

Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre

Community Resilience in Urban Areas (CRUA) - Summary

Objectives: Why necessary?

Since 2004 in Europe, over 1,000 have been killed and more than 3.4M affected by flooding. Projections are for this to intensify. Without action, up to half a million additional people will be affected every year by 2080. Those to be most affected are central Europe and the British Isles. Long-term health effects are less easily specified but include increased incidence of common mental health disorders¹. Statutory and community response to have developed over time but need to continue improving, particularly in urban areas, in relation to the UN Hyogo Framework, the EC Floods Directive, and the response of each member state. As lead partner and applicant, the British Red Cross has been involved in preparation and response to floods for many years. Northern Ireland's experience after two years of particularly severe and sustained flooding in Belfast, led to research papers detailing gaps and unmet needs of urban communities. A multiagency partnership framework was set up including lead stakeholders from national and local government, and also including the Red Cross to support community engagement work.

A similar situation evolved in Hungary, where the Red Cross has a partnership with Ministry of the Interior, National Directorate General for Disaster Management, and local Defence Councils. They supported nearly 50,000 people in 52 locations during historical Danube flooding of 2013. Denmark was affected by its first serious flooding last winter. The Danish Red Cross are keen to develop research in this area and consider how best to serve urban populations and work with statutory and other agencies already active in Denmark. In each partner country there has already been a considerable response, based on the Floods Directive and Hyogo. However, these are statutory level responses and there is a gap in relation the knowledge and ability of urban communities to prepare for and recover from floods (i.e community resilience) which this project will directly address. The results of our needs analysis show that urban communities are significantly less likely to support themselves and depend heavily on emergency services that are often overwhelmed by demand in these circumstances. The result is that individuals and communities are traumatised by the events, and feel threatened by its high probability of reoccurring. The need for emotional resilience is paramount but has so far fallen through the gaps. Specialist Red Cross Federation (IFRC) agencies Climate Centre and Psychosocial Support Centre have global expertise that they will adapt to European conditions, developing innovative elements that will further help us devise effective solutions at community level.

This project aims to contribute towards, and share result widely, on **1) Individuals and urban communities being better prepared for the increased level of incidence of flooding through studying, designing, adapting, testing and implementing innovative, approaches, tools and techniques to link prevention measures to preparedness and response needs.** 2) Ensuring the right level of support, especially emotional support, to aid recovery from the effects of flooding and integrate our emotional resilience model into local planning and other policies. 3) Study current, and encourage exchange of, good practice on multiagency partnerships in civil protection, facilitating access to specific knowledge and expertise on issues of common interest.

¹ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/189020/e96853.pdf