Citizens are generally receptive to training as a preparedness measure

At least half of the participants in most groups expressed their interest in free emergency preparedness and response courses. Only a minority explicitly rejected the idea, mostly indicating vaguely a lack of time as the reason. Interestingly, in particular participants in G1 and G2, i.e. the youngest groups, were not only very keen, but even felt that attending such courses should be mandatory: "It should be a law requirement and it should be done every two to three months" (G1-P9 - see source document for full reference). Some of these participants, here, also drew a direct link to citizen duties: "It should be mandatory, because one of our Constitutional principles is about solidarity amongst citizens" (G1-P1). Understood as such, making disaster preparedness and emergency response courses available to the general public would then, on the other hand, be a state's obligation in order to allow citizens to fulfil their duties. Beyond citizen duties, other participants felt that the participation in these courses would be "a social gathering moment" (G4-P7), and that attendees would be "part of a larger system" (G10-P5), outlining thus the effect of social cohesion a frequent participation in such courses may have. Generally, the majority of participants indicated an increased knowledge as the main motivator, with some of them referring, here, not only to the acquisition of physical skills in disaster preparedness and response, but also to learning about more general reactions in disaster situations: "I would do it, and it would be very good to have it done periodically, in order to avoid confusion and damages while waiting for professional help" (G5-P8). "These courses may help to learn about how to manage panic" (G3-P8). "Anything can be useful in the end. Maybe these little things that may help you to overcome the panic, to be more alert, lucid" (G10-P10). These statements demonstrate that at least some of the participants understand disaster preparedness courses not as learning, or refreshing, skills in standard emergency first aid, but as opportunities to learn about emotional responses and self-control, which can be seen as their, intentionally "passive", contribution to professional disaster management.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: Norms/values, Worldviews, Power relations, Social networks

Disaster Phases: Prevention, Preparedness, Response

Types of Actors Concerned: National civil protection body, Local authorities, Non-active citizens, Active citizens, Government, Red Cross, Healthcare and emergency services

Hazards: Natural hazards, Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations, Man-made intentional hazards

Recommendations:

- The use of new technologies (e.g. Bluetooth) can improve communication strategies in disaster management situations
- Use cultural factors to improve the effectiveness of disaster communication

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Source

Deliverable D5.5 "Report on citizens' reactions and opinions: Citizen Summit 3 (Italy)" (page 28)

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