



COLLOQUIUM 2



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Executive Summary

During the BuildERS project, three so-called global resilience research colloquia are planned to be organised. They are a part of the implementation of WP6 Co-design and Co-development with Stakeholders. The aim of WP6 is to support and facilitate interaction between researchers, citizens, volunteer groups, NGOs, authorities, technology providers and other stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. It also provides the WPs 1-5 critical supportive, facilitation service, and produces iteratively new knowledge from the WPs for the sequential WPs and tasks. The role of colloquia is particularly to strengthen discussion and offer a place to present the findings of the BuildERS project for academic networks.

This document provides the results of the BuildERS second online colloquium taken place on 14th December 2020. The presentations offered insights of the work done in WP2 and WP3 during the first half of the project. Presentation 1 presented case studies of how emergency warnings are being shared in social media as well as the use of social media during a crisis. Presentation 2 offered selected snapshots of technological opportunities for improving operation and resilience disasters relying on the results of the survey on technologies tools. Presentation 3 introduced the principles of systematically updated satellite imagery to monitor, forecast and get real time status of the hazards on earth. Presentation 4 presented a typology of harmful informational content that may increase people's vulnerability in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Presentation 5 offered insights of practicalities of organisations providing support to the most vulnerable individuals.

On the next pages, short summaries of the presentations, the agenda and link to the recording of the event can be found.



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List of Acronyms

BuildERS	Building European Communities Resilience and Social Capital project
D	Deliverable
EKU	Eberhard Karls Universitaet Tuebingen
EU	European Union
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GEO	Geonardo Environmental Technologies Ltd
GIS	Geographic information system
SAL	The Salvation Army
TRL	Technology readiness level
UTA	University of Tartu
WP	Work Package
VTT	Technical Research Centre of Finland



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1. Short summaries of the presentations

1.1. Social media for emergency alerting and during a crisis by Asta Bäck

Upcoming EU Directive (will come into force in June 2022) related to public warnings states that public warnings should be transmitted to all those who are located in the geographic areas potentially being affected. This requires development of systems such as mobile phone messaging and apps. In practice, alerts often reach people through social media either directly from official channels or through official and unofficial intermediaries. Social media is highly efficient in increasing the reach of emergency warnings and emergency related messages. Nevertheless, it does not reach everybody, but that is the case with TV and radio too, so multichannel communication is necessary. Social media are used both in constructive and unconstructive ways. They can be used for offering help and support and sharing information. At the same time, existence of rumours, sharing falsified information and using the event to increase tensions and promote political issues, can cause disruption and anxiety.

During the discussion it was highlighted that the current Covid-19 pandemic is very different from the crisis examined in the study, since the pandemic has a very long duration. In cases of quickly solved emergencies, also the discussion in social media channels “dies” quickly. As the Covid-19 pandemic lingers on, it offers several opportunities to speculate and discuss, because it is a new situation and it is not always clear to anybody what the correct types of actions would be. Different kinds of crisis and disasters come with varying challenges in social media.

1.2. A view to emerging opportunities for improving resilience in disasters by Juhani Latvakoski

The presentation provided snapshots to the results of the survey on technologies and tools carried out within task 2.5 of Builders project. There are a rich variety of different enablers in the field of public safety environment such as social media, video surveillance, real-time monitoring of the disaster areas, big data platform etc. The disaster management stakeholders estimated the importance of the emerging technical enablers. The analysis covered 118 tools developed within European research collaboration projects. Majority of the tools were estimated to be in TRL 7-9 level, and they were classified to four classes. One example tool of each class were presented: location based services (Temporary population tool), simulation based training (Trasim tool), trustworthy information sharing (M2MGrids platform), and visualizing global epidemic situation (ESRI COVID-29 GITHUB tool).

A discussion on vulnerable/limited capability people and the emerging opportunities were provided. For example, tools related to Covid-19 pandemic were mostly relying on positioning of people using smart phones or some other means. Usually, some physical asset device, such as e.g. smartphone or any IoT device is required in most new emerging opportunities (location detecting, showing warnings, alarms, situation etc.). If vulnerable person is located somewhere in the disaster area without such device or capabilities, it is a major challenge to find the location of the person. On the other hand, if the vulnerable person has the required physical asset, the use of location aware services became easier. In any case, trust, security, privacy, and ethical issues must take thoroughly into account.



1.3. Satellite images and hazard vulnerability by Eija Parmes

ArcGIS® Esri and Google Earth platforms were used to combine data from hazards, discharge areas and their impacts to create integrated maps of hazards and impacts. Tools were developed to extract and combine hazard data from different hazard websites. Population density data and locations of socio-economically disadvantaged residents' strata were also added to the maps to identify social groups designated as vulnerable in hazard situations. About 180 hazards in European countries during 2015 - 2019 were identified as severe, since significant impacts of human losses (mortality, injured, evacuated, etc.). Based on empirical literature the most vulnerable groups in hazards were: elderly individuals during heatwaves, homeless families with young children and young adults exposed to cold-related injuries. In addition, homeless people in regions affected by fires, homeless people with disabilities, and homeless refugees and registered or unregistered migrants in large urban areas were identified most vulnerable. In future, new nano- and microsatellite constellations with hundreds of satellites will improve hazard detection enabling real time detection and alarm sending directly to alarm systems and actors in the hazard area.

During the discussion it was stressed that practitioners' problem is not lack of satellite systems, since there are a lot of systems and information available in several sites. Further integration of information from the websites would increase the usefulness for practitioners. Imaging request for a certain satellite system may include payment and may be triggered by national authorities, and this might lessen the use of the system. Despite, especially the Copernicus Emergency management system, based on satellite imaging, has been actively used and requested for mapping of severe hazard cases and risk areas. Information from satellite images could be useful for NGOs providing help for people in vulnerable situations, when they act in collaboration with other organisations, but decisions have not yet been made.

1.4. COVID-19 information disorder by Sten Hansson

When people are exposed to misleading or contradicting information during the crisis such as Covid-19 pandemic, they may behave in ways that cause harm to the health of themselves or others. Potential harmful information may spread via various channels and take various forms. Not only information shared via social media may be harmful. Information disorder involves spreading of misinformation, disinformation and mal-information. Six types of harmful information during the pandemic in Europe were identified in the BuildERS study. The identified information types were: discouraging protective actions against catching or spreading the virus, promoting the use of false (or harmful) remedies against the virus, misrepresenting the transmission mechanisms of and immunity to the virus, downplaying the risks related to the pandemic, scams, and harassment of the alleged spreaders of the virus. These types of harmful information should be seen as situational factors that may potentially create social vulnerability among various groups and individual. Governments and authorities should not only focus on misinformation and disinformation, but harmful information more broadly.

Discussion underlined that ongoing pandemic is a kind of evolving crisis and at the beginning of pandemic, there was only little information available. During Covid-19 pandemic first three months, it was easy to spread information, which was not based on medical research, either accidentally or intentionally. Social media can be used to amplify harmful information. Several stories of harmful information ended up to research data from local newspaper websites. People may share harmful news stories via social media increasing potential negative impacts and increase the number of vulnerable people.



1.5. The coping of social service providers during COVID-19 by Abriel Schiefflers

There are both internal (e.g. organisational culture and leadership) and external factors (e.g. support from authorities and local community) that shape organisations' coping in crisis. The study clarified the effect of the first Covid-19 wave on social care providers and their clients. The pandemic caused many significant changes in service provisions like residential settings and day centres. Some services shifted to online video calls or calls, food parcel distribution, or outreach services, while other services, including hygiene facilities, were forced to close. Clients faced various obstacles depending on their situation before and during the pandemic. Organisations providing social care suffered from a huge increase in staff workload and decrease in number of staff due to illnesses, childcare responsibilities, or being in a high-risk group. There was also a lack of assistance and clear communication from local authorities at the beginning of the crisis and difficulty accessing PPE. Communication with homeless and other vulnerable groups was a challenge, since those groups have limited access to TV or radio and other communication channels and relied on social workers to explain the changing regulations. Good communication and cooperation with local authorities, advocacy and solidarity from community are key external influencing factors when coping with crisis, as well as the flexibility of managers of social services to changing regulations.

Discussion emphasised that crises significantly exacerbate poverty and inequality. People in vulnerable situations need increased funding and sustainable housing solutions to ease their challenging situation. There are already good solutions available, and it is more often a question of political will. The pandemic has shown that it is possible to implement solutions in the short term like emergency accommodation solutions. In order to prevent future crises and the ongoing pandemic, we need to work now to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups in a sustainable way. It is essential to improve our knowledge of causes, trends and capacity gaps. Building resilience is absolutely the key aspect to improve coping in crisis.



2. The agenda and link to the recording

Let's get together to hear and discuss about the H2020 BuildERS project's findings

Monday 14 December 2020 12:00 – 15:00 CET online

Our project The H2020 BuildERS (Building European Communities' Resilience and Social Capital) is at the halfway point and we are eager to reveal current findings.

In the times of increasingly complex crises and disasters our main goal is to bring local, national and international governance levels together for co-creation of more effective resilience building and policy recommendations for supporting vulnerable groups. We study challenges related to risk awareness and social trust. We contribute to a better understanding of national institutional settings and capacities to face crises and disasters; assesses tools, processes and methods to enhance resilience, social capital and coping skills also via technological innovations.

Our BuildERS team includes researchers and NGOs preventatives of various disciplines, backgrounds and competences from ten countries. Find more about us: <https://buildersproject.eu/>

The participation is free of charge and is held via Gotomeeting. We can take not more than 250 participants.

Agenda for the meeting:

Welcoming words and introduction by Project Coordinator Anna-Mari Heikkilä, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland.

1. *Social media for emergency alerting and during a crisis* Asta Bäck, (VTT, Finland) - presents case studies of how emergency warnings are being shared in social media as well as the use of social media during a crisis.
2. *A view to emerging opportunities for improving resilience in disasters*, Juhani Latvakoski (VTT, Finland) - presents selected snapshots of technological opportunities for improving operation and resilience in disasters relying on the results of the survey on technologies and tools.
3. *Satellite images and hazard vulnerability*, Eija Parmes (VTT, Finland) - introduces the principles of systematically updated satellite imagery to monitor, forecast and get real time status of the hazards on earth.
4. *COVID-19 information disorder*, Sten Hansson (University of Tartu, Estonia) - presents a typology of harmful informational content that may increase people's vulnerability in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.
5. *The coping of social service providers during COVID-19*, Abriel Schieffellers (Salvation Army, Belgium) - offers insights of practicalities of organisations providing support to the most vulnerable individuals.

Wrapping up and conclusion.



Practicalities:

Each presentation will last 20 minutes and will be followed by a question from the moderator. The moderator will give then the floor to the audience. We advise you to use the chat tool either to signalise that you would like to raise questions/comments or to write directly your questions/comments. Welcome!

Link to the recording of the event in BuildERS website:

<https://buildersproject.eu/media> (under the video section)



Appendix 1: Registered for the colloquium

The second BuildERS colloquium assembled 54 registered participants. Table below shows the organisations from which the participants came from.

Table 1. Organisations participated in the colloquium

Organisation	Country
Emergency Services Academy Finland	Finland
Estonian Rescue Board	Estonia
European Commission	-
European Emergency Number Association	Belgium
Everbridge	-
Finnish Red Cross	Finland
Geonardo Environmental Technologies Ltd	Hungary
German Red Cross	Germany
International union of railways	France
Italian Department of Civil Protection	Italy
National EMS Organization	Israel
Police University College	Finland
Politecnico di Milano	Italy
Positium	Estonia
Provincia Autonoma di Trento	Italy
Resilience Advisors Network	UK
Save the Children	-
SINTEF	Norway
Sitech	The Netherlands
Stockholm University	Sweden
Tampere University	Finland
The Balkan Institute of Labour and Social Policy	Bulgaria
The Finnish National Rescue Association	Finland
The Institute of Transport Economics	Norway
The Salvation Army	Belgium
The Swedish Institute of International Affairs	Sweden
University of Applied Sciences Köln	German
University College Copenhagen	Denmark



University of Oulu	Finland
University of Stavanger	Norway
University of Tartu	Estonia
University of Trento	Italy
University of Tübingen	Germany
University of Twente	The Netherlands
VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland	Finland
VU Amsterdam	The Netherlands



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