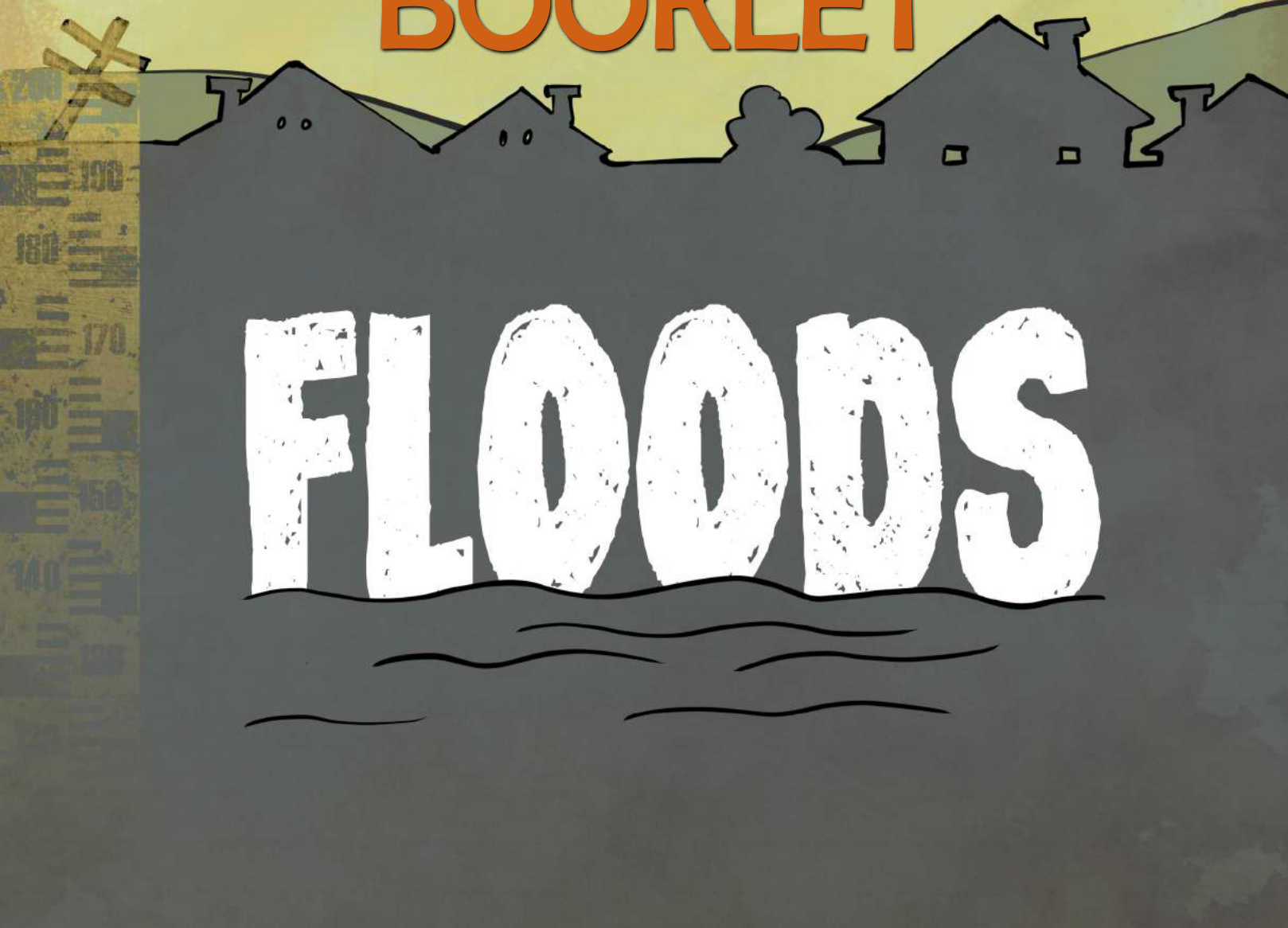


FAMILY EMERGENCY BOOKLET



The illustration shows a dark grey silhouette of a village with several houses and a windmill on the left. The houses are partially submerged in a dark grey flood. The word 'FLOODS' is written in large, white, distressed capital letters, appearing to be floating in the water. To the left of the houses, there is a vertical wooden post with a cross-shaped marker and a scale with numbers ranging from 120 to 200, indicating water levels.

FLOODS

Foreword, introduction

Dear teachers and parents!
Dear adults!

This booklet wants to offer your community and your children an innovative and interactive educational instrument to deal with disaster risks.

We, the humans, are part of nature, and the quality of our lives depends on all other living things, which belong as well to nature. We should take care of nature because our own wellbeing depends on it.

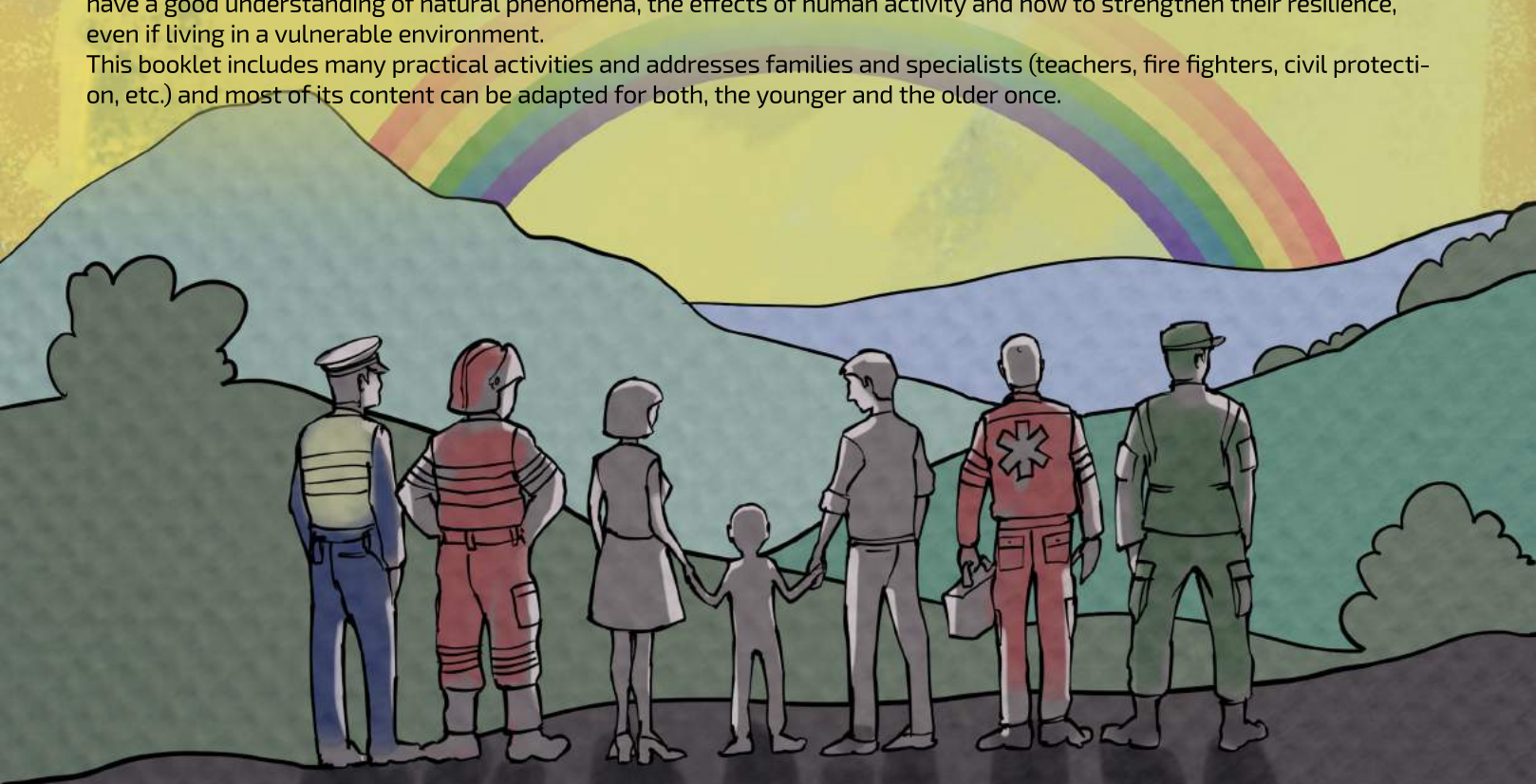
Earthquakes, floods, storms and other extreme natural events have always been a part of nature and history. Nevertheless, more persons than in the past became vulnerable to disasters in our days. The reasons are the fast-growing population of the world, the destruction of the environment and poverty. Hence every decade millions of people get killed by disasters and many more millions lose their homes and belongings. Economic losses caused by natural disasters have tripled during the last years.

Constant collaboration of community members might contribute to the reduction of the impact of disasters. In this sense, also children play an important role by

- implementing activities at school on this subject with the participation of the community
- informing families and the community regarding natural hazards and encouraging them to take preventive measures

Children are, as well, the key to promote a culture of prevention in our society, for a safer world. They can learn from early ages to respect the environment and to understand the effects of development by evolving habits which last for a lifetime. By supporting the creation of a real and long lasting culture of prevention – both by action and a new attitude – they will have a good understanding of natural phenomena, the effects of human activity and how to strengthen their resilience, even if living in a vulnerable environment.

This booklet includes many practical activities and addresses families and specialists (teachers, fire fighters, civil protection, etc.) and most of its content can be adapted for both, the younger and the older once.



General information about disasters

What is actually a disaster? Of course we have heard about many disasters like floods, earthquakes or nuclear accidents. Maybe we already have been affected by ourselves by a disaster. Disasters cause massive destruction, loss of property and even injure or kill people (in some cases thousands of people).

A disaster happens, when an (often natural) event, hits a community. Let's see here more in detail, what happens:

Heavy rainfall



**buildings on
riverbank**



flood



HAZARD X VULNERABILITY \Rightarrow DISASTER

What is a hazard?

A hazard is a phenomenon or a process (mostly in nature) beyond our community's influence, which jeopardizes a group of people, their belongings and their lives, if they don't take safeguard measures. There are different types of hazards. Most are natural, while others are caused by humans, i.e. so-called industrial disasters or technological hazards (explosions, fires, toxic chemical substances, discharges) or wars and terrorism.

Amongst various natural hazards we can identify:

Earthquakes: the violent shaking and trembling of the surface of the earth due to movements in the depths.

Landslides: soil, rocks or other materials moving suddenly or slowly down a slope. Landslides usually happen during the rainy season or during seismic activities.

Drought: A period of time (months or years) during which a region suffers from the lack of rain, causing serious damage of soil, agricultural cultures, sometimes even provoking the death of animals and human beings.

Fires: damaging fires in forests and other areas covered by vegetation. These fires may get out of control and spread easily to large areas.

Floods: Appearance of large quantities of water, in most cases caused by ample rainfalls, which the soil is not able to absorb. Depending on the type, floods can develop very slowly after strong rainfalls, or in just some minutes, very fast, even without any sign of rain. Floods can be a local event, effecting only a small piece of land or a large disaster having a negative impact on the whole community.

There are several types of floods which might appear, inclusive due to rivers bursting their banks, caused by extreme events, by natural or artificial saturation of the ground after long periods of rainfall. River floods are the most frequent form of floods. If the discharge is larger than the capacity of the channel of the river, areas along the river might get flooded.

Flash-floods are extreme instances of river floods. They appear very fast, often without any warning, accompanying excessive rainfall or even without rainfall. Flash-floods can be caused by the blocking of rivers – either natural (landslides, avalanches) or artificial (barrage), releasing suddenly a huge quantity of water.

Floods damage bridges, roads and other transportation networks. Infrastructure like buildings, cars and houses might be affected or even completely destroyed by the water. Canalization and electric networks might be destroyed as well. This hazard can be transformed into a disasters, especially if you are living in a vulnerable situation.

What does vulnerability mean?

Vulnerability is the lack of capacity to stand a danger or to respond to a disaster. For example, people living in the floodplain are more vulnerable than those living at a higher place.

Actually, vulnerability depends on several factors like people's age and health situation, local conditions, quality and condition of local buildings and their location regarding to different hazards. Families with smaller incomes usually live in areas with higher risk, since they cannot afford to live in safer (and more expensive) places.

EXERCISE

Put these letters in the right order and you will identify a factor which increases the vulnerability of many communities


ALKC FO PCAATIYC

Arrange the letters you find in the drawing, according to their size starting from the largest to the smallest. You will find the name of a danger that has destroyed entire communities which have been located in dangerous places

S L O F D O

A disaster happens when the following three conditions are met at the same time:

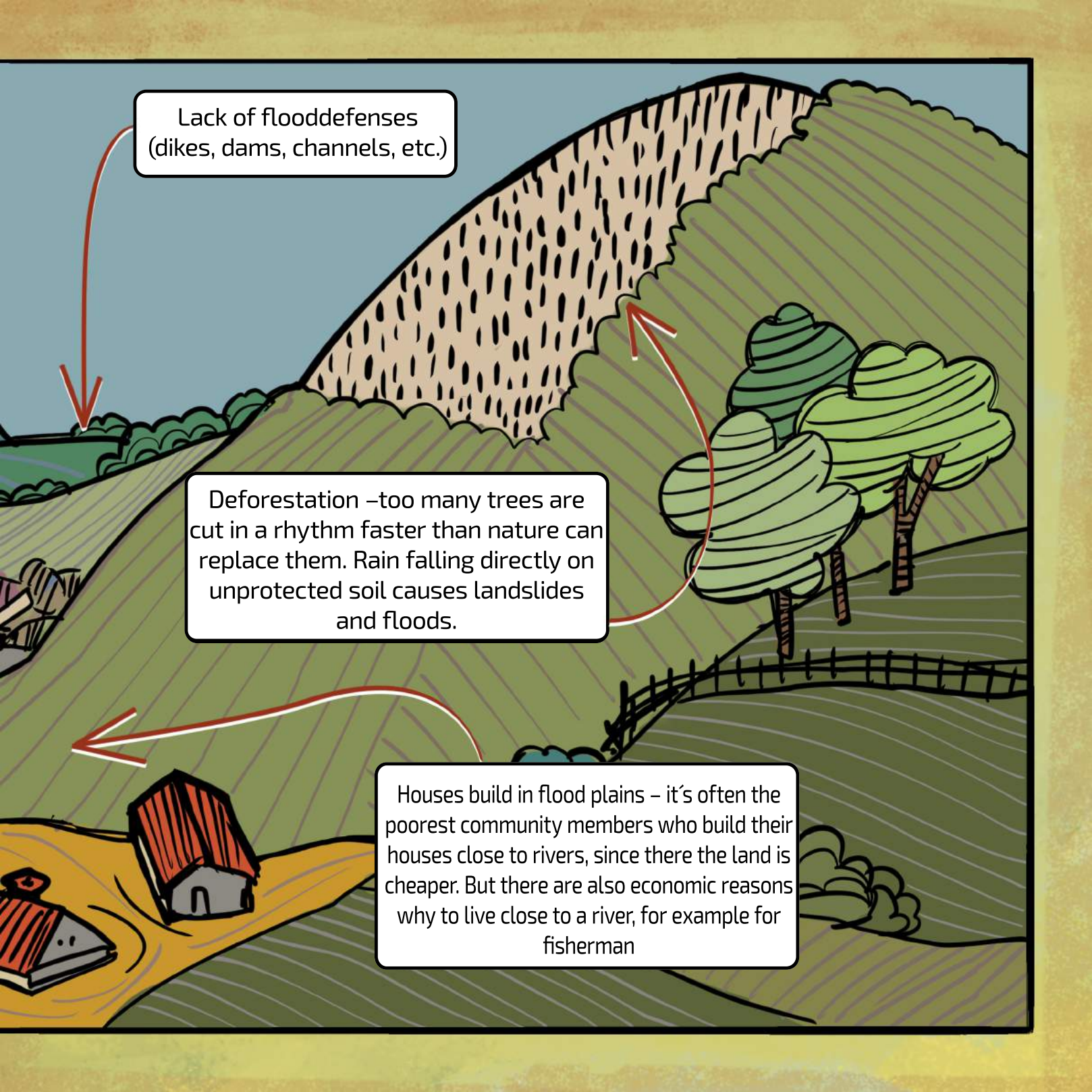
- When people live in dangerous places, like on instable slopes where landslides are to be expected, or close to rivers where floods might occur.
- When a dangerous phenomenon, either natural or human, appears.
- When the phenomenon causes numerous damages, especially in the case where no preventive measures have been taken.



Lack of community preparedness:
lack of evacuation plans, rescue
teams, safe places, rescue teams
etc.

Pollution and litter – waste thrown
on the river banks or into rivers can
blocks rivers, especially at bridges.
This even increases floods and causes
further damages

Vulnerable people: elderly, sick,
disabled persons; single mothers



Lack of flood defenses
(dikes, dams, channels, etc.)

Deforestation – too many trees are cut in a rhythm faster than nature can replace them. Rain falling directly on unprotected soil causes landslides and floods.

Houses built in flood plains – it's often the poorest community members who build their houses close to rivers, since there the land is cheaper. But there are also economic reasons why to live close to a river, for example for fishermen

How do floods affected our community?

Floods happen almost everywhere and they are among the most frequent disasters. Like many others, also your community might be at risk.
If a flood happens in your community, what will be affected? And why? Discuss with your family and fill in your answers in the table:

	What will be affected?	Why will it be affected by floods?
Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: Drinking water	Poluted by rubbish
Constructed things	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: Bridge	Weak construction
Economic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: Cows	Stable built in floodplain
Your individual belongings and values (including life, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: Health	Mould and humidity in house

Let's draw a map showing risks and safe places

A risk map is a drawing showing your village with all important features. The map shows which areas are at risk of being flooded, wherefrom you can expect help (town hall, health center) and where are the safest buildings/places. It also shows the routes you should follow, when you have to evacuate from your place. To show all these, you can use the symbols shown below (you may add also your own symbols). Prepare the map together with your family.



Legend:

	Road		School		Agricultural land		Risk areas
	River		Church		Residential areas		Safe areas
	House		Medical center		Points of high risk		Evacuation routes
	Our house		Bridge				Meeting points

How do we ourselves increase the capacity of our community?

To reduce the effects of a disaster in your community, it is crucial to be aware of the risks, to share your knowledge also to others and to be prepared.

Be aware ✓

know the history of your community.
Discuss with older family members and friends about disasters that affected your community in the past.

Share ✓

use risk maps or activities at school to tell other community members about what you have learnt.

Be prepared ✓

get to know the meaning of warnings. Identify safe places where to go in case of an evacuation of the area where you stay. Prepare an emergency kit.

Methods of flood prevention

Humans cannot stop the rains from falling or stop flowing surface water from bursting its banks. These are natural events – hazards –, but we can do something to prevent them from having great impact. Here are some examples:

Retaining walls

In some places, retaining walls levees, lakes, dams, reservoirs or retention ponds have been constructed to hold extra water during times of flooding.

Town planning

It is important that builders acquire permission before buildings are erected. This will ensure that waterways are not blocked. Also, drainage systems must be covered and kept free from objects that clog them. This way, water can quickly run through if it rains and minimize any chance of town flooding. Drainage systems should also be covered to prevent litter from getting into them.

Vegetation

Trees, shrubs and grass help protect the land from erosion by moving water. People in low-lying areas must be encouraged to use a lot of vegetation to help break the power of moving flood water and also help reduce erosion.

Education

In many cases, drainage systems are clogged with litter and people have little knowledge of the effects that can have during a rain. When it rains, waterways and culverts are blocked by massive chunks of litter and debris, and water finds its way into the streets and into people's homes. Education is therefore very important, to inform and caution people about the dangers of floods, what causes floods, and what can be done to minimize its impact.

Detention basin

These are small reservoirs built and connected to waterways. They provide a temporary storage for floodwaters. This means in an event of flooding, water is drained into the basin first, giving people more time to evacuate. It can also reduce the magnitude of downstream flooding

**Find your way from the flooded school
to the safe evacuation place**

**Who may help you
during evacuation?**

Identify all those who
offer support to you
in the maze:



Our disaster preparedness plan

What to do in the case of a flood? Where can we find a safe place? How can we get in contact with each other? When a disaster happens, it will be already too late to think about these questions. Let's do it now and collect the most important information you will need in case of a disaster.

How do we learn that a disaster is going to happen?

Signs in nature

Warnings

Some information about the members of our family:

Name:
Date of birth:
Blood group:
Special needs:

Name:
Date of birth:
Blood group:
Special needs:

Name:
Date of birth:
Blood group:
Special needs:

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Date of birth:
Blood group:
Special needs:

Name:
Date of birth:
Blood group:
Special needs:

Places, where we spent most of our time

Home:
Adress:
Phone:

Workplace:
Adress:
Phone:

School:
Adress:
Phone:

Workplace:
Adress:
Phone:

School:
Adress:
Phone:

Other places:
Adress:
Phone:

Meeting place in case of an emergency

This place should be in a safe area and easy to be reached for all family members. If a meeting place is defined by local authorities, use this place. Every family member should know this place and how to get there.

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In case we have to evacuate from our house

What to do before leaving the house?
What to take with us?
Where do we go?

Out-of town contact person

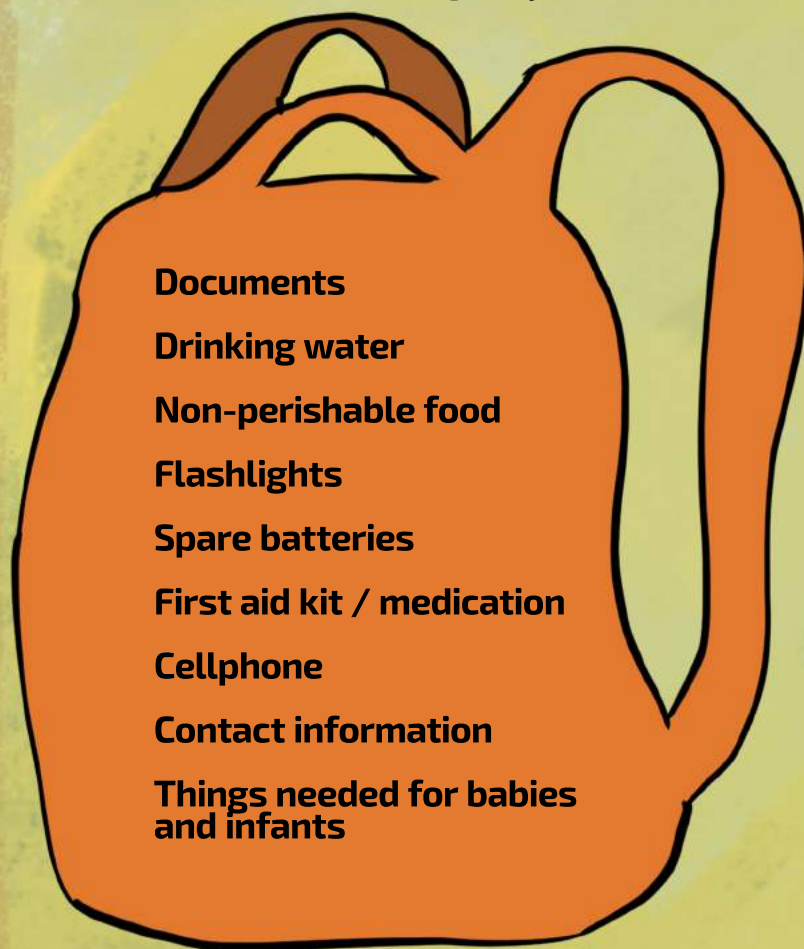
In case we don't find each other anymore after a disaster, this person will help us to get in contact with each other

Name:
Adress:
Phone:
Mobil phone:

What to do when a flood is imminent? (inclusive family check list)

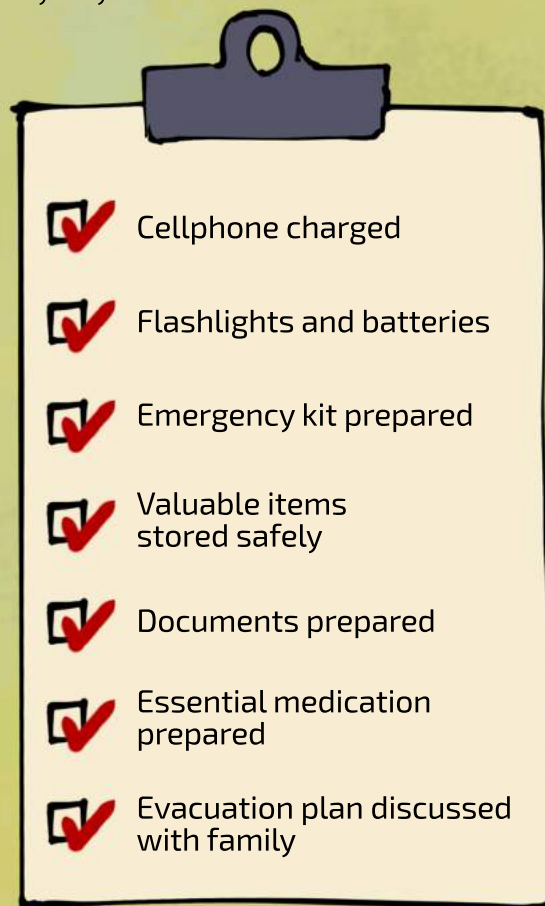
- Pay attention to weather changes, bad weather warnings and other public announcements.
- Charge your cellphone's battery and have prepared a flashlight with batteries. Candles or other lamps using fuel might be dangerous, they can cause fires and it is better not to use them.
- Some floods happen very fast, so do not put your or your family's life at risk just to save your properties. When the water level rises, urgently leave the house.
- If there is a risk that your house will be flooded, move valuable items (household aids, TV-sets, documents, etc.) to safe place (first floor, attic, on high furniture)
- Get yourself ready for a possible evacuation. Prepare your emergency kit and check if all family members know what to do when you have to leave your house.

What should our emergency kit contain?



Family checklist – before the flood

Use this checklist, when preparing for an imminent flood. It will help you not to forget anything, while everybody is excited and anxious.



What to do during a flood? Explanation and exercise

Always follow the announcements and instructions of the authorities (local administration, police, fire brigades, civil protection). They are here to protect you and to support you during an emergency situation.

When you are at home and water is coming through the walls of the house, leave the house quickly. Leave as well when you hear sounds which might be a sign of the house starting to collapse. If you cannot leave the house, go to the highest place and call for help.

If there is a risk that your house will be flooded, disconnect electricity, gas and water supply.

When you have to leave your house, and cannot take your animals with you: open the gates and assure yourself that they are not tied and have the possibility to flee and get themselves to a safe place.

In case you have to evacuate, take care that nobody is left behind in the house. If you know about vulnerable neighbors (elderly people, disabled and sick persons, families with small children), announce them and, if possible, help them. If you cannot support them, immediately inform authorities.

Never pass over a flooded area. Moving water is very powerful and even 20cm of running water can push you over. Flood water may also contain debris hurting you and toxic substances.

Stay away from power lines or broken power transmission cables.

What to do after a flood? Explanation and exercises

When coming back to your home after a flood, check the structure for safety risks before entering the house again. Check all electric installations as well before putting them in function again. If you are not sure about the safety of your house, ask a specialist.

Foodstuff that had been in contact with flood water has to be thrown away. It has been contaminated and is of high risk for your and your family's health.

Be aware that wells, but even drinking water from public water systems might be contaminated. Use water from safe sources as long as wells are not cleaned and water systems declared safe by the authorities.

Clean the entire home, together with all the objects that have been in contact with flood-water with a disinfectant (for example hydrochloride solution).

If you or a family member shows signs of fever or diarrhea, see a doctor urgently.





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