



BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Europe is experiencing increasingly complex risk environments from floods, storms and wildfires to earthquakes and cascading infrastructure disruptions. Across these contexts, communities are the first responders, knowledge holders, and long-term stewards of local rebuilding. The case studies assembled for this guide illustrate how organised volunteering, community networks, local authorities, civil society and businesses can jointly accelerate recovery, protect the most vulnerable, and strengthen preparedness for future shocks, whether it is through structured civil-protection systems and digital coordination platforms, or through low-cost, locally driven initiatives such as community hubs, preparedness toolkits, and community-led planning.

This Best Practice Guide on Community-Led Recovery and Resilience is developed as an output for the project RISE Resilient Communities. It compiles innovative and adaptable strategies from across Europe and neighbouring partner contexts, with a particular focus on grassroots mobilisation, frugal innovation, and sustainable rebuilding. It is intended as a practical resource for community leaders, adult educators, and policymakers, and is structured around a shared analytical lens and a portfolio of case studies that provide actionable insights into effective recovery and resilience-building approaches.

RISE PARTNERS



KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

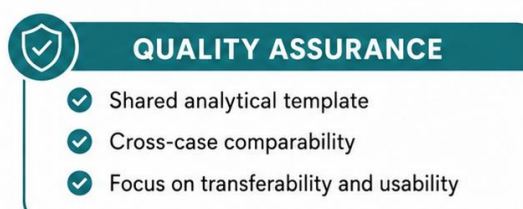
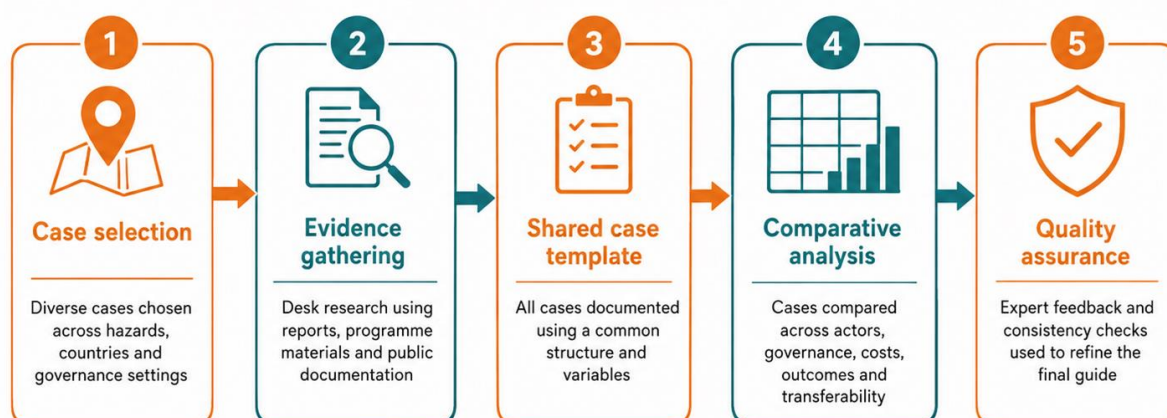
Community-led recovery	In this guide, <i>community-led recovery</i> refers to recovery processes in which local communities (including residents, informal neighbourhood networks, volunteer groups, community organisations, and locally rooted institutions) play an active role in shaping priorities, mobilising resources, and co-delivering solutions. Community-led recovery complements formal response systems by enabling faster local problem-solving, reinforcing trust, and ensuring that assistance is culturally appropriate and responsive to lived realities (e.g., volunteer mobilisation, community support hubs, and local coordination structures).
Resilience	It is understood as the capacity of individuals, communities, and systems to anticipate, prepare for, withstand, adapt to, and recover from shocks, while maintaining essential functions and protecting wellbeing. It includes both immediate coping capacity (e.g., maintaining access to basic services during outages) and longer-term transformation (e.g., embedding risk reduction into planning, standards, and governance). The case studies highlight resilience as a cycle linking risk reduction, preparedness, response, recovery, and learning.
Frugal innovation	It refers to resource-light, cost-effective solutions that deliver high value under constrained conditions by using what already exists, simplifying processes, and scaling through local capabilities. It can include low-tech measures as well as “smart simplification” through digital tools that reduce administrative burden and speed up coordination. The defining feature is not technology level, but appropriateness, affordability, and deployability in real-world constraints.
Sustainable rebuilding	Sustainable rebuilding means restoring and improving the built and natural environment in ways that reduce future risk, strengthen long-term liveability, and support environmental and socio-economic sustainability. It includes “build back better” approaches such as safer construction and retrofitting, risk-informed relocation where needed, nature-based solutions, and recovery models that support livelihoods during transition.
Preparedness	The term refers to the measures taken before a crisis to ensure that people, services, and institutions can respond effectively and recover faster. This includes risk awareness and communication, training and exercises, volunteer readiness, community response planning, mapping of local supports, early warning and monitoring, and the operational arrangements that reduce confusion during crisis (e.g., clearly defined roles, service-group coordination, and accessible guidance that works even when power or connectivity is limited).
Transferability	It is the degree to which a practice can be adapted and replicated in another place or context. It depends on enabling conditions such as governance arrangements, trust and participation, legal and financial frameworks, institutional capacity, and local hazard profiles. Transferability therefore requires identifying <i>core elements</i> of a practice (what must remain) and <i>adaptable elements</i> (what can change), as well as anticipating barriers (legal, financial, institutional) and mitigation options.

CONTEXT: COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY IN EUROPE

Across Europe, recent years have highlighted a risk landscape characterised by more frequent and compound climate-related events, alongside cascading impacts on infrastructure, livelihoods and social cohesion. The case material illustrates how floods, storms and wildfires increasingly generate *multi-sector disruption* that extends well beyond the immediate emergency phase. Among the analyzed cases such as Emilia-Romagna (Italy), exceptional rainfall in May 2023 triggered widespread flooding and landslides with major human and economic impacts, and recovery required a structured progression from urgent life-saving actions to medium- and long-term reconstruction programming. In Ireland, severe winter storms caused prolonged electricity and water outages, with rural isolation and winter conditions intensifying risks for older people, families, and individuals living alone. In Spain, DANA-related flooding demonstrated how large-scale volunteer mobilisation can accelerate early recovery, while also underlining the need to convert solidarity into sustained social and economic revitalisation in the months that follow.

Within this context, community-led recovery is emerging as a critical operational layer that strengthens effectiveness and legitimacy as well as equity and collaboration. The cases show community action operating along a continuum: from organised volunteering embedded in civil-protection systems and multi-level governance arrangements, to locally coordinated hubs and networks that maintain wellbeing during service disruption. Importantly, community-led approaches also support an inclusion and accessibility lens: trusted community spaces reduce barriers to access, plain-language communication mitigates confusion when connectivity is limited, and pre-crisis mapping of local supports enables faster, more targeted assistance to vulnerable groups. At the same time, the European setting is defined by multi-level coordination, where local and regional implementation interfaces with national frameworks and, when relevant, EU-level tools and solidarity mechanisms (e.g., Copernicus mapping and financial support instruments), reinforcing the need for rapid but accountable transitions from emergency measures to reconstruction governance.

HOW THE GUIDE WAS DEVELOPED



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

A shared lens for comparing community-led recovery and resilience practices



WHY IT MATTERS



Creates comparability across diverse case studies



Highlights enabling conditions and barriers



Supports practical and transferable guidance



Links recovery experience to long-term resilience learning

HUMAN-INDUCED DISASTERS AND RESILIENCE

The case of Ukraine broadens the report's understanding of resilience by moving from natural hazards to a context shaped by human-induced disaster, prolonged violence and repeated disruption of civilian life. In this setting, resilience is not only about absorbing the shock of a single event. It is about sustaining essential functions under continuous pressure, protecting civilians, preserving local governance capacity, and enabling communities to adapt while the crisis itself remains active. The Ukrainian context therefore illustrates a form of resilience that is dynamic, conflict-sensitive and deeply rooted in solidarity between institutions, civil society and local communities.

Unlike most natural disasters, conflict-related crises are intentional, recurrent and politically charged. They affect not only physical infrastructure, but also trust, social cohesion, mobility, service delivery and the psychological wellbeing of affected populations. In Ukraine, russian attacks on housing, energy systems, water supply, health facilities and transport networks have created cascading risks that extend well beyond immediate destruction. The resilience challenge is therefore multi-layered. It includes emergency response, continuity of public services, support for internally displaced people, restoration of critical infrastructure, and the maintenance of civic life under extreme uncertainty.

The Ukraine case studies are valuable for this report because they show that resilience in human-induced disasters depends on more than formal emergency mechanisms alone. It also relies on decentralised decision-making, strong local leadership, flexible coordination, volunteer mobilisation, and the capacity to combine immediate relief with longer-term recovery planning. In this sense, Ukraine offers important lessons for European resilience policy, particularly on how to strengthen preparedness, continuity and social cohesion in situations where disruption is prolonged, repeated and deliberate.



BUR: BUILDING UKRAINE TOGETHER

The complex realities of living through the “war–work–life balance” in Ukraine for the last 12 years, and the related challenges of youth participation in civic and social life, have created an urgent need to build horizontal networks and connections among young people. These networks help youth cope with uncertainty and enable them to participate meaningfully in rebuilding Ukrainian communities.

BUR (Building Ukraine Together) addresses these needs through its ongoing programs and the camp-leaders’ community. By fostering peer-to-peer engagement and quality group dynamics within volunteering camps (also known as workcamps or service-learning camps), camp-leaders create meaningful volunteer experiences for other newcomer youth, while developing their own leadership competencies in doing so. Through this process, they help decentralize non-formal education to smaller, war-affected communities.

The main instrument, or the “formula” behind this program, is a mobility-based volunteering program, which enables young people to travel to new places and work hand-in-hand with local residents where the opportunities and the educational, cultural, and recreational infrastructure (both in the sense of the buildings and human capital) are underrepresented. This experience also nurtures continuous learning, self-discovery, and social mobility, helping youth explore future career paths while contributing to social cohesion and to peacebuilding generally.

Mobility itself is a complex trauma within the current context of Ukraine, with around 10 million Ukrainians displaced inside Ukraine or abroad. Yet, skills developed through BUR - adaptability, teamwork, cultural awareness and social mobility - help the youth cope with forced mobility and rebuild social ties wherever they go, as they already embodied these meaningful experiences with BUR, working, volunteering, connecting with other strangers whom they never met before.



BUR: BUILDING UKRAINE TOGETHER

Within BUR's long-term strategy, called the Volunteer's Path, every small personal transformation of a young person contributes to a larger, sustainable impact. BUR has developed a "strategy of small responsibilities"- a model that allows each participant to gradually take on more initiative, responsibility, and agency at their own pace and scale.



Before launching the camp-leadership initiative, BUR's core team of 6–9 people managed all volunteer camps, enabling around 500 volunteers per season. By 2022, after training 50 camp-leaders (42 of whom successfully led at least one camp), BUR was able to support 82 volunteer shifts, engaging over 1,500 participants in non-formal education and rebuilding experiences. This tripled both the number of youth involved and the number of communities reached.

Although BUR does not formally track all long-term outcomes, online communication from alumni shows that many continue to create their own projects and volunteer groups with peers they have met through BUR - demonstrating strong social sustainability beyond the program itself. Which only proves the efficiency of the "strategy of small responsibilities". Moreover, the camp-leader role often becomes a career pathway for young people: many go on to work as youth workers in municipal youth centers, facilitators in (for example) UNICEF projects, summer-camp animators, or L&D specialists in the private sector.

With the ongoing war and Russian military invasion, the horizontal network of dedicated, experienced "youth workers" who now understand the power of volunteering, is a crucial part of a stable civil society and provides the services through non-formal education that are normally more native to the different government initiatives or formal education (or not usual normally at all. For example, trauma informed approach are not so widely common around the Europe regardless it is a formal or non-formal institution).

OBEREG OF YOUR HOPE, UKRAINE

Here we address the weaponisation of winter conditions in Ukraine during 2025-2026, where repeated attacks on energy infrastructure disrupted access to heat, electricity and water across both major cities and frontline communities. In this context, resilience is shaped not only by the restoration of centralised services, but by the capacity of local actors to maintain basic living conditions for people who cannot relocate and who remain exposed to prolonged cold, damaged heating systems and recurring outages. The case highlights how human-induced disaster creates cascading effects on daily life, wellbeing and community trust, especially where municipal heating and energy systems are damaged or unreliable.

The intervention overview focuses on Obereg of Your Hope, a local volunteer initiative that produces and distributes trench candles and portable wood- and coal-fuelled stoves to communities affected by shelling and infrastructure damage, including in the Kharkiv region. These simple devices provide households with a practical means to cook, heat water and maintain a minimum level of warmth when centralised systems fail. The initiative operates through a mixed support model that combines local volunteering, wider humanitarian fundraising and, where needed, logistical support from larger humanitarian actors. In practice, it represents a form of frugal innovation for recovery: resource-light, locally manufacturable and deployable under severe constraints, especially in situations where generators or larger power solutions are financially or logistically out of reach.

The best practices highlighted are, first, the decentralised community production and delivery of low-cost heating tools that preserve dignity and continuity of daily life during prolonged outages, and second, the strengthening of horizontal solidarity through direct, bottom-up support that connects practical assistance with trust-building inside affected communities. The case shows that in conflict conditions, community-led recovery may depend as much on modest, rapidly deployable solutions as on large-scale infrastructure repair. Its results include access to warm food and basic domestic functionality in conditions otherwise considered unlivable, while its wider impact lies in reinforcing community ties, mutual aid and a sense of hope.





COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

PILLARS OF RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

BEST PRACTICES: MAIN THEMES



Grassroot Mobilisation and Community Governance

Volunteer management, trust-building, multi-level coordination



Frugal innovation for recovery

Low-tech solutions, repair/reuse logics, minimal resources



Sustainable rebuilding & long-term resilience

Nature-based solutions, data management, maintenance



Partnerships, funding, and capacity

Sustainability of financing tied to institutional capacity

1. GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION AND COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Across the case studies, mobilisation is rarely spontaneous in the literal sense but it is enabled by social infrastructure that already exists, even when formal emergency systems are under strain. In County Leitrim, the rapid scaling of community support hubs during Storm Éowyn relied on locally run places coordinated by the local authority but operationalised through community groups, volunteers and staff. The network expanded from an initial set of locations to around 30 hubs, and it functioned as a service point for warmth and power and also as an anchor for social connection and informal welfare checks in rural settings where isolation compounded risk. Where governance arrangements were already participatory, mobilisation took on a deliberative dimension rather than a purely logistical one. Leitrim's Public Participation Network used its convening mandate to translate disruption into structured public voice, gathering lived experience, identifying preparedness gaps, and pushing issues into formal policy arenas. The public meeting attendance (around 140 people) is less important than what it signals: that community governance can create a legitimate bridge between residents and institutions, ensuring that emergency experience becomes an input to planning. The same case underlines that coordination work is itself a form of emergency capability, even when the coordinating body does not deliver response services directly.

Volunteer management emerges as a recurring pressure point and a differentiator between "goodwill mobilisation" and sustained capacity. Several cases show that volunteer energy can be abundant but operationally fragile unless it is channelled through clear roles, training, and interfaces with professional responders. In Türkiye, the Bozkurt flood is explicitly framed as a learning environment in which experience was integrated into AFAD's volunteer training system, strengthening modules on flood dynamics, safety in water-related rescue operations, coordination with professional teams, and psychosocial interaction with affected communities. This moves volunteering from being an ad hoc supplement to becoming a governed capability that can be transferred across regions and future events.

Trust-building and communication repeatedly appear as the hidden architecture of mobilisation. The Leitrim PPN case shows how plain-language guidance and resource mapping reduce reliance on fragile connectivity and fragmented information flows; it also frames vulnerability as situational and dynamic. This is governance in a practical sense: deciding who receives attention, through which channels, on what basis, and with what accountability to the community. The Youghal Pathways project demonstrates this through creative engagement methods that translate flood risk into accessible dialogue and create entry points for residents who do not typically participate in formal planning processes. The project's evolution from awareness-raising towards working groups for a community-owned flood response plan illustrates a broader pattern: participation becomes meaningful when it is tied to decision-making and ongoing structures, not one-off consultations.

Finally, several cases illustrate that community governance does not sit outside public authority; it often gains effectiveness when embedded within multi-level civil protection systems. The Emilia-Romagna floods combined municipal, regional and national coordination with organised volunteering at scale, supported by data-driven situational awareness including Copernicus mapping and the region reported 2,856 personnel and 1,125 volunteers active during peak phases.

2. FRUGAL INNOVATION FOR RECOVERY

Frugal innovation, as evidenced across the portfolio, is best understood as an approach to speed, usability and dignity under constrained conditions, rather than as a preference for “low tech”. In Leitrim, the core innovation was the rapid repurposing of existing buildings into functioning support hubs, combined with informal needs mapping and volunteer-led distribution of essentials during prolonged outages. In smaller rural communities such as Killargue, where the community centre itself was without power, volunteers compensated through door-to-door checks and local knowledge networks, and the experience then translated into a preparedness investment logic: acquiring a permanent generator to ensure that the hub can operate off-grid in future crises.

Low-tech solutions recur because they remain robust under disruption. Monaghan’s universal household preparedness toolkit addresses the recurring problem of information inequality during emergencies and reduces reliance on digital access. The integration of “Message in a Bottle” adds a simple mechanism for emergency responders to retrieve critical medical information quickly, illustrating that “innovation” in recovery may be a matter of making essential information reliably retrievable in high-stress environments. The case also highlights an important methodological caution for practitioners: behavioural impacts are often assumed rather than measured unless evaluation is built in from the outset. Resource-light approaches can also be institutional, not only community-led. Türkiye’s National Disaster Response Plan (TAMP) shows frugality through standardisation: predefined service groups, organisational templates, and inter-agency protocols that allow rapid scaling without building new coordination structures during the event. AYDES, used for decision support and donation management, illustrates a different kind of frugal logic: upfront investment in digital coordination to reduce duplication, improve transparency, and lower administrative burden over time.

Local production and repair/reuse logics are particularly visible where recovery intersects with livelihoods. LIFE VAIA frames recovery as both ecological restoration and socio-economic stabilisation by introducing agroforestry systems that allow temporary agricultural uses, including berries, herbs and apiculture, during reforestation. This effectively turns recovery sites into productive landscapes, enabling income generation while forest structure rebuilds and supporting the development of local value chains for non-wood products. The approach illustrates frugal innovation through “stacking” functions on the same land: stabilisation, regeneration, and livelihood support, rather than single-purpose restoration. Also, frugal recovery is most successful when it is paired with explicit safety protocols and clear thresholds for when specialist expertise is non-negotiable.

The enabling conditions behind frugal innovation are consistent across very different hazards: trusted local spaces, pre-existing networks, minimal seed resources, and simple governance arrangements that permit quick adaptation. The Youghal project’s low-to-medium cost profile (centred on facilitation and creative materials rather than capital works) shows how relatively small funding can catalyse longer-term structural change when it is coupled with local leadership and access to expertise. Conversely, where communities are expected to stretch limited operational resources without corresponding recognition or support, the approach risks becoming extractive: “resource-light” for institutions can mean “resource-heavy” for volunteers.

3. SUSTAINABLE REBUILDING AND LONG-TERM RESILIENCE

A central finding across the cases is that “recovery” and “resilience” diverge unless reconstruction decisions explicitly reduce future risk and that nature-based solutions appear as a pragmatic pathway to resilience in landscapes exposed to climate-driven extremes. LIFE VAIA is exemplary in explicitly aligning recovery with future climate suitability, working with assisted regeneration and species selection through a 20/50/100-year perspective, and integrating monitoring to track soil, vegetation and carbon recovery. The project’s design positions ecological restoration as a long-term resilience asset while keeping local communities economically connected to recovery sites through agroforestry and beekeeping. In Spain, wildfire recovery reinforces the same logic from a different hazard pathway: resilience is treated as inseparable from landscape governance. The cases frame fuel reduction, land management and reforestation/land restoration programmes as core recovery measures because they directly shape the probability and severity of future impacts on communities, agriculture and infrastructure. In Galicia, traditional and communal forest management logics are complemented by modern vegetation-management systems that support planning, monitoring and compliance, anchoring sustainable rebuilding in continuous stewardship rather than one-off post-fire works.

A further dimension of sustainable rebuilding concerns the role of data and assessment in shaping risk-informed decisions, particularly when trade-offs include relocation, retrofitting or differential prioritisation of reconstruction. In Türkiye, the combined use of a structured national response framework (TAMP) and a digital damage assessment and decision-support platform (AYDES) demonstrates how large-scale recovery can be guided through interoperable information flows, real-time field reporting and controlled citizen reporting channels. Parallel evidence from flood recovery highlights the importance of integrating structural and geological assessments to avoid rebuilding into persistent exposure.

Sustainable rebuilding also depends on local ownership and maintenance arrangements that persist after external attention and funding peaks. The Irish storm-related hubs demonstrate how the repurposing of existing community buildings can become a resilience investment logic when communities and local authorities translate temporary arrangements into durable preparedness capacity, including practical upgrades that enable spaces to function during future outages. At the same time, these cases make clear that maintenance is not a purely technical question: it is institutional and social, requiring clear custodianship, safe operating procedures, and realistic resourcing so that “community-led” does not become a substitute for essential public responsibilities.

Finally, the material broadens the definition of “long-term impacts” beyond physical reconstruction, presenting sustainable rebuilding as socio-ecological and socio-economic recovery. In l’Horta Sud, medium-term recovery is framed through territorial identity and local economic revitalisation, explicitly seeking to convert post-disaster solidarity into sustained recovery by promoting local businesses, cultural heritage and place-based narratives. In this sense, long-term resilience is treated as the combined outcome of reduced hazard exposure, restored environmental functions, and strengthened livelihoods and cohesion, dimensions that are often shaped by community-led action even when formal reconstruction programmes remain asset-focused.

4. PARTNERSHIPS, FUNDING, AND CAPACITY

At local and regional level, partnerships are often anchored in everyday institutions that communities already trust and use. The Irish cases illustrate collaboration that combines local authority coordination with community-run delivery, enabling community hubs to function as interfaces between affected residents and service provision during prolonged disruption. In parallel, participatory intermediary structures such as the Public Participation Network (PPN) translate lived experience into policy-relevant priorities, demonstrating a partnership role that is neither purely service-delivery nor purely consultative, but connective and capacity-building. In Southern Europe flood recovery contexts, partnerships include deliberate efforts to bridge emergency mobilisation with medium-term revitalisation, including collaboration with local economic actors. The l'Horta Sud case demonstrates an inter-municipal and community-led approach that mobilises volunteer networks during immediate clean-up and then pivots towards economic and social recovery through place-based communication and tourism-oriented revitalisation, supported by collaboration with municipalities, community organisations and local businesses. This illustrates a partnership logic in which the private sector is positioned as a donor and as a stakeholder in recovery trajectories that depend on restored local demand, identity and confidence.

Financing models across the cases vary widely, but a common pattern is the need to align funding instruments to time horizons and to the “full cost” of recovery, including coordination, communication, monitoring and maintenance. Emilia-Romagna exemplifies a layered model in which large-scale public financing and EU Solidarity Fund support coexist with organised volunteering systems and civic participation, including a regional fundraising campaign that mobilised substantial citizen contributions and a participatory interface through citizen committees. Other cases illustrate how relatively modest funding can catalyse durable capacity when it is coupled with local leadership and partnership-building. The Youghal “Pathways” project, funded through a national Creative Climate Action mechanism, demonstrates a grant-based model supplemented by voluntary participation and in-kind contributions, with a cost profile concentrated on facilitation, creative materials, venues and coordination.

The Irish Monaghan preparedness booklet provides a different funding and capacity configuration: a publicly funded, local authority-led intervention delivered at scale through universal distribution to households and businesses, implemented through inter-agency coordination and practical logistics rather than high-end technology. Its “medium-cost” classification, and its emphasis on universal reach and redundancy highlights that some of the most transferable preparedness investments are those that rely on administrative competence, distribution infrastructure and trust. Cost categories across the portfolio should therefore be read as indicators of both financial and institutional intensity, with direct implications for transferability. Medium-to-high cost models may also arise from system-wide coordination investments, as seen in digital assessment and information-management platforms that require sustained maintenance, skilled staff and interoperability arrangements, even where they generate long-term efficiencies. By contrast, frugal and “resource-light” initiatives, such as place-based revitalisation campaigns or community-led engagement projects, can be low-cost in budgetary terms while still requiring substantial social and organisational capacity to avoid volunteer fatigue and to sustain coordination beyond the emergency phase.



IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Key questions to assess readiness before adapting a practice

1



Risk and context

- What hazard or disruption is the community preparing for?
- Is the priority response, early recovery, long-term reconstruction, or preparedness?
- Which groups are most exposed or least likely to access support?

2



Governance and coordination

- Who has the mandate to activate the practice?
- Which authorities, services, or community organisations must be involved?
- Are roles clear before, during, and after the crisis?

3



Community capacity

- Are trusted local spaces, groups, and communication channels available?
- Are volunteers trained, supported, and protected?
- Is there a plan to prevent volunteer fatigue?

4



Infrastructure and resources

- Are power, water, transport, heating, connectivity, and emergency access considered?
- What minimum equipment or funding is required?
- Who covers operational costs during a crisis?

5



Inclusion and accessibility

- Are children, older people, people with disabilities, migrants, and low-income groups explicitly considered?
- Are materials available in plain language and accessible formats?
- Are offline communication routes available?

6



Monitoring and learning

- What indicators will show whether the practice works?
- How will feedback be collected from affected communities?
- How will lessons be integrated into future preparedness planning?



HOW TO USE IT

- ✓ Review before adapting a case study or practice
- ✓ Identify gaps, risks, and enabling conditions
- ✓ Use the results to tailor action to the local context

THE CASES OVERVIEW: EARTHQUAKES

Marmara Earthquake, Türkiye, 1999

The case centres on the 17 August 1999 Marmara earthquake, a catastrophic seismic event that caused mass casualties, large scale building collapse, and severe disruption across one of Türkiye's most densely populated and industrialised regions. The study presents the disaster as a turning point that exposed structural weaknesses in urban governance, construction control, and fragmented disaster coordination. In response, recovery moved beyond emergency shelter and reconstruction towards long-term institutional reform. The two leading best practices highlighted are, first, the Compulsory Earthquake Insurance Scheme, which introduced a national risk-pooling model to strengthen household recovery and reduce reliance on ad hoc public compensation, and second, the 2001 Building Inspection Law, which embedded independent quality control into the construction process and reframed recovery as a pathway to future risk reduction.

Evolvement of AFAD through earthquakes, Türkiye

This case examines how repeated earthquake experience, especially after the 1999 Marmara earthquake and the 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes, drove the transformation of Türkiye's disaster governance system. The context is one of persistent national seismic risk, where institutional learning gradually shifted practice from fragmented emergency response to a more integrated cycle covering preparedness, response, risk reduction, and recovery. The intervention overview focuses on the creation of AFAD, the introduction of national and provincial planning frameworks, and the formal recognition of recovery as a strategic policy phase. The two best practices emphasised are, first, the institutionalised volunteer and accreditation system, which integrates trained citizens and civil search and rescue teams into formal disaster management, and second, the integrated planning architecture linking TAMP, TARAP, IRAP and TASİP, which connects risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery within one coherent governance model.

Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes, Türkiye, 2023

The event was the twin earthquake disaster of 6 February 2023, one of the most destructive in the region's recent history, causing tens of thousands of deaths, widespread displacement, and the collapse of housing and public infrastructure across eleven provinces. The case shows how the scale of the disaster tested Türkiye's national disaster system under extreme conditions. The intervention overview highlights the activation of predefined institutional coordination, the rollout of temporary shelter and psychosocial support, and the growing use of digital tools for assessment and planning. The two best practices presented are, first, the National Disaster Response Plan, TAMP, which enabled multi-actor coordination through predefined service groups and operational roles, and second, community-led support mechanisms, where households, volunteers, teachers, psychologists and grassroots groups provided shelter, education, food, psychosocial care and local solidarity in ways that complemented formal response structures.

THE CASES OVERVIEW: WILDFIRES

Severe wildfire season, Spain, 2025

This case addresses the exceptionally severe 2025 wildfire season in Spain, driven by heatwaves, drought and adverse weather conditions across Galicia, Castilla y León and Extremadura. The fires caused major environmental, economic and agricultural losses, large scale evacuations, transport disruption, and impacts on heritage and water quality. The intervention overview covers emergency firefighting, evacuation, environmental damage assessment, agricultural support, and longer-term restoration and prevention measures. The two best practices highlighted are, first, the coordinated mobilisation of national and international resources, including early deployment of the Military Emergency Unit and activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and second, landscape management and fuel reduction, where community forest governance, traditional management systems and digital tools such as Galicia's Xesbio platform helped lower fire risk and support more fire-resistant landscapes.



THE CASES OVERVIEW: FLOODS

Emilia-Romagna Flood, Italy, 2023

The event was the May 2023 flood and landslide emergency in Emilia-Romagna, caused by exceptional rainfall that overwhelmed river systems, displaced tens of thousands of people and generated very high economic losses. The context is a region with recurring hydro-meteorological risk, where severe weather is no longer treated as exceptional. The intervention overview underlines a multi-level response system combining warning and monitoring, local to national coordination, volunteer mobilisation, rapid support to households, and a structured reconstruction framework under an Extraordinary Commissioner. The two best practices highlighted are, first, the use of organised volunteering embedded in the civil protection system, supported by training, surge capacity and citizen fundraising, and second, data-driven emergency management using Copernicus and Earth observation products to improve damage assessment, prioritisation and recovery planning.



THE CASES OVERVIEW: FLOODS

Valencia DANA Floods, Spain, 2024

The event was the October 2024 DANA flood, Valencia, which caused widespread damage to homes, infrastructure, agriculture and local economic life. The case places strong emphasis on the social and territorial consequences of flooding in a Mediterranean region where similar extreme rainfall events are likely to become more frequent. The intervention overview follows the path from emergency clean-up and volunteer mobilisation to a medium-term recovery strategy. Therefore, the Mancomunitat de l'Horta Sud, promoted the campaign “Vuelve a l'Horta Sud / Torna a l'Horta Sud” to reactivate the local economy and strengthen territorial identity. The two best practices are, first, the conversion of post-disaster solidarity into sustainable local recovery through place-based tourism and positive territorial storytelling, and second, community-driven emergency response and rapid recovery mobilisation through neighbourhood associations, volunteer networks and direct cooperation with municipalities.



THE CASES OVERVIEW: FLOODS

Kastamonu-Bozkurt Flood, Türkiye, 2021

This case focuses on the flood disaster that struck Bozkurt and the wider Western Black Sea region in August 2021 after intense rainfall and river overflow. The event caused severe human and infrastructural losses, disrupted transport access, and forced large scale evacuation, with aerial rescue becoming critical in the first phase. The intervention overview traces a progression from emergency response and temporary shelter to damage assessment, relocation decisions, and institutional learning for future flood preparedness. The two best practices are, first, the strengthening of AFAD volunteer training through lessons learned in Bozkurt, especially on flood dynamics, field safety and community interaction, and second, the integrated use of structural, geological and geotechnical assessment to guide relocation and reconstruction away from high-risk riverine zones.

Youghal, Ireland, community flood resilience

Rather than a single disaster, this case addresses recurrent coastal and fluvial flood risk in Youghal, a town exposed to sea-level rise, storm surges and intense rainfall at the mouth of the River Blackwater. The context is one of growing climate risk and the absence of a fully community-owned flood response structure. The intervention overview centres on the “Pathways” project, which used creative engagement to translate climate science into local dialogue and to build grassroots capacity for preparedness, response and recovery planning. The two best practices are, first, community-led creative climate engagement through arts-based workshops and installations that widened participation and reduced technical barriers, and second, the participatory development of a Community Flood Response Plan through structured town hall discussions around preparation, prevention, response and recovery.

Monaghan Personal and Community Resilience Booklet, Ireland, 2025

This case is a preparedness initiative rather than a post-disaster response. It addresses multi-hazard risk across County Monaghan, including flooding, severe weather, fire, power outages, health emergencies and security incidents. The context is a growing need to embed resilience into everyday life through practical tools that are accessible to all households and businesses. The intervention overview describes a county-wide distribution of a printed resilience booklet and emergency contact magnet, supported by inter-agency cooperation and a focus on simple, universal guidance. The two best practices are, first, the universal household preparedness toolkit, which ensured that every household and business received the same baseline emergency guidance, and second, the inclusion of the “Message in a Bottle” system, a low-tech measure that helps emergency responders rapidly access vital medical information, especially for vulnerable residents.

THE CASES OVERVIEW: STORMS

Vaia Storm, Italy, 2018

This case concerns the Vaia storm, an extreme weather event that hit northern and north-eastern Italy in October 2018 with hurricane-force winds, very heavy rainfall and major ecological damage, especially to Alpine forests. The study frames the event not only as an emergency but as a long-term landscape shock with implications for climate adaptation, rural livelihoods and ecosystem resilience. The intervention overview links the emergency civil protection response to a later innovation phase, most notably the LIFE VAIA project. The two best practices are, first, the rapid community and volunteer mobilisation that helped reopen roads, reconnect isolated settlements and stabilise conditions using existing local social capital, and second, the LIFE VAIA recovery model, which combines reforestation, agroforestry, beekeeping, climate-adapted species selection and digital monitoring to turn ecological recovery into a socio-economic resilience strategy.



Community Support Hubs after Storm Éowyn, Ireland, 2025

The event was Storm Éowyn in January 2025, which left parts of County Leitrim without electricity or water for extended periods, in some cases close to three weeks. The case presents a rural emergency where isolation, winter conditions and prolonged service loss created acute pressure on daily life and wellbeing. The intervention overview highlights the rapid establishment of community support hubs in familiar local venues, coordinated by the county council but delivered through community groups, volunteers and local facilities. The two best practices are, first, the use of locally controlled, power-resilient community hubs that could provide warmth, charging, washing and information during outages, and second, the flexible collaboration model between local authorities and community organisations, which allowed existing spaces and networks to be quickly adapted into a distributed support system.

THE CASES OVERVIEW: STORMS

Leitrim PPN, Ireland, severe storm impacts, 2025

This case examines the aftermath of severe winter storms in County Leitrim in January 2025, which caused repeated electricity and water outages and exposed rural vulnerabilities linked to ageing populations, dispersed settlements and fragile infrastructure. The context is one of increasing service disruption risk in rural Ireland. The intervention overview focuses on how Leitrim Public Participation Network convened communities, documented lived experience, translated official information into accessible formats, and used public advocacy to bring local concerns into national policy discussion. The two best practices are, first, community-led coordination and preparedness through trusted local networks that connected people, information and support, and second, the development of Leitrim PPN as a long-term education and communication actor, using plain-language materials and a local supports map to improve readiness before future crises.



02

ADULT EDUCATION APPLICATION



MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL RECOVERY

Disasters affect not only infrastructure and services, but also people's sense of safety, stability, and trust. Fear, grief, uncertainty, displacement, exhaustion, and prolonged disruption can continue long after the immediate emergency has passed. Community-led recovery can support mental health by creating trusted spaces, maintaining social connection, providing clear and calm information, and identifying people who may need additional support. Volunteers and community leaders should not replace professional services, but they can play an important role in reducing isolation, protecting dignity, listening with empathy, and helping people access appropriate health, social, and psychosocial support.

Phase	Psychosocial priority	Community action
Before	reduce anxiety through preparedness	run scenario-based workshops and explain available support
During	maintain calm, dignity, and connection	provide safe spaces, clear information, welfare checks
Early recovery	identify distress and prevent isolation	organise peer support, referrals, and community gatherings
Long-term recovery	rebuild confidence and belonging	support participation, memory, local identity, and future planning

WHAT COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS CAN DO

Practical ways to support people before, during, and after a crisis

Community volunteers can support recovery and wellbeing, but they do not replace professional services.



1. Listen with empathy
Offer calm, non-judgmental listening without forcing people to retell traumatic experiences.



2. Share clear information
Repeat verified, simple, and practical information to reduce confusion and anxiety.



3. Identify people at risk
Notice who is isolated, overwhelmed, or unable to access support and basic services.



4. Connect to services
Signpost or refer people to professional health, social, protection, or emergency support.



5. Respect boundaries
Know the limits of the volunteer role and avoid promises that cannot be guaranteed.



6. Protect dignity and privacy
Treat people respectfully, protect confidentiality, and support informed choices.



KEY PRINCIPLE



Be calm and respectful



Use trusted information



Refer when specialist help is needed

INTEGRATED EMERGENCY COORDINATION AND CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION

Community-led recovery works best when it is connected to formal emergency coordination systems. In major disasters, response may involve firefighters, ambulance services, police, civil protection authorities, health providers, utility companies, municipal services, volunteers, humanitarian organisations, and, in some contexts, military or civil-military actors. Clear coordination is essential to avoid duplication, unsafe action, confusion, or gaps in support.

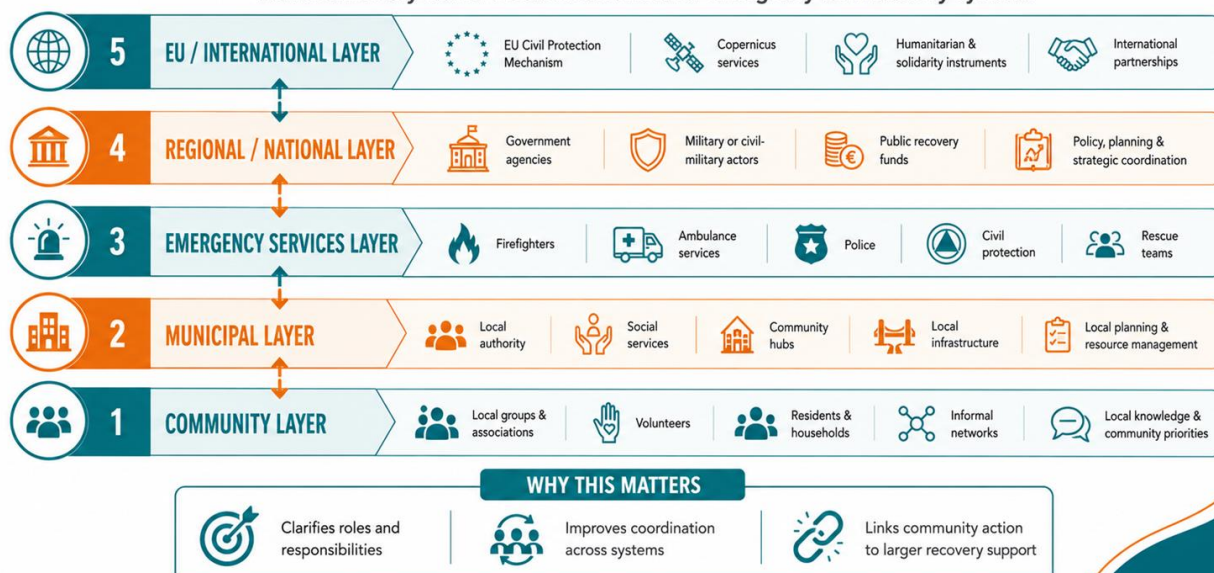
Community organisations should not be expected to manage high-risk emergency tasks independently. Their added value lies in local knowledge, trusted communication, welfare checks, inclusion, volunteer mobilisation, and continuity of support. Formal responders provide command structures, safety protocols, specialised equipment, legal authority, and technical expertise. Effective resilience depends on defining how these roles interact before a crisis occurs.

Practical coordination principles

- Define who leads, who supports, and who communicates.
 - Establish liaison points between community groups and formal emergency structures.
 - Clarify when volunteers can act and when specialist responders are required.
 - Include civil-military actors where relevant to national or regional systems.
 - Train community representatives on emergency coordination procedures.
- Use exercises to test cooperation before

LAYERED COORDINATION FOR COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY

How community action connects with formal emergency and recovery systems



COMPETENCE MAPPING FOR COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

A competence map can be developed by translating what the cases describe as “effective practice” into role-relevant tasks and observable performance. The portfolio points to a limited number of recurring functions that appear across hazards and governance settings: coordinating multi-actor action; mobilising and managing volunteers safely; communicating risk and guidance in ways that remain usable under disruption; operating trusted community spaces that can provide continuity of support; integrating learning into preparedness routines; and, where relevant, using digital or low-tech information systems to improve transparency, targeting and decision-making.

On this basis, competence mapping can proceed in a structured sequence. It begins with identifying local “capability-bearing roles”: the cases repeatedly reference roles such as community hub coordinators and volunteers (in outage contexts), participatory intermediaries who convene and translate public voice into planning (as seen in Public Participation Network practice), local authority coordinators who interface between community delivery and statutory services, and trained responders or specialised personnel whose operational preparedness shapes outcomes in high-intensity hazards. The second step is to translate each role into tasks that occur before, during and after crises. In Leitrim, for example, the hub function is not limited to “opening a building”; it includes needs mapping when information is incomplete, managing safe access to basic services, coordinating communications, and planning upgrades such as backup power and operational guidelines in advance of future events. In Türkiye’s Bozkurt flood, the volunteer dimension similarly evolves from spontaneous mobilisation toward a governed capability, where flood dynamics, operational safety in water-related rescue contexts, coordination with professional teams and psychosocial interaction become training-relevant tasks that can be transferred across regions. The third step is to articulate competence domains that correspond to those tasks and can be supported through adult education pathways. The material supports six domains as a pragmatic “minimum set” for community-led recovery and resilience: coordination and partnership practice across institutions and community actors; risk communication and accessible information design, including redundancy when power and connectivity fail; facilitation and inclusive participation, ensuring that engagement moves toward actionable planning rather than one-off consultation; volunteer governance, including role clarity, safety, fatigue management and interfaces with statutory responders; psychosocial awareness and dignity-centred support, treated as a recovery function rather than an optional add-on; and practical preparedness planning, including scenario-based learning anchored in everyday community settings.

A complementary, context-dependent layer concerns technical and digital competences. In Spain’s 2025 wildfire context, operational readiness is explicitly built through large-scale training and education activity for specialised personnel, combined with public awareness initiatives that extend prevention knowledge into educational centres and the wider public. In Türkiye’s earthquake management, the AYDES platform illustrates how digital infrastructure requires trained staff, data validation routines and continuous simulation exercises to remain effective under real crisis conditions, while also enabling controlled citizen reporting and two-way communication. These cases suggest that adult education should treat digital skills as operational competences linked to coordination and transparency outcomes.

COMPETENCE MAP FOR COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

A starting point for the Erasmus+ ADU curriculum

1. CAPABILITY-BEARING ROLES



Community leaders & hub coordinators



Community volunteers



Participatory facilitators / intermediaries



Local authority coordinators



Trained responders / specialised personnel



Digital or information support staff

Competence mapping links roles to tasks, observable performance, and learning pathways.

2. CORE COMPETENCE DOMAINS

1 Coordination & partnership practice



- Organise multi-actor action across community, municipal, and statutory systems
- Map actors, roles, and decision points
- Build liaison routines with public authorities and partner organisations
- Activate simple protocols for escalation, communication, and task allocation

2 Risk communication & accessible information



- Make guidance usable under disruption, low connectivity, and uncertainty
- Translate official information into plain language
- Use trusted channels, signposting, and offline alternatives
- Support resource mapping and timely updates for residents

3 Facilitation & inclusive participation



- Turn community engagement into actionable planning, not one-off consultation
- Convene diverse groups and widen participation beyond the usual voices
- Facilitate dialogue, co-design, and community decision-making
- Ensure accessibility, inclusion, and practical follow-up

4 Volunteer governance & safe mobilisation



- Treat volunteering as a governed capability, not spontaneous goodwill alone
- Define roles, boundaries, safeguarding, and supervision
- Manage safety, fatigue, rota systems, and interfaces with responders
- Capture experiential learning and improve future training

5 Psychosocial awareness & dignity-centred support



- Protect wellbeing, dignity, and social connection throughout recovery
- Listen with empathy and recognise distress or isolation
- Support welfare checks, referrals, privacy, and informed choice
- Maintain calm, trusted spaces that reduce uncertainty and exclusion

6 Preparedness planning & scenario-based learning



- Embed readiness in everyday community settings
- Run workshops, drills, and scenario-based exercises
- Prepare community spaces, resources, and continuity arrangements
- Use after-action review and reflection to update plans

3. CONTEXT-DEPENDENT TECHNICAL & DIGITAL LAYER



Digital coordination tools and dashboards



Data validation and transparent reporting



Resource mapping and needs assessment



Hazard-specific operational awareness



Continuous training, simulation, and maintenance

Digital skills should be treated as operational competences linked to coordination, transparency, and decision-making.

4. COMPETENCES ACROSS THE RECOVERY CYCLE



BEFORE

preparedness learning, role definition, partnership building, resource mapping



DURING

communication, hub operation, volunteer management, welfare checks, coordination



AFTER

recovery planning, reflection, reconstruction support, evaluation, institutional learning

5. FROM MAP TO CURRICULUM



Translate domains into modules



Define role-based learning outcomes



Use practical exercises and simulations



Assess observable performance and reflection

HOW ADULT EDUCATION SUPPORTS RECOVERY ACROSS THE CYCLE

The evidence indicates that adult education can support community-led recovery in three mutually reinforcing ways. The first is by strengthening immediate operational confidence. When community spaces are used as hubs during service disruption, preparedness learning embedded in those familiar settings can reduce uncertainty and improve the capacity to act, particularly when formal systems are delayed or fragmented. The Leitrim hubs case explicitly frames these spaces as future platforms for preparedness education, workshops and scenario-based learning, building readiness without relying exclusively on crisis-time communication.

The second contribution is by improving the quality and legitimacy of decision-making. Illustrations include the deliberate use of plain-language, outage-usable guidance and resource mapping through community networks, and universal distribution of printed resilience guidance to households and businesses as a practical preparedness interface. These approaches reduce information inequality, widen access, and provide a foundation for informed participation in recovery planning.

The third contribution is by institutionalising learning so that recovery becomes a durable capability rather than an episodic effort. In Bozkurt, experiential knowledge feeds back into national volunteer training modules, demonstrating a clear pathway from event-specific learning to transferable competence building. Similarly, large-scale preparedness requires continuous training and exercises when coordination systems and digital tools are used at scale, as described for TAMP and AYDES. Adult education can operationalise this by structuring learning pathways that connect community practice to repeatable routines and progression, including recognition mechanisms aligned with VET logic.





CROSS-CASE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: SUCCESS FACTORS

Read comparatively, the portfolio confirms that community-led recovery in European and neighbouring contexts functions most effectively when it is treated as a structured enabling layer within disaster governance. The cases consistently show that community action contributes to speed, reach and legitimacy, particularly under conditions of fragmented information, prolonged disruption, or when recovery extends into long reconstruction horizons. Across the case studies, common success factors include:

- The presence of coordination capacity that sits close to communities while remaining connected to statutory decision-making. In the Irish setting, Leitrim PPN demonstrates how formally recognised participatory networks can convene residents, translate official information into accessible formats, and maintain live resource mapping, without substituting for emergency services; the value added lies in bridging community experience and public authority planning, and in sustaining preparedness communication beyond the acute phase. In the Storm Éowyn hubs model, local authority coordination combined with community delivery enabled decentralised, trusted spaces to provide continuity of support across a rural territory, reinforcing the importance of clear channels, role definition and operational readiness at local level. At the other end of the governance spectrum, the Türkiye earthquake case illustrates the same principle at national scale: predefined institutional roles under TAMP and interoperable information flows through AYDES reduced fragmentation and enabled multi-actor coordination that included municipalities, civil society and volunteer networks.
- The ability to manage transitions across timeframes in a manner that is rapid, but auditable and socially legitimate. The Emilia-Romagna floods are particularly instructive because the response-recovery interface is explicitly structured from short-term rescue and assistance, through medium-term restoration and eligibility processes, into long-term reconstruction programming under an Extraordinary Commissioner framework. This staged architecture is supported by multi-level governance and EU-level instruments, including Copernicus mapping and EU Solidarity Fund support, and it demonstrates that recovery performance depends not only on mobilising resources but on managing the shift from emergency measures to reconstruction governance without losing accountability or coherence.
- Information as a resilience asset: practices that improved situational awareness and prioritisation tended to accelerate coordination and reduce uncertainty. In Emilia-Romagna, the use of Copernicus products and Earth-observation-driven tools supported damage assessment and prioritisation, reinforcing a data-supported approach to decision-making within a multi-actor response setting. In Türkiye, AYDES provided real-time mobile field reporting, centralised information management and controlled citizen reporting mechanisms, strengthening transparency and two-way communication while reducing delays associated with paper-based workflows.

CROSS-CASE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

What the case portfolio shows about community-led recovery and resilience



OVERALL FINDING

Across the case portfolio, community-led recovery works best when it operates as a structured enabling layer within disaster governance. It improves speed, reach and legitimacy, especially where information is fragmented, disruption is prolonged, or recovery extends into long reconstruction periods.

1 SUCCESS FACTORS ACROSS CASES



Local coordination linked to public decision-making

Trusted coordination close to communities, but connected to statutory systems.



Clear communication and situational awareness

Plain-language information, live resource mapping, and data-supported decisions reduce uncertainty.



Structured transitions across timeframes

Effective cases move clearly from emergency response to recovery and reconstruction.



Modular and role-defined models

Practices scale best when roles are clear and building blocks can be replicated.



Partnerships and inclusion

Communities, municipalities, volunteers and civil society work better when roles and access are inclusive.



Training, maintenance and readiness

Systems stay effective when they are exercised, funded, and supported over time.

2 WHAT DIFFERENT CONTEXTS REQUIRE



Earthquakes / large-scale collapse

Rapid coordination, standardised assessment, integrated governance and data systems.



Floods / landslides

Volunteer surge capacity, multi-level coordination, and a managed shift from rescue to reconstruction.



Storms / prolonged outages

Power-resilient community hubs, welfare checks, trusted communication and decentralised support.



Wildfires / ecological shocks

Strong response capacity, prevention, restoration planning, and cross-boundary cooperation.

3 WHAT SCALES WELL



Local and frugal models

Trusted spaces, plain-language communication, resource mapping, and community networks.



Hybrid community-institutional models

Public authority support plus community delivery and inter-agency coordination.



System-level digital models

National coordination frameworks and decision-support tools, but only with legal mandates, technical staff, interoperability, and continuous training.

4 KEY BARRIERS AND TRANSFER LESSONS



MAIN BARRIERS

- Responsibility expands faster than capacity
- Funding and staffing gaps
- Weak legal or institutional interfaces
- Financial strain on community organisations
- Engagement fatigue and volunteer burnout



TRANSFER LESSONS

- Match the practice to the hazard and disruption profile
- Also match it to governance architecture and capacity realities
- Preserve core functions, adapt delivery mechanisms
- Clarify who convenes, decides, funds, and communicates
- Build in evaluation, accountability, and learning



BOTTOM LINE

Practices transfer successfully when core elements remain intact, delivery is adapted to context, and community action is **supported—not substituted** for formal responsibility.





TRANSFERABILITY AND REPLICATION

Practices travel successfully when their core elements are preserved, while **delivery mechanisms** are adjusted to local hazard profiles, governance arrangements, legal and financial frameworks, institutional capacity, and levels of trust and participation. In practical terms, replication therefore begins by distinguishing what must remain stable for the practice to work (for example, clear roles, accessible communication, or continuity of a community venue) from what can legitimately vary (for example, the cultural form of engagement, the specific partners involved, or the funding mix), and by anticipating legal, financial, and institutional barriers that may block implementation unless mitigated in advance.

Across the case portfolio, transferability tends to cluster into three “replication bands” that reflect cost and capacity requirements. A first band consists of low-cost, network-based and frugal practices that can be deployed quickly using existing community infrastructure and convening capacity, as illustrated by Leitrim’s community support hubs during Storm Éowyn and the Leitrim PPN’s coordination and preparedness role. These approaches scale primarily through social infrastructure—trusted places, clear communication channels, and established networks—rather than through capital investment. A second band consists of hybrid community–institutional models that remain relatively resource-light but rely on an enabling public authority role and inter-agency coordination, as seen in Monaghan’s universal preparedness booklet distribution and in flood and wildfire settings where coordination across agencies and with communities shapes outcomes. A third band consists of system-level and/or technology-intensive models that can be highly transferable conceptually, but only where national or regional governance has the regulatory, financial, and technical capacity to implement them at scale, such as Türkiye’s integrated disaster governance tools and regulatory reforms following major earthquakes.

TRANSFERABILITY MATRIX

How practices can be adapted across disaster contexts



Practices transfer successfully when their core function is preserved, while delivery is adapted to local governance, hazard profile, and capacity realities.

1. LOW-COST / FRUGAL COMMUNITY PRACTICES

1 Power-resilient community hubs & welfare checks	Fits best Prolonged service disruption, winter storms, rural isolation	Must-have conditions Trusted venue; municipal/county coordination; volunteer mobilisation; backup power or energy resilience; clear information routes	Typical barriers & mitigation Community groups absorb costs; mitigate with reimbursement pathways and modest preparedness funding
2 Participatory networks for coordination & risk communication	Fits best Multi-hazard disruption where information, trust, and coordination determine who is reached	Must-have conditions Formal recognition; clear emergency roles; plain-language communication; resource mapping; inclusive convening	Typical barriers & mitigation Under-resourcing or exclusion from emergency planning; mitigate with formal liaison and role-based resourcing
3 Household preparedness guidance & low-tech inclusion tools	Fits best Preparedness gaps are widespread and digital access is uneven	Must-have conditions Strong local authority coordination; reliable household distribution; inter-agency collaboration; public trust; translation and accessibility capacity	Typical barriers & mitigation Funding and coordination limits; mitigate through joint budgeting and built-in evaluation
4 Community engagement that converts risk into shared planning	Fits best Slow-onset climate risk, recurrent flooding, low participation in formal planning	Must-have conditions Active community group; small seed funding; hazard expertise; meeting space; facilitation capacity	Typical barriers & mitigation Engagement fatigue and weak links to authorities; mitigate with clear decision pathways and institutional ownership

2. HYBRID COMMUNITY-INSTITUTIONAL MODELS

5 Flood recovery governance with volunteer surge capacity & data support	Fits best Large flood or landslide events needing a rapid shift from rescue to reconstruction	Must-have conditions Functional multi-level civil protection; warnings; emergency ordinances and rapid procurement; volunteer safety management; early household support payments; EU interface capacity	Typical barriers & mitigation Institutional fragmentation and weak legal tools; mitigate with pre-defined protocols and recurring training/exercises
6 Nature-based restoration with livelihood bridging & monitoring	Fits best Windthrow, forest loss, ecological destabilisation, long recovery horizons	Must-have conditions Forestry expertise; landowner willingness; governance for fragmented properties; species and climate suitability analysis; monitoring capability	Typical barriers & mitigation Protected-area constraints, financial barriers, institutional complexity; mitigate via early legal scoping, blended finance, and clear division of responsibilities

3. SYSTEM-LEVEL / TECHNOLOGY-INTENSIVE MODELS

7 High-capacity wildfire response & recovery systems	Fits best Extreme fire seasons requiring coordinated response, evacuation logistics, restoration, and agricultural support	Must-have conditions Strong multi-level coordination; trained emergency services; public awareness; community engagement; detection and monitoring systems; recovery finance management	Typical barriers & mitigation High cost, capacity limits, regulatory differences, lack of trained staff/equipment; mitigate via mutual assistance, training pipelines, and alignment with monitoring frameworks
8 Integrated disaster governance & digital decision-support	Fits best Large-scale disasters where coordination, assessment, and reconstruction require system-wide integration	Must-have conditions Centralised coordination capacity; interoperable data infrastructure; trained technical staff; continuous training and simulation; legal/regulatory reform capacity; public and risk-financing mix	Typical barriers & mitigation Institutional complexity and cost; mitigate through staged implementation, workforce capability investment, and accountable governance linked to decisions



TRANSFER RULES



Match the practice to the dominant disruption pathway



Preserve the core function, adapt the delivery mechanism



Clarify who convenes, decides, funds, and communicates

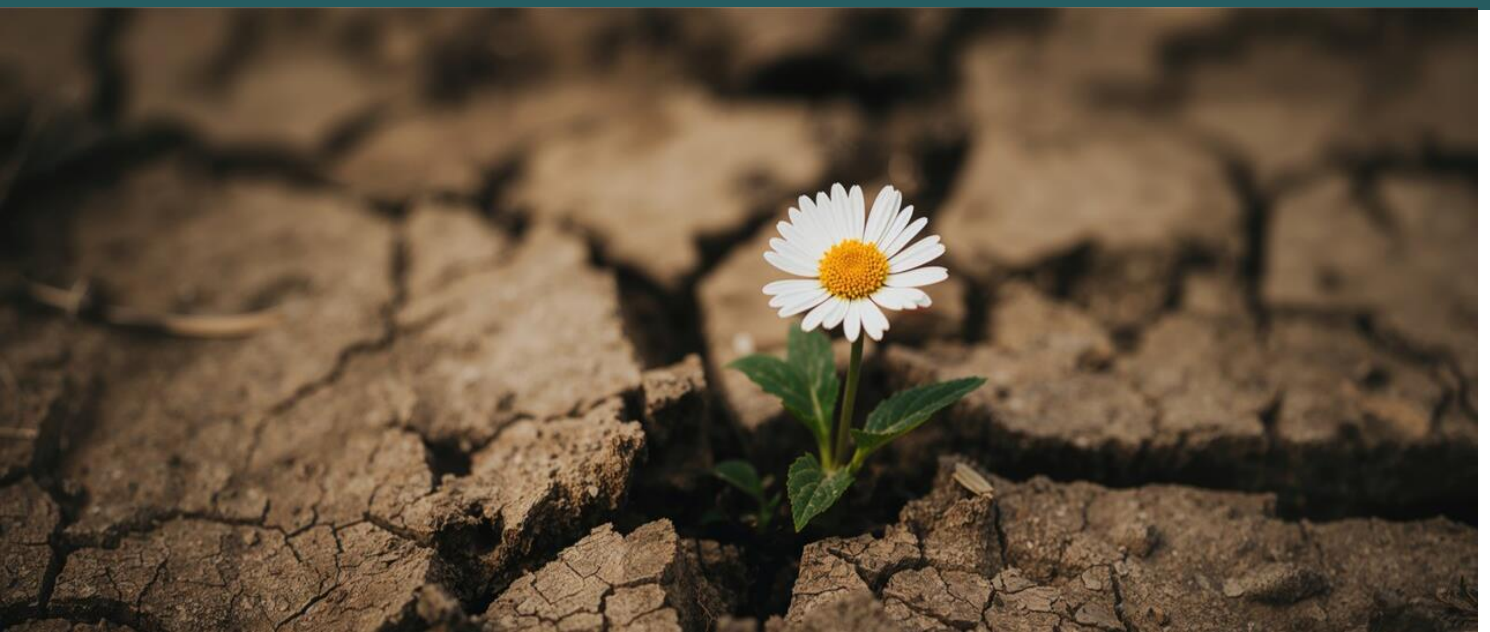


Surface legal, financial, and staffing barriers early

TRANSFERABILITY AND REPLICATION - conclusions

For adaptation by disaster type and region, the case material points to a pragmatic rule: match the practice to the dominant disruption pathway. In prolonged outages and winter storms, the limiting factor is often not “awareness” but access to warmth, power, information, and welfare checks, making power-resilient community hubs and plain-language communication the priority. In floods, early recovery speed and equity depend on organised volunteer capacity and on the ability to move quickly from emergency measures to structured assessment and reconstruction governance, including transparent information channels for citizens. In wildfire contexts, response capacity is inherently resource-intensive, but transferability can still be supported through community engagement in prevention and through governance designs that enable cooperation across administrative boundaries and learning exchanges across regions. In ecological shock events such as windthrow, sustainable rebuilding requires a longer time horizon and an explicit coupling of restoration with livelihoods, supported by monitoring and by governance arrangements that can coordinate fragmented land ownership.

Barrier mitigation can be approached as a three-part readiness agenda. Legal barriers should be surfaced early through “pre-event legal scoping” that clarifies what can be done under emergency powers, what requires procurement, and what is constrained by land-use or protected-area rules, an issue explicitly flagged in nature-based restoration contexts. Financial barriers are best mitigated by separating rapid-response operational costs from preparedness investments, so that community organisations are not forced to self-finance essential services during crises and then retroactively seek reimbursement; the Leitrim experience illustrates both the strength of community-led delivery and the vulnerability created when reimbursement pathways are unclear. Institutional barriers should be addressed by clarifying interfaces (who convenes, who decides, who funds, who communicates) because even highly motivated volunteerism performs poorly when it is not integrated into safe task allocation and when coordination responsibilities expand without resourcing. Finally, several cases underline that evaluation is itself a transferability enabler: where initiatives lack built-in mechanisms to assess behavioural or long-term effects, sustaining financing and scaling beyond the pilot phase becomes more difficult, as noted in the Monaghan preparedness booklet context and in the wider thematic synthesis.



RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

Community leadership in recovery and resilience is most effective when it treats “community energy” as a capability that requires governance. In practice, this means investing in routine coordination before crises, maintaining up-to-date knowledge of local resources, and ensuring that communication is designed for disruption conditions, including low-connectivity periods. The Leitrim experience shows how trusted everyday spaces can become emergency assets, and how informal needs mapping and welfare checks can protect dignity and reduce isolation when formal systems are delayed or overstretched. Where communities operate essential services during emergencies, leaders should prioritise agreements with local authorities on how coordination will function and how costs will be covered, because community-led delivery becomes financially fragile when utilities, consumables, and volunteer time are absorbed without reimbursement or preparedness funding.

Community leaders should also regard preparedness learning as a normal function of community spaces, not an occasional campaign. The hub model is explicitly framed as a platform for workshops and scenario-based learning outside crisis periods, which can strengthen confidence and reduce uncertainty when extreme events occur. In parallel, leaders should pursue forms of engagement that widen participation beyond “usual voices”, particularly for climate risks that require long-term behaviour change and shared planning; the Youghal case illustrates how creative and deliberative methods can translate technical risk into accessible dialogue and build ownership of a community flood response plan.

Orientation	What to prioritise	What to avoid
Coordination and roles	Establish clear roles with local authorities and partner organisations; maintain a simple activation protocol for who opens venues, who communicates updates, and how welfare checks are coordinated.	Relying on informal arrangements that work in small incidents but collapse in prolonged disruption, particularly where reimbursement and safeguarding are unclear.
Communication	Use plain-language guidance and trusted channels designed for low connectivity; translate official information into formats people can use during outages.	Overly technical messaging or digital-only communication that excludes households with limited access or capacity during emergencies.
Infrastructure readiness	Prioritise modest but decisive investments that enable continuity of community services, notably backup power solutions for key venues.	Assuming that venues will remain functional during grid failure, or deferring resilience investments until after the next crisis.
Sustainability and momentum	Convert emergency solidarity into medium-term recovery actions that sustain local livelihoods and cohesion, as shown in place-based revitalisation approaches.	Allowing engagement to become one-off mobilisation without follow-through structures, which can contribute to fatigue and declining trust.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

Adult education adds value when it strengthens the competencies that make community-led recovery reliable: coordination, facilitation, risk communication, psychosocial awareness, and scenario-based preparedness planning embedded in everyday community settings. This approach aligns with evidence that preparedness is most effective when it is routine and local, not limited to crisis-time information campaigns, and with the explicit positioning of community hubs as potential venues for preparedness education and exercises. Adult educators can therefore act as “capability multipliers” by designing learning that is immediately usable under disruption, including practice in plain-language translation of official guidance, mapping of local supports, and facilitation of inclusive community deliberation that connects engagement to concrete planning outputs.

In regions where volunteer mobilisation is significant, adult education should also support structured volunteering as a safe and governed capability. The case material highlights that volunteer effectiveness depends on coordination, role clarity, and training systems that can absorb experiential learning from events and apply it in future incidents. Where recovery includes long-term ecological and livelihood transitions, adult learning can support skills that underpin nature-based recovery models, particularly in facilitating community–expert collaboration and in building literacy around monitoring, adaptation, and multi-use land management. Finally, adult educators can strengthen transferability by embedding simple evaluation practices into learning programmes, addressing the recurring limitation that many initiatives demonstrate plausibility and uptake but lack formal assessment of longer-term effects.



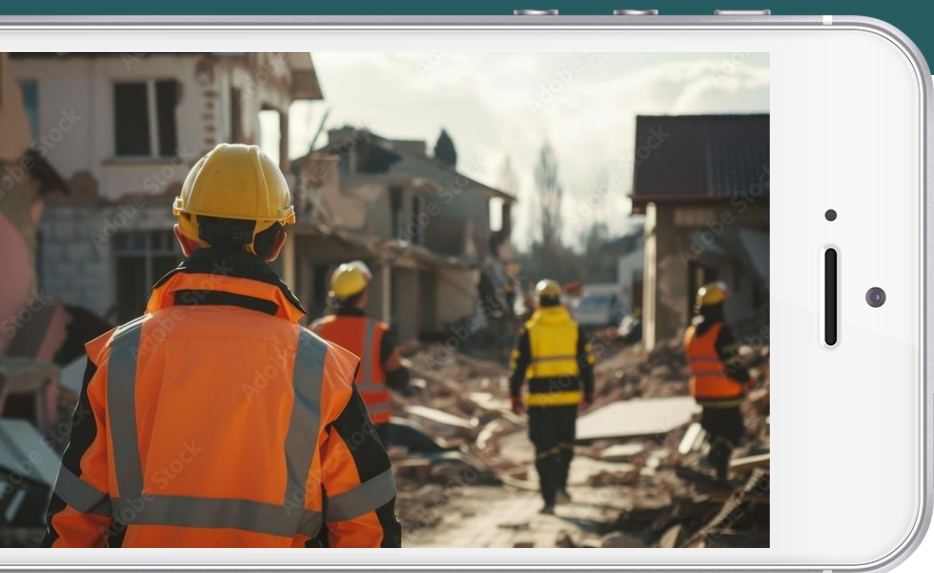
RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND POLICY MAKERS

For municipalities, the central enabling measure is to treat community-led action as an operational layer of resilience, with defined interfaces to public responsibility. This begins with formal recognition of community networks and with clarity on the division of labour during emergencies, as illustrated by participatory coordination structures where community organisations translate lived experience into planning input and help maintain accessible communication during disruption. It also requires practical investments in the continuity of community assets, notably ensuring that designated community venues can remain operational during outages, and that communication and signposting systems are in place to guide residents to support.

Financing policy should reflect the cost realities identified in the cases: many “frugal” approaches are low-cost in deployment because they use existing buildings and volunteer time, yet they generate hidden and deferred costs that can undermine sustainability unless modest preparedness funding is available for critical enabling infrastructure and unless reimbursement mechanisms are clear. In parallel, where governments pursue universal preparedness measures, the enabling condition is coordination capacity and a reliable distribution system, alongside accessibility and translation, because universal tools are intended to reduce preparedness gaps rather than reproduce them.

At regional and national levels, scaling resilience depends on the availability of legal and administrative instruments that enable rapid but accountable action, including emergency ordinances, procurement flexibility, and mechanisms for safely managing volunteer surge capacity, as highlighted in flood recovery governance models. Policymakers should also recognise that certain domains, particularly nature-based restoration, face legal and institutional constraints that can block implementation even where technical solutions are strong; anticipatory legal scoping and cross-sectoral governance are therefore prerequisites, not optional enhancements. Finally, for system-level tools and reforms, including digital governance and risk-financing mechanisms, transferability depends on sustained investment in institutional capacity, training, and interoperability, alongside regulatory capability in domains such as building safety and insurance.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Practical priorities for community leaders, adult educators, municipalities, and policymakers

1. For Community Leaders



- Establish clear roles, activation protocols, and welfare-check arrangements with local authorities.
- Use plain-language communication and trusted channels that still work in low-connectivity conditions.
- Keep key community venues operational through modest resilience investments, especially backup power.
- Turn solidarity into long-term preparedness through workshops, scenario learning, and inclusive participation.

2. For Adult Educators



- Build practical skills in coordination, facilitation, risk communication, and psychosocial awareness.
- Use scenario-based learning in everyday community settings, not only during crises.
- Support structured volunteering through role clarity, safety guidance, and reflection on experience.
- Embed simple evaluation and learning practices, including skills for long-term ecological and community recovery.

3. For Municipalities



- Treat community-led action as an operational layer of resilience with clearly defined interfaces to public responsibility.
- Formally recognise community networks and maintain accessible communication, signposting, and local support systems.
- Ensure designated community venues can function during outages and disruption.
- Provide modest preparedness funding and clear reimbursement pathways so community groups do not absorb essential costs alone.

4. For Policymakers



- Enable rapid but accountable action through legal and administrative tools, including emergency ordinances and procurement flexibility.
- Support safe volunteer surge capacity, cross-sector coordination, and anticipatory legal scoping for complex recovery contexts.
- Invest in digital systems, interoperability, institutional capacity, and continuous training.
- Strengthen long-term resilience through risk-financing tools, regulatory capability, and institutionalised learning.



Shared principle

Community action is most effective when it is recognised, resourced, and connected to formal governance — complementing public responsibility, not replacing it.





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