**Bulgarian National Report**

**A. Center for Educational Initiatives Association**

We examined a total of 11 good practice examples. Of these, 7 address natural disasters, 1 is related to first aid and 3 address potentially emerging criminal offenses and crimes and child-related risks. The examples examined concern both children and parents, teachers and other expert and school staff, who are directly involved in the topic under investigation. The survey was conducted using the desktop research method, with a total of 6 expert interviews and one common expert task group session.

**1. Subject areas covered within the researched categories:**

The examined examples include:

• Modern educational tools - e-learning platforms;

• Out-of-class activities and special interest clubs for children who wish to receive further training;

• Tools for enhancing students' knowledge and skills as part of larger-scale campaigns to improve public awareness of different institutions;

• Inclusion of children with disabilities, some with severe mental and physical conditions;

• Interaction between networks of public bodies, NGOs, schools and voluntary organizations;

• Measures applied at different levels - local, regional and national;

• Behavioral advices and strategies for personal safety and security.

**2. Main successful characteristics of the examined examples**

During the survey, the following most important successful characteristics were defined:

• Positive public attitudes about the usefulness of training and the need to improve the skills of teachers;

• Interactive practical modules, led by young specialists, make the trainings attractive for young students;

• The possibility to access a modern web-based learning platform with interactive methods that allow learners to verify their knowledge is particularly useful and attractive to students;

• Positive image of the fire department, police and volunteers in children’s consciousness - building a bond between rescuers/volunteers/police officers and children;

• Performing evacuation as a game could facilitate real-life situations;

• Providing a training environment that is similar to the real one;

• Improving the interaction between schools, services, volunteers and children – ensuring constant interaction with professional services;

• Increasing the theoretical and practical training and, respectively, the capacity to deal with emergency situations that involve children and parents;

• Providing access to additional extracurricular activities or elective subjects, inclusion of marginalized and isolated groups;

• Competitive characteristics - if teams perform well, they can climb the ladder of different levels of competition - local, regional, national and international;

• Active inclusion of people with disabilities;

• Providing an opportunity for teachers to periodically organize additional classes on their elective subjects;

• Videos adapted for children are also useful for parents and teachers; the information provided is easy to perceive by children;

• Providing information on the specific behaviors children and parents should have in order to avoid getting into risk situations;

• Drawing attention to potential risks and threats;

• Improving interaction and enhancing trust between schools, security services, children and parents;

• Potential development of an unified model for the training of children throughout the country, ensuring the development of identical skills and knowledge for personal safety and responses in life-threatening situations.

• Well-designed, developed and structured lessons and methodological instructions and guidance for responsible police officers.

3. Main points of weakness:

• There are not enough teaching materials adapted for this age group;

• Lack of interactivity and gamification in distance learning;

• Lack of electronic learning resources through which children can continue to enrich their knowledge, lack of resources, adapted for children with disabilities;

• Lack of unified curriculum, developed jointly by educators, psychologists, professionals and volunteers to be followed and upgraded, instead trainings are organized according to the capacities of specific lecturers;

• Lack of rhythmical and cyclical activity, activities are erratic and sporadic;

• Not all divisions have the same opportunities for organizing events, especially units in small settlements that have fewer resources, funds and staff;

• The primary focus is on fires. In modern times, there are many different types of risks and threats of disasters. That is why consideration may be given to the introduction of disciplines covering other types of disasters;

• Activities intended for children are primarily practical, with insufficient attention being paid to theoretical training and prevention;

• The opportunities of modern ICT for the education of children and school staff are not being used well;

• There are no adequate measures aimed at children with disabilities as well as acute and chronic diseases;

• Lessons and activities are not foreseen in the curriculum, and extracurricular forms do not guarantee sufficient sustainability and an acceptable minimum of knowledge and skills.

**B. Society and Safety Foundation: interviews with representatives of police, fireworks and child inspectors**

In the period November - December 2018, interviews were conducted with five Ministry of Interior (MoI) officers. The contacts and conversations with them were realized thanks to the successful partnership between the Society and Security Foundation and the Trade Union Federation of MoI Employees. The interviews were conducted according to a questionnaire prepared in advance with the Center for Educational Initiatives. The most important conclusions from the interviews are:

In fact there is no a common protocol for action. According to the Disaster protection law, the services are united in a Unified Rescue System, but each acts autonomously and according to its own rules. The leading role is for General Directorate Fire Safety and Civil Protection, which performs both disaster prevention and response. Prevention includes classes for children and teachers in kindergartens and schools, and the practical development of evacuation plans for each school building. In case of disasters, the leading priority is to save children's lives. During each shift firefighters follow a specific curriculum and study evacuation plans of buildings, location of electrical panels, gas and water supply, and who are the responsible persons for each school building.

The Firefighters, unlike the policemen, feel much better prepared for disaster response at school - first because of their previously prepared internal protocol and secondly because of the experience they have. There are no common protocols in the Police. The police officers do not know the MoI's crisis plans well, but they have a practical experience and that’s why they know what to do in critical situations. They need more trainings. It is necessary a common protocol for the employees in all services to be prepared, tested and changed (if it is necessary). More joint trainings are needed between different institutions, citizens and children. The Ministry of Education and Science should take part in the development of the protocol, concerning the schools.

The police officers do not know whether there are any plans to respond to man-made disasters - such as terrorism.

Institutions are not well prepared for interaction. Next, citizens are not aware of what behavior to follow in an emergency - how to protect themselves and how to support professional services. There are various initiatives aimed at improving the skills for disaster response or personal protection, but they are sporadic and do not cover all children. Measures aimed to raise the public awareness are extremely ineffective. A very important role for children is played by their teachers. There are no materials that match the pupils' age.

Ultimately, the level of preparedness for emergency response at school is very low. One of the reasons is the insufficient number of human resources or the combination of operational functions with preventive activities and work with children. Also there are no specialists specifically dealing with children, and on the other hand not all pupils can be covered. Parents and children have an interest in being involved in events to enhance the culture of behavior in critical situations.

In case of crimes involving children, there is an informal protocol of interaction, based on the practical experience of the employees. Such situations are a signal of a school bomb, beating, theft or others. Employees are familiar with the rules of conduct in an emergency at school, but this is mainly due to their self-preparation. The materials they have as methodical instructions for carrying out preventive activities provided by the Ministry of Interior are obsolete and inadequate. Often it happens to be asked to enter schools and to give lectures on subjects that have not been provided with any materials - in such situations they search for online sources of information, entertaining games and lessons, and structure the classes at their own discretion.

All professionals are firmly convinced that the prevention should be the guiding principle, but it is essential to have a common protocol for action. The protocol must be implemented in all schools, and to be developed jointly by all relevant institutions.