



Interreg - IPA CBC 
Greece - Albania
4PLUS

Project **4Plus**:
“Public awareness, Preparedness, Participation and
Coordination for Civil Protection for All”

Activity 5.5
Deliverable 5.1.5
Impact Assessment & Lessons Learned & Sustainability

January, 2022

National Confederation of Disabled People



Athens

PC.16141

Greece

Tel: +30-2109949837 Fax: + 30-2105238967

Last edited: January, 2022

Copyright © 2021, National Confederation of Disabled People. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, transcribed, stored in a retrieval system, or translated into any language, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission from National Confederation of Disabled People.

All copyright, shall remain the sole and exclusive property of National Confederation of Disabled People. However, no responsibility is assumed by National Confederation of Disabled People for its use, or for any infringements of patents or other rights of third parties resulting from its use. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners



Document History

Authors:		
	email:	Telephone: +30
	email:	Telephone: +30
	email:	Telephone: +30

Project Manager:		
	Email:	Telephone: +30
Approved		Date: December, 2020

Project Financial Manager:		
	Email:	Telephone: +30
Approved		Date: December, 2020

Project Communication Manager:		
	Email:	Telephone: +30
Approved		Date: December, 2020

Deliverable/Report Information

Document Name	Author
Title	Joint Cross Border Study
Contributions from:	People and Ideas PB6-Albania
Version	1.0
Date of Publication	December, 2020
Dissemination Level:	Confidential, only for members of the consortium

Reference Documents

Document Name	Author
4PLUS Subsidy contract <A2-1.4-1>	SEE JTS & NCDP
4PLUS Application Form	NCDP
Visual Identity Guidelines	JTS
Decision of the Joint Steering Committee through written procedure	JTS
Implementation Manual	JTS
4PLUS Partnership Agreement	All 4PLUS Partners

Distribution List

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Position
LB-1. National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece	Project Lead Partner
PB-2. Regional Union of Municipalities of Ionian Islands, Greece	Project partner
PB-3. Regional Association of Local Governments of Western Macedonia, Greece	Project partner
PB-4. Albanian Association of Municipalities, Albania	Project partner
PB-5. Municipality of Kolonje, Albania	Project partner
PB -6. Urban Research Institute, Albania	Project partner

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION.....	7
A. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	8
A.1 USEFUL DEFINITIONS	8
A.1.1 Disaster	8
A.1.2 Resilience	8
A.1.3 Preparedness	8
A.1.4 Capacity-Development	9
A.1.5 Simulation Exercise.....	9
A.1.6 Roles and Responsibilities.....	10
A.1.7 People with Disabilities.....	10
A.1.8 Elderly People	11
A.2 METHODOLOGY.....	12
A.2.1 Research Purpose	12
A.2.2 The Situation Analysis Method.....	12
A.2.3 Qualitative Research Method - Interviews.....	13
A.2.4 Research Questions Identification.....	13
A.2.5 Target Group Identification	13
A.2.6 Interview Preparation and Planning.....	14
A.2.7 Initial Approach of the Interviewee.....	15
A.2.8 Conducting the interview	15
A.2.9 Dealing with difficulties and unforeseen situations	16
B. TOOLS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED METHODOLOGY	17
B.1 SURVEY METHOD.....	17
B.1.1 Questionnaire	17
B.1.2 Guide of interview effectiveness	19
B.1.3 Recommended analysis of research findings	20
C. SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION	22
C.1 SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION	22
D. DATA ANALYSIS AND STUDY.....	23
D.1 RESULTS	23
D.1.1 Introduction to the participants.....	23
D.1.2 Factors contributing to disaster preparedness	26
E. FINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT	31
E.1 DISCUSSION.....	31
E.2 LESSONS OF THE ACTION	32

REFERENCES..... 33
ANNEX..... 36

INTRODUCTION

Societies are faced with numerous threats and disasters, which either come from natural phenomena or arise after human interventions. Disasters such as floods, storms, earthquakes, droughts, forest fires and volcanic eruptions are among the most devastating types of natural catastrophe. Disasters from human interventions includes mainly explosions, major fires, aviation, shipping and railway accidents. For such potential disasters, societies have made great efforts to avoid the unpleasant consequences that arising, either through the improvement of the built environment or through preparedness exercises and information actions.

However, these measures can protect a large percentage of the population, but this does not happen in the case of people with disabilities. There are many concerns that arise about the extent to which the structured environment serves the evacuation needs of people with disabilities. That disability issues are urgently needed to be included in emergency evacuation and preparedness planning.

In the context of the Interreg programme 4Plus and the specific deliverable, it is implemented the present study which aims to explore the social processes of disaster preparedness in people with disabilities, elderly and/or medically frail adults in Kolonjë Municipality of Albania. The purpose of this survey was to understand how these people have experienced such a disaster and how this experience impacts the way that now they are prepared. The further aim of this action is to assess the need for a strategy for the prevention and response to multiple risks disasters in the cross-border area, to identify the basic requirements of such a strategy, to record the needs of people with disabilities and the shortcomings in terms of existing facilities, rescue equipment, etc. and the proposal of possible design and policy solutions.

In the context of this research, the basic definitions concerning the study are identified and the proposed methodology is sent to partner PB6 for the implementation of the research. The way in which the research was implemented is presented in detail and the recorded results and the main conclusions points of this action are presented.

A. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A.1 USEFUL DEFINITIONS

A.1.1 Disaster

According to UNISDR (2009) disaster is “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and other negative effects on human physical, mental and social well-being, together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, social and economic disruption and environmental degradation”. In order to avoid the negative consequences of an emergency situation, urgent actions are required. This may include plans and institutional arrangements for the involvement and guidance of governmental, non-governmental, voluntary and private actors in responding to the full range of emergencies.

A.1.2 Resilience

Given the frequency of disasters, societies need to be prepared to manage them and reduce the impact they have on humans and the environment in which they live. In this context, the term of resilience has been introduced, according to which people and societies must strengthen their degree of resilience in order to resist and recover from any emergency disaster. According to European Commission (2016), resilience is “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions”. The resilience of a community depends on the resources it has and the degree of the organization for a possible disaster.

A.1.3 Preparedness

In order for a community to be prepared and organized in the event of a disaster, withstanding the vibrations and to remain resilient, it is necessary to develop its degree of readiness. United Nations (2009) mention that preparedness is “the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions. Preparedness action is carried out within the context of disaster risk management and aims to build the capacities needed to efficiently manage all types of emergencies and achieve orderly transitions from response through to sustained recovery. Preparedness is based on a sound analysis of disaster risks and good linkages with early warning systems, and includes such activities as contingency planning, stockpiling of equipment and supplies, the development of arrangements for coordination, evacuation and public information, and associated training and field exercises. These must be supported by formal institutional, legal and budgetary capacities. The related term “readiness” describes the ability to quickly and appropriately respond when required”.

AS IFRC mention (IFRC, 2021) preparedness is a strategy that analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the societies response system. The preparedness approach according to them made up of five phases:

- **Orientation:** Identification of internal and external risks
- **Assessment:** Evaluation of the existing system through self-assessment, disaster simulations or reviews during or after an operation.

- **Prioritization and analysis:** focus on and conducts in-depth analysis to identify the barriers are needed to overcome.
- **Workplan:** Development of a road map which includes outcomes, outputs, activities, timelines, targets and a clear accountability framework.
- **Action and accountability:** Implementation of the action, monitoring and reporting on the progress in the long-term.

In order the societies to achieve the preparedness in an emergency disaster five mission areas were important to be implemented (Federation of American Scientists, 2016):

- 1) **Prevention:** actions that are needed in order to avoid prevent or stop a disaster.
- 2) **Protection:** actions that are needed in order societies to be secured the homeland against manmade or natural disasters.
- 3) **Mitigation:** actions that are needed in order to reduce the probability of losings lives.
- 4) **Response:** actions that are needed in order to save lives and properties.
- 5) **Recovery:** actions that are needed in communities' recovery.

In the literature, the concept of readiness refers to the readiness of an individual or the readiness of a household. According to FEMA (2021) and the campaign "Ready", the individual/ household readiness is happened when:

- ✓ has registered the riskiest disasters
- ✓ has developed a communication and evacuation plan
- ✓ has a complete supply kit (battery-powered weather radio, flashlight and extra batteries, first aid kit, whistle, dust mask, plastic sheeting, duct tape, personal sanitation items, wrench, pliers, manual can opener, and local maps) that can sustain each member of the household with food, water, and medication for up to three days without any outside assistance.

A.1.4 Capacity-Development

Capacity-Development is a strategy that aim to reduce the negative effect of a disaster risk. The effectiveness of this strategy includes technical assistance and the community training in order to recognize risks. Its implementation requires management skills, the transferability of the technology and information and network development. In addition, in order to maintain this, the institutions of society and the decisions they take in this direction have an important role to play (UNISDR, 2019).

A.1.5 Simulation Exercise

In the context of emergency disaster management planning, simulation exercises are carried out in order to test plans, which depending on their effectiveness will be implemented in a real emergency. Simulation exercises enable all involved to develop their skills and knowledge and are an extremely effective training and education tool through hands-on experience. Also, it is an important process used to identify gaps, best practices and lessons learned emerging from an emergency, as well as to suggest measures and actions to improve ongoing response or be better prepared for future emergencies. A simulation exercise can be large or small depending on the organizers' goals and available resources. The World Health Organization (2021a) defines four different types of exercises, the table top exercises, the drills, the functional exercises and the field/full scale exercises and aim to:

1. Review and assess planning assumptions, procedures, operational plans and guidelines and standard operating procedures.
2. Assess and test interoperability between these plans and procedures.
3. Reveal planning weaknesses and resource gaps.
4. Improve coordination and collaboration.
5. Clarify roles and responsibilities.
6. Practice and clarify chain of command.
7. Develop knowledge and skills for emergency response operations.
8. Familiarize staff with new functions and equipment.
9. Gain recognition and trust in the emergency management processes.

A.1.6 Roles and Responsibilities

In the process of protection against an emergency disaster involves many different groups of society, which when coordinated contribute significantly to protection against potential risks. According to FEMA (2016) these groups are the following:

- ✓ Individuals, Families, and Households
- ✓ Communities
- ✓ Private Sector Entities
- ✓ International Partnerships
- ✓ Non governmental Organizations
- ✓ Local Governments
- ✓ State, Tribal, Territorial, and Insular Area Governments
- ✓ Federal Government

For this reason, in a preparedness strategy, all the above groups must participate and cooperate in order to be effective in the management of a disaster and protection from its unpleasant consequences.

A.1.7 People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are a special group of the society, which faces many risks in a possible disaster. According to CDC (2020), a disability is “any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)”. The types of disabilities, that CDC mentioned are those that affect a person’s such as:

- Vision
- Movement
- Thinking
- Remembering
- Learning
- Communicating
- Hearing

- Mental health
- Social relationships

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (2006) also defines persons with disabilities to "include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". The WHO (2021b) refers that almost everyone will temporarily or permanently experience disability at some point in their life and estimates that about 15% of the world's population has a disability.

People with disabilities, although they have the same rights and basic needs as other people, they face many difficulties and dangers in their daily lives. Such risks are violence, exploitation, abuse, and stigma. In addition, they have difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid, education, livelihood, health care and other services. In many cases they are also excluded from decision-making processes (UNHCR, 2019). Even in the event of an emergency, there is a high possibility that their lives will be put in danger, as in many cases there is no proper evacuation planning, safe infrastructure and the necessary information in case they are in danger.

A.1.8 Elderly People

The same may be happen even in elderly people. According to Orimo et. al. (2006), an individual can be considered elderly when he or she is greater than 65 years of age. As people age, they are prone to disease and disability, like falls and injuries. (WHO, 2021c). Also, many of them are at risk of developing mental disorders (WHO, 2021d). So, many of them will be in danger when an emergency disaster will happen.

A.2 METHODOLOGY

A.2.1 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand how people with disabilities, the elderly and / or medically weak adults in Albania have experienced a disaster and how this experience has taught them to be better prepared for a new one. As it mentioned before, the lives of these people are in daily danger as there is no proper evacuation planning, safe infrastructure and the necessary information in case of a sudden disaster. For this reason, this research seeks to bring to light the problems that these people are faced in such a case, the shortcomings that exist at the level of civil protection and the ways in which these individuals can be assisted in such dangerous situations. In order to approach and examine this issue, the method was proposed to be followed is the Situation Analysis (also referred to as formative research, explorative research or needs assessments).

A.2.2 The Situation Analysis Method

The Situation Analysis is a descriptive methodology that researchers identify and understand the characteristics, interests, behaviors and needs of a target group that influence their decisions and actions. The information and data collected helps to design or redesign a policy and help the decision making.

There are three general methods for the implementation of the Situation Analysis (Corey, 2011):

1. Qualitative Research

- In-depth Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions
- Other qualitative methods (social mapping, pile sorting, free listing, observations, participant observation, rankings)

2. Quantitative Research

- Numbers/Percentages
- Measurable
- Statistical Analysis
- Employs mathematical models,
- theories, hypotheses
- Example: Surveys

3. Mixed Method Research

In any survey the researcher needs to make an initial but basic methodological choice between quantitative, qualitative or a mix method to research his topic. The quantitative approach is the one that allows to know "what is happening?" while quality allows us to look at "why does it happen?". The aim of qualitative research is to discover the views of the surveyed population, focusing on the perspectives from which individuals experience and feel the events. Therefore, the qualitative approach is an in-depth approach, aimed to analyse qualitative data, categorize and evaluate them. On the other hand, quantitative data collection methods cannot provide the rich descriptions and interpretations required to understand all of the above, and especially experience.

A.2.3 Qualitative Research Method - Interviews

As the issue of civil protection for people with disabilities or elderly people has not been analyzed in depth in the existing literature and the policies pursued in today's societies do not plan appropriate actions to protect this group, it was considered appropriate for this survey to have more information as possible about the needs of these people. In-depth Interviews is one such method that are useful when you want to explore new issues in depth and you want to learn a person's thoughts, behaviors, attitudes and views.

In general, the interview is an open communication between the interviewer and the respondent and as a method helps the researcher to approach the subject in depth but also for the exploitation of experiences and emotions. In other words, the interview is a way for the researcher to find out what the respondents think and feel. As a research tool it has many advantages, because it gives opportunities to clarify some answers, to ask additional questions, thus giving the opportunity for deepening, where what was said was unclear, and due to its immediacy, it is usually widely accepted by the participants in research.

Depending on how an interview is structured, it is divided into the following categories:

- **Structured interview:** Strictly predefined system questions which are asked in a uniform manner (default layout) to all respondents.
- **Semi-structured interview:** predefined questions but flexibility in the layout of the questions (you can add and remove questions and issues for discussion).
- **Unstructured interview:** not predefined questions but thematic areas - the order of the topics determined by the interviewer – interviewee interaction.

A.2.4 Research Questions Identification

In the context of the implementation of the present study and for the design of the interview guide, the main research questions were identified. These research questions are the below:

1. Which is the capacity-development that is needed to build people with disabilities and elderly people to manage a sudden disaster?
2. Which are the ways of participation in decision making for disaster preparedness?
3. Which are the most effectively communication methods in the case of a disaster?
4. How do they understand the meaning of preparedness?
5. Which are the barriers to disaster preparedness for people with disabilities?
6. How they have experienced previews disaster events?

The above research questions are the ones on which the design of the research interview guide was based and also the data analysis.

A.2.5 Target Group Identification

The researcher who will use the interview method is the number of interviews in order representativeness to be ensured. In other words, the respondents must be typical cases, to represent as far as possible the main categories of the population we are researching. Usually, some in-depth interviews are usually enough to give an objective picture. In such research cases 20-30 interviews is a sufficient number to obtain the rich information required.

Also, it is important to select the respondents based on the ability to approach them, in other words the selection of people that easily we will be able to find and communicate.

The target group identified in the present study was people with disabilities, elderly and medically frail adults living in a Kolonjë Municipality, who did not have experience working as disaster responders or they are rescue volunteers. More specifically, in the survey could participate:

- 1) people with disabilities included adults of all ages with serious and complex medical conditions, physical and/or mental disabilities, or with pharmacological dependence.
- 2) elderly people were 65 years of age or older.

These individuals have access or functional needs during disaster and are considered vulnerable populations. Participants were non-institutionalized (e.g., not living in house, a skilled nursing facility, or mental institution). No specific race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, employment status, marital status, or education level were targeted for recruitment. Disease, and pregnancy status was not ascertained for recruitment purposes.

In order to find the target group of this survey, it is proposed to PB6 to come into contact with an Albanian public body of Kolonjë in order to seek information about the target group of the survey. After the data collection, it was proposed a separation of the participants to be realized in order to have a representative sample. The participants separation it is proposed to be realized with the following two questions.

➤ **Are you 64 years of age or younger?**

If the answer is yes, then it is asked about their medical frailty status, that can be self-reported or reported by a family member in charge of the person. The potential participant must be asked if he or she had a serious and complex medical condition, is considered disabled, or is dependent on at least one prescription medication. An affirmative answer to any of those questions qualify the individual to participate in this study.

➤ **Do you belong to one of the following groups (police officer, firefighter, emergency medical worker, government agency official, non-government agency volunteer, public health department employee or a healthcare worker in a hospital, nursing home or home health agency)?**

People from this group (disaster responders) must be excluded because they receive formal training in emergency preparedness and they know how to response to disasters.

A.2.6 Interview Preparation and Planning

The main concern of the researcher is to plan the interview and to have clarified what he will ask and why. Therefore, the interview needs to be designed based on some themes. In general, the axes of an interview should be in line with our purpose and research questions. In this phase we make sure to create a questionnaire, which will based on the purpose and research. In each axis, the researcher has pre-planned some possible questions to ask, and often begins the interview with them until the ice "breaks" and the discussion flows more effortlessly.

The second point involved in planning the interview is determining the place and time of the meeting and conducting it. The researcher must have found the appropriate place and time to suggest to the

respondent. These two factors, are often crucial to its smooth and seamless conduct. Especially, a quiet place can avoid creating anxiety, embarrassment, difficulty, etc.

A.2.7 Initial Approach of the Interviewee

An important element of an interview is the communication with the interviewee. Approach and first impression often determine the quality of this communication and play an important role in establishing a climate of trust - essential for an interview. The first approach can be done in person or by phone, in any case, but we say who we are, what we research and why we ask for his contribution to our research.

We should be as clear as possible from the beginning for the purposes of the interview and why we chose this person to give an interview, in order to reduce his wariness and anxiety. In this first communication we can specify the type of recording that will be done, for example to ask permission to use a recording device, in order to secure the consent of the participant. We may also need to explain that it is necessary to use it, because it ensures the faithful reproduction of what he tells us, etc. Also, during the initial communication, the issue of anonymity (or not) is discussed and, in general, guarantees are given, on how the information provided by the respondent will be used. Here is the promise that the interview will stop at the point where he will not feel comfortable or that, even if some of his views are initially recorded, he may ask not to be made public. Finally, we can agree, and this usually removes the respondents' skepticism, that before each use and publication of the interview they will be given a copy. These types of explanations and assurances are safeguards for the hesitant participant and usually make him / her feel more secure, open and relaxed during the interview. All these are the "contract" of the interview. The researcher must adhere to what was agreed at the initial stage of the approach. It is good, however, to remember that the respondent has the right (for his own reasons, which he does not have to tell us) to refuse to take part in our investigation.

A.2.8 Conducting the interview

In the interview the researcher needs to have the ability to create a climate of trust, which will make the participants relax, open up and give honest and complete answers. To listen with interest, to watch and react to what he says in such a way as to push him to reveal more information, without losing the eloquence of his thoughts or to get away from the subject. Small encouraging expressions, clarifying (but not directing) questions, positive hand, eye and face expression (but not directing), in general, the friendly and open attitude help to make an interview run smoothly. He tries to keep his position as a guarantor of the communication framework with the respondent, without judging morally or in any other way his actions and words. He is open and willing to listen to and understand him and has absolute secrecy for everything that is confided to him.

During the interview, the researcher needs to be careful not to deviate from his / her themes in order to collect the data he / she needs and to be able to process it more easily in the next stage. Of course, the course of the interview, in some cases is not always predictable and any unforeseen situations may arise either from the circumstances, or from the subjects and their willingness to cooperate, or from the lack of communication with the researcher. The interview is characterized by flexibility. No matter how strictly structured it is, modifications can be made based on what is happening at the time of its implementation. Thus, in an interview we may be interested in collecting and recording not only

the views of the respondents as "they will express them, based on their experiences and the difficulties they encounter" but also some views or factors that do not had been prevented.

A.2.9 Dealing with difficulties and unforeseen situations

When an interview seems to be "stuck", the researcher needs to give it a boost, a breath of thought and / or time to start flowing smoothly again. It is his concern to facilitate the discussion, to unblock the respondent. Thus, the interview can be enhanced with additional or encouraging questions, in order to encourage or facilitate the interviewee and make the interview run smoothly. In this case the interviewer can use some communication techniques, such as "mirror questions" (we turn as a question the answer he gave us, eg "you mean that....", Or if I understand correctly, you tell me that...") Or the paraphrase (we ask the same thing in other words eg" we could say it anyway »."). Maybe we need to move on to the next topic or the next question and if we can get back to the topic that was left unanswered later, at a more convenient time. However, we should not force the respondent to give an answer to something that he consciously or unconsciously avoids touching.

External circumstances can also stop or interrupt or even postpone an interview. Noise, a minor accident, an external event, an interruption from a third party, a sudden new, etc., may cause our design to be overturned. The researcher should be flexible and try to correct what can be corrected or find an alternative or try to postpone the interview to another time, if necessary.

The biggest upset, however, comes when due to some awkward handling by the researcher, the respondent's mood to continue the interview changes, e.g. if he feels offended or pressured or forced to reveal things he did not want. The researcher then has to admit the pressure he exerted or the mistake in the expression etc and try to continue, avoiding to raise again the issue that caused the dissatisfaction of the respondent.

B. TOOLS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

B.1 SURVEY METHOD

For the implementation of the above research based on the methodology analyzed, three tools were proposed to the partner PB6. The first was a sample of questionnaire, the second a useful guide for effective interview management and the third tool was a recommended analysis of research findings.

B.1.1 Questionnaire

As it mentioned before, there are three categories of interview method, structured interview, the semi-structured and the unstructured interview. In the present survey we proposed to the PB6 to follow the semi-structured in-depth interview which consists of a set of predetermined questions and in order to have a guide with the most important topics to cover. This type of interview is flexible, because the content of the questions can be modified according to the respondent, the research can deep on some issues and can add or remove questions for discussion.

For the design of the questionnaire, the questions were sought to:

- focus on topics related to the research questions of the study
- be open and flexible and allow the respondent to go deep
- be related to the experiences of the participants
- be distinguished by sensitivity to the needs of the respondents
- assist in communication during the interview

So, it is prepared a questionnaire which consists of four brief sections. The first section included multiple-choice questions with key demographic data such as the gender, the age group, the type of disability, their daily tasks difficulty and the employment status. The proposed questions to PB6 for the first section were:

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Group-age

- 19-30 years old
- 31-40 years old
- 41-50 years old
- 51-60 years old
- >60 years old

3. Type of disability

- Walking and climbing stairs
- Daily self-care
- Memory/concentration problems
- Communication problems
- Vision problems

- Hearing problems
- Down Syndrome

4. Degree of difficulty to perform daily tasks due to disability

- A lot of difficulties
- Some difficulty
- Completely impossible to perform daily tasks

5. Employment status

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Social benefits
- Other, please specify _____

The second section of the interview included open-ended questions about the level of needs and challenges that people with disabilities experienced during a danger and emergency. The proposed questions were the following:

- **Can you share your experience from a danger and emergency?**
- **What are some of the barriers that prevent you from preparing for disaster?**
- **Is there anyone who can help you during a danger and emergency?**

The third section of the interview included open-ended questions about the level of knowledge and information they for an emergency situation. The proposed questions were the following:

- **Are you aware on the type of alerts that warns you during a danger and emergency?**
- **Are you aware of any type of plans for emergency in local and central level?**

The last section of the interview included open-ended questions about the level of preparedness during a danger and emergency. The proposed questions were the following:

- **Which steps would you take if you heard an emergency warning?**
- **What would motivate you to prepare for an emergency and seek information on what to do before and during an emergency?**
- **Whom would you trust to be informed about emergencies? Why?**
- **What would be the best way to communicate an information during emergencies?**
- **In what way did you think that people with disabilities should be included and participate in the decision-making in family, community and government?**

The design and conduct of quality interviews are a complex and demanding task that requires systematic preparation on the part of researchers. A particularly important dimension in research that adopts qualitative interviewing is the design and correct wording of the questions before conducting it. The interviewer, however, needs to be able to make decisions on the spot during the interview regarding e.g. the order, wording, style, extent or addition or subtraction of the questions, always

keeping in mind the research questions but also the specific circumstances and the interaction with the participants

The above questionnaire was sent to PB6, who was responsible to implement the interview process at Kolonjë Municipality of Albania. After minor changes in the order and wording of the questions to adapt it to their own research needs, the questionnaire was completed as shown in the appendix.

B.1.2 Guide of interview effectiveness

In the context of the implementation of the survey, it was deemed appropriate to give to PB6 a second guide, which is consisted of rules about the effective management of the interview. This guide included some key points that interviewers should pay attention to before, during and after the interview. More specifically, the guide mentioned the following points:

Before the Interview

- **Arrange an appointment for an interview as soon as you can.** In this case you are more likely to have a positive answer. Be polite and flexible with the dates and times of the interview and confirm them with an email if this is possible, as the target group you are addressing may not be very familiar with the new technology.
- **Inform the participant that all protection measures against covid-19 will be followed.** Before the day of the interview, make sure that you have a disposable protection mask and antiseptic care to protect yourself and the participant.
- **Be clear about the information they are asking for.** Clearly explain the purpose of the specific survey, the time required (30 minutes or an hour is a typical time frame), the preservation of the anonymity of the answers, etc.
- **Designate a meeting place that will provide security for you and the interviewee.** In the specific case that the participants have some disability or difficulty in moving, you can suggest the space of their house or some public space, given the fear for the transmission of covid-19. You can also arrange a telephone interview if you are offered one.
- **Study the research well before the interview.** To be clear and informative it is good to have time to study the research, so if you need to focus on getting information that you cannot find from sources other than the interview.
- **Study in advance, if possible, the person you are interviewing.** In order to be clear and informative, it is good to know in advance some information about the person you are going to meet, as people in this target group have significant differences in their disability and face different difficulties in their daily lives.
- **Prepare the questions you will ask.** The aim is to be as clear as possible to the interviewee so that you receive a clear answer. As the largest part of the proposed questionnaire consists of open-ended questions it allows you to get more information and explanations for one answer.
- **Decide in advance how you want to record the interview.** Recording an interview is a good practice as you will be able to focus more on the discussion with the participant and at the same time you will have a complete and accurate file of the interview. However, keep in mind that the interviewee may be a shy person, who may feel embarrassed about a possible recording. In this case, try to either make it feel more comfortable with the process, otherwise keep as many written notes as you can.
- **Confirm the interview appointment.** Given the large number of interviews that will take place, it is a good idea to call the interviewee one day before each scheduled interview to confirm it. In case it is canceled for any reason, you can suggest a new date and time.

During the Interview

- Try to be on time.
- Make sure you follow all the protection measures against covid-19
- Be friendly and polite.
- Do not show how anxious you can be.
- Remind to the interviewee the purpose this appointment.
- Keep your cell phone off.
- Write the name of the person you are interviewing, the date, time and place of the interview
- Before you start, ask the participant if he / she wants to be recorded and if he / she agree record the answer on the recording device. In case of refusal, start the interview by taking as many notes as possible.
- Relax and have fun in your interview.
- Be cooperative and speak simply and directly.
- Look straight in the eyes but not indiscriminately.
- Ask the questions you have designed in simple words.
- If an answer was not helpful enough, ask follow up questions.
- Do not be absorbed in taking notes as long as the interview lasts.
- Be neutral so as not to influence the participant, but always with an interest in his point of view.
- Respect the time of the person you are interviewing and if you want a little more time for the interview ask for his / her approval.
- Thank the person for his / her time to participate in this survey.

After the Interview

- Immediately after the interview, check if you have recorded the interview, otherwise go to your notes and make sure they are completed.
- Send a thank you note or email.
- Properly record all the information you gained in the interview according to your documentation style.
- It is recommended that you send the final report to the person you interviewed with a final thank you note.

B.1.3 Recommended analysis of research findings

To evaluate the research findings, the following methodology was proposed to PB6, in order to be highlighted the problems faced by people with disabilities during an emergency disaster, as well as their needs for safety.

- **Annotation of Findings**
 - Presentation of results in diagrams and tables and annotation of the findings under each graph (One paragraph per table of 3-5 lines).
- **Evaluation of Findings**
 - Which is the capacity-development that is needed to build people with disabilities and elderly people to manage a sudden disaster? (1-2 paragraphs)

- Which are the ways of participation in decision making for disaster preparedness? (1-2 paragraphs)
- Which are the most effectively communication methods in the case of a disaster? (1-2 paragraphs)
- How do they understand the meaning of preparedness? (1-2 paragraphs)
- Which are the barriers to disaster preparedness for people with disabilities? (1-2 paragraphs)
- How they have experienced previous disaster events? (1-2 paragraphs)

➤ **Conclusions**

- Summary assessment of the degree of coverage / satisfaction of vulnerable groups by existing emergency plans (1 paragraph).
- Summary assessment of the difficulties they face (1 paragraph).
- Summary assessment of needs and gaps in information, information and (pre) notification (1 paragraph).

C. SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

C.1 SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION

As it mentioned before, the interview process was implemented by the PB6, who was responsible to come into contact with the target group that have been defined. Firstly, PB6 came into contact with the Director of the Social Services in Kolonjë Municipality of Albania, in order to identify the most appropriate people with disabilities and elderly participants of the region. After PB6 received the list of potential participants, the telephone communication followed. If the participant met the conditions which are mentioned in the methodology (to be >65-year-old and not disaster responders), then an interview meeting it was arranged.

The interviewers visited the participants at a predetermined day and time that they would be available and, in a place, where they felt comfortable and safe. They follow the guide of the interview effectiveness both before, during and after the interview process.



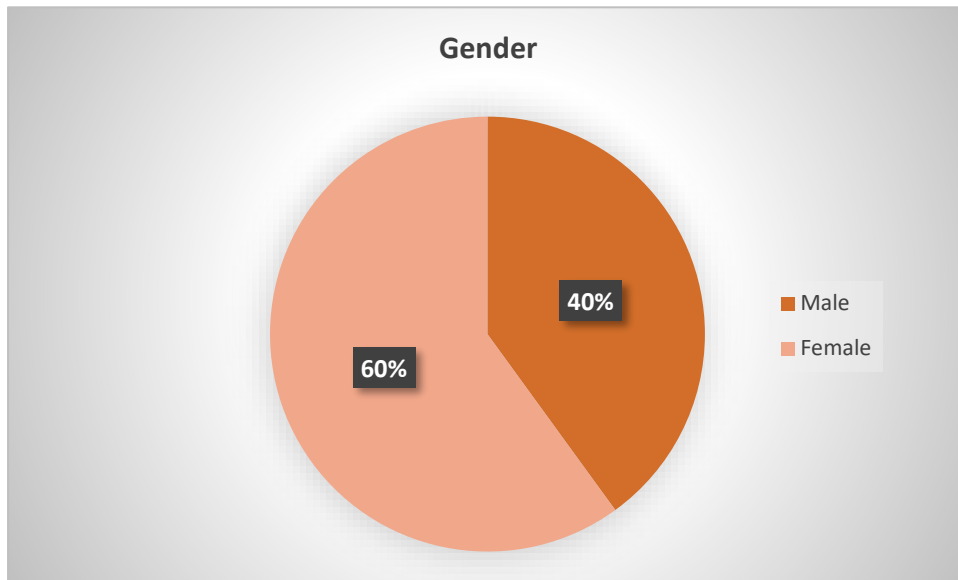
During the survey, the participants were asked about the first demographic information and then a discussion is followed about the other three sections of the survey. The questionnaire that was followed by the interviewer is the one in the appendix. After the implementation of this action, the PB6 analyzed the above results.

D. DATA ANALYSIS AND STUDY

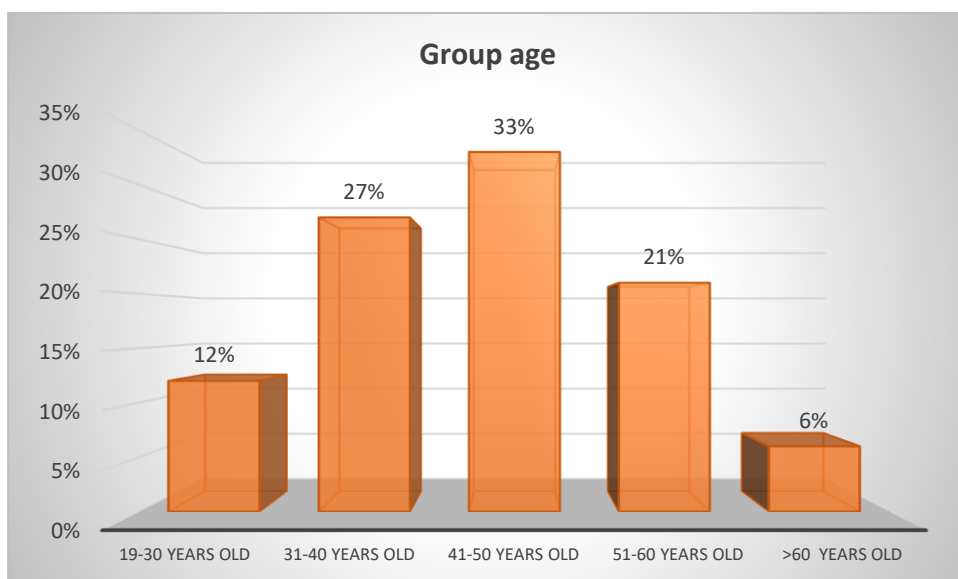
D.1 RESULTS

After the completion of the interviews, all the data were collected and the results were analysed by the PB6. The number of interviews conducted was 33 participants / interviewer covering the necessary and desired range of the sample. Below is the analysis of the data.

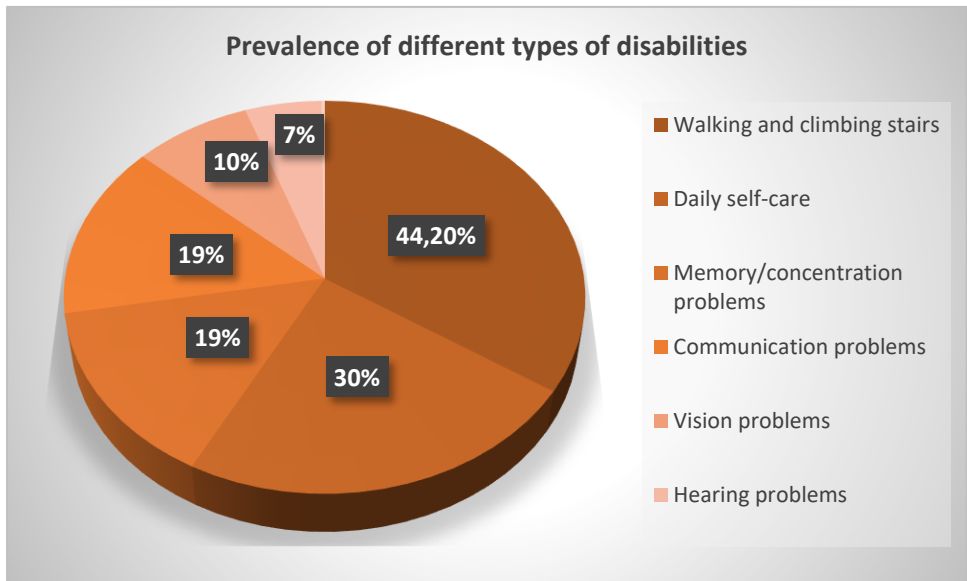
D.1.1 Introduction to the participants



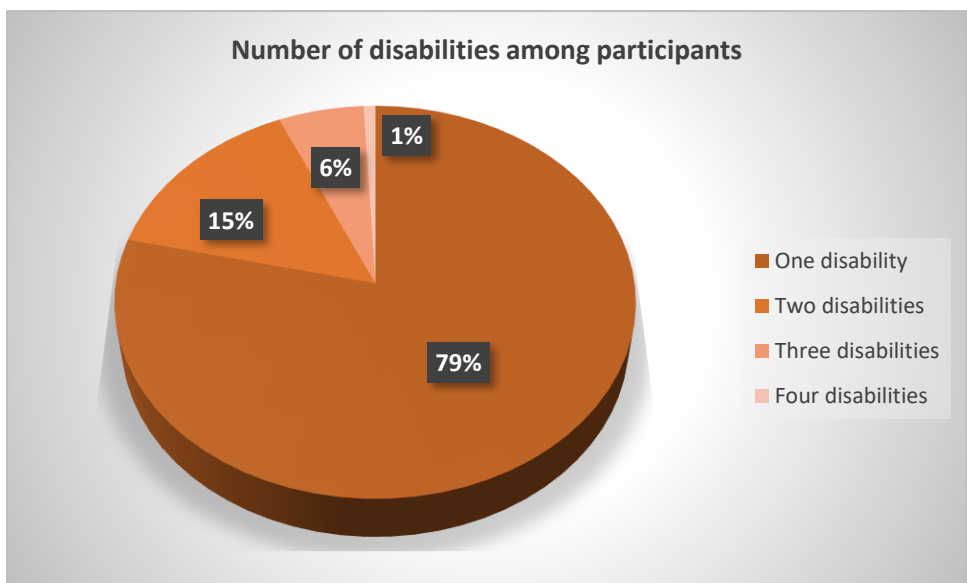
Starting from the demographic information survey, as shown in the chart above, from the total participants, 60% were women, while the remaining 40% were men.



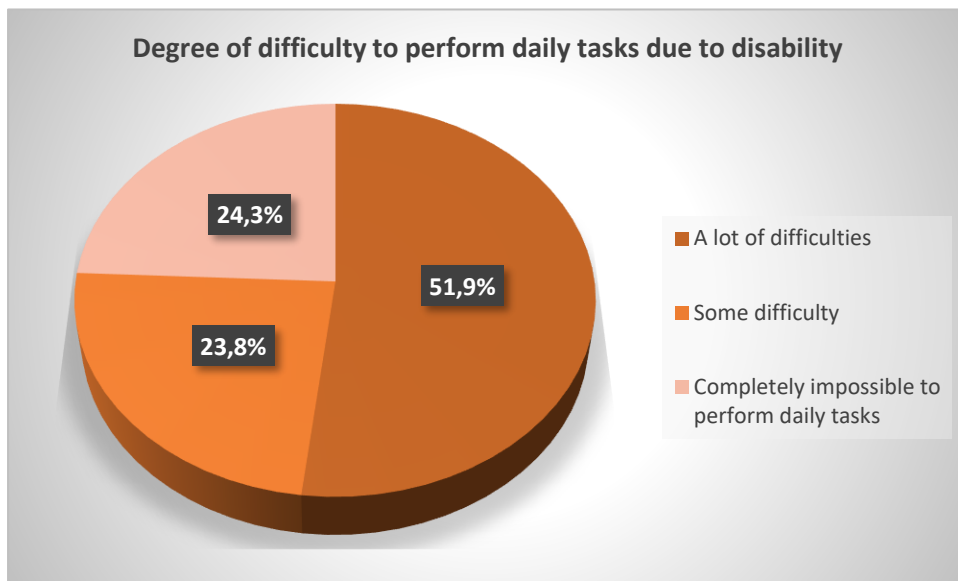
Regarding the age groups to which the participants belong, most people was between 41-50 years old (33%) and it followed those between 31-40 (27%), 51-60 (21%), 19-30 (12%) and >60 (6%).



When they asked about the type of disability that participants have, the largest percentage (44,20%) answered that they have a problem with “Walking and climbing stairs” and it followed the answers “Daily self-care” (30%), “Memory/concentration problems” (19%), “Communication problems” (19%), “Vision problems” (10%) and “Hearing problems” (7%).



When they asked about the number of disabilities that they have, the largest percentage (79%) answered “One” and it followed the answers “Two” (15%), “Three” (6%) and “Four” (1%).



When they asked about the difficulty to perform daily tasks due to disability the largest percentage (51,9%) answered “A lot of difficulties” and it followed the answers “Completely impossible to perform daily tasks” (24,3%) and “Some difficulty” (23,8%).

D.1.2 Factors contributing to disaster preparedness

In order to analyse the research open-ended questions, a thematic analysis was conducted by axis of interest. Analysing the data collected based on a categorization process helps to make the results easier to understand. This categorization was made based on the initial research questions that had been asked in the research methodology.

➤ **Capacity development**

‘Capacity development’ is an important component for preparedness. Participants were requested frequent live evacuation drills and development of evacuation plans for people with disabilities.

One of the PWD interviewed said **"There should be workshops, awareness programs, and training on disaster preparedness, especially for us disabled people to be inclusive."**

Another participant noted that **"people with disabilities would want to know or prepare for disasters, and this has to be done for their safety given the impact disasters may have on their lives"**.

Another one said that **"Some people don't take it to seriously the task to prepare for disasters. But, if the local or central government decides what to do with people with disabilities, they can come to one place where they would extract them to a safe place"**.

Despite concerns about people with disabilities not wanting to and how little government departments recognise and include people with disabilities in decision making, participants suggested more awareness programs.

"Awareness programs should include radio programs, posters, and other IEC materials including visiting government departments lobbying for inclusive policies as well as selling of handicrafts", said one of the participants in the interview.

➤ **Participation**

Participation in decision making for disaster preparedness was mentioned by participants. They were aware of the importance of being involved in community and government decision-making bodies such as the disaster management department. The Government of Albania has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

One of the participants stated: **"I think the way to include people with disabilities to participate is through the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). By protecting people with disabilities rights. At the moment there are so many associations and government departments in Albania focused in the promotion awareness of people with disabilities."**

Despite this, participants noted that the government needed to do more for people with disabilities. The participant clarified that although CRPD has been ratified, it needs implementation:

“Because the government has ratified the Convention on the Rights of people with disabilities, now it’s time to implement because, now it’s time to implement because at the moment it has not been implemented. For example, the Ministry of Education plans for inclusive education, but they don’t practice it. So, people with disabilities should inform the government our needs because it’s stipulated in the convention that people with disabilities should be involved in mainstream education. So that is what we should do this year.”

➤ **Communication**

Communicating information to people with disabilities is critical before, during, and after a disaster. Most participants noted the various methods that can be used to effectively reach out to these individuals such as the caregiver, proximity of announcement, language and communication, and the use of sign language. Several participants expressed their belief that information that is communicated to people with disabilities is specific and should be delivered by their caregiver considering their relationship and disabilities, particularly those who are physically impaired, deaf, or blind. Wrong information or not communicated in the right manner would cause anxiety and confusion to people with disabilities.

One of the participants stated: **“So the messages can be related to those that are deaf during strong winds and this include looking straight at them and relate the message. Its’ important that they can see our lips.”**

However, even in the best interest of carers and families, different times of the day may cater to different sign language and a participant commented on an appropriate sign language method for deaf or hearing disabilities.

"For deaf individuals, it's good during the daytime because we can use sign language...In my opinion, it's better to prepare signs and use a sign specifically for a type of disaster such as colour picture, so that the deaf individuals would know of the disaster. If it's at night, then we should use a light so that deaf individuals would see and know that there is a strong wind have picked up speed. And for the fire, well everyone sees the fire."

➤ **Understanding barriers to disaster preparedness**

Understanding and addressing the barriers to disaster preparedness would assist families and the government to prepare people with disabilities for disasters. Participants highlighted barriers to not having individual/family disaster/evacuation plans, unemployed, and inability to evacuate without assistance. Some of the participants mentioned that their families did not have an evacuation plan and neither do they know what the government plans are for people with disabilities.

“I do not know whether Kolonjë Municipality or the Government have emergency plan. My family does not have a specific plan of preparation for such events.” said one of the participants.

Another one said: **“I am not aware of any plans for emergencies, but my husband and I know that if we are warned of a crisis like strong winds, then we will follow those instructions.”**

Participants felt that preparing for disaster is a challenging issue since they cannot be ready in time before a disaster as they are unemployed. Data has shown that more than 54% of the interviewed people with disabilities were are unemployed.

“My husband and I do not work but Kolonjë Municipality helps us financially.” said another one.

One of the most challenging issues for most participants was the evacuation was most noted that they would need assistance.

“I highly doubt there is anything I can do about that. The only thing I can depend on to help me during such events is my family and their effort to take me to a safer place. Therefore, I think that there is nothing I could do about things like that except depending on my family.” said one of the participants.

One participant gave an insight into why the public, including family members, need to know that people with disabilities limitations differ. For example, during disaster evacuation, persons with physical impairment may be assisted differently than those with hearing impairment.

“As we know we have different disabilities they (rescuers) should know how to handle each one, if they don't know then it's a big problem.”

➤ **Perception of preparedness**

1. Motivation to prepare

Participants felt that motivation was an important factor in their preparations for disasters. Motivation is a purpose for them 'to stay alive' for their families.

"We usually hear the announcements on the Television, national one and less on the radio". We don't really use much SMS in the phones or telecommunication means. Maybe this should take the attention of the right institutions.

2. Trusted sources

'Trusted Sources' to the people with disabilities is important. The information must come from a trusted source, either the national government or local government, and needs to be related to people with disabilities in a manner they understand.

"In my opinion, the weather people are trustworthy because they are the ones who observe the changes in the weather and know about disasters before they occur using their equipment. And also, I trust the disaster department, as they prepare the community for threats like this. Those are the people that I trust." said one of the persons interviewed.

"Okay, I believe local announcements, because it's a message from the government to prepare all for disasters such as strong winds at that time. And at times local calls are not trusted, because when they announced but the waves have passed us already. But the important thing for the family is to prepare for emergencies. Because we do not know when it happens, but if we're ready then we are ready whenever disaster strikes. Whether the calls or announcement of an emergency happens or not we should be ready."

➤ *Experience*

1. Disaster experiences of different types of disabilities

'Lived experiences' is described as the actual personal account that an individual encountered living within a group. In this context, we define lived experience as personal experiences of people with disabilities living in Kolonjë. Personal disaster experiences of people with disabilities differ for each type of disability.

For individuals with physical activity, the majority stated that they were vulnerable to strong winds, storm snow, and fires. Those with visual impairments mentioned that they were vulnerable to strong

winds, whereas for individuals with hearing impairments perceived those strong winds and storm were disasters that could impact their lives.

Participants with physical disabilities shared their experience and the majority felt that they were vulnerable to strong storms and winds.

For physical disability participants they noted that:

“Once strong storms caused extensive damages to my house sometimes during midnight hours..... I couldn’t sleep those early morning hours because of the sound of the winds...I was scared because our house was far from the main settlement and I went to stay at my neighbours’ house until dawn.”

Participants with hearing disabilities have their own experiences and the common experiences of participants with hearing disabilities were that they did not know what was happening around them during a disaster.

““I recall in one of my experience, people ran during a strong wind incident, but I wasn’t afraid.... but now I want more information provided in advance before any disaster happens.

Participants with visual disabilities also have different experiences during disasters.

“...because of my disability (visual), I can be extremely affected by all these disasters (strong winds, drought, and fire)

E. FINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT

E.1 DISCUSSION

As the issue of civil protection for people with disabilities or elderly people has not been analyzed in depth in the existing literature and the policies pursued in today's societies do not plan appropriate actions to protect this group, it was considered appropriate for this survey to have more information as possible about the needs of these people. In-depth Interviews are one such method that are useful when you want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth. Interviews "illuminate", that is, they allow access to the way others see things, their thoughts, attitudes and views that are hidden behind their behaviour. An interview can, also be the means for a deeper examination of the motivations of the respondents for the reasons they answered in this way.

The aim of this survey was to understand the behaviour of the people with disabilities and elderly people in case of emergencies, to distinguish their degree of preparedness in a possible disaster and their needs for greater safety in such situations. Thus, the factors that contribute to the readiness of the disabled were identified (Capacity development, Participation, Communication, Understanding barriers to disaster preparedness, Perception of preparedness, Experience).

More specifically, capacity building has been important for people with disabilities, especially when it comes to evacuation. Evacuation drills help people with disabilities know the safe protection options in a disaster. The same happens for communities that provide evacuation assistance, as the needs of people with disabilities are very different from those of others in a disaster.

Regarding their participation in the decision-making process. Many participants stressed the importance of actively participating and being informed about state developments and community meetings, and stressed the need for more support.

Communication is also an important factor contributing to the safety of people with disabilities in emergencies. This group of people require different communication approaches and the right methods of communicating information determine their understanding and ability to get away in time. These methods include communication with the caregiver, proximity to announcements, use of the local language, and sign language.

The obstacles identified by participants and hampered their preparedness efforts are mainly the lack of preparedness planning, both for families and for the government or NGOs, the lack of assistance for evacuation in case of disaster and their marginalization in its decision-making participation. as a result of which they do not know the basic steps of readiness. Also, the limited financial resources of people with disabilities do not make it easier to cover disaster preparedness.

The study also found that sources of information that people with disabilities find reliable are government departments, including the police, the weather and the community alert system.

Finally, in terms of their experience in similar disasters, the findings of the study showed how people with disabilities use the knowledge of different types of disasters to prepare for a possible disaster. For this reason, these experiences are considered important in the decision-making process and civil protection.

Research therefore shows that a society's preparedness actions can to some extent protect its citizens, but this is not the case for people with disabilities. These people are insecure about a disaster and no steps have been taken to provide them with a complete preparedness plan that will include them. The state is therefore called upon to redesign a preparedness plan that will protect virtually all its citizens.

E.2 LESSONS OF THE ACTION

Conducting interviews was a first step in identifying the shortcomings and needs of people with a disability in an emergency. The results of the research revealed the following:

- Civil protection should ensure that a protection guide can be issued, in order to cover most disability groups and at the same time to provide continuous updates to this group of the population.
- Communities should be aware of the evacuation plan for people with disabilities and regularly inform those concerned. It is also suggested that people with disabilities should participate in these communities to take an active part in community decision-making.
- It is also suggested that there be better coordination during the evacuation process and the necessary assistance can be provided to anyone in need. In this case, the new technology can help in timely information but also in notifying the right people who can offer help.

The next step in protecting people with disabilities from a disaster can be include the below directions:

- Cooperation of the authorities and communities to work together and document the plight of these people in order to design an evacuation plan that specializes in protecting this group of citizens.
- Implementation of a series of consultations by specialists to people with disabilities in order to improve the civil protection plan as much as possible.
- Introduction of an annual well-designed pilot simulation exercise which will be addressed also to people with disabilities that it will help them to be ready in any emergency disaster.

REFERENCES

Brain Traffic (The Situation Analysis: How to Put Your Research to Work)

Online access to:

<https://www.braintraffic.com/insights/the-situation-analysis-how-to-put-your-research-to-work> [10-2021]

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention - CDC (Disability and Health Overview)

Online access to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html> [09-2021]

Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

Corey (2011), *Formative Research: What, Why and How*, Geneva, Switzerland.

Online access to:

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2010/Geneva-Workshop/pdf/Formative-research-Corey-2011.pdf> [10-2021]

European Commission (2016). *Building Resilience: The EU's approach*. Brussels.

Online access to:

https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/EU_building_resilience_en.pdf [11-2021]

Federation of American Scientists (2016). *National Protection Framework*. United States.

Online access to:

<https://irp.fas.org/agency/dhs/fema/npf2d.pdf> [11-2021]

International Atomic energy Agency - IAEA (Situational Analysis)

Online access to:

<https://www.iaea.org/resources/nuclear-communicators-toolbox/methods/planning/situational-analysis> [10-2021]

International Federation of Red Cross - IFRC (Disaster Preparedness)

Online access to:

<https://www.ifrc.org/disaster-preparedness> [09-2021]

Orimo H, Ito H, Suzuki T, Araki A, Hosoi T, Sawabe M. Reviewing the definition of “elderly” *Geriatrics & gerontology international*. 2006;6(3):149–158.

Ready Campaign - FEMA

Online access to:

<https://www.ready.gov/about-us> [10-2021]

UNHCR (2019). *Working with persons with disabilities in forced displacement*.

Online access to:

<https://www.unhcr.org/4ec3c81c9.pdf> [10-2021]

UNISDR (2009). *Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction*. Geneva.

Online access to:

https://iwhw.boku.ac.at/LVA816343/Background_Material_2021/UNISDR%20Terminology%20on%20Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction_2009.pdf [09-2021]

UNDRR (2019). *Strategic Approach to Capacity Development for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, UNISDR

Online access to:

https://www.unisdr.org/files/58211_fullconciseguide.pdf [10-2021]

United Nations (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol*. New York.

Online access to:

<https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf> [09-2021]

World Health Organization – WHO (Simulation Exercises)

Online access to:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/operations/simulation-exercises> [11-2021a]

World Health Organization - WHO (Disability)

Online access to:

https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability#tab=tab_1 [11-2021b]

World Health Organization - WHO (Risk factors of ill health among older people)

Online access to:

<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/healthy-ageing/data-and-statistics/risk-factors-of-ill-health-among-older-people> [10-2021c]

World Health Organization - WHO (Mental health of older adults)

Online access to:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-of-older-adults> [11-2021d]

ANNEX

Questionnaire

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Group-age

- 19-30 years old
- 31-40 years old
- 41-50 years old
- 51-60 years old
- >60 years old

3. Type of disability

- Walking and climbing stairs
- Daily self-care
- Memory/concentration problems
- Communication problems
- Vision problems
- Hearing problems
- Down Syndrome

4. Degree of difficulty to perform daily tasks due to disability

- A lot of difficulties
- Some difficulty
- Completely impossible to perform daily tasks

5. Employment status

- Employed
- Unemployed

- Retired
- Social benefits
- Other, please specify_____

6. What are some of the type of disasters that you have gone through, and can you share the experience?

7. What are some of the barriers that prevent you from preparing for disaster?

8. In what way did you think that PWDs should be included and participate in the decision-making in family, community and government?

9. Are you aware on the type of alerts that warns you during a danger and emergency?

10. Are you aware of any type of plans for emergency in local and central level? What about a family plan?

11. Which steps would you take if you heard an emergency warning? What about the first thing that you would do?

12. What would motivate you to prepare for an emergency and seek information on what to do before and during an emergency?

13. Whom would you trust to talk about emergencies? Why?

14. What would be the best way to communicate an information during emergencies?
