



Report: Living lab “From dialogue to preparedness” in Dordrecht

Low-cost Disaster & Emergency Services for Communities At Risk (LODESTAR)

Date: 5 September 2025, 15:30-18:00

Venue: Stichting Openhaard, Dordrecht

Organised by: WUR Lodestar team, GOPA MetaMeta, Stichting Openhaard, Gemeente Dordrecht

Facilitator: Maia Brons

Living Lab 05-09-2025: With Turkish community and municipality in Dordrecht

In this living lab, titled “From Dialogue to Preparedness”, members from a Turkish-Dutch immigrant community met with municipality representatives to establish a first collective dialogue around the themes of flood risk, warning communication and preparedness for the city of Dordrecht. The aim was to shed light on this community’s experiences and existing knowledge concerning natural hazards, cultivate a broader familiarity with flood risks and emergency measures specific to Dordrecht, and initiate debate on how current warning mechanisms can better reflect the needs of specific communities.

The event started with an ice breaker game emphasizing the role of communication in disaster preparedness (photo 1) and a round of introductions. Then, a ball of wool was used as a tool for participants to share ideas and stories about natural hazards and disaster management. Ensuring everyone got a turn to speak, participants were asked to answer the questions: “Have you ever experienced/witnessed a disaster and can you describe one thing that stood out about that event?” and “What do you think is the most important thing in being prepared for disasters?” This exercise revealed that the residents had a lot of latent knowledge, many of them having experienced disasters in their home country of Turkey, including earthquakes, power outages and wildfires. The outcome of this sharing exercise was a string web connecting the residents, municipal workers and researchers, offering a helpful symbol for the central themes of the workshop: communication and collaboration (photo 2).



Photo 1

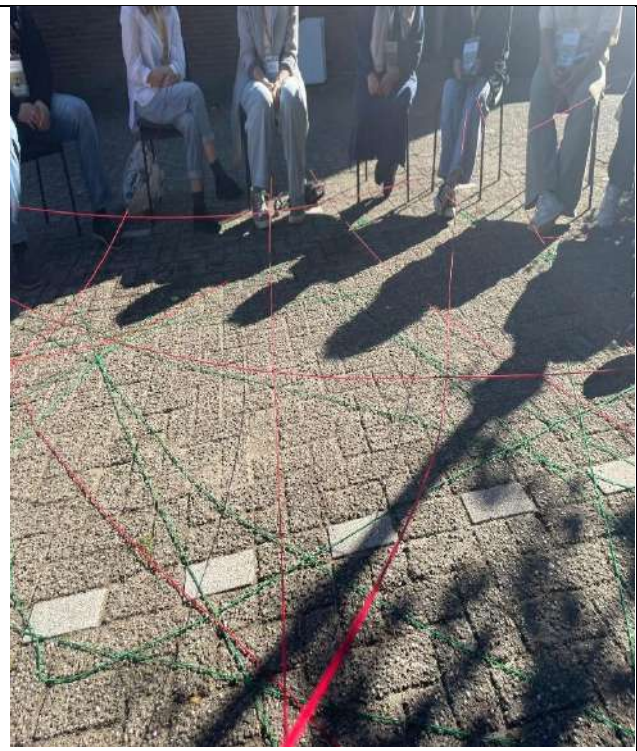


Photo 2

After a welcome break with tea and baklava, the participants were divided into groups to engage in a scenario game. The groups were presented with various scenarios concerning water-related hazards (photo 3), for instance about receiving a push notification about an impending storm, and asked to discuss what they would do; how they would obtain information; what they perceived their risks to be during such an incident. During this exercise, it became clear that many of the disaster communication efforts made by the municipality, including various campaigns and publishing information on their website, overall do not sufficiently reach this community. The residents generally indicated they would sooner rely on community WhatsApp groups or ask their neighbours about ongoing developments, rather than access official websites or, indeed, trust official communications without further inquiry.



Photo 3

Overall, a sentiment shared amongst all participants was that the workshop's success resided especially in bringing together these various stakeholders for the first time, establishing a foundation of recognition, trust and rapport. Before advancing with improved (technological) warning systems, it is crucial to ensure that warnings and risk communication are accepted by local communities and that the messaging resonates with their needs as well as personal backgrounds and specific social and cultural contexts.