were tasked to address crisis management from an EU perspective and define an emergency plan that matches civil protection legislation and safety risks, presenting their whole experience and results during a public conference.

The aim of this mobility activity was to enable participants to translate into practice the competences/skills gained in a real environment.

Case study alignment

The EU-wide capacity building gathering in Italy was launched with the case study alignment activity, where each EFEP country team presented its case study work to the other teams. After the presentations, the participants had the chance to ask questions and delve deeper into the specifics

of each case study focusing on key elements such as identification of gaps in emergency response and recommendations for improvement in similar future incidences.

The sharing of the case studies resulted in an enriching and interesting discussion regarding the major risk factors in their countries and ways to prevent, manage and recover from emergencies.

This activity aimed to see how each group approached their case study development during the virtual exchanges stage, and compare the methods of analysis and evaluation that were deployed by each team in order to reach a set of recommendations for improvement.



Threat-sure Hunt

The Threat-sure Hunt activity was based on the traditional live game “Treasure Hunt”, in which, in this case, players must search for ‘threats’ and ‘risk sources’.

As part of the Threat-sure Hunt, the EFEP trainees had reached specific points in the city of Torre Pellice by analysing and understanding some provided clues. The clues were built to force participants to read the map they were given, analyse the territory, and make a decision. Analysing a territory and knowing how to read a map are basic elements to deal with civil protection issues. The second part of the activity was to classify some buildings of the city of Torre Pellice into risk categories. The groups had to decide the level of vulnerability of each exposed element /building, and add it in the respective risk category.

At the end of the activity, the participants discussed how they assessed the level of vulnerability for the same exposed elements. Vulnerability is a key and often under-evaluated element in the crisis-management, especially in the after-event recovery, which is exactly the point in which an EFEP might be called in to take action.

The Threat-sure Hunt had 3 main goals:

1. Working in teams and experiencing in real life the real meaning of key words in the field of emergency management, such as ‘hazard’, ‘exposed value,’ ‘risk area’, ‘vulnerability’.
2. Discover and feel familiar with the area they would stay for 10 days.
3. Serve as an ice-breaker useful for mixing national groups, helping participants to get to know each other.

Civil protection Plan Analysis

A set of guided questions were provided to analyse the current civil protection plans of two municipalities in the area. The participants were divided into two groups, one analysing the plan of Torre Pellice (small municipality of around 4.500 inhabitants) and another of Pinerolo (bigger town of around 34.000 inhabitants). For each plan, participants were asked to reflect on the following topics/elements, recalling the section of the plans themselves:



1. Spatial analysis;
2. Operational Procedures;
3. Risk scenario (focus hydrogeologic risk scenario)
4. Document content
5. Communication

The main goals of this activity were:

1. To learn the functioning and structure of a civil protection plan on a known territory.
2. To be able to analyse its most important aspects and find potential critical points.
3. Prepare questions to be addressed to stakeholders in post-emergency evaluation meetings.

Interviews with Stakeholders

Meetings with local stakeholders were carried out in two steps. First, each group met and interviewed representatives of a municipality. They analysed the plan to better understand the functioning of the Civil Protection local system, how emergencies are dealt with, and identify what was not clear in the emergency plan.

Second, and after a group debriefing, participants met with the same stakeholders and provided them with their feedback and suggestions to improve the civil protection planning. The opportunity to interview stakeholders and observe their civil protection plans was enriching and knowledgeable. It provided valuable insight into the differences and similarities between the Italian and other European approaches to civil protection planning. Stakeholders received all suggestions and included some of them in the list of improvements to add when they will update the civil protection plan. Stakeholders from the municipality included the mayor, counsellors, technicians, and volunteers or professionals of the civil protection system.

The main goals of this activity were:

4. To meet stakeholders who deal with civil protection issues in their everyday work.
5. To understand in concrete terms how civil protection plans are applied in practice.
6. To be able to understand and summarise how an existing emergency plan works, and to be able to make suggestions to improve it.

EFEP role-play

A role play was organised with EFEP trainees acting interchangeably as an EFEP team during a post-emergency evaluation session with local actors. The activity was based in a scenario that was provided to all participants, during which the EFEP trainees were challenged with facilitating discussions and proposing solutions for a better, coordinated response in the future.

The game consisted of 6 rounds. Each round was a phase of the participatory evaluation process of the post-emergency planning:

1.Pre-evaluation, 2.Plan and coordinate the evaluation, 3.Collect data, 4.Analyse the data, 5.Develop the report, 6.Disseminate results.

A short debriefing was made at the end of each round.

The EFEP role-play activity had 2 main goals.

1. Learn how to prepare and facilitate a meeting between different stakeholders and how to deal with potential conflicts between them in order to reach consensus on decisions.
2. Face a realistic situation to experience first-hand the difficulties of facilitation.

Public event

The final event was intended as an opportunity to present the project and the EFEP Professional Profile to the public, and discuss with citizens and stakeholders how they can utilise the results of PERCEPTION. The host organisations (GALEVV and QueSiTe) and the EFEP trainees presented the project and the training programme experience (local classes, entrepreneurship webinar, case study development, ten-day capacity building activities). The day concluded with a collective reflection on the importance of civil protection and safety, and highlighted the importance of revising emergency plans in periods of calm based on past experiences and responses.



Conclusions

The PERCEPTION program, with its rigorous three-year journey across European nations, culminated in the successful development and training of 46 young EFEPs. Through a meticulous approach encompassing analysis, development, and implementation, the program contributes to addressing critical gaps in post-emergency planning. The diverse training modules, including local classes, entrepreneurship webinar, virtual case study exchanges, and a transformative ten-day capacity-building experience in Italy, collectively sculpted a cadre of professionals ready to start their journey in the field of post-emergency management.

By instilling not just theoretical knowledge but practical skills through immersive activities, role-plays, and stakeholder interactions, PERCEPTION ensured that EFEP trainees emerged as dynamic contributors to the field.

The impact of PERCEPTION extends beyond the participants, contributing to a broader objective of enhancing community resilience and reducing the impact of future disasters. As these newly-trained EFEPs enter the workforce, the program's ripple effect promises to foster a culture of participatory planning, collaboration between authorities and local organisations, and heightened awareness of safety and risk prevention. In essence, PERCEPTION has not only equipped individuals with a specialised skill set but has sown seeds for a more resilient and prepared future in the realm of emergency planning.

Author Note

Data collection, preliminary analysis, content development and capacity building activities were co-funded by the European Commission E+ programme. All material created as part of the PERCEPTION programme is available at: <https://perception-eu.com/>.

Correspondence regarding this paper should be addressed at Kyriaki Chatzipanagiotou, Center for Social Innovation, Rigenis 62, 1010, Nicosia, Cyprus. Email: Kyriaki.chatzipanagiotou@csicy.com.

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project Number: 2020-1-IT01-KA202-008444.

DAY II: WORKSHOP AND VOLUNTEERS' PRESENTATIONS

Workshop: The effective training of CALD communities in Civil Protection through EMCITY project

MARIA GIAMPOULAKI, PROJECT MANAGER & RESEARCHER, COMMUNITY CRISIS INTERVENTION (CCI HELLAS), GREECE

As part of the EM-CITY conference, a workshop was held to equip participants with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively design a non-formal learning program for young people. Educational and voluntary organizations, Departments of Municipalities and Regions and other stakeholders that organize trainings have to adopt some basic principles of adult education.

Basic characteristics of adult learners:

- ✓ They need to know why they **need to learn something**
- ✓ They **use their experiences** as sources of learning
- ✓ They want to acquire **concrete knowledge** rather than abstract and academic concepts.
- ✓ They **present obstacles** arising from obligations, commitments and their social roles
- ✓ They **do not have time**
- ✓ They want to **actively participate** in the educational process

Training should contain **active and participatory** techniques such as

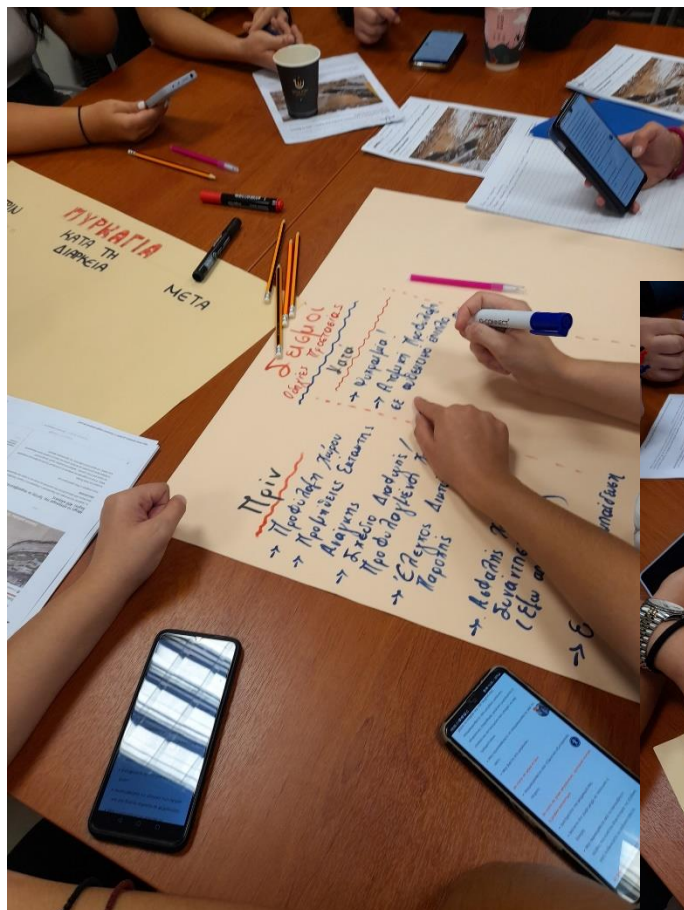
- ✓ Dialogue, Discussion
- ✓ Work groups
- ✓ Brainstorming
- ✓ Case study

Key principles and practices:

- ✓ **Clear Objectives:** well-defined and measurable objectives.
- ✓ **Relevance to Learners:** Training content should be tailored to the needs of the participants. It should be applicable to their roles, tasks, and responsibilities, making the learning experience more relevant and engaging.
- ✓ **Active Learning:** Practical exercises, case studies, simulations and group discussions
- ✓ **Feedback Mechanisms:** Regular assessments, quizzes, and feedback sessions help participants understand their progress, identify areas for improvement, and reinforce learning.
- ✓ **Real-world Applications:** Connecting theoretical concepts to real-world applications helps participants see the practical relevance of what they are learning.
- ✓ **Adaptability:** flexible and adaptable to the needs of the learners and any changes in the environment.
- ✓ **Clear Communication:** Instructions, materials, and presentations should be clear, easily understandable
- ✓ **Motivation and Engagement:** Creating a positive and supportive learning environment, acknowledging achievements.

- ✓ **Continuous Learning Culture** Once is not enough, especially in matters of civil protection or culture change
- ✓ **Trained Trainers:** Trainers should know the subject but also have to be skilled in effective teaching
- ✓ **Supportive Learning Environment:** Providing a supportive learning environment, free from distractions, culture of collaboration and mutual support among learners

Organizations can create a more **effective training** program that leads to **improved skills, knowledge** and **application of learning in real-world scenarios**.



EM-CITY Volunteers: The EM-CITY Training Experience

CHRISTINA LATINA & YIANNIS LAMPRAKIS

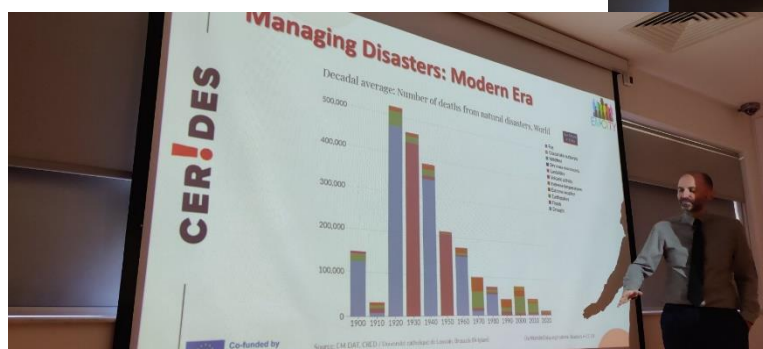
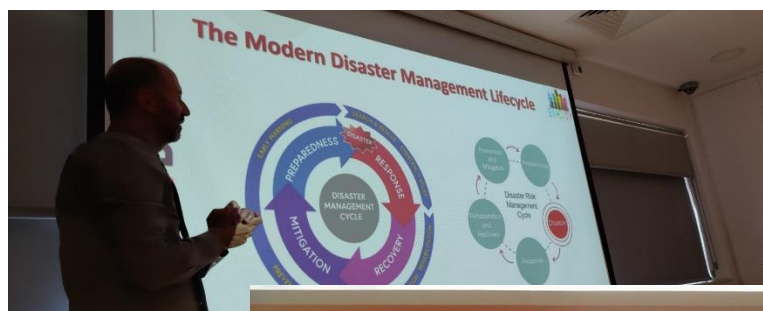
Christina Latina:

First of all, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the training in Cyprus. I think Maria's presentation have the exact results of our meeting in Cyprus. It was a pleasure for us to participate. We participated in a one week training the Erasmus training program. We were able to get trained in various fields of civil protection, crisis management operation and volunteerism. And the most important part was that we were able to speak up our opinions - and that is for me the most important - and we were able to set questions in an open environment.

The EMCITY project is funded by the European Commission , by Erasmus. The aim is to promote interactive processes between local authorities, civil protection operators, young people, local community during emergencies. The role of youth as interactive bridges, as we already have said, between civil protection operations, local authorities, and CALD and non CALD communities.

Civil engagement, active citizenship and civil protection values were all fields that were promoted during the training. And last but not least one aim was to raise awareness for emergency communication issues between CALD, non CALD communities as well in the local commune.

I would like to start to present to you some of our first day in Cyprus. I have prepared my files, so as I said earlier, we will we were able to communicate and it interact together with us were teams of young people from Italy, Cyprus, and Turkey. I was personally so excited for the upcoming experience. To my surprise all of us were sitting in the round table as we are now. And that allowed us to have a more open communication to see everyone and set questions. And beside of this, this was also the purpose of the meeting, I think. So little did I know that the most part of our training would include lots of open conversations and discussions.



And also projects with professors, professionals, local authority management and the organization that were active and had knowledge and experience in every aspect and definition of crisis and civil protection during emergencies. Here you can see a little bit of our first days where the icebreaker, as we say, took place. I still cannot forget that the first day we had the opportunity to make teams, random teams. So everyone got up and started talking and mixing up with each other.

When everyone heard that we would be able to mix group, everyone stood up and that was very important for me. Second, yes, we had the opportunities to hear experiences from people from different backgrounds during emergencies. For example, the guys at Turkey were able to express their opinions and, points of view during the earthquake, for example, the guys from Italy were able to address some issues during the problems with floods and also COVID 19 issues.

So, imagine back then it was, earthquakes in Turkey took place back then with those, those disaster in there was about like a month after that.

More or less everyone had the background either in civil protection or some kind of experience in volunteerism or some of them participated in different organizations.

And so we were able to take experiences from all of them and discuss. In the following days, I cannot describe the level of interest and engagement that we had. There were real open conversations with participants, placing also their opinions. And the experiences through emergency, for example, we learn so much by our co participants and that we could not stay focused in the free time when we were going out.

We still had to discuss various issues because we had too many too much interest in between. So hearing how things operate in different countries and how different cultures behave and interact was a crucial part that could evolve our critical thinking and help us at least evaluate different situations.

Much of the approach was given to the meaning of engagement and basic methodology for crisis and emergency management. We learned more about volunteer actions, governmental and institutional forums and organizations that take up and cooperate in civil protection, prevention and crisis management.

Last, but not least, it was the fact that the great importance was given in prevention is something I will not forget because I think, we lack of prevention in nowadays, and this is the best way to prepare by various means and help reduce the use of too many resources. 1 thing we address and I think we will not forget it.

Is that every time a disaster happened, we come unprepared and we use a great amount of resources , money. And of course, let's not forget for the loss of human lives. The most important. So we could reduce this effort money and loss of lives at least. Well, I will not say 50%. Approximately, we were only taking some prevention precautions measures.



So here you can see the other part of our experiences. Of course, we took the chance to meet up and do some sightseeing, some meetings to gain experiences together. It's funny because we were so triggered that during the days after the training we had long long walks and we will still, again, talking about the civil protection issues and experiences of other participants.

Yiannis Lamprakis:

Actually, it was an honor. It was an honor that with to part in the, in this in this experience cause actually we built as well, bonds with each other.

But for instance, like, nowadays you can, you can see like, the, the whole you know, the culture between, for instance, Hellas and Turkey. That but in the end of the day, if the disaster happens. We are all humans. So, it was, we had the opportunity to build some bonds as well with our friends.

Because actually, if you remember back then in Turkey also we, as Greece, we sent also rescue team as other countries in Kahrranmaras here. Earthquakes. Yeah. So that's, that's how you can build the actual culture as Maria said before. It's not only the presentation is, it's in general, the experience.



With you know, like presentation, then as, as Christina said, we mixed up in teams. We, we asked about our opinions, what we are doing like in this, in this case, in that case, etc. So, it was very important for us to, to learn a lot about, civil protection. And actually I hope that more and more people take part in those actions because it's actually crucial.

And I'm personally disappointed that in Greece, we haven't built this culture yet because we are a European country in the rest of the Europe. If you go to other countries you can see like straight out of school, have learned about civil protection. I'll have learned a lot, about, for instance, okay, in Greece, we have some trainings in earthquakes situations, you know, like.



As I remember back in school, for instance, but it's only that climate change is a climate change. Is a fact here. So, we have to be more, you know, to insist to. To get trained and develop a culture, more and more so we can be prepared because this is the important, if you are prepared, you have best, possibilities, actually, because it's about possibilities to have, less life losses, that's the more important and also resources, but because as I remember back then they present us for instance, the, how much more, expensive is to recover from a disaster.

I would also like to add something I remember during our discussion with Mr. Christos Dimopoulos, who was the professor for the main training. So we concluded that in any type of emergency, we are the first ones to act before someone arrives, before some help arrives. So it is very important for us to facilitate some knowledge to be prepared.

So, after after this, I would like to also talk to you about the experiences, the results. I think that we have gained 1st of all, we had some valuable knowledge on how to be prepared in different situations. I think the only way to facilitate the knowledge is to repeat trainings all the time. Second of all we learned how to properly search for information in various sources and learn more about civil protection in our countries.

And the most important was again, the human factor. The multicultural world that we live in. So we also had the opportunity to see the detailed methodology of stages before, during and after a crisis or disaster. And of course, I think one of the most important aims is for us to implement changes in our environment.

So the engagement of young people is definitely very important during tough periods of time during every time you think, and I would like to come to the last.

For me, most important part, which is the communication in between. So when we hear aspects and points of view from different people with different backgrounds and cultures, we gain a lot of experience, critical thinking, and for us, for me, at least personally, the most valuable lesson was the opportunity to hear everyone.

I want to say something that is so short. Yes. I think the, the result of this training was very successful. And I can say this only because when we returned, everyone, at least me, I don't know if you also were asking what we did. And we were so excited. I wanted to share my experience for weeks because I could not forget, the training and I would like to have more opportunities to be trained in the field of civil protection.

And again, thank you very much. I want to add something as well. Because for instance, we promoted these actions in in our social media, for instance, it was it was very, you know, like. Young people actually interested in those in civil protection and, it was I was very, when we returned, I had a lot of questions with, of my friend's family and and other people.

So I have to mention that because, young people actually interested in those actions we have to give them the chance to get involved.



EPIDRASIS NGO - Heraklion

MR DIMITRIS STEIAKAKIS

Good morning everybody,

I am Pacos Panagiotis. I'm an agronomist and I'm also involving in adult training as a vocational teacher in the local institutions. I'm a volunteer for 14 years now, but and one of the, the initial members that established the Epidrasis volunteer rescue team.

The name of our team, visitors guests here translate is into the word p and act and altogether impact. So every action of solidarity, because small can have an impact on our lives and, to everybody of us. We are very new as a volunteer team.

We established in 2022 and the team created by a group of veteran experienced volunteer rescuers together with some other considered active, citizens or professionals with a common love for volunteering. The first idea came with the earthquake in Arcalohori in September 2021. That will observe some gaps in the search and rescue operations.

And with this factor, combined with other consideration, gaps in the civil protection, we emerged the need for the creation of a new volunteer team that will have fresh ideas. A local character, be well organized and have flexibility, so to participate in the important issues of the, you know of our society.

Our vision, is to develop and the great integrated system of prevention and response actions that will respond to the longstanding pathogens of the society and also to the emergency needs. With key access, the society. The citizen, the environment and the rest, human fellows that is in privileged in numbers were established in 2022.



We already have 51 active, volunteers we're running now the second basic training school that has 29 trainees. We have make, for, training to the civilians. Basically, they call us and ask, to train teachers from that schools. Not young people as with the talk before, but the teachers basically the, the BLS protocol, the basic like support in the first aid.

We have two-line guards to shift water technicians to divers and professionals to do with the first aid, like doctors, nursing, paramedic.

Our primary responsibilities and targets of our rescue team are to train the citizens, train new rescuers, providing first aid and medical assistant in the local for now, and cultural and sporting events for now. Search and rescue operations, evacuation and shelter management, disaster

response coordination, general volunteering in different sectors, prevention of the idea of a volunteer general, and support and integration assistance for people with special needs.

Our training now. Our new volunteers follow an eight-month training course that includes the basic training. In what is volunteering and what is its purpose. The basic idea, basic first aid concepts, rescue principles, way of operation, a team rescue psychology introduction to disaster management, training in sensor rescue training, urban search and rescue full first aid, training by professionals.



Training in the use of basic rescue equipment, training in mountaineering and mountain rescue techniques, training to help people with disabilities in emergency situations, and training in non-swimming rescue. Very important for all of our volunteer teams is the collaboration and teamwork. Our goal is to emphasize on significant and effective collaboration and teamwork with all the local authorities and other volunteer teams.

We speak the same language and have the same training. So to be more useful as a team's so to overcome the pathogens of the previous years that, we

all go together to incidents, but nobody knows what to do and have different training on the different training levels. Collaboration and teamwork.

Our collaboration so far is with the Civil Protection General, Civil Protection of Crete Region, Municipality of Heraklion, Municipality of Minoa Pediados, EKAV, the Fire Department, the Police, the Coast Guard, the Hellenic Mediterranean University, the National History Museum, the National History Museum, Oh, ask the rescue free, training group is a group that is training basic training in different, sectors of search and rescue. And of course, CCI our community engagement is outreach programs, training sessions, awareness campaigns conducted by the team. And some of our activities so far, it's a, we are very, very young as a team, but I think we have achieved the enough of the time. We are active. This is our training.

One of the sessions of our training, our new volunteers, we, do some meetings to our office for briefings that we call experts and they make presentation in different and various, rescue fields. We make a citizen, training after they call us and, train them. We're providing first aid and medical assistance in sport events.

We're providing first aid and medical assistance. We find it very important for the people with disabilities. We have focus, to the people, with disabilities. We have two members in our team, already. Providing first aid and medical assistance in cultural events. Thanks.

We participate with other volunteers' team in municipal workshop on civil protection. We attend the university workshop also in civil protection. We have already had any introductory training in Technical rescue. So, we are hoping in the future to do more things. We have, we will and have the, the courage to do it.

So, thank you very much and I hope you to see you in the future.

Hellenic Rescue Team

MR KONSTANTINOS EFTHYMIPOULOS, HEAD OF USAR DEPARTMENT, IN HELLENIC RESCUE TEAM BRANCH OF HERAKLION

The Hellenic Rescue Team is a non-governmental Organization of Search and Rescue, whose members have participated in operations since 1978 and since 1994 works with the association form.

The headquarters are in Thessaloniki and there are 34 branches throughout Greece, with manpower of over 2.500 volunteers.

H.R.T is certified by the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, as well as by the **INSARAG** of the UN since 2005. It is in constant collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (The Agency for International Development and Cooperation* and with the European Union (ECHO*). It is also a full member of **IMRF**, of the International Federation of Mountain Rescue **IKAR-CISA** and of the International Rescue Dog Organization (**IRO**).

The Hellenic Rescue Team participates in search and rescue operations, in emergencies and mass disasters in Greece and abroad. It is staffed by professional and amateur rescuers with excellent scientific and technical training, acting out of voluntary consciousness. Some of the most important moments of HRT were: the missions to Turkey due to the earthquake of 1999 and 2023, identifying and freeing a survivor in the ruins in Haiti, 14 days after the earthquake, the establishment of Nursing Schools in Afghanistan and setting up the health system in Serbia.

Within the borders, H.R.T acted in all big earthquakes since 1995 (**Achaia** 1995, **Athens** 1999, **Kefalonia**, etc), in locating fallen YACOVLEF and in the hauling of the relics of the Patriarch of Alexandria, during the fall of the military helicopter and in other major emergencies. The H.R.T of Heraklion has participated in search operations of missing people on land and at sea as well as in fires in Heraklion providing assistance to firefighters and .



One of the branches is that of Heraklion, Crete. The Branch was established in October 2011, and currently has 50 members. It is registered by the General Secretariat for Civil Protection of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, under registration number 2/2012.

Its members are certified volunteer rescuers - first aid providers, who, in cooperation with the official authorities (Paramedics, Fire Brigade, Emergency Response Unit, etc) act in urban areas, in mountain areas and in marine areas. The humanitarian work of the branch is also manifold.

The H.R.T of Heraklion has participated in search operations of missing people as well as in fires in Heraklion providing assistance to firefighters. Also it provides health coverage at

events/activities/sports, First Aid seminars to Sectors, Earthquake drills in schools of Primary and Secondary Education, firefighting, etc. Under this context, HRT of Heraklion has conducted earthquake readiness drills and evacuation of buildings in schools of primary and secondary education as well as in schools of children with special needs.



H.R.T cooperates in case of emergency with the authorities who are in charge, like:

- Hellenic Air Force (request for helicopter, transportation for international emergencies etc.)
- National emergency medical services
- Hellenic coast guard
- Civil protection authorities
- Military forces
- Fire brigade
- UN, international USAR teams (international deployments)

The Hellenic Rescue Team consists of the following departments and the members are trained and operate both separately and together:

- Department of Mountain Rescue (search and rescue in the mountain field)
- Department of Water Rescue (search and rescue at sea, rivers, lakes, rushing waters)
- USAR Department (attempts in the event of earthquakes, fires and other mass disasters and in cases of freeing victims)
- Department of Dog Search and Rescue (involving in research missions with sniffer dogs)

- Department of Telecommunication (covering the telecommunication needs of operations)
- First Aid Department
- Department of Humanitarian Missions (humanitarian aid within and outside Greece).



Education - Training:

The new members after graduating from a “Basic School” in which learn basic principles for search, rescue and first aid, they choose a section in which want to take part and have special training, depending on the section in which they are part. The training takes place either by certified instructors of the team or in collaboration with official bodies (Fire Service, emergency medical service, Mobile Unit Dealing with Disasters, Air Force etc).

Drills: The team maintains a high level of operational drills, designed to simulate as much as possible the conditions the rescuers have to face in the field of real incidents.

Participation in HRT

You can find us at our page on facebook (www.facebook.com/eodheraklion)



Volunteers in Hellenic Fire Service

TRIANTAFYLIDIS NIKOLAOS, CRETE REPRESENTATIVE OF HELLENIC VOLUNTEERS FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Summary

The Hellenic Volunteers Firefighters Association was founded in 2008 with the purpose of representing and promoting Greek Volunteer Firefighters nationally and internationally in an effort for Greece to reach the level of most modern and developed countries where volunteer firefighters are accepted and welcomed by citizens and government authorities.

Key Words: Hellenic fire Department , Volunteers firefighters, Crete , Hellenic Fire Service

Introduction

The institution of the Volunteer Firefighter was established in Greece with Law 1951/1991 "Establishment of the Institution of the Volunteer Firefighter and other provisions".

The Mission of the Volunteer Firefighter is the safety and protection of the life and property of citizens and the state from the dangers of fires, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters and accidents. It is delimited in the context of the honorary and unpaid offer of the citizens exclusively and only in the context of the Fire Department's operation.

Discussion

The Greek Volunteer Firefighters were established by law in 1991 and today are covered by the provisions of 4029/2011 Law and are staff of the Hellenic Fire Service.

The aims of the Association as they are also reported in the statute are:

- 1) The safeguarding, defence, aid, consolidation and modernisation of the institution of the volunteer fire fighter & volunteers who serve in Fire Stations, in Firefighting Units, or in other services of the Fire Brigade.
- 2) To increase the prestige and significance of volunteer fire fighters, the enhancement of their value and the promotion of their importance and contribution of the volunteer firefighter institution within the Fire Brigade.
- 3) The protection, safeguarding, study and promotion of the related institutional interests of its members and their legal rights.
- 4) The contribution to the improvement of volunteer fire fighters on all levels, to insure growth of the organisation of volunteer fire fighters in the Fire Brigade and to upgrade their education and training in order to insure achievement of their mission, for the benefits of the public as a whole.
- 5) The growth of solidarity and mutualism and the tightening of bonds among volunteer fire fighters and permanent and seasonal employees of the Fire Brigade as well as among Greek citizens.
- 6) Providing information and briefing of responsible bodies and institutions and more generally

of the public on the problems that its members face.

- 7) The sensitization of public opinion on the protection of the environment, the maintenance of ecological balance and environmental awareness.
- 8) The safety of citizens and the protection of their properties against the dangers of fire, floods and all kinds of natural and technological disasters.



The Hellenic Volunteers Firefighters Association has also been an International Member of the National Volunteer Fire Council of the U.S.A. since 2013

The Volunteer Firefighters:

They are trained in branches of the Fire Academy throughout Greece, participate in preparation and readiness exercises of the Fire Brigade and hold a Special Service ID of the Fire Brigade, in which a special register of Volunteer Firefighters is kept.

They serve in the Professional and Volunteer Fire Services of the Fire Brigade throughout the year and intervene together with the professional Fire Fighters, in urban and forest fires, in rescues, traffic accidents, floods, earthquakes and in general in the mission and work of F.D.

They are part of the organic - fighting force of the Fire Brigade and quietly and daily prove with their work, the purpose of their mission in the entire Greek Territory.

They wear the same uniform as the Permanent Firefighters, according to the legislation and decisions of the PS Headquarters. and they are distinguished by the status badge "VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER" that they wear on their uniform, which was determined by a relevant Decree. and is carried exclusively by them.