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How to communicate with children about different types of crisis: crisis, war and the pandemic

CP4Europe Webinar on

“Child-friendly communication in crisis situations”

Aneta TENEVA and Cath LARKINS
CoE independent experts

Co-funded
by the European Union



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Building a Europe
for and with children
Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants



The Pandemic

Learning from and with children

The Building on Rainbows Project

Concerned academics and NGOs across 22 countries in Europe, inc with Roma and Pro-Roma organisations in 13 countries.

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child :

Provide opportunities for children's views to be heard and taken into account in decision-making processes on the pandemic. Children should understand what is happening and feel that they are taking part in the decisions that are being made in response to the pandemic. (UN Com RC 2020)

Relevant Resources

The Building On Rainbows Report <https://clock.uclan.ac.uk/33087/>

Roma Policy paper <https://clock.uclan.ac.uk/33616/>

#Covidunder19 <https://cpip.ucanmakechange2.org/covidunder19-an-initiative-to-meaningfully-involve-children-in-responses-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-2/>



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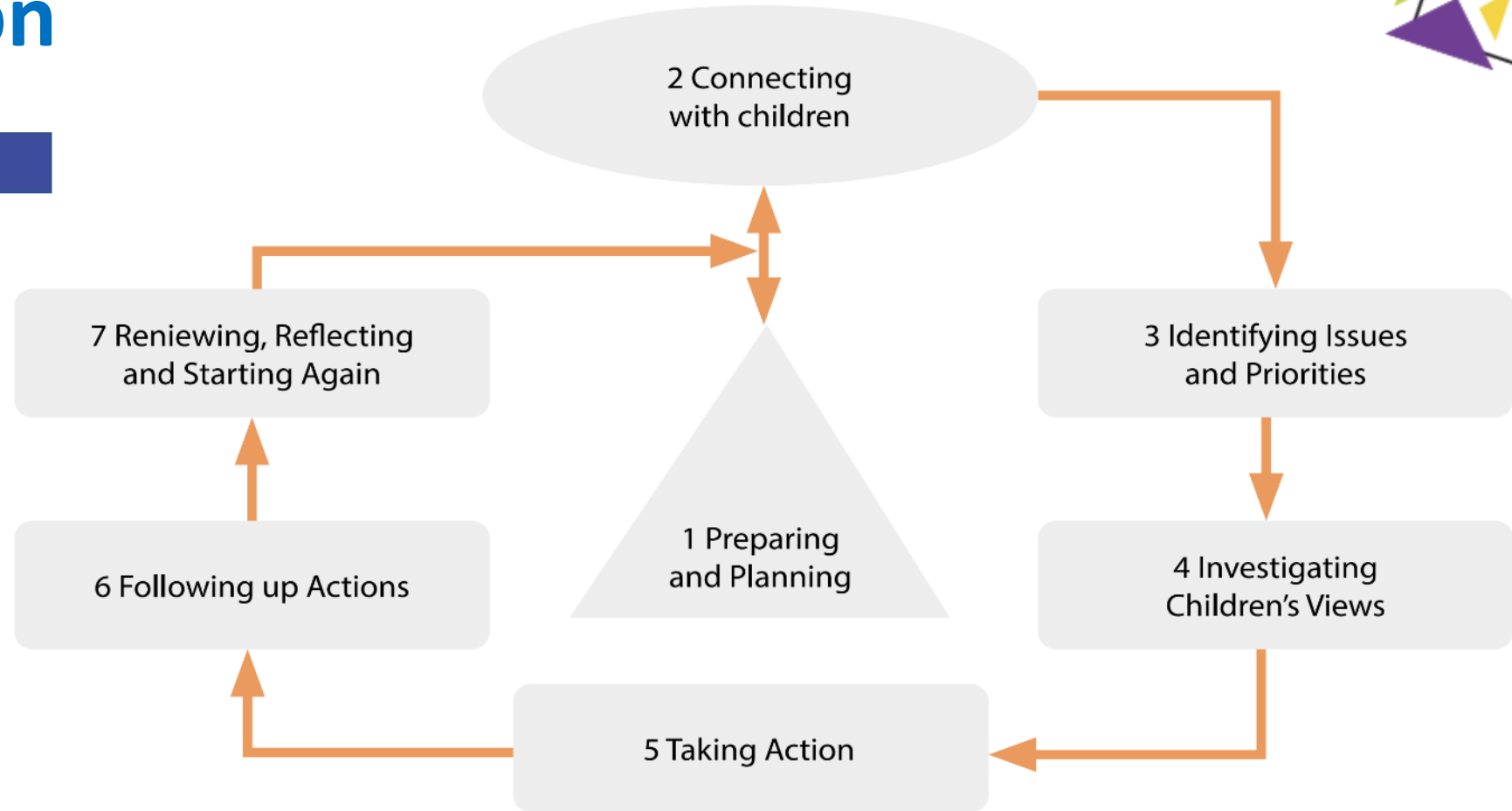


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Building on

The Handbook



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What professionals said helped



Prepare and Plan

We are in contact with the Civil Protection Service of Catalonia, providing guidance on how to improve the care of children and trying to implement some action that allows us to know first-hand what the needs, demands and concerns of children and adolescents are, thinking especially in the phase of deconfinement.

- Create online and face to face spaces in which participation can occur
- Ensure professional capacity to facilitate these spaces is maintained.

Connect with Children

We are calling and talking to parents continuously (those who have phones), and meeting [children] one by one respecting the distance.

- A combination of on- and off-line is essential

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What professionals said helped

Identifying Concerns

Children in Care Council is currently looking at impact of Covid on their lives and what future they would like to see afterwards.

- Use existing spaces and processes as well as creating new ones
- Listen and reach out through TV and through social media (with politicians and counsellors)

Investigate Issues

- Online surveys and discussions (beware of digital exclusions)
- Dialogues in schools
- **Use the learning from individual casework**
- A combination of on- and off-line is essential



Building on Rainbows

Supporting Children's Participation in Shaping Responses to COVID-19

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What professionals said helped



Taking Action

*Young people I work with started a **Facebook/Insta campaign** with other young people*

***Campaigning with Children's Commissioners** and governments on the issues for care experienced young people during this time.*

- Direct dialogue with policy makers
- Hackathons

Follow up action

As in any settings, a child rights-based approach - their participation throughout entire processes, their empowerment to access information and support to take forward their own initiatives, accountability to duty bearers so that children know what to do if their best interests are not taken into account, non-discrimination to ensure the best interests of every individual child

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What communicating with children achieved



#COVID19 UNDER19

Better INFORMATION

Non-accompanied minors have written information about protection measures in all languages.

Children are taking part in a poster designing competition, to create information for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, about how to stay safe during the pandemic

Better SERVICE RESPONSE

- Education in some schools was tailored to fit children's suggestions
- Funding was directed in some countries for respond to children's concerns eg mental health

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Even when action not yet taken: the possibility of informed action exists

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How to communicate with different groups of children (facing discrimination/marginalization)

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Preparation



Trusting Relationships: Build your organizational relationships with organisations who have strong links with children in vulnerable situations

- Invest in these organisations and grassroots relationships, with children, families and communities
- Deliver on promises
- Show that you are willing to learn - accept challenges as an opportunity to do things differently

Challenge your own prejudices

- Reconsider your assumptions about what children will know and understand
- Identify the particular discriminations and vulnerabilities that different communities may face
- Ask them about the best ways of communicating, and put resources into developing your capabilities

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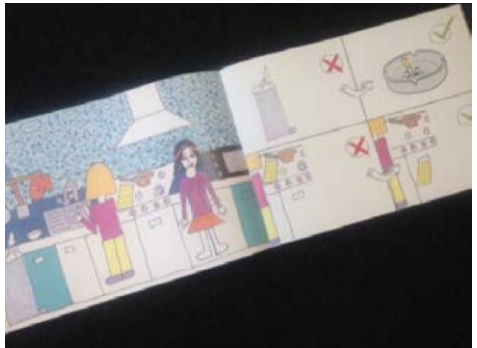
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Communication



Maximise safety (preparation)

- Timing
- Who should be present
- What information is shared
- **Co-create information with children for children**

Ensure that communication is a two-way process

- Listen first - it is impossible to communicate the right information if you do not know people's questions and concerns

Provide support

- Validate feelings
- Reassure
- Give access to resources that can help
- Help children take positive action if they want to (but don't responsabilise)

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The role of schools in explaining difficult situations to children

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Barbarah NEMETH
CoE independent experts

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Thank you for your attention

www.coe.int/CP4EUROPE



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