

Report: Living lab “Warned together” in Dordrecht

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

Date: 6th February 2026

Venue: Dordrecht city hall

Organised by: WUR Lodestar team, Stichting Openhaard

Facilitator: Maia Brons

Living Lab 06-02-2026: With Turkish community, experts and municipality in Dordrecht

This living lab, titled “Warned together” (“*Gezamenlijk gewaarschuwd*”), built on the previous one, conducted in September 2025, bringing together the same group of Turkish-Dutch residents with Dutch water and disaster experts as well as municipal representatives, this time hosted at Dordrecht city hall. Whereas the preceding workshop was designed to facilitate an exploratory, foundational dialogue and exchange about the themes of flood risk, warning communication and preparedness, this living lab was designed as a more hand-on experimentation around the question: What does perfect communication of early warnings for floods in Dordrecht look like, from the perspective of local residents?

The event started with an ice breaker game inspired by the recent initiative by Dutch government to send all households in the Netherlands a “Think Ahead” (“*Denk Vooruit*”) flyer to urge people to prepare for disasters, for example by collating an emergency kit. Participants were asked to move across a virtual line, indicating their agreeing or disagreeing with several statements (e.g. “I took preventative measures after receiving this flyer”). This got people actively engaged, with each other and the event’s themes.

After a brief introduction by the organisers and a round of introductions, followed by a break, the participants were divided into groups for the main activity. They were tasked with designing an early warning flyer for a hypothetical flood scenario, occurring in the city of Dordrecht. Each group consisted of at least several Turkish-Dutch residents and one or two experts, for instance from the local water board or regional safety authority. Equipped with craft supplies and an array of cut-out icons, designed to represent all aspects relating to early warning and disaster preparedness, the groups were asked to discuss what such an early warning flyer ideally would look like; which elements it should contain; and how information should be communicated (photo 1).

The results were highly diverse and creative. For example, one group focused especially on how the hydrological and geographical details of the flood should be communicated and visualised, highlighting the importance of colour coding and map illustrations (photo 2). Another tried to chart an interpersonal, community-based communication network as a foundation for the dissemination of warning messages, with special attention for vulnerable people in the community, such as elderly residents (photo 3).



Photo1

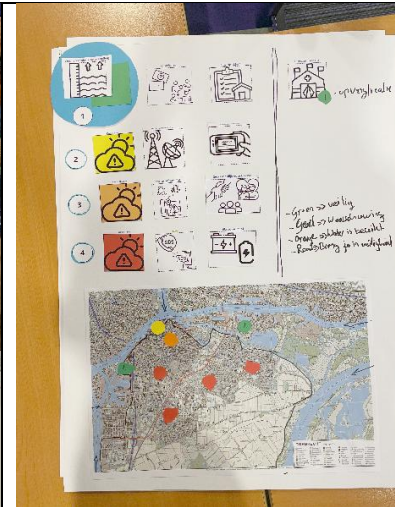


Photo2

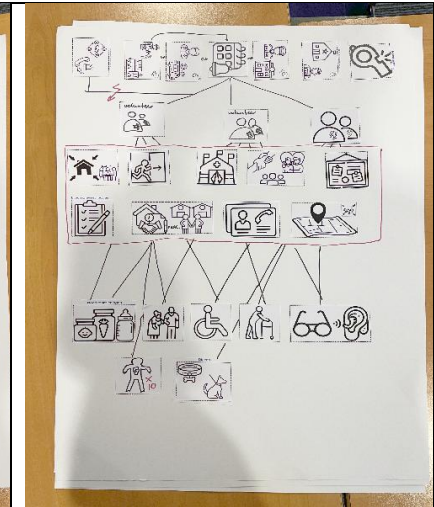


Photo3

Two aspects stood out as especially relevant across the working groups. First, all groups prioritised non-digital communication systems over creating new technological, (app-based) warning systems, for instance discussing the role of mosque tower speakers in the broadcasting of messages or designating building managers as central communication ‘nodes’ in the dissemination of warning information. Second, the residents ascribed special value to the opportunity of sitting with experts and getting first-hand insight into flood risk management and disaster response in the Netherlands. In that sense, the process of collaboratively creating the flyers was equally as – if not more – important as the products of the living lab.