

Crisis Preparedness through Co-operation between Municipalities and Non-Governmental Organizations

Maarit Rissanen
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Public sector organizations differ from private sector organizations as they have statutory duty to rescue citizens. Crises have been mostly investigated from the point of view management and leadership.</p> <p>The goal of this thesis was to study crisis preparedness from the perspective of co-operation between municipalities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The leading theoretical frameworks in the study were the CERC model and the Crisis Communication Scorecard. The Crisis Communication Scorecard has been developed to improve the quality of crisis communication and at the same time increase the preparedness of public organizations.</p> <p>The empirical part of the study was implemented as qualitative research utilizing thematic analysis. Altogether nine interviewees were interviewed by means of a semi-structured interview method. Three interviewees represented communication professional of three medium-sized Finnish cities, and six interviewees represented three different NGOs.</p> <p>The findings indicate that the three municipalities involved in the interviews prepared for crises by statutory contingency plans, crisis plans and crisis exercises. General crisis plans of these cities did not mention co-operation with NGOs for the crisis preparedness phase or even the initial phase of a crisis event. However, in practice some NGOs were active in this area, and one municipality was actively co-operating with other parties during the initial phase of a crisis event. The collaboration between municipalities and NGOs created social capital that contributed to successful crisis management.</p> <p>When reflecting on the results and the theory brought together, several enablers for co-operation can be noted, especially a non-bureaucratic way of the municipality to operate in crisis situations, management’s attitude to crises, autonomy of the communication professional, and social capital created by good relationships. The barriers for possible co-operation found are a hierarchical culture of municipalities where citizens and NGOs are not seen as the most important stakeholders, lack of time and resources to concentrate on crisis preparedness, and a false sense of security created by written crisis and contingency plans.</p> <p>However, there would be several activities by NGOs that municipalities could utilize in the crisis preparedness phase. Various NGOs have related expertise, for instance, in risk education and crisis consultation, and they often have many volunteers which can be utilized especially in the initial crisis phase but also during the pre-crisis phase.</p>	
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Julkissektorin toimijoiden kriisiviestintä ja kriisijohtaminen eroavat yksityisten toimijoiden vastaavasta viestinnästä, koska julkisen sektorin organisaatioilla on lakisääteinen velvollisuus pelastaa kansalaisia hädässä. Useissa kriisiviestinnän tutkimuksissa on keskitytty tutkimaan kriisejä organisaation tai johtamisen näkökulmasta.</p> <p>Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli tutkia kriisiin varautumista kuntien ja vapaaehtoisjärjestöjen yhteistyön näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen tausta on haettu CERC-mallista ja kriisiviestinnän tulokortista (Crisis Communication Scorecard). Kriisiviestinnän tulokortti on kehitetty ja testattu parantamaan kriisiviestinnän laatua ja samanaikaisesti kehittämään julkissektorin organisaatioiden varautumista kriiseihin.</p> <p>Työn empiirisessä osassa käytettiin laadullista, haastatteluaineistoon pohjautuvaa temaattista tutkimusta. Yhteensä haastateltiin yhdeksää eri henkilöä, joista kuusi edusti kolmea eri vapaaehtoisjärjestöä ja kolme haastateltavaa toimi viestintävastaavana kolmessa eri keskikokoisessa kaupungissa Suomessa.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittavat, että kaupungit ovat varautuneet kriiseihin lähinnä lakisääteisten valmiussuunnitelmien, kriisiviestintäsuunnitelmien ja kriisiharjoitusten avulla. Yleisen tason kriisiviestintäsuunnitelmat eivät sisältäneet yhteistyötä vapaaehtoisjärjestöjen kanssa, sillä niitä kuten ei myöskään kansalaisia nähty tärkeimpinä viestinnän sidosryhminä. Tästä oli kuitenkin myös poikkeuksia, sillä yhden valtakunnallisen vapaaehtoisjärjestön samoin kuin yhden kaupungin viestintä olivat tehneet yhteistyötä alueellisesti hyvin tuloksin.</p> <p>Teoriaa ja tuloksia verrattaessa esiin nousevat yhteistyön mahdollistajina – ja sosiaalisen pääoman mahdollistajina – kaupungin, erityisesti johtoryhmän, epäbyrokraattinen tapa toimia, johdon asennoituminen kriisien merkittävyteen ja viestinnän autonomia. Esteitä mahdolliselle yhteistyölle ovat kuntien hierarkkinen toimintakulttuuri, jossa kansalaisia tai vapaaehtoisjärjestöjä ei nähdä merkittävimpinä viestinnän sidosryhminä, vääränlainen turvallisuuden tunne johtuen liiasta luottamuksesta etukäteen kirjoitettuihin valmius- ja kriisiviestintäsuunnitelmiin ja ajan ja resurssien puute.</p> <p>Vapaaehtoisjärjestöillä olisi paljon potentiaalia tukea kuntien valmistautumista kriiseihin: riskeistä valistaminen, kriiseistä konsultointi ja vapaaehtoisverkostot ovat joitakin esimerkkejä aiheista, joita kunnat voisivat hyödyntää.</p>	
<p>Asiasanat – Keywords</p> <p>CERC-malli, julkisen sektorin viestintä, kriisiviestinnän laatu, kriiseihin valmistautuminen, Kriisiviestinnän tulokortti, riskien johtaminen, riskiviestintä, sosiaalinen pääoma</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

It has been said that the network society is not any more a risk society, but rather a society of uncertainty (Beck 1990). In an uncertain society it is not possible to prepare for all risks and to predict them. Uncertainty can be seen as a consequence of continuous change. Change in one place results change somewhere else in the world due to the complicated web of interconnections, when unpredictable is more common than foreseeing (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche & Pfefferbaum 2008, 131).

Public organizations are described to function in a complicated, unstable environment, and they are regulated by additional legal and formal constraints. They operate with more rigid procedures and usually have more diverse services and objectives than private sector organizations. In policymaking, public organizations should communicate about unfinished matters that are still under discussion. (Gelders, Bouckaert & van Ruler 2007.) When comparing public and private organizations, instead of marketing communication which is relevant for most private organizations, in public organizations more emphasis will be laid on policy communication, the role of the media and transparency, as in democracy authorities need to be more transparent than private organizations (Vos 2003). In addition to transparency, public sector organizations differ from private sector organizations as they – or least some of them - have a statutory duty to provide services to people.

This thesis focuses on public sector organizations – especially municipalities - involved in crisis preparedness and, in particular, communication and collaboration with other agents relevant to these organizations. Nowadays, communication is not just understood as a support function of the organization, but as a central part of organizational strategies and leadership (Korpiola 2011, 13): Good communication calls

for a fluent and rapid flow of information between the organization and its stakeholders. It will be essential to know how to meet the expectations of citizens and provide fluent information about the crisis at hand. (Palttala & Vos 2011, 317.) Public organizations need to collaborate with other organizations involved in rescue operations, but also with citizens and civil groups. Communication can be seen as a two-sided approach with the help of which the organization aims to fulfil its strategic goals. In addition, the meaning of communication can be seen as common sharing and encounter. Related to crisis situations, all these means are acceptable and often necessary. (Huhtala & Hakala 2007, 23.)

Many crisis communication studies come from real life examples, mostly case studies, in which the communication of an organization in charge is examined (Palttala & Vos 2011, 19). It has also been stated that crises have been largely investigated from the point of view of management and leadership (Coombs 2007; Huhtala & Hakala 2007; Marra 1998; Seeck, Lavento & Hakala 2008; Taylor & Perry 2005; Tikka, Hakala & Pedak 2013, 15) meaning also that power and control have been dominated these studies (Kim & Dutta 2009). The traditional theories of crisis management consist of centrally supervised models where the organizational management is placed in the centre point and the victims of the crisis are placed far away in the side of the centre point, not in the heart of the centre point. (Tikka et al. 2013, 11).

However, the past crises have approved that networking and cooperation among the range of actors is essential (Palm & Ramsell, 2007). Nowadays cooperation is needed during crises by various response organizations, as the quality of the performance is based on collaboration of the whole system (Palttala & Vos 2011, 312). Many researchers have approved the significance of establishing partnerships (Sellnow, Ulmer & Snider 1998; Ulmer 2001). Covello (2003) suggests that coordinating and cooperation with other organizations is a key to risk and crisis communication success. Accepting stakeholders as legitimate partners in communication is a major part of crisis preparedness and response (Covello 2003; Sellnow et al. 1998; Ulmer 2001). Seeger et al. (2008, 106) emphasize:

Organisations that engage their stakeholders to decision-making in crisis preparedness can probably utilize support of those stakeholders during a crisis.

Relationships within the network are understood as means where resources such as information, knowledge and trust can be exchanged (Kenis & Schneider 1991 in Palm & Ramsell, 2007). The development of networking and partnerships and an integrated response strategy have been as important already for example already during possible health crisis preparedness phase for the following reasons: (1) they let for the

development of a coordinated, responsive public health infrastructure; (2) a coordinated infrastructure is necessary for coordinated response; (3) coordination allows clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved; (4) coordination ensures that, during possible crisis, professionals will speak with one voice; and (5) many groups already have effective information-dissemination mechanisms that could be utilized in case of a public health crisis. (Seeger & Reynolds 2008, 210.)

The authorities have to establish close relationships with the relevant stakeholders already in normal circumstances (Government communications in crises and emergencies 2007a). The dominant stakeholder groups for the Finnish public sector concerning networking and cooperation are non-governmental organizations (later NGOs), enterprises and communities. In this study, we use the abbreviation NGO both from registered and unregistered institutions and other civic organizations.

During Asian tsunami in 2004, the strategic crisis management team in Finland asked for the first time stakeholders such as Finnair, travel agencies, the Finnish Red Cross and the church to be involved in the strategic crisis management activities. This supported and fastened to understand the victim's concrete situation in Thailand, their evacuation and giving mental support by making right decisions together with these stakeholders. (Huhtala, Hakala, Laakso, Falck, 2005, 185 - 201.) Many NGOs have activities relevant to crisis preparedness. The relevance of such NGOs for crisis preparedness of citizens is known, but how such groups are connected to and included in policymaking by municipalities is not always clear.

The aim of this study is to clarify the role of NGOs in crisis preparedness of municipalities. This study will focus on investigating pre-crisis activities, especially crisis preparedness of local municipalities from the point of view of co-operation with NGOs. In this thesis, first, a theoretical basis will be provided. The leading framework for this study is the CERC model that combines risk and crisis communication activities within one integral framework (Reynolds & Seeger 2005). Besides the CERC model, described in the section 4, the model of the Crisis Communication Scorecard by Palttala and Vos (2011) will be utilized. Next, the research questions and method will be explained. An interview study has been chosen to explore the involvement of NGOs by some municipalities. The findings will be presented and conclusions discussed.

2 RISK COMMUNICATION

2.1 Risk definition and risk perception

The network society is not any more risk society but society of uncertainty (Beck 1990; Clegg, 2007). In uncertain society it is not possible to prepare for all risks and to predict them. School shooting in a Finnish school was not supposed to be possible; it was not listed as a threat in the risk analysis and crisis management model of government. However, the first school shooting happened in Jokela, Tuusula in 2007 and the second one in Kauhajoki in 2008.

Also the nature of risk has been changed. The current risks and potential crises can be global linked to each other. They are difficult to resolve as they are challenged by active citizens, social media and general networking. The emergence and spread of SARS was a consequence of social practices, demographic and travel patterns, and political institutions (Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer 2008, 6). At the same time institutional rules for responsibility and cause, causality and guilt do not operate partly any more. A special feature of current risk is that it is not any more possible to eliminate risks with the help of technology, but technology can only minimize risks. (Beck 1990, 17-19.)

The term risk comes from the Latin verb *riscare* meaning that somebody may run into danger (Lehtonen 2009, 8). There are different meanings to the term which depend also on the context as, for instance, individual risks differ from organizational risks. It is essential to bear in mind when analysing risks and risk perception that defining risk means also power and control: who can define a risk and from whose point of view it is defined.

A risk can be described as a factor which is a probable cause of injury or harm (Palttala

& Vos 2011, 17). The risk can also be defined as a threat identified by someone who will take the risk. Some individual risks are voluntary risks such as gambling, some of them are not voluntary to certain circumstances such as risk of fire. A risk can be described also as an insecure outcome as it refers to an event in which something of human value – including humans themselves – has been put at stake with unclear consequences (Renn 2008, 98).

Most researchers agree that the term risk refers to the probability of disaster (McEntire 2002, 216; Smith & Petley 2009). When risk is seen broadly, it can be described as a hazard, probability, consequence or a threat (Slovic & Weber 2002). Normally the risk is measured in terms of consequences and likelihood (Palttala & Vos, 2011, 17). However, during the last decades, there have been several crises all over the world which had not been considered likely in risk analysis. The first school murder in Finland in 2007 is one example of this kind of surprising and shocking crisis.

Risks can be divided into *objective* and *subjective* risks. Objective risks are identified on the basis of the likelihood of their occurrence, whereas subjective risks are identified, in addition to statistics and likelihood, by perceptions of actors in an individual's social environment (e.g. friends, colleagues, and opinion leaders). (Lehtonen 2009, 15 - 16.) It is presumed that in the future, the most essential risks will be invisible, post-industrial and slowly appearing phenomena (Beck 1990, 14 - 15) such as, for example, climate change.

Stakeholders' personal risk perception should be understood as an essential part of risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. Risk perception normally symbolizes the processing of physical signals and or information about potential harm, and the formation of a judgment about seriousness, probability and acceptability of the respective damage. Information here means verbal and non-verbal exchange of messages about uncertain outcome. (Renn 2008, 98.) Risk perception is not so much produced from experience or personal evidence, as it is a result of social communication (Renn 2008, 99).

Risk perception can also be done either from *technical-scientific* or *socio-cultural* point of view. If risks are understood from the technical-scientific point of view, environmental risks can be seen according normal decision-making logics. These risks intend to be managed technically according to their likelihood. Technical risk perception leads to bureaucratic prohibitions and compensations. Another perspective for risk perception is that risks are produced historically and socially, and they are difficult to construe. (Beck 2008).

Research on risk perception has identified a range of perception models used by society in perceiving and assessing risk. Looking specifically at technological and natural disasters, the following perception models can be identified:

- risk as a fatal threat
- risk as fate
- risk as a test of strength
- risk as a game of chance
- risk as an early warning indicator

(Renn 2004, 406.)

In this study the last-mentioned perception model (risk as an early warning indicator) is used as a starting point because of its relevance when communicating risks to public. Early warning indicators can be noted if one monitors the environment, collects the information and analyses it. Organizations combine information gathered by different departments to better understand risks in a wider perspective and gain insight in early warning signals. Connecting input from different organizations is especially meaningful to base future collaboration on (Coombs 2007) - however, it may not be common practice.

When informing citizens about possible risks or crises it is worthwhile to take risk perceptions into account. For example, most people feel more threatened by danger that could happen them unexpected and unprepared than by danger which is familiar to them with and where there is still time for risk control activities to be taken. Thus, how people perceive and evaluate risks in this perception model depends on the following: the likelihood of the risk, the expected seriousness of unfavourable effects, and the time-span for risk control activities. (Renn 2004, 406.)

It is mainly the context where those risks are experienced that determines their effect on risk perception (Renn 2004, 409). Lehtonen (2009, 17) states that personal and social risk can be evaluated differently, as an individual can understand the meaning of a risk but may evaluate the effects of it lower when it is concerning him/her (optimistic bias).

Other meaningful factors connected to perception of risk are, among other things, undesired impact on future generations, trust in state-operated risk control and management, familiarity with the origin of risk, experience (collective and individual) with technology and nature, reliability of information sources and clarity of information on risk (Renn 2004, 409 - 410).

Most risks are faced through indirect communication, for example through the news media. That is why it is worthwhile both to know how we select and notice information and to be aware of selective attention and retention processes (Renn 2008, 99). People have subconsciously developed ways to select information that is interesting to them. These ways of processing sensory input are also valid in risk communication.

The key issues in selection are *ability* and *motivation*. Ability is connected to access to information, time to process it, and absence of distraction to note it. Motivation is related to personal interest and involvement in the issue, values and the content of the source. (Renn 2008, 100.)

As authorities are responsible for the security of citizens, they are expected to communicate to them about risks connected to their responsibility areas. When doing so, it is important that authorities take factors described into account as they influence the perception of risks.

2.2 Risk communication and risk messages

Proactive crisis preparedness is recommended in the studies. One example can be taken from fire protection: it is considered rational to invest in equipment and rescue personnel's training. However, it may be more useful to identify those processes and circumstances where and when fires are possible, prepare citizens for prudence and prevent fires. These kinds of activities are typical risk assessment and risk communication activities. (Lehtonen 2009, 10.)

The National Research Council (1989) of the U.S. describes risk communication as an *"interactive process of exchange of information and opinions among individuals, groups, and institutions"* (Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer 2008, 2). Unfortunately, in real life it is still typical that the process is not interactive, meaning that in most cases the reactions to an organization's risk communication are not actively monitored thoroughly by the organization itself. This can ascribe from several reasons: the organization does not have time to follow stakeholders' feedback, it does not know how to do it or it does not think this is relevant at all.

Risk communication can also be described as a purposeful effort to inform the public about risks trying to persuade people to modify their behaviour to reduce risk, but this description defines risk communication as one-way information which it is not recommended (Seeger et al. 2008, 9). Risk communication can also be defined as the public's right to know about possible risks impacting on their wellbeing (Seeger et al.

2008, 9). Risk communication acts also as a facilitator of public's decision making and risk sharing by letting citizens know about risks that might impact their wellbeing (Seeger & Reynolds, 2008, 9). Risk communication is often message and sender centred. However, in today's digital world, it has to be understood that often it is social media or news media where members of the public will receive their information, rather than the Internet pages of the public sector organization in charge of crisis management. Moreover, news media as mediators interpret news from their point of view.

Risk messages have to be translated from a technical understanding of risk into behaviours through persuasive and informative messages while addressing public concern or fear. Messages are more useful when matched with audience needs, values, background, culture, and experiences (Murray-Johnson, Witte, Liu & Hubbell 2001). This means that an organization has to know its stakeholders, and their way of thinking and possible diversity to match messages according to the audience. But trying to send different messages aiming to reach specified groups can lead to embarrassment and perception of distinctive handling (Quinn 2008, 245). Risk messages should include activation - promoting actions that can be done to reduce the risks (Egbert & Parrott 2001). Risk messages should be clear and simple, appeal to both reason and emotion, and offer solutions to problems (Freimuth, Linnan & Potter, 2000). This can be challenging if the organization has not clarified its different stakeholder groups thoroughly. Risk communication should also tell about benefits of the actions recommended - such as vaccination before a serious epidemic. One key component of risk management is to encourage the adoption of protective measures (e.g. storing food and water, household emergency planning) to reduce the risk of damage and facilitate individuals' capacities to cope with hazard consequences (Paton 2003, 206).

2.3 Challenges of risk communication and risk perception

Nowadays the nature of risk has been changed. Due to interdependencies in society, risks are no longer limited locally, temporally or socially. Consequently, earlier assumed elementary rules for responsibility and cause, causality and guilt may not function in the same way anymore. At the same time, it does not seem possible to eliminate risks with the help of technology, although technology can help minimize risks. (Beck 1990, 17 - 19.) Organizations can mistakenly assume that with the help of technology errors and fails can decrease or even be finished totally (Olaniran & Williams 2001, 487 - 488). The threats originate from several different sources, cross political and functional boundaries with ease and have the potential to influence on a wide variety of critical infrastructures (LaPorte 2007). The changing nature of crisis seems to be a logical development, given long-term trends as globalization, increased

mass communication 'inter-wiredness', social fragmentation and the dissipation of state authority (Boin & Lagadec 2000, 185).

Tsunami in Asia showed also that via Internet crises are not any more local but they are global and information about them can suddenly be reached all over the world. With the Internet more people will become aware of the problem (Coombs 2002, 218). Due to this, authorities cannot any more hide themselves thus they have to act transparently and they to face citizens fast in many different forums (Huhtala & Hakala 2007, 22).

A crisis can be a shock and surprise also to the people of the organization responsible for managing it, not only to its stakeholders. In crises, decisions have to be made quickly without a complete understanding of the situation. The decision-makers need information to perceive the severity of the crisis, manage the emergency and prevent further damage. In addition, the attendance of several different stakeholder groups is a challenge for communication management (Stephens et al. 2005). In crisis situations environmental groups or any other active networks, with whom the organization has perhaps not had previous contacts, can activate and behave determinatively (Lehtonen 2009, 13). These kinds of groups or individuals can easily form an effective network via social media and gain publicity, too. That's why when the responsible organization is planning its pre-crisis activities it should take into account all possible relevant stakeholder groups.

An organization can try to face known risks by preparing for crises in three different ways; It can prepare by acknowledging the risks, by acknowledging the resulting potential crisis and by contacting people to whom the possible crisis may affect. If an organization has assessed risks as potentially becoming connected with its environment, it can attempt to reduce uncertainty. (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger 2007, 15, 42.) The crisis communication and crisis management of an organization should include proactive preparation for potential risks. Preparedness planning in turn includes threat identification and risk assessment as a preventive function.

3 CRISIS COMMUNICATION

3.1 Crisis definition

From the mid-1990s onward, the term crisis has increasingly started to be an essential part of everyday vocabulary in the Western world (Boano & Lund 2011, 64). Without aiming to be definitive or comprehensive, this section will present briefly some examples about definitions of a large amount of terms used in crisis and emergency literature. In addition to the word crisis, there are also several other words to describe negative events: emergency, disaster, catastrophe, exceptional situation, hazard, and scandal. Firstly, the last terms mentioned are briefly introduced and compared with each other. Secondly, the different definitions for the term crisis are described here.

Emergency is a term generally used both in real life and in research literature. The term is used especially in the terminology of rescue operations to replace the terms of crisis, disaster or catastrophe. (Palttala & Vos 2011, 17). However, emergency situation is every day work for fire or police forces whose professionals are trained for those situations, but the word does not describe the situation from the point of view of possible victims and their loved ones. Authorities both in Finland and Sweden prefer to use the term emergency in their own guidelines and materials, but in Finland, the Government Guidelines for Communications in crisis and emergencies (2008) also use the following description about a crisis: *a situation that arises under normal conditions or when normal conditions are disturbed and call for heightened action.*

The term *disaster* - as well as crisis - has a number of reformulations which can also be opposite to each other. As the term disaster will not be used in this thesis, not its all definitions will be presented here, but one definition made by research center and simple classifications for two types of disasters are presented. The Center for Research

on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) at the Department of Public Health, Université Catholique de Louvain, which maintains EM-DAT, a global database on disasters, describes disaster as “*a situation or event which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to a national or international level for external assistance; an unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering*” (Scheuren, le Polain de Waoux, Below, Guha-Sapin & Ponserre 2008, 2). The database is based on such a definition and on the following criteria: “*for a disaster to be entered into the database, at least one of the following criteria must be fulfilled: 10 or more people reported killed; 100 or more people reported affected; declaration of a state of emergency; call for international assistance.*”

A number of professionals propose there are two main types of disasters: natural disasters and man-made disasters (Boano & Lund 2011, 60). A natural disaster is the implication or influence of a serious event, occurring when human activities and natural phenomena (i.e. a physical event, such as a volcanic eruption, earthquake or landslide, which do not influence on human beings) become enmeshed (Leon Abbott 2005). Natural disasters such as thunderstorms or earthquakes can also affect man-made disasters such as power or telecommunications outages (Boano & Lund 2011, 61).

Quarantelli (2005, 2) proposes that in *a catastrophic event*, most or all of the community built structure is heavily impacted, as in the case of Hurricane Hugo which destroyed or heavily damaged more than 90 % of all homes in St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Finnish Red Cross preparedness guidelines define a crisis as something which has occurred because of human actions and a catastrophe as something happening because of external forces where help and support of the Red Cross is needed. It has to be remembered that the Red Cross is a special kind of organization as its aims and mission are connected to survival and support of people in catastrophes, for example, in natural disasters. (Tikka et al. 2011, 16.)

The University of Delaware’s Disaster Research Center, U.S. suggests differences between disasters, emergencies and catastrophes as follows: Emergency is an event that is possible to be managed locally without the need of added response activities or changes to procedure. Disaster is an event that involves more groups who normally do not need to be involve in management of emergencies, which demands for the involved parties to abandon their usual autonomy and freedom in favour of special response activities and connecting with supporting stakeholder teams, and changes the usually performed activities, requiring closer operations between public and private organisations as well as individuals. Catastrophe is an event that can destroy most of a

community, prevent local authorities from conducting their duties, affect to most community functions to cease, prevent contiguous communities from supporting aid. (Boano & Lund 2011, 63.)

Exceptional situation is a neutral word used by many authorities as organizations can prepare their personnel for instance for fires and accidents (Lehtonen 2009, 39). *Hazard* can be associated with the security of nation or even more serious, war and hazards aim to substitute the role in favour of a more patriotic one (Allan & Zelizer 2004). *Scandal* is generally related to the actions which are not seen as ethical when they will get publicity (Lehtonen 2009, 39) and the term is so connected to reputational crises.

From an organisational point of view, crisis and disaster are nearly the same (Palttala & Vos 2011, 68). The seriousness and the influence of the event can differ from each other, but all events described previously demand for fast stakeholder-oriented communication as well as proper internal communication within the organization and its agents. There can be many kinds of emergencies as many kind of catastrophes. There is no precise definition of crises and disasters in a form which could empirically identify when such situations can happen. Thus, it is important that from an organisational point of view crises and disasters do not differ from each other considerably - the main distinction commonly made between them is a root cause of the problem (Faulkner 2001, 136). The context is also the key as will be introduced next.

When defining a crisis, the context is essential – such as society, organization and agents – you have to think who is the one who can dominate the context and from whose point of view the situation is defined (Tikka et al. 2010, 15). Often this is the organization itself, but since social media began to activate citizens to establish networks and, for example, publicly complain more easily about several faults, it can also be one stakeholder group of the organization that takes the initiative. In many exceptional situations the event has even escalated to a crisis because the focal organization misjudged the power of those stakeholders who in normal conditions do not have much influence but may gain influence in exceptional situations (Lehtonen 1999, 110 - 113). For instance, similarly to news noting abuses and making them public, also activist groups or even single citizens can get publicity via social media and thus affect crises.

Originally the term crisis comes from the Greek word *krisis* meaning solution (Lehtonen 2009, 136). The words of the Chinese language *wei ji* have been explained to mean danger and opportunity (Lehtonen 2009, 77). This interpretation which is often sited is at least partly based on a misunderstanding as *wei ji* actually means technically dangerous moment and frightening situation (Mair 2007).

There are also several other definitions for the concept of the crisis in the literature as there are for the term risk, too. The term crisis can be described as a risk that has been materialized (Lehtonen 2009). It is used widely to describe various kinds of incidents or events which threaten individuals or the environment (Palttala & Vos 2011, 17). The term has meant fatal distraction, sudden change or crucial turn of event (Perry 2007; Forsberg, Pursiainen, Lintonen & Visuri 2003; Huhtala & Hakala 2007). According to Massey (2001, 157) a crisis is a major unpredictable event that may harm an organization and its stakeholders. Ulmer et al. (2007, 5 - 6) describe crisis as a threat to the public health and welfare. It is also stated that several characteristics are common to most crises in public organizations, such as a threat to basic values, a short response time, and increased pressure by stakeholders for information (Fishman 1999, 347).

Crisis is a sudden event which is difficult to predict beforehand. It threatens the expectations of the stakeholder groups of the organization, demands for more than normal actions, causes contingency, complicates the goals of the organization, makes damage either for the organization or the citizens and can induce allegations to the organization. (Adkins 2010, 97; Coombs 2007, 2 - 3.) Crisis can also be described as unusual event having extremely negative meaning. It will include risks, damage and possibility for larger losses. For instance, floods and explosions can have affects to whole communities. It is characteristic for a crisis that it will happen during a specific period of time. Due to these reasons, it is important to understand how crisis can develop and larger meaning of it. (Seeger et al. 2003, 4.)

In addition to the above mentioned definitions, one description is that crises are highly visible, require immediate attention, have a need for action, and are outside the organisation's complete control (Stephens, Malone & Bailey, 2005). Crises are surprising situations disturbing seriously every day operations of an organization in question or can even threaten its existence (Forssell & Laurila 2007, 151). Crises can also be described as long term development paths the essential characteristics of which can be understood when something too serious has already happened (Karhu & Henriksson (2008, 25). Stephens' et al. and Fisherman's description are accepted in this study: From the communication point of view especially the stakeholders' urgent need for information as well as short response time and the fact that crises are often outside the organization's control will make crisis management and crisis communication challenging.

Crises can be divided into *intentional* and *unintentional*. In addition, health crises can be identified as a separate group. Consequently, civil crises can be divided in three main types which need different kinds of actions. These three types are:

- *natural disasters and catastrophes* like tsunami and earthquake which need urgent rescue operations
- *man-made disasters* such as deliberate bomb attacks and accidents due to human error
- *diseases* which spread via animals and humans like SARS and other pandemics which need proactive communication and risk management. (Huhtala & Hakala 2007, 16.)

3.2 Crisis communication

Today, crisis communication is accepted to cover every crisis phase from pre-crisis situation and preparedness strategies to post-crisis activities and evaluation strategies (Dardis & Haigh 2009). Crisis communication and even threat of it always creates needs for information. Communication supports collecting of information, changes the threat for knowledge and information and shares this information with others. Communication composes critical part of whole crisis management process. Every phase demands for requests of creating and sharing of information typical for it. (Coombs 2010, 25.) Crisis communication in exceptional situations means collecting the important information from the point of view of the crisis situation itself, processing it and spreading it (Coombs 2010, 20). It is good to remind that information in these situations is not finalized. This insecurity makes citizens to look for information about crisis and follow media. (Andersen & Spitzberg 2009, 211, 214.)

Crisis management involves preparedness as well as response in order to prevent and reduce harm. Communication supports crisis management (see the figure 1 in the next page) in various ways, for instance, by enhancing understanding of risks, empowering citizens and facilitating cooperative measures during organizations involved (Palttala & Vos 2011, 316). Understanding and building trust are especially important during a crisis and they are, therefore, considered main aims in crisis situations (Seeger 2006). To support people's empowerment in crisis situations it is crucial to be aware of the diversity of the main stakeholder groups, their needs for information and their ways to use media (Palttala & Vos 2011, 317).

In nature accidents there is always many kind of communication as warnings, risk messages, evacuation information, assessment of efficiency of the messaging and information about possible symptoms and care of (Reynolds & Seeger 2005, 44).

In addition to this, it should be emphasized that there are several groups in the network

society who receive the first information about crises through social media before noting official communication. This has added new requirements for the speed and content of authority communication.

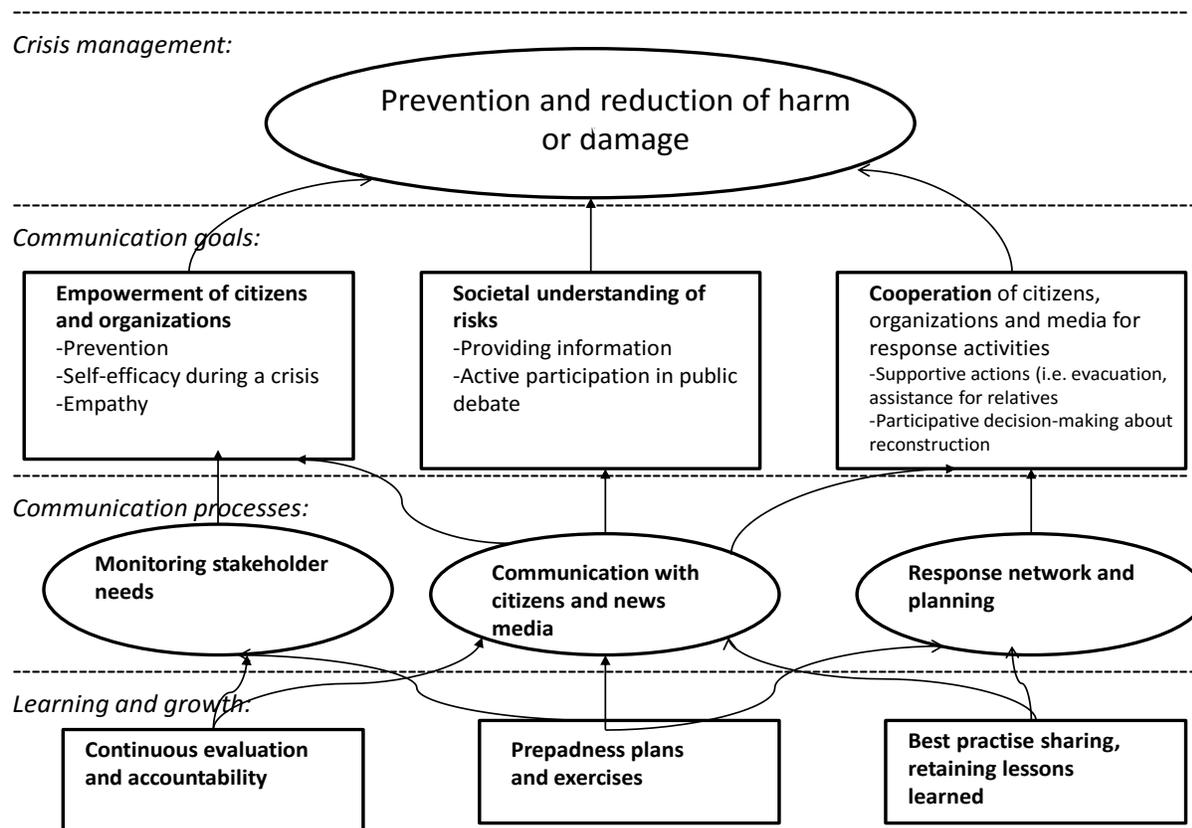


FIGURE 1 Strategy map of crisis communication supporting crisis management by public organizations (Palttala & Vos 2012)

The goals of crisis communication are described in the above mentioned Figure 1: to empower citizens and organizations to prevent risks, to provide information about risks, and to cooperate and communicate with citizens and news media. Preparedness plans and exercises as well as evaluation and accountability are seen useful tools to understand and learn more about risks and crises. Nowadays online media, especially Internet websites, blogs and social media forums have gained importance as compared to traditional print media.

Nowadays the role of social media for crisis communication has been accepted with respect to e.g. issuing of emergency warning and alerts, receiving requests for support,

assisting in recovery activities, and provision of situational awareness and real-time information through monitoring (Lindsay 2010). Moreover, the most important feature of social media is that it enables two-way communication and dialogue (Muralidharan, Rasmussen, Patterson & Shin 2011, 175; Stephens & Malone 2010, 381).

Although social media are also known for being vague and even passing on wrong information they are mainly seen as a positive addition, because they can form a much faster information channel than traditional authority communication. During the Asian tsunami in 2004 a group of active citizens had an important role in informing stakeholders complementing the slower authority communication during the first days of crisis. People both in Thailand and Finland started to help each other via *sukellus.fi* and *thairy.net* channels. Administrators of both web channels received splendid acknowledgements from grateful citizens (Huhtala et al. 2005, 181, 221 – 222).

In general, it can be noted that an organization cannot succeed in crisis communication in challenging times, if it is not already motivated to take care of good communication under normal circumstances. One way to understand crisis communication could thus be that it is not so different from communication in every-day circumstances but that it, however, has to be implemented and decided on much faster.

3.3 Similarities and differences of risk communication and crisis communication

The basic goals of risk and crisis communication are different. Risk messages concern the probabilities of some harm and associated methods for reducing the probability of the harm. Risk communication often refers to individual health hazards. Risk messages seek to translate the technical understanding of a certain risk into behaviour through persuasive and informative messages to public in question, for example, promoting a healthy lifestyle. This often requires addressing the cultural or social factors related to the risk. Moreover, when communicating about risks, it would be wise to explain the benefits that will come when avoiding risks. However, promoting risk reducing measures may be challenging, for example, the use of injections to prevent the flu. In 2009 - 2010 when many countries faced the risk of a swine flu epidemic, the vaccination used in Finland escalated incidence of narcolepsy among children and adolescents, although the narcolepsy risks were not found beforehand during vaccine tests (National Institute for Health and Welfare 2013). In this case, the risk reduction remedy introduced a new previously unknown risk.

Risk communication may also refer to individual health hazards, such as negative effects of an individual's eating habits for that same individual. Crisis communication focuses on multiple stakeholder groups that may be affected by a crisis, such as an earthquake, industrial explosion or pandemic. As such, it is a part of a larger crisis management function (Seeger et al. 2008). Risk communication that relates to crises often focuses on the pre-crisis phase of an incident, although in all crisis phases new risks may occur. Risk and crisis can be seen as part of an integral process (Reynolds & Seeger 2005).

Risk and crisis communication both need to focus on credibility as a fundamental persuasive attribute, and share the aim to decrease public harm. Some researchers see crisis communication as a more limited way of risk communication (Lundgren 1994), as some literature focuses on reputation crises and sees crisis communication as a way to prevent or reduce the negative outcomes of a crisis to protect the organization, stakeholders, and/or industry from damage (Coombs 1999, 4). This thesis does not focus on reputation crises, but on public organizations that are responsible for societal crisis management. However, it is not easy to separate reputational crises from other crisis types, as often crises influence on reputation of an organization in charge of crisis solving.

The most important difference between crisis and risk communication is the form where the communication takes place. Risk communication is a continuous process that aims to define a problem and find a solution to it before it will happen. This needs for time, good relationships with stakeholders, sharing information and common understanding how to face the risk. Crisis communication is related to those messages which will be informed to public during crisis. Crisis situations can start suddenly, and there are not necessarily proper connections to the public to be used. (Walskin 2011, 9 – 10.) There are described some differences and similarities of risk communication and crisis communication in the Table 1.

TABLE 1 Differences and similarities of risk communication and crisis communication (adapted from Boano & Lund 2011, Huhtala & Hakala 2007, Reynolds & Seeger 2005)

Differences	Risk communication	Crisis communication
content of messages	known probabilities of negative implications; how they could be reduced; addressing technical understanding and cultural beliefs (outrage); based on what is currently known; message-centred	information about specific negative event; magnitude, immediacy, control/remediation, cause, consequences; based on what is known & what is not known; situation-centred
style of messages	persuasive	informative
examples of main channels of communication	mediated: advertising, campaigns, media articles, brochures, websites	mediated: press conferences, online media, social media, news media, and also warning systems, face to face contacts
frequency of communication	frequent/routine	infrequent/non-routine
form of communication	continuous, also case by case (e.g. before the new flu type)	during the crisis and afterwards
way of communication	controlled and structured	spontaneous and reactive
scope	personal	personal, community, regional
stakeholders (main receivers of messages)	individuals, sometimes homogenous groups	multiple stakeholder groups
Similarities	Risk communication	Crisis communication
way of communication	public and trustworthy messages	public and trustworthy messages
legitimacy	public's rights to know about risks	public's rights to know about crisis in question; authorities' duties to rescue people
comprehension about public and individuals as stakeholders	how individuals perceive risks; what does effect to it	how individuals and groups behave in crisis; what does effect to it
best way to communicate	two-way communication incl. feedback, monitoring after the campaign etc.	knowing your public well, two-way communication incl. feedback, monitoring, self-assessment etc.

4 FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY

4.1 The CERC model

The Crisis and Emergency Risk Control model (later CERC model) has been constructed by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in the U.S. It has been developed mainly for the public health sector, but can also be used in similar sectors such as some ministries, local authorities and the rescue departments. It was first developed primarily to educate the public sector on the expanding communication responsibilities in emergency situations (Veil, Reynolds, Sellnow & Seeger 2008, 3). It demonstrates a process approach from the pre-crisis situation to the post-crisis situation (Reynolds & Seeger 2005, 49). CERC can be described to be a combination of many risk and crisis communication principles in one general framework.

The CERC model differs from classical models of crisis communication with its approach of communication processes through different stages of crisis. It is meant to blend risk and crisis communication from a meaningful and practical point of view. (Veil et al. 2008, 3.) It is also planned to empower citizens and communities to take action when recovering from crisis (Veil et al. 2008, 7). However, it has to be reminded that there are cultural and societal factors and differences that exist in empowerment and activeness of individuals, community groups and citizens of different countries and cultures. Crisis often suffers from poor communication between organisations and the public, and it is clear that communication challenges tend to be intensified in a multicultural context, even though multicultural issues are neglected. *“People always create meanings in different situations, and their interpretation will inevitably be dissimilar to the sender’s original meaning”*. (Falkheimer & Heide 2006.)

The criticism to the CERC model comes from the fact that not all crises follow the model as some risks cannot be foreseen. Regardless of its limitations, Reynolds and Seeger (2005, 51) see the model to offer an encompassing perspective to both risk and crisis communication. The model was chosen as one framework of this study as it combines well both risk and crisis communication and emphasizes pre-crisis activities. This study concentrates on the pre-crisis phase, but shortly all five phases will be presented.

There are altogether five different stages in the CERC model:

- pre-crisis (phase 1)
 - initial event (phase 2)
 - maintenance (phase 3)
 - resolution (phase 4)
 - evaluation stage (phase 5)
- (Reynolds & Seeger 2005, 52)

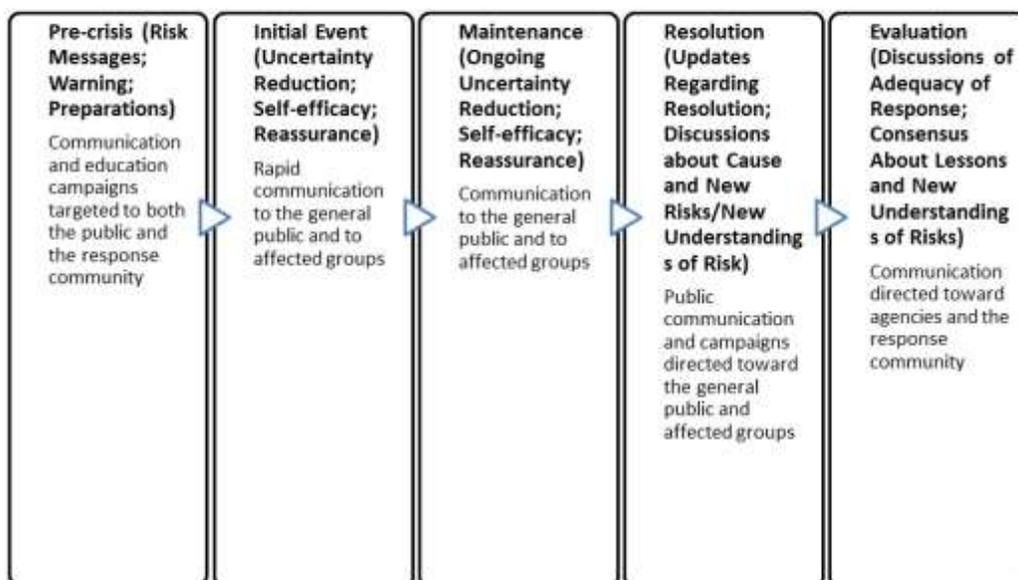


FIGURE 2 All five phases of the CERC model (Reynolds & Seeger 2005, 52)

Each phase of the CERC model demands for different kind messages, different type of information, different time of information and perception, and different requests. At the same time, a single phase can require more than a single method of communication which can occur when the audience is variously and differently affected by the crisis in question - i.e. specific and immediate: injured people; general and distant: informed by

the media; local but less immediate: people affected but not seriously injured. (Boano & Lund 2011, 121.)

The CERC model explains the role of communication in all phases. Phase 1 (pre-crisis) includes the following actions: monitoring and recognition of potential risks, strengthen people's understanding of the risks, creation of specified warning messages related to prominent threats, creation of alliances and co-operation with other groups and networks, development of mutual recommendations by specialists. (Reynolds & Seeger 2005, 53 - 54.) During the pre-crisis stage the risk communication means are necessary: promotion of health or environment to warn citizens connected to potential threats (Reynolds & Seeger 2005, 49 - 50). The pre-crisis phase includes prevention and, in addition, it can be interpreted as the preparedness phase: crisis preparedness is the extent to which individuals, communities, and organizations are willing to respond to threats (Perry & Lindell 2003, 238 - 239). The content of the five phases of the CERC model are described thoroughly in the Appendix 1.

The CERC model is applied as a framework in the Crisis Communication Scorecard which is an instrument to evaluate and plan risk and crisis communication. The instrument will be presented in the following section.

4.2 Crisis Communication Scorecard

The Crisis Communication Scorecard was published in 2011 as a result of an EU-funded research project (Palttala & Vos, 2011). The Scorecard has been developed and tested to improve the quality of crisis communication and at the same time to increase preparedness of public organizations (Palttala & Vos 2011, 315).

The term quality can be described as an effort to answer to the needs of the target groups (Koski & Kilpeläinen 2006, 12). According to Vos (2009, 362) the quality of municipality communication can be defined as the degree to which communication strengthens the relationship between citizens of the municipality and the municipality organization. The indicators of the tool support to find strong and weak points in public crisis communication.

The Crisis Communication Scorecard uses performance indicators of Balanced Scorecard developed first by Kaplan and Norton (2001). The Balanced Scorecard approach has been developed for business life purposes, but same kind of tools can be also utilized for public sector organizations (Palttala & Vos 2011, 316). The researchers point out that crises are different from one another, and therefore it is not possible to

understand all of them with one tool (Palttala & Vos 2011, 329). For instance, the seriousness and length of crises differ remarkably. Crises can affect only few people or many. Crises can manifest over a short period of time or longer on, such as some health crises.

Palttala and Vos (2011) accept the five phases of the CERC model as a framework for the Crisis Communication Scorecard. The Crisis Communication Scorecard can be used as an audit of crisis communication preparedness to evaluate the communication during a crisis exercise, and to learn from evaluating communication after an actual crisis. The Scorecard includes altogether 63 performance indicators from which 18 are for the preparation phase (Palttala & Vos 2011, 320).

The Crisis Communication Scorecard categorizes stakeholders into *directly* and *indirectly affected* citizens and communities (abbreviated as citizens), the news media, and the response organization and broader response network. When planning crisis communication, each of these has to be dealt with separately (Palttala & Vos 2011, 317). On the one hand, it can be noted that this will not be simple especially if the organization has not specified its stakeholders beforehand, already in pre-crisis situation. This approach demands from an organization a proactive approach to risk and crisis communication. This categorization can be useful and worthwhile to do, if municipalities want to understand what it means to see citizens as their main stakeholder group. Other organizations include related authorities, but also business organizations. The latter type of organizations and public-private collaboration in crisis management could have received more attention in the scorecard.

Preparedness is certainly one of the key foundations in crisis management, but unfortunately it has not received enough attention in the academic literature (McEntire & Myers 2004, 151). The Crisis Communication Scorecard focuses strongly on preparedness actions as to improve crisis management including risk assessment and analysis in pre-crisis situations.

As an example, Table 1 on the following page shows communication tasks for different stakeholder groups in the pre-crisis phase - the indicators are not included here. During pre-crisis/preparation phase the organization has to get to know its public groups and their media use. Especially the use of social media is important as today's information disseminates rapidly through various real-time media channels. It is not enough to know media use, the organization should understand what kind of information needs stakeholder groups have in risk and crisis situations and how they react to risks. Monitoring of risk perception and understanding of risks is also important in this phase. The organization should contribute to the general public preparedness, establish

		the organization and in the response network			
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Knowing the different citizen groups is important for an organization according to the Crisis Communication Scorecard; municipalities can then divide their residents on the basis of age, family form and living area. Some guidelines to define different stakeholder groups, for instance, have been investigated based on empirical research meant for the Crisis Communication Scorecard (Harro-Loit, Vihalemm & Jakobson 2011). These guidelines include four different categories: possible socio-demographic crisis factors such as different mother tongue compared to majority and access to media channels, communication habits of different groups of people, trust in institutions and different communication channels including so called influencers and public broadcast channels, and lastly vulnerability of certain groups such as kindergartens and schools. This kind of categorization would be useful in crisis situations, and it has to be prepared already in pre-crisis phase.

When a municipality organization wants to warn its residents effectively, the organization needs information about age structure of the residents and how residents of different ages can be reached. The city of Nokia experienced a crisis concerning polluted drinking water in 2007 did not have or did not use such information. They had not identified vulnerable stakeholder groups such as children, teenagers and senior citizens. (Seeck et al. 2008.) Stakeholder mapping contributes to crisis communication, but needs preparedness to be utilized efficiently when a crisis occurs.

Understanding residents' media use is also important as mostly people hear news on crisis situations via the media (either news media or social media) or from their own personal network. The public sector organization should understand that the web pages of its own organization may not be the first channel to look for news. However, when people have heard about a crisis in their municipality, tweets, social media posts can link to its web page if it has updated news. As some people may not have access to Internet other channels have to be used, too (multi-channel approach).

It is worthwhile to remind that for successful crisis communication there are other important factors, too. Marra (1998, 464) states the communication culture of an organization and the level of autonomy of communication professionals can easily prevent (or enhance) implementation of a crisis communication plan. With communication autonomy is meant the amount of control and responsibility of communication professionals within an organization (Marra 1998, 469). The concepts of communication and organizational cultures are especially relevant also in public

organizations due to their bureaucratic and hierarchical structure. Fearn-Banks (2001, 480 - 481) supports Marra by listing useful preparedness activities for the crisis management by an organisation, but in addition to communication's autonomy in the organization she also emphasizes the importance of communication planning, summarized as follows.

1. The communications manager belongs to top management of an organisation.
2. The stakeholder relations are taken care of well.
3. The stakeholder groups have been defined according to their importance.
4. There is a communication plan for every stakeholder group.
5. The communication department has strong relationships with the media.
6. Issues management belongs to the communication function's duties as a two-way activity.
7. Two-way crisis communication is used to answer when a crisis occurs.
8. Risk communication activities are in development.
9. The organization supports crisis management activities.
10. The organization supports an open relationship with its publics.

Pearson and Clair (1998, 69) also state that in the organizations where executives believe that their organization is not vulnerable to crises, there will be fewer procedures for crisis preparation, prevention and fewer crisis plans. However, the value of plans may be higher for the mind set and the capability to quickly tune in to what is happening, than for actual implementation details. Marra (1998, 2) cites a famous remark of Eisenhower:

In the war, before the battle starts, planning and plan are important, but when they start to shoot, plans change to be useless.

Marra (1998) provided a model of crisis public relations where communication culture and PR autonomy are shown to affect the process. Figure 3 describes the pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis phases which are the basis for the CERC model and Crisis Communication Scorecard as well, but in addition the terms of organizational communication culture and PR autonomy.

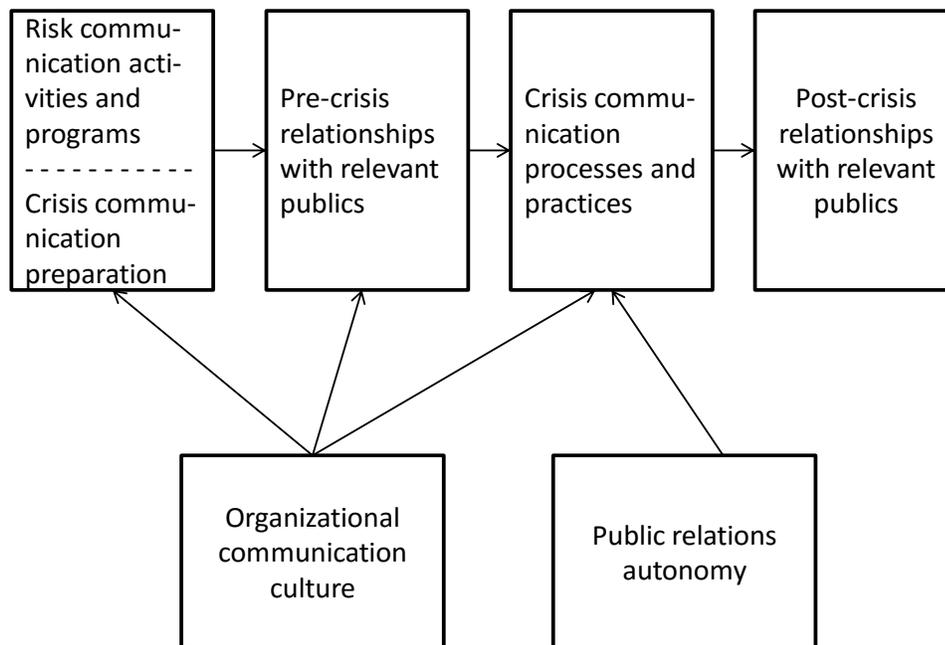


FIGURE 3 Model of Crisis Public Relations (Marra 1998, 464)

The Crisis Communication Scorecard is an example of thorough efforts to improve crisis communication activities that often are unsatisfactory to both the organization in charge and its stakeholders. However, the indicators do not take into consideration leadership and leaders' attitudes to communication and crisis communication, which are essential in crisis communication. Otherwise, the Crisis Communication Scorecard is a useful instrument for self-assessment and to base improvement actions on. It could be used also when improvement actions are suggested to the management. It explains, for example, why contacts with local media are important, and why one should react fast and inform about crises openly and timely.

4.3 Community approach

4.3.1 Community resilience

Efficient communication is not only a fluent and fast flow of information between organizations, it should mainly relate to how response organizations can serve their

stakeholders: to meet expectations of citizens and provide reliable information about the crisis (Palttala & Vos 2011, 317). In crises, one of the key concepts is how the authorities connect with citizens; how they understand their information needs, react to their feedback in social media and so on. According to Huhtala and Hakala (2007, 17) meeting points should be arranged, for instance using media platforms to facilitate communication between authorities and citizens. It is also worthwhile to note that crises affect, not only the individuals, but also the community and authorities in charge of the crisis management.

A community has been described as an entity having geographic boundaries and shared destiny (Norris et al 2008, 128). However, the location-oriented description does not take into account other important dimensions of community related to common interests, values, activities and structures (Twigg 2009, 9). Nowadays people can easily contact each other through Internet and form networks in spite of geographic boundaries. For the purposes of studying approaches to increase public empowerment in crises, a broad conceptualization of the term community is proposed as “*a collective of people living in a particular area, or being socially connected through a common ethnicity, religion or interest*” (Johansson & Linnell 2014, 8).

The concepts of resilience, vulnerability, and adaptation have become more and more important for the study of crisis and human dimensions of global environmental change. Serious events such as the Hurricane Katrina, the Asian tsunami, and the bird flu illustrate the potential vulnerability of human society to interruptions and variations (Janssen & Ostrom 2006, 237).

Community resilience is a process linking together a network of flexible capacities, such as resources with hard-working qualities, to adaptation after harm occurred. Four different abilities are preferred: financial development, social capital, information and communication, and community’s capability to compete. Together they provide a strategic approach for crisis readiness. (Norris et al 2008, 127.) Adger (2000) defines social resilience as the ability of human communities to stand for external threats to their social infrastructure, while Anderies, Janssen & Ostrom (2004) use the concept *robustness* meaning the maintenance of some desired system characteristics in spite of variations in the behaviour of its component parts or its environment. However, resilience is not only about being persistent or robust to interruption. It is also connected to the opportunities that interruption opens up in terms of the recombination of evolved structures and processes, reformation of the system, and emergence of new trajectories (Boano & Lund 2011, 96). This is why the concept of resilience in relation to social-ecological systems incorporates the idea of adaptation, learning and self-organisation, in addition to the general ability to resist disturbance (Folke 2006, 259).

When resilience is seen as strategy for crisis readiness, it can include five phases: 1) to create basic resilience, financial resources have to be developed, risk has to be decreased, and the most important social vulnerability areas have to be stressed, 2) local community members have to be committed to mitigation process to receive social capital, 3) networks and relationships have to be strengthened to be able to act fast during crisis, 4) actions to support naturally-occurring social abutment are needed, and 5) communities have to concentrate on flexible and effective communication in spite of the fact there are no guidelines or plan for immediate actions (Norris et al 2008, 142).

In any case, political, economic and natural forces affect those capacities that are available to operate at the community level (Norris et al 2008, 144). One example is the question about power and validity. Who is responsible if something happens in a Finnish municipality? The municipalities and other authorities are always the responsible entity and cannot avoid their legal duties as leaders of rescue services.

It has been examined the evolution of approaches to vulnerability which originated in the social and the natural sciences, arguing that vulnerability emerged as a *powerful analytical tool for describing states of susceptibility to harm, powerlessness, and marginality of both physical and social systems and for guiding normative analysis of actions to enhance well-being through reduction of risk* (Adger 2006, 268). Adger suggests that vulnerability to environmental change does not exist in isolation from the larger political economy of resource use but is: *driven by inadvertent or deliberate human action that reinforces self-interest and the distribution of power in addition to interacting with physical and ecological systems* (Adger 2006, 270). According to Fuessel (2007, 159), the theoretical evolution of hazards research has been characterized by an evolution from pure determinism to an increasingly more complex political economy approach, arguing that *structure not nature, technology, or agency creates vulnerability*.

4.3.2 Whole community approach

The U.S. based FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) presents a *foundation for increasing individual preparedness and engaging with members of the community as vital partners in enhancing the resiliency and security of our Nation through a Whole Community Approach* (FEMA 2015a). According to FEMA (2015b), the Whole Community Approach is not a particular survival plan, but more like an overview of key principles concerning emergency management. The main features of this approach are connected to how communities are motivated and engaged, how they understand risk and what their

experiences are with resilience following a disaster (FEMA 2015c).

The Whole Community Approach belongs to a new foundation for increasing individual preparedness and engaging community members in enhancing security and resilience (Johansson & Linnell 2014, 37). It can also be described as a philosophical approach in how to conduct the business of emergency management.

The attitude of FEMA can be well acceptable in the U.S. where the government system is not as binding supporting as it is in Northern European countries. Welfare states of Northern Europe such as Finland mainly focus on formal public sector activities during relatively unique crises and emergencies, but cooperation with the third sector organizations (NGOs) as well as active communicative groups still could be increased. In Finland the role of authorities is strong, although there also is a long history in volunteer work. Finnish value studies have shown that young adults are more addicted to hedonism than older people in Finland (Puohiniemi 2006). In spite of this, the young ones are highly interested in volunteering (Grönlund & Pessi 2008, 57). The nature of volunteering has been changed in Finland: single event activities have increased, whereas activities based on strong ideology such as political and trade unions lost members. Uncontrolled networks can distribute their activities easily and empower others to participate, for example, disputing previous ways of doing and not needing support from public institutions (Cook 2015.)

4.3.3 Social capital

Social capital can be described as connections between individuals and reciprocity and trustworthiness arising from them. Social capital refers to resources which can be utilized in social relationships (Lin 2001). The assumption is that weak ties bridging interactions and generalised trust might be ways of social capital that can be beneficial, both to the individual and the wider community (Rothstein & Stolle 2003, 5). Social capital can also be seen as an output of trust (Luoma-aho 2008, 306). It is not possible to buy social capital or estimate it financially, but it can be earned. Extensions of social capital are sense of community, institutions, rules, and cultural synergy which complement and strengthen each other (Harisalo & Miettinen 2010, 121).

It has been commented that social capital in Europe is different from social capital in the U.S. due to their differences in historical development, the stronger role of the state and cultural traditions. However, trust in society is the crucial key concept of social capital as mutuality and involvement following from trust. (Luoma-aho 2005, 148.) Trust in relationships is built on open and decent communication accepting dialogue (Sellnow et

al. 2009). The idea of social capital is to enable people's mutual cooperation, as common values, principles, standards and practices motivate to act (Harisalo & Miettinen 2010, 120).

Communication can be described to be the catalyst or way of social capital (Lehtonen 2000). People can cooperate either with acquaintances or unknown people. In the latter case there are uncertainties when people do not know each other. In the beginning, they have quite limited opportunities to influence each other's behaviour and choices. When they learn to cooperate, they build common values, rules, principles and practices. (Harisalo & Miettinen 2010, 120.) This is reinforced when people notice that by following common principles the probability of success will increase. It lessens uncertainty and attracts new candidates to join the co-operation. (Harisalo & Miettinen 2010.)

Social capital also has a dark side: it is not obvious that people will act according to common signs. When people start to trust common signs, they will form social capital based on trust capital. Genuine community builds bridges, helps people to build connections, encourages unknown to mutual interaction and cooperation, but the other side of the coin is that communities can also retreat to themselves. (Harisalo & Miettinen 2010, 121.)

4.4 Crisis communication of Finnish municipalities

4.4.1 Introduction of municipalities

In 2016, there are altogether 313 municipalities in Finland (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities 2016), whose duties include to provide statutory services like social welfare and health, technical infrastructure, the environment, education and culture. These are the basis for every-day life, and a social safety net. (Suomi.fi 2015a.)

Central and local government establish democracy of Finland, and from the point of view of citizens' democratic rights, both central and local level, are as important. Finland's municipalities are self-governing entities, which according to the Finnish law, have the right to decide about their own issues. The following Figure 4 presents the general public sector organization in Finland (Suomi.fi 2015b).

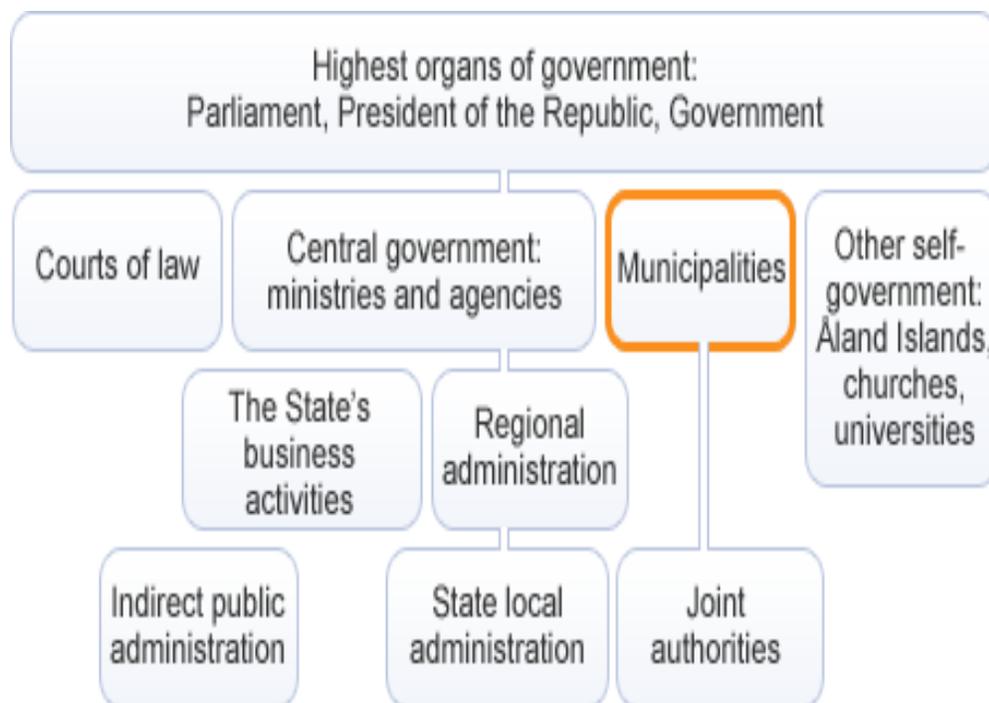


FIGURE 4 Public sector organizations in Finland (Suomi.fi 2015b)

Finland's police forces operate under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with other authorities and local communities. Meanwhile, municipalities are together responsible for the 22 regional rescue services areas. (Ministry of Interior 2016.)

4.4.2 Special features of public sector crisis communication

Statutory duty to rescue

Public organizations like ministries and municipalities have a statutory duty to rescue people in crisis situations as well as to warn them about risks connected to their wellbeing. It can also be said that authorities have to await the public interest and guarantee the security of citizens by crisis management (Palttala & Vos 2011, 316).

The main purpose of crisis communication by public sector organizations, for instance in the public health sector, is to reduce and prevent injury and death, and to help communities and individuals get back to normal every-day life (Reynolds & Seeger 2005, 46 - 47). Because the sector is responsible for public safety, preparedness relates to what kind of possible threats there can be, and how they can be handled. Moreover, the public sector needs to communicate in a way that make complex issues understandable

and give people an opportunity to decide independently how to behave in the crisis situation. (Smith & McCloskey 1998, 42.)

The management of the municipalities in Finland is based on the Local Government Act (365/95) also under specific situations. The Emergency Act (1080/9) and some special acts presume that municipalities are prepared for exceptional circumstances with the help of plans and other procedures (Prime Minister's Office 2009.) Preparedness belongs to normal activities and in crisis management normal management is applied with exceptional resources if needed. Those responsible for activities in normal circumstances are also responsible for them in crisis management situations. (Prime Minister's Office 2011a).

The regional state administrative agencies are responsible for the co-ordination of preparedness in the regions. This includes, for example, coordination of contingency planning, arranging preparedness exercises and promoting security planning in regional and local administration. Steering of various sectors within regional administration is the responsibility of the respective ministries. (Prime Minister's Office 2011b.)

Bureaucratic way to operate

Hood (2000) announces four different features for hierarchic public management. He links the first two to a groupist metaphor, such as the family and the last two are connected to a gridist metaphor, such as the machine. The principles are:

- the organization has to come before individuals
- individual needs must be surrendered compared to group interests
- following rules and regulations helps when avoiding chaos
- in case of failure those who do not follow rules are blamed.

This kind of approach does not support initiative and flexible improvisation, but on the other hand it can be clear in normal situations and in those situations which can be rehearsed beforehand. The belief that in an organization the collective is more important than individuals can lead to messages that are organization-centred rather than individual-centred. This can be challenging especially in crisis situations, if the organization does not understand the usefulness of individual-centred communication. Miller (1999) has analysed Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy and he suggests six keywords for Weberian bureaucracy:

- *a clearly defined hierarchy*: normally in the shape of pyramid, where everybody in the organization has supervisors and subordinates to whom the person in question has certain responsibilities
- *division of labour*: work can be done best when workers are given only a limited number of specialized tasks
- *centralized decision-making and power*: the central management has control and makes decisions
- *authority*: bureaucracies function on authority, power and discipline
- *rules*: rules and regulations should cover every aspect of the organization's work and should be most preferably be in written form
- *a closed system* (Luhman 1995): communication with outside environments is not recommended since it could disturb activities of the organization.

If the organization concentrates its communication to strictly written regulations and guidelines, it does not acknowledge the importance of interpretation. In every communication situation - both face-to-face and mediated - people connect the content to their previous information, values and attitudes, and understand or do not understand it in the same way as it was intended. This means that feedback and interactive communication are essential tools to succeed in organizational communication.

However, the older transmission model of communication and the bureaucratic model to operate have been used in some earlier crises that involved rescue activities of the public sector. For example, in the case of the bomb explosion in 2001 in the city of Vantaa in Finland, in Myyrmanni shopping centre the crisis management of the rescue forces, police and health services succeeded according to these models, because every organization knew its responsibilities (Huhtala & Hakala 2007, 72.) Transparency and clear responsibilities are the advantages of these models (Huhtala 2006, 34).

There is no perfect theory or model but in today's network society where citizens actively communicate with each other for instance in social media, bureaucracy can be slow and an inflexible way to operate. There are many kind of resistance, in which cultural change demands for new meaning systems which have to be created in all organization levels (Huhtala 2006, 34).

Public sector organizations easily see communication as a one-way informing. However, in a modern network society communication is actually functioning fast and in an interactive way supported by technology. If authorities do not communicate fast in crisis, citizens will find other ways to get information and may lose trust in

communication by authorities.

According to crisis communication guidelines of Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (kunnat.net 2009) authorities should create close contacts with their stakeholder groups even under normal conditions. They should also estimate with the help of risk analyses the likelihood of threats of industry and other agents active in their community. In addition to that, the representatives of the municipalities should be well aware of their community and they should prepare to comment in almost all news connected to their community. (kunnat.net 2009.)

5 RESEARCH METHOD AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.1 Research questions

This study investigates the role of NGOs in crisis preparedness by means of qualitative research. Public crisis preparedness has had minor role in crisis management. Although the importance of support of NGOs during and after crises has been underlined, the role of the NGOs has not been studied deeply when thinking of crisis preparedness.

Burnett (1999, 476-477) presents three different ways to study crises: case analyses about organizational crises, prescriptive studies giving instructions and descriptive studies describing crisis. Kim and Dutta (2009, 143-146) comment that the dominant theories of crisis communication are based mainly on the concepts of power and control. This is also accepted in the Finnish study about catastrophes (crises) where the Finnish Red Cross has been involved; these studies were focused on the perspective of management and leadership (Tikka et al. 2013).

The main idea when choosing a research method is to see how well the chosen methodology fits the current research problem (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 14). This thesis was executed as an empirical study with qualitative research method. Qualitative research is suitable when the aim of the research is to obtain accurate and deep information which can be interpreted by the researcher. This study does not aim to generalize its findings wider to the public sector crisis preparedness, but rather wants to give implications of inclusion of NGOs in crisis preparedness.

The research questions (RQs) of this thesis are as follows:

RQ1: How are NGOs integrated in crisis planning of municipalities?

RQ2: What kind of activities could NGOs offer to municipalities to support them in crisis preparedness?

RQ3: What enables that NGOs are integrated in crisis preparedness of municipalities?

RQ4: What are barriers for integrating NGOs in crisis preparedness of municipalities?

5.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research studies how the socialized world is interpreted, understood, experienced, brought or constituted (Mason 2002, 3). It consists of arguments connected to special contexts, rather than representing the wide scale of experience (Mason 2002, 136). The following can be seen characteristic for qualitative research, although categorization is flexible: research method, interviewees' perspective to the topic, discretionary or theoretical sampling, qualitative-inductive analysis of collected information, non-hypothesis, research style and presentation of the results, position of the researcher and narrative (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 15). The typical features of qualitative research can also be described as follows: examining meanings in their original context while the researcher's role can be seen as an interpretative subject (Jensen 2002, 236). In qualitative research criterion for scientific material is not the quantity of the material, but the quality of what is covered (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 18). That's why it is also important to choose the interviewees right - due to their experience. Instead of random choices, the choices should be relevant and based on consideration. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 86.)

5.3 Interview as a research method

The main research methods used in qualitative research are observation, text analysis, and interviews. Qualitative research typically focuses on in-depth interviews with a relatively small sample, even on single cases selected purposefully (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 18; Patton 1990, 169), where quantitative methods normally depend on larger samples selected randomly (Patton 1990, 169). It is normal to use unstructured or semi-structured interview questions when using the interview as a qualitative research method (Metsämuuronen 2005, 88). The semi-structured interview can be based on a list of questions prepared in advance, but often new additional questions are included in the interview during implementation, to enable the researcher to understand deeper the subject. When the interview is unstructured, it would mean that the questions are kept open.

In this study the semi-structured interview was chosen to go deeper into the topic, but

also to guarantee wide opinions about the topic as the interviewees had different backgrounds: for instance, only one municipality organization had real-life experiences about crisis management and crisis communication during a crisis encountered. Doing an interview in a semi-structured way also facilitated an open and trustful dialogue during the interviews.

In line with Mason (2002, 62) qualitative interviewing refers to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing. Semi-structured interview means that only some of the questions are pre-planned and that the questions are open, providing no alternatives for answering (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

Interviews are found especially useful when researching a topic with only a few previous studies or the topic is assumed to generate complex answers (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 35). When conducting research about people's perceptions, thoughts and opinions, an interview is a natural way to gather information. It is also a flexible method that allows the researcher to discuss with the participants, ask more defining questions and correct possible misunderstandings (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 72 - 73). These were the reasons why an interview was considered a good choice in this research.

Another additional benefit of an interview is also that it creates a genuine interaction situation of two or more people where both parties can affect each other. The idea of an interview is that the required information is easiest to obtain from the interviewee in question. But the same idea creates a problem; one cannot assume that the person in question tells about the topic in the way it really is. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 43 - 44.) It is always possible to misunderstand the question or the answer; however, this does not happen as easily in face-to-face interviews as in written surveys of quantitative research. During an interview the researcher can ask the question again to ensure that it is understood, and the interviewee can further explain his/her answers. Face-to-face interviews can be real dialogue and build communication according to the situation. A researcher might also get more confidential information in face-to-face interview than via anonymous poll (Gillham 2000, 62; Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005, 20).

Mason (2002, 62) defines a comparably informal style conversation and interactional exchange of dialogue as fundamental features of the interview process. Some other researchers define the main duty of the interviewer as asking questions, and providing some short feedback to the interviewee concerning adequateness of answers or request to go on with his/her response. It is recommended in many guidelines that an interviewer avoids comments or at least remains neutral in comments given. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 109; Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 44 - 45.) However, the interviewer's role

does not need to be a distant researcher, as she/he can be active in processing and gathering information and interpreting it (Daymon & Halloway 2002, 8). If the interview is done in good cooperation and in interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer, it can be possible for the interviewer to understand the perspective of the interviewee or the perspective of the interviewee's organization. Thus the researcher can gather the interviewee's stories which are valuable and meaningful in qualitative research. (Patton 2002, 341.)

An expert interview is a specialized form of interview. It is opposite to a biographical interview, as the focus is not on the interviewee's opinions as a person, but rather on an interviewee's capacities as an expert of certain field of activity or organization. Interviewees are integrated into the study rather representing a group than as a single person. (Flick 2006, 165.) In an expert interview the aim is not to find out the interviewee's subjective visions, but common practices, experiences and visions of the organization. The expert interview method is used in this study as all three interviewees were interviewed in their capacity of communication professional of a municipality.

It is common to use sampling to find information to be used for qualitative research utilizing interviews. The main reasons for sampling in qualitative research are practicality, resources, and the importance of focus (Mason 2002, 121). However, the researcher should consider whether the chosen sample provides access to the kind of data looked for, and with the right focus so that it is possible to answer to the research questions. Two specifications for the sample can be described: it should give understanding of the topic of the study rather than represent a population, and the selection of the sample should be a dynamic and ongoing practice (Mason 2002, 135).

In sum, in this study the interview method was considered to be an appropriate way to collect data for the following reasons: real interaction in interview decreases misunderstanding, during an interview it is possible to discuss about the topic more thoroughly, and interviewees are presumed to speak openly and honestly in face-to-face communication.

5.4 Interview process of the study

5.4.1 General process and the interviewees

Three Finnish cities (municipalities) chosen for the study had to represent medium-sized or big Finnish cities (population over 40,000), and there had to be at least one full-time communication professional in the organization of the city. The cities chosen for

the interviews were Kuopio in eastern Finland, Salo in southeast Finland and Järvenpää in the so called Central Uusimaa area.

The NGO interviewees represented two large national associations connections to crisis solving - the Finnish Red Cross and the Voluntary Rescue Services (Vapepa). The third NGO - Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association - was chosen as it seemed to have potential to support municipalities in crisis preparedness due to its national distribution and its role as an arranger of safety courses. All three NGO organizations chosen had either proven experience from different crises, crisis preparedness training or they had potential to be used in crises and pre-crisis activities (Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association).

The interviewees were contacted first by email and then by phone. The selected NGO interviewees were also asked to recommend another interviewee from a different level of their organization and these were contacted first by email, too. During the interview period one municipality communication professional was added as it was mentioned that she would have valuable experience about real-life crisis communication activities including preparedness. Altogether, nine persons were interviewed: three municipality representatives of three different cities, and six NGO representatives from three different NGOs.

The interviewees' from the cities of Kuopio, Järvenpää and Salo had two kinds of job titles: they were either Communications officers or Communications managers. All of them had worked in communications functions in their organizations for more than five years. The interviewees from the Finnish Red Cross were the Communications manager and the Communications officer, both from its central office - they worked nationally, even globally for some activities. Voluntary Rescue Services interviewees represented the north-western area of Finland, based in Turku, and their job titles were Preparedness manager and Programme manager. They were in charge of preparedness activities of the local Red Cross as well as rescue activities of Voluntary Rescue Services during different kinds of crises with the support of municipalities. The third representative group of NGOs consisted of the Chairman and Secretary General of the Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association. All the interviewees are listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Interviewee organizations and roles of the interviewees

Interviewee	Organization	Role within the organization
1	Municipality 1	Communications Officer
2	Municipality 2	Communications Manager
3	Municipality 3	Communications Manager
4	NGO 1	Communications Manager
5	NGO 2	Communications Officer
6	NGO 3	Preparedness Manager
7	NGO 4	Program Manager
8	NGO 5	Chairman
9	NGO 6	Secretary General

Some other NGOs could have been chosen for research as well. The Finnish church is an institute which is connected to crises, for example, when mental and psycho-social help or premises for large audience are needed. Members of different sport associations have been used as “messengers” during crises. However, the decision was made that it will be more worthwhile to take two interviewees from each three comprehensive organizations to obtain deep and also more concrete information about topic than to include more NGOS in the study by just one respondent each.

Semi-structural interviews were held in the premises of the organizations in question in Helsinki (two interviews), Kuopio, Turku (two interviews), Järvenpää, and Hämeenlinna. Two last interviews were done as telephone interviews to save the interviewees’ time as the Finnish summer holidays approached. The interviews were made approximately within four weeks of time – between 6 June, 2012 and 3 July, 2012. The shortest interview (telephone interview) took 32 minutes and the longest face-to-face interview one hour and 15 minutes.

The interviews were built around two different themes: with municipality communication professionals themes were municipality crisis preparedness and experiences about possible co-operation with local NGOs. The interviews with NGO professionals dealt with their experiences and knowledge about crisis preparedness, as well as experiences about crisis-related cooperation with municipalities before and

during crises. The interview questions can be found from the Appendix 2. They were composed based on the CERC model, the Crisis Communication Scorecard framework and other related literature. Besides the prepared questions, much time was given to open comments and questions to further clarify what was brought up by interviewees.

5.4.2 Introduction of interviewee organizations

The chosen organizations are introduced shortly in the following.

Cities (municipalities) are a part of municipal self-governance in the Finnish public sector administration. Introduction and information about the Finnish public sector communication were presented in the Frameworks section.

Cities of Kuopio, Järvenpää and Salo

Kuopio is the 8th largest city of Finland, with a population of 111,000; there are altogether 600,000 people living in the larger Kuopio region. A majority of the Kuopio inhabitants lives downtown or in the suburbs. (City of Kuopio 2016a.) The interviewee of the City of Kuopio was involved in the crisis communication of the city.

Järvenpää is located in the Helsinki Region, along the Helsinki-Lahti motorway, at a 30-minute drive from downtown Helsinki, and same time along the main railway line to the north. The population of Järvenpää is 44,000. (City of Järvenpää 2016a.) The interviewee was involved in the communication of the city.

Salo is a coastal city of about 54,000 inhabitants in the prosperous south-west of Finland. The downtown of the city is close to the estuaries of the Uskela and Halikko rivers, the Halikko bay coast and the Turku-Helsinki motorway and railway. (City of Salo 2016a.) The interviewee was involved in the communication of the city.

The Finnish Red Cross helps when a catastrophe or an accident happens somewhere. It also encourages people to look after their own well-being and to take care of each other. (Finnish Red Cross 2016b.) The law obliges the FRC to cooperate with authorities in societal crisis situations. The activities of the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) are formally based on the act of the FRC (A79/1931), the law about the FRC (L238/2000) and the renewed act (A239/2000 and A811/2005) (Finnish Red Cross 2016c).

The Finnish Red Cross activities in Finland include emergency response volunteering in accidents, first aid teams and first aid training, friend network activities, health places,

encouragement for health, safety houses of young people in five cities and coordination of Voluntary Rescue Services (Vapepa) (Finnish Red Cross 2016d).

The employees of the twelve local offices of the Finnish Red Cross organize training events for the volunteers in their own area. The Central Office in Helsinki supports and coordinates the activities of the local offices. The Central Office has also other duties like national campaigns, cooperation with authorities and international cooperation. (Finnish Red Cross 2016e.)

Our (the Finnish Red Cross') main goals are in particular that we aim all the time, with all of our capacities, to focus to be well prepared when there will be a crisis or a catastrophe. (NGO 1)

It should be noted that the legal position of the Finnish Red Cross is different from other Finnish NGOs. *"Finnish Red Cross is an association acknowledged by the State of Finland and governed by public law whose activities are based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and on the Act on the Finnish Red Cross (238/2000). The Finnish Red Cross is obliged to support authorities in various emergencies."* (What is the Finnish Red Cross 2016a.)

The interviewees were both involved in the communication by the Finnish Red Cross Central Office. They were interviewed separately.

Voluntary Rescue Services (Vapepa) is a coalition of 50 Finnish associations (appendix 3), and it is coordinated by the Finnish Red Cross. Its duty is to support authorities when there is need of extra rescue personnel. Voluntary Rescue Services operate in cooperation with authorities supporting police, rescue, and social and health authorities. The most common situation when authorities can alarm Voluntary Rescue Services is when they have to find missing people, but the assignment can vary from arranging accommodation and controlling traffic to psycho-social (mental) support. (Voluntary Rescue Services 2016a.)

The two interviewees were involved in preparedness and programme management of the organization and are located in Turku, in south-western Finland. They were interviewed separately.

The goal of **Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association** is to guarantee that all Finnish women can participate in emergency response and to maintain and improve their skills concerning civil security. Women work together to promote security in everyday life and to support families and communities of Finland to be prepared. Women's understanding related to security in every-day-life is thus increased by training. (Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association 2016a.)

Training is organized in the form of courses where both women and men are mostly welcome. Besides these regular courses, the association arranges twice a year major national exercises only for women. (Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association 2016b.) The association arranges among other things twice a year so called NASTA training (major national exercise). Themes of these training add knowledge and experience in everyday life, support preparedness or prepare for placement. Training topics include safety on the streets, information security, elderly people's challenges to safety, safety of residents of the municipality, psycho-social/mental support, off-road skills, fire safety, ability to operate in crises and transportation. (Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association 2016c.)

The member organizations of the Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association are mentioned in the appendix 4. Some member organizations of the Association are more well-known than the association itself, which is also understandable, as the national association operates through its member organizations and does not have individual members itself.

The interviewees were involved in the board of the association. They were interviewed separately. The summary about each NGO is described in the table 4.

TABLE 4 Summary about the NGOs in question

Name of the NGO	Main activities	Local/national activities	Typical for them
the Finnish Red Cross (FRC)	emergency response volunteering; preparedness activities related to health etc.	National (also international activities)	Finnish law obliges FRC to support authorities in crises; FRC coordinates Voluntary Rescue Services
Voluntary Rescue Services	supports authorities when extra rescue personnel is needed; mainly known for its duties when missing people have to be found	National	coalition of 50 associations
Women's National Emergency Association	Goal is to guarantee by training all Finnish women could participate in emergency response	National	operates through its member organizations

5.5. Analysis and interpretation

The data gathered in the interviews were transcribed. All together 8.5 hours of interviews were transcribed to 122 pages of written material. The transcription was done word by word, including padding words. Padding words have been deleted from citations used in this study. The interview data and the citations used in this thesis were anonymized because of good research practice and because one interviewee asked for this. The interviewees are categorized in citations as follows: Municipality 1, Municipality 2, NGO 1, NGO 2, and so on. However, there are some citations where the connection to the organization may be obvious, as this has been accepted by the interviewees.

Any generalization of research information is improved by comparison (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 66). It has been presented that it is not possible to make generalizations directly from the material, but from the interpretation of the collected material (Sulkunen 1990, 272 - 273). To enable interpretation, it is important to collect information in a proper way, which means among other things, that interviewees selected should have at least to some extent a quite similar experience world (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 66).

The quite similar experience world is difficult to try to resolve, but it can be assumed that due to every interviewee's expert position they could have the same kind of experience world. It is also obvious that the municipality professionals had information about crisis communication as they were responsible for it, but their tasks, duties and the level of their autonomy differed slightly from each other which was found during the interviews.

In analysis, thematic analysis was used to find proper material from the interviews. Thematic analysis can be done based on the material (interviews) but also based on the frameworks and theory (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006). The interviewer has to be open-minded when analyzing the material as sometimes you can even find new themes from the material.

Before the analysis, the transcribed text was read twice by the researcher to better understand the content. When reading, the significant words and sentences were underlined from the material. Then the material was reduced, so that less essential information was erased and after this, the material was clustered, looking for

similarities and differences. This way the essential information could be divided into different themes, sub-themes and headlines that arose from the interviews.

Accordingly, the main themes with their sub-themes found were as follows:

Pre-crisis activities of municipalities were composed of crisis and contingency plans, training, and exercises, public preparedness activities and communication. Pre-crisis services of NGOs included the following subthemes: prevention of crises by education; consultation, knowledge and skills related to crisis preparedness and crisis management; and volunteer networks. Pre-crisis connections and cooperation of municipalities' and NGOs involved the following subthemes: links between NGOs and municipalities, involvement of NGOs in crisis plans of municipalities, experiences about cooperation including possible barriers and enablers for co-operation. The findings from each area are presented in the following section.

6 FINDINGS

The findings of the study will be presented in this section. The main themes and their sub-themes which were found in the analysis of the interviews are introduced here. The pre-crisis activities of the cities included three sub-themes: crisis and contingency plans, training, exercises and possible preparedness activities and communication. Pre-crisis services of the NGOs were the second main theme consisting of the following sub-themes: prevention of crises by education; consultation and knowledge related to risk and crisis communication and management; and network of volunteers. The third main topic concerning co-operation of the cities and the NGOs in pre-crisis situations included: how NGOs and cities are linked to each other, cooperation experiences, and enabling factors that enhance cooperation and possible barriers preventing from it. As both the CERC model and the Crisis Communication Scorecard emphasize the stakeholder view in crisis communication, questions about stakeholder groups of the cities were included in the interviews and the findings from them are also described in this section.

6.1 Pre-crisis activities of the cities

The summary of the interview analysis showed that the three cities had in their crisis preparedness planning concentrated on crisis plans and crisis exercises. The Finnish municipalities have to prepare a statutory preparedness plan (*contingency plan*) for remarkable crises: besides it, many municipalities implement also plans for smaller scale crises and crisis communication plans.

Mostly, the municipalities had written crisis communication plans which were updated regularly. However, the only city which did not have or at least did not use formal crisis plan had nevertheless faced several crises during the last few years.

Some of the communication professionals had planned and implemented crisis communication plans for their own cities. The plans were general-level crisis communication plans meant to be used by the central management of the city. At the same time, they included general recommendations for the service units of the cities (health and social welfare unit, education unit and so on). The communication professional of one city did not know what kind of crisis plans the service units of their city had, whereas another communication professional had evaluated, for example, a crisis plan of an enterprise owned by the city. The latter professional also explained in the interview that their service units have to implement their own crisis plans according to the main crisis plan, and the plans have to include risk analysis as well. Risk analyses had been done in a written form by one of the cities. This city also had a central administration crisis plan combined with more specific crisis plans with risk assessments by the various service units of the city.

The crisis plans of service units were deemed important as there are seldom crises affecting to all service units of the municipality and the general crisis plan cannot take into account all risks possibly connected to the activities of the municipality. Generally, preparedness of rescue services, health and social welfare units, infrastructure service unit and educational service units was emphasized. The activities of rescue services and national police forces are not covered in this study, as these specialize in security services.

I have myself audited thoroughly the communication plan of the water works of our city, and this week we have checked all the contact information connected to it. (Municipality1)

Risk assessment of and preparedness for risks can be seen as a main element of crisis preparedness, as is shown in the following example mentioned: The biggest private employer of one of the cities had informed in its interim report that it would reassess the economic situation of the factory in the city in question. This could mean a risk to the city. Thus the management and the communication professional of the city prepared three different scenarios for the future together with action plans for each scenario. The preparations were indeed needed, as six months later the company decided to shut down its factory in the city:

Those involved in such matters have to think about possible risks and threats, first discussing it in smaller groups, as otherwise one might easily reacted too heavily and negatively to the risk. Thanks God, we had

made the analysis beforehand, so in February when the information came that the factory would be shut down, we had within a couple of hours a complete presentation explaining how the city would proceed in this situation. (Municipality 2)

There was one city which did not emphasize doing risk analyses – or at least their communication professional did not know about them. The other two communication professionals understood their role connected to the Central Administration of the City rather than the service units or enterprises owned by the city.

The written crisis communication plans of the two cities provided detailed information on channels, methods, key messages and the roles of different organization members in crisis situations.

When we planned crisis communication in the communication team with representatives from different units, we recognized various existing channels and established new ones. For instance, extra telephones and telephone lines, a system for short messages (for personnel) and releases in exceptional situations have been created in 2010. (Municipality 3)

One city uses in crisis communication a model in which in the case of a crisis situation a new group would be activated to manage the crisis. Another city wrote in its crisis plan that in crisis situations the regular management group of the city would continue to act. The interviewees referred to the Finnish law, in which the Municipality Manager is always responsible for crises taking place in his/her own municipality, so that's why continued responsibility of the top management of the municipality often is recommended. This also depends on the seriousness of the crisis and which level of authorities are involved.

The roles in crisis situations were made explicit beforehand by one of the cities, specifying responsibilities for tasks such as serving news media, et cetera. In a crisis situation there would be a need for thorough communication to different stakeholders, so it was considered good practice to plan the roles beforehand. Another city had arranged crisis responsibilities in a flexible way ensuring that in any case the right members of the Management Group would be involved in the crisis management. Besides them, some other members could be added to crisis management. The third city established a different management team during crisis, and communication professional and the lawyer will join this group, too. In the crisis plans of the cities NGOs are generally listed as one common stakeholder group:

In our general crisis plan we have mentioned that service units of the city have to take into account different stakeholders in crisis communication. But it is not up to me to follow it, I am not authorized to do that - and I don't know all these stakeholders. (Municipality 3)

When asking about the most important stakeholder groups in crisis and in crisis plan of the city, one communication professional started to list them as follows:

Authorities like the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, National Institute of Health and Welfare. The city hospital is a very important stakeholder and then, naturally, the media as via them we can provide messages and they can support, for example, that residents of the municipality are instructed to act in a certain way. (Municipality 1)

Building relations with news media was considered important, too. One communication professional, for example, mentioned in the interview that she planned to contact the editor of the local news medium responsible for writing safety-related articles.

The pre-crisis activities of the cities also included statutory preparedness exercises and other kind of crisis exercises. All three cities have had at least one crisis exercise during the last three years. The responsible organization for statutory preparedness exercises in Finland is the State Administrative Agency in every region. The interviewees mentioned that they had also used NGOs, universities and universities of Applied Sciences as organizers of municipal crisis exercises. However, the content of the training and roles of communication professionals varied in these exercises.

We thought that in a real crisis situation, if communications professionals would form only their own group and they would not be integrated in the management and activities of the crisis, the crisis management would not succeed at all. (Municipality 2, when discussing about arrangements for a preparedness exercise)

Exercises and training can be seen as useful procedures to improve the quality of crisis communication when the actions which did not succeed well in exercise will be taken to further notice and the organization can thus improve its preparedness to possible crises.

The crisis communication simulation exercise opened our eyes to understand for what kind of things it is good to agree and plan beforehand. Nowadays it is usual that if a crisis starts, information on the web cannot be controlled in any way. But you have to be able to try to follow and change activities according to it. (Municipality 1)

Within the Central Administration of the City the crisis exercises had primarily improved general crisis preparedness through crisis planning, and understanding of crisis management. The interviewees did not know whether the crisis exercises or training had also improved communication between municipality and NGOs in the response network.

Some of the communication professionals had improved preparedness of their own organization even if there had not been remarkable crises in their own area. However,

6.2 NGO's services in crisis preparedness

The NGO interviewees mentioned several services of NGOs that contribute to public crisis preparedness. These included: crisis prevention by means of education, consultation and skills related to risk and crisis management and communication, and volunteer services to the municipality. It can be emphasized that NGOs can offer most of these services both to municipalities and citizens – except networks of volunteers. For instance, the Finnish Red Cross operates in risk education, training, consultation and voluntary networks activities of pre-crisis phase. When thinking of crisis preparedness, the local volunteer networks of the Finnish Red Cross as well as its tools to prevent social marginalization can be seen as social capital worthwhile to consider when municipalities map available resources in the area.

Our existing volunteer teams and networks are important. Volunteers operating in different local departments of the Red Cross are our biggest resources, and the keystone of our activities. (NGO 3)

The Red Cross organizes crisis training and exercises, first aid courses to individuals and also to employees of companies, and it is involved in supporting safety in big events, such as outdoor concerts et cetera. It is involved also in educational communication concerning campaigns warning about drugs, alcohol and so on. In addition, it has many kinds of services for people who suffer from social exclusion. The brand and the name of the Red Cross are well-known, but the precise services and level of activities of its offices vary in the different parts of Finland. The Central Office in Helsinki has supported the management of municipalities and communication personnel in many crises.

I am used to work in crises and can give tools and clues how to communicate there. Sometimes my advice is accepted warmly, and sometimes I do not get any answers to my e-mails. (NGO 2)

Concerning the Voluntary Rescue Services, the findings proved that the national organization is involved in offering preparedness activities via its member associations. It can be seen as a broad network of volunteers to secure and assist in rescue operations at sea, on the ground and in the air.

The operations start normally so that the social authorities or rescue forces contact us. (NGO 4)

The Voluntary Rescue Services local office with its volunteers in south-western Finland has supported authorities and municipalities in many crises. The volunteers have contributed in different cases, for instance when there has been need for catering and maintenance after floods or fires.

The volunteers are also a good resource when people are needed to go from door-to-door and communicate face-to-face in a specific area: the messages they distribute can be simple like “do not walk or drive to that direction, there is a flood” or “do not drink tap water, there is something wrong with it.” These kinds of teams spreading over the area are an efficient support of all the other communication means used in crises. Also educated first aid teams and mental help (psycho-social help) are meaningful both in crises.

The interviewees of the Women’s National Preparedness Association emphasized that they arrange several courses on related topics, including preparedness and coping with difficult circumstances. Besides training courses and networks consisting of volunteers of member associations of the Women’s Preparedness Association, the association has participated in public sector crisis planning, for example by providing experts for work group compiling preparedness plans for the social sector.

We act as experts in several work groups, giving statements to some preparedness governmental bodies and in this way to authorities making decisions. (NGO 5)

In summary, the NGO interviewees acknowledged that their organizations add resources to public crisis preparedness that can support the municipal pre-crisis preparedness in many ways. Their experienced personnel can operate as experts of their field when making recommendations and guidelines for crisis communication, crisis management and general preparedness of the municipalities, ministries and so on. The NGOs arrange crisis exercises, crisis training and can be used as an additional intermediary channel to educate and warn public groups about risks. NGO teams form extra resources in different tasks such as providing first aid support, information about how to behave in face-to-face contacts, and in events when educating and warning about for instance dangers of alcohol and drugs.

I dream that before I will retire we will have in elementary school a situation where they encourage children’s first aid skills every year. When they will be in the ninth class and finish basic education, they will have all the skills connected to our first aid course number one. Then we could speak about it that the first aid is an ability of all civics. (NGO 3)

When describing the key words mentioned by the interviewees of the activities of the NGOs the following figure was compiled by gathering the main terms. It shows that arranging and educating volunteers as a workforce is the most essential form of preparedness activities that NGOs can offer to municipalities.

Red Cross department and the municipality. In the interviews one communication professional emphasized that if the city would use services of the local Red Cross they would absolutely make a written agreement about it beforehand.

Another communication professional mentioned in the interview that a member of the management group of the city belonged to the local Voluntary Rescue Services, so it was natural to ask for help and assistance from them when a crisis occurred.

Only two NGO local office representatives and both representatives of the related Central Office could describe real-life experiences about cooperation with municipalities – they were altogether six NGO interviewees altogether. Based on an agreement local office representatives had had good and long-term collaboration by offering the availability of volunteers in case of different kinds of crises.

I do not have any single bad experience about the cooperation at all. Besides bigger cities, we have been used in smaller cities' pre-crisis activities. (NGO 4)

The NGOs primarily see their role as a concrete partner in the crisis phase, and naturally this role needs activities in the pre-crisis phase too, for example, educating and training volunteers. They did not see the link with the municipality so clearly for their activities in the pre-crisis phase. These activities usually are geared towards citizens, although the following citation provides an example of such activities for the municipality.

Our small local office was asked to arrange a preparedness evening in one municipality. The audience was not the citizens, but the personnel of the municipality and representatives of some other NGOs. We used a storm as an example how they should be prepared. (NGO 4)

In summary, the NGO interviewees mentioned different ways of contributing to preparedness including adding their expert experience when municipalities write crisis plans, educating and training volunteers that can assist in crisis situations. They also have other educative tasks related to citizens and give presentations on crisis preparedness, also for municipality employees and other NGOs.

The following figure gives an overview about services NGOs can offer municipalities and citizens. It can be emphasized that both in normal and exceptional circumstances the main stakeholders of NGOs are citizens, and municipalities can be the “messenger” when serving citizens. However, there are also services NGOs can offer to municipalities and authorities, too, such as crisis and crisis communication consultation.

PRE-CRISIS SERVICES OF NGOS TO MUNICIPALITIES

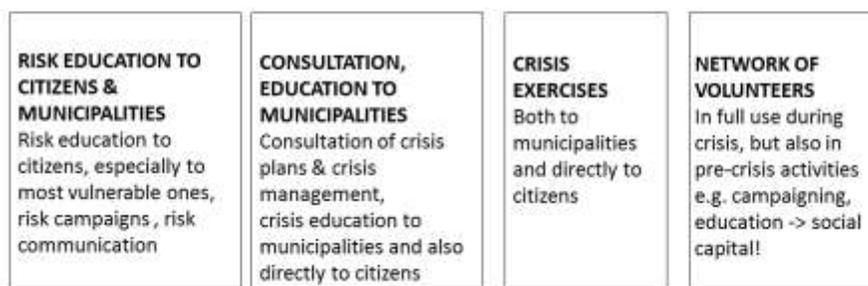


FIGURE 7 Pre-crisis services of NGOs (simplified model)

6.4 Enablers of co-operation and barriers for it

Co-operation between a municipality and local NGOs can begin when a municipality accepts that the citizens are one of its most important stakeholder groups and that NGOs can support municipalities in crisis response and preparedness. And if there is no need or acceptance for co-operation, it will not start at all.

The NGO interviewees commented in the interviews that the key enablers for cooperation are having realistic view about the cooperation, a clear division of roles and of concrete duties in which NGOs are needed to provide support. One interviewee highlighted also the importance of open discussion between municipalities and NGOs.

First of all, municipalities have to know to whom they could contact in a crisis and they should also have a realistic opinion about the tasks that an NGO could do. (NGO 4)

The quality of the cooperation and the level of trust in each other may increase further, if there are already good experiences at the beginning of the cooperation. The more you work together the more you will learn and start to have phase by phase common attitudes and values about co-operation.

Next to describing good experiences with the cooperation, there were also barriers for cooperation mentioned. If a municipality is not interested in crisis management or approaches it in very bureaucratic way, the role of the NGOs may not be acknowledged. Two NGO interviewees mentioned also that there is apparently some

kind of hierarchy attitude preventing the possible cooperation.

If you think about cooperation of NGOs and municipalities there are two very difficult things: interaction is one and the second one is prejudices or challenges in leadership which are connected to division of roles between municipalities and volunteers. (NGO 5)

We have good volunteers even they have not been graduated from the university. They can do their own duties well which should be extremely important to the Welfare Manager of the municipality. (NGO 2)

Many interviewees of the NGOs on the national level wanted to encourage their local offices to be active and contact the local municipalities.

We support our local departments strongly everywhere in Finland that they should establish relationships to local authorities already when there is no emergency situation going on. (NGO 2)

Although it is recommended to contact with local authorities, not all local offices have done it. When asked for the reason for this, five interviewees of six mentioned the same reason: the authorities can easily be seen as upper class people. If one does not know them personally beforehand, it is challenging to try to contact them.

As summary, there were found both enablers for cooperation and barriers for it. Interviewees have had good experiences about co-operation in crises when the roles of the NGO representatives have been clear and open and honest communication has been used. On the other hand, some interviewees had faced barriers when trying to contact the municipalities. The roles and responsibilities of the volunteers have seemed to be a challenge that some municipalities could not have succeeded to resolve.

ENABLERS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES AND NGOS

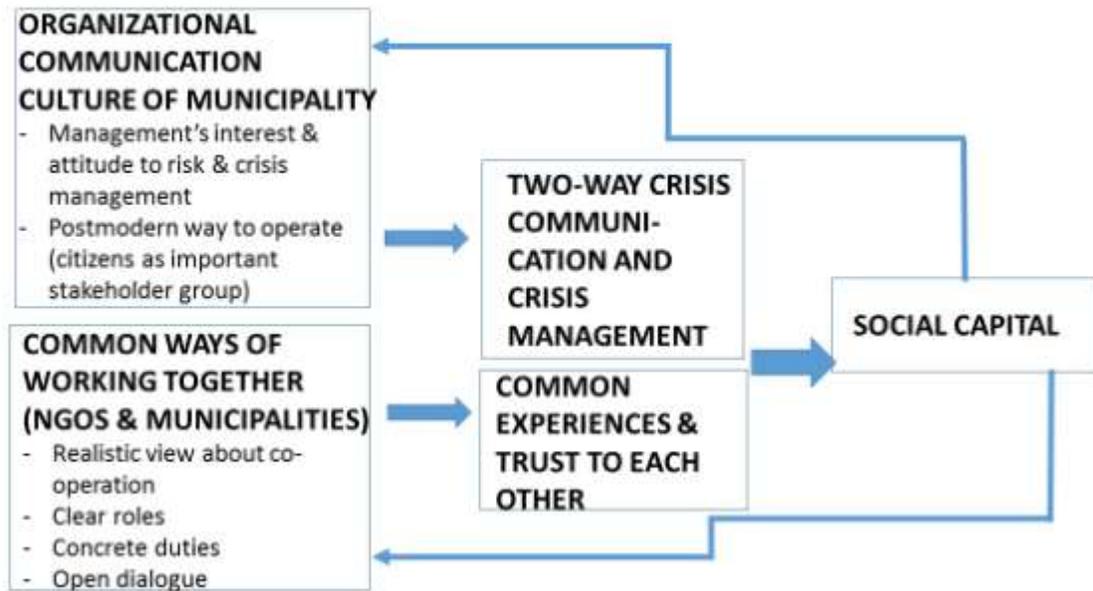


FIGURE 8 Enablers for cooperation between municipalities and NGOs (simplified model)

BARRIERS FOR COOPERATION

FROM MUNICIPALITIES POINT OF VIEW

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- No interest in crisis management by the leaders
- Residents and NGOs are not seen important stakeholders due to hierarchic way to operate
- False sense of security due to written crisis plans and exercises

AUTONOMY OF COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications not seen as strategic function of the organization
- Communications responsible not member of Management Group

FROM NGOS POINT OF VIEW

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- Municipalities can be seen as "upper class" people to whom it is difficult to get contact
- No time to be active or proactive yourself

FIGURE 9 Barriers for cooperation between municipalities and NGOs (simplified model)

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Here, the findings of the study are compared with the theoretical frameworks of the study. The focus is especially on the barriers and enablers of the co-operation between NGOs and municipalities and on the role of NGOs in pre-crisis activities.

7.1 Co-operation between municipalities and NGOs

The findings of the study show that NGOs are not easily seen as partners in crisis management including pre-crisis activities by the municipalities. The reason for this is that the organizational culture of many municipalities still reflects the bureaucratic model which makes it hierarchy oriented rather than external oriented. According to Max Weber's bureaucratic model, a clearly defined hierarchy means that everyone has a supervisor or an organization above its own status. That's why ministries and other authorities are discerned as important stakeholders - more than citizens - by the municipalities.

However, according to the CERC model and the Crisis Communication Scorecard cited in the Frameworks section, in today's crises a core focus should be how the authorities connect with citizens; how they understand public information needs, react to societal feedback and improve their communication when coproducing safety. The focus in citizens also means that communication should start already before real crisis circumstances; societal understanding of risks by providing information to the citizens should be increased as well as self-efficacy and other kind of empowerment of citizens and other response networks.

The second reason neglecting NGOs as partners comes from the communication culture

of the organization: The organizational communication culture affects crisis management according to Marra's model of crisis public relations. It is related to establishment of pre-crisis relationships with relevant publics, risk communication activities and crisis communication preparedness activities. Besides hierarchy, which is typical for communication of public sector organizations, the management attitude strongly influences on crisis management. Crisis preparedness is connected to executive perceptions about risk and risk taking: if executives do not believe the vulnerability of their organizations, they will not accept resources for preparations of crises (Pearson & Clair 1998, 13). Statutory written preparedness plans of municipalities can give the organization a false sense of security concerning their real preparedness for crises (Huhtala & Hakala 2007, 23). The city of Nokia had a statutory contingency plan, it had implemented several crisis exercises and it had formulated a risk management plan. In spite of this, the city failed in crisis management and in crisis communication in 2007 during its water crisis. The persons in charge had not properly understood the crisis plan and crisis guidelines, the plan had not been distributed to all internal stakeholders, and the necessary actions were not trained enough before. (Hakala et al. 2008, 76.) Furthermore, cooperation and stakeholder group connections in normal conditions are relevant to successful crisis management and crisis communication. (Seeck et al. 2015.)

If the organizational communication culture and the attitude of the management does not support open stakeholder minded crisis management, plans and training are not enough to predict high quality crisis communication. This became clear also from restrictions mentioned by the interviewees. For example, one professional explained how their communication expertise group was not integrated into the management of the crisis exercise at all.

The dialogue with the citizens is emphasized in the CERC model as well as in the Crisis Communication Scorecard. Citizens, including those directly affected by the crisis, e.g. possible victims and their loved ones, as well as those not directly affected, are identified as key stakeholders in Crisis Communication Scorecard. According to the Scorecard, municipalities should be aware of different public groups among their residents and especially vulnerable groups (e.g. children, immigrants, senior citizens) and their media use. Crises will often become public through Internet and media, including nowadays social media. Citizens were not in major role as receivers of information in the beginning of Asian tsunami in 2004, when family members in Finland did not receive any information from the authorities about possible Finnish victims in Thailand. There were then some active volunteers in Finland and in Thailand who began to publish the information about the Finns found from the hospitals. (Huhtala & Hakala 2007.)

Traditional crisis management thinking has been criticized by Schoenberg (2005, 2-4), as leaders can trust on the crisis plan and consider general monitoring enough even for pre-crisis activities. According to Schoenberg the key responsibility in the crisis management is development of management's and top leader's leadership skills. When concentrating on qualities and theories of the leadership, this can change the original crisis plan to new extent. This can also mean that the organization responsible for the crisis management starts to think more about values, honesty, trust and leadership. (Schoenberg 2005, 2 - 4.)

Social media have gained importance, especially for young adults. A municipality can maintain its own Facebook page, and utilize it during crises for fast information and for answering to residents' questions. Communication professionals need to know the most important local, regional and national news media, main journalists and way to work concerning news information. This is also mentioned in the Crisis Communication Scorecard, indicator No 4 (establishing cooperation with news media and journalists for crisis situations). There is no time to establish good relationships to the media or other networks or organizations when the crisis has already started. One has to do this beforehand in the pre-crisis phase.

Contribution to the general public preparedness (Scorecard indicator No 3) would mean, for instance, information about equipment needed at homes if possible storms, floods and power outages occur in the region. When analysing the interviews it became clear that the organizational structure, the autonomy and the experience of the communications professional is essential when interpreting the crisis management and pre-crisis activities connected to it. As described in Weber's hierarchical organization model in the Framework section, if the organization concentrates deeply in written instructions as authorities often do, it forgets the importance of interpretation. Communication using written instructions is not as interactive as face-to-face communication. It is often assumed that using written guidelines makes it easier to avoid chaos, but it is not feasible to have written instructions for all of the potential crisis situations. However, it could be worthwhile to keep an open mind and prepare for various situations by means of risk analysis and crisis exercises.

The findings also show there was one municipality and two NGOs co-operated with other parties in crisis circumstances (not with each other). The successful co-operation between one municipality and the local NGOs had been developed in actual crisis circumstances and co-operation was based on trust and clear roles in crises. Findings have also examples about cooperation in compelling circumstances where for instance the communications professional of the NGO supported the municipality organization in media communication.

One of the most important communication tasks is building trust. It can be achieved best via face-to-face communication, though not even then it needs time to grow. Moreover, when individuals and teams learn to work together, they start to build their own principles, while creating *social capital*. Findings prove this: management group of one municipality had to cope with crisis every year. There are several reasons why they managed to do this: they had experienced many crises together, and they had learned from them, the city manager and the communications professional had experienced crises before in their previous duties, and they had in their management group a representative from a relevant local NGO. The management's attitude to crisis management and crisis communication is important: if they do not accept open, fast and stakeholder-oriented communication in crisis management, such cooperation cannot begin.

Other barriers concerning cooperation, besides neglecting citizens as well as NGOs as stakeholders due to a bureaucratic way of working, come from the simple fact that there is lack of time and resources to plan risk or crisis management beforehand. The many current problems to solve leave little time for anticipation on potential future crises. The duties of the Finnish municipalities are multiple covering from children's day care till children's and young people's basic education, residents' health and social services and maintenance and building infrastructure. And as described earlier, if the management attitude does not follow the model of stakeholder oriented crisis management, in a hierarchic organization it is not suitable to start to concentrate on crisis planning by himself/herself. The attitude towards crisis management and communication depends on the experience with previous crises and related skills of the management of the municipality including its communication professionals.

The perceived hierarchy was also seen as one reason that can prevent eagerness for contacts also from NGO's side. NGOs may feel that they are lower in the social hierarchy than public sector organizations. The findings show one interviewee's experiences when trying to contact municipalities.

When speaking about municipality level authorities, one will often face this comment: "that you cannot manage those (volunteers), you cannot command them as they don't have management relatedness. ... The command relatedness has to come through the organization. (NGO 5)

The autonomy of the communication as described in Marra's model in the Frameworks section might explain why it seems that communications professional belonging to the management group of the city has executed well crisis activities together with her organization and together with the NGOs needed. It was also mentioned in the

interview that the city manager in question has a deep interest in risk assessment and sees crisis management as one of important duties of his organization. Referring to Marra (1998), both the organizational communication culture and the autonomy of the Communications professionals affect to the level and quality of crisis communication. The city had succeeded in its crisis management from the perspective of proactive crisis communication management and from the perspective of cooperation with NGOs. The crises that had occurred in the city included natural disasters like floods and storms, and man-made crises like a shut-down of the largest private employer in the area. So it can be concluded that the city management together with its communication professional had monitored possible risks as recommended in crisis management (CERC model, phase 1: monitoring and recognition of potential risks) and that the interviewee considered this beneficial for the outcomes.

As a summary, NGOs were not integrated in crisis plans of municipalities as named groups, and they were not thought to be cooperation partners or stakeholders of crisis communication. However, the findings also show examples of good co-operation between municipality and NGO. The reason for this relates to social capital, non-bureaucratic organizations and communication culture: partners (NGO, municipality) had experienced several crises, learned from them and the municipality saw citizens and NGOs as important stakeholder groups for their communication. Also the management attitude and the communication professional's skills and autonomy seem to have an important role in successful crisis management.

Crises could be seen also as a learning process and the indicators of the Crisis Communication Scorecard may facilitate evaluation both before and afterwards of the functioning of the crisis management. They emphasize cooperation with citizens and among organizations within the response network. The findings show that when people face crises, they can also learn from them.

7.2 The roles of the NGOs in crisis preparedness

There is good potential for NGOs and municipalities to cooperate already in the crisis preparedness phase: NGOs could support municipalities with risk education, crisis training, crisis exercises, consulting about crisis and by guaranteeing there would be the network of volunteers in use when they would be needed. It is also worthwhile to remind that NGOs work with citizens and they could serve also citizens, not only municipalities, in different crisis phases. This could leave more space for municipalities to manage the crisis. Finnair, travel agencies, the Finnish Red Cross and the national church were invited for the first time to participate in the strategical crisis management

team during Asian tsunami in 2004, and this decision helped authorities to understand the situation faster, and to decide faster about evacuation, management and mental support (Huhtala & Hakala 2007, 181 - 201). Even if the municipalities would not accept the members of NGOs to the crisis management team, the communication between NGO and the crisis management should be solved in some other way.

Community approach can be explained as organizational behaviour to crisis management, and involving in other partners as equal members of the crisis management would strengthen the community resilience. It would also engage them to solve the crisis together.

All NGOs involved in this study - the Finnish Red Cross, Women's National Emergency Association and Voluntary Rescue Services - are experts in crisis management and could support municipalities with crisis training and crisis exercises, assist in crisis management, and provide crisis communication consultation. They do it in normal circumstances, too, and they do it directly to citizens. NGOs and municipalities could strengthen their relationship by deciding what kind of risk education is needed most in their own community, and then the proper NGO could arrange it. NGOs could also arrange special courses, training and crisis exercises for municipality personnel. Most NGOs have many volunteers listed, who could be useful not only in crisis response but also in crisis preparedness to support the communication about risks and related practical arrangements.

NGOs can be involved in crisis preparedness of municipalities, when their expertise is understood as useful. Many NGOs have a wide network and a deep understanding of different risks and crisis situations. One city in question had understood that it will need partners in crisis management and it had included NGOs as equal partners when managing crises. Proper crisis management has to include successful collaboration and coordination between different organizations, as is presented in the Crisis Communication Scorecard. From the point of view of both NGOs and municipalities, it would be important to have a common way of working and build mutual trust in the pre-crisis phase. When one has experienced collaboration, it becomes easier to work together in later cases also. Both, NGOs and municipalities, need to understand the organizational culture and way of working of the partner, and respect each other in it. Another key feature in utilizing the input of NGOs is the understanding that citizens are one of the municipality's most important stakeholder groups in crises.

According to the CERC model presented in the Frameworks section, the pre-crisis phase of crisis communication should include understanding of risk, public preparation for the possibility of an unfavourable event and empowerment of citizens (changes in

behaviour to reduce the likelihood of harm), warning messages, alliances and cooperation with agencies, organizations, and groups. The pre-crisis phase should furthermore include message development and testing, and gaining recommendations of experts and first responders. Many of those activities can be developed together with NGOs.

This list is comprehensive and it is not easy to fulfil it properly. It can be challenging to communicate about risks, as people perceive them in a very sensible and individual way. When thinking of all services and duties that municipalities have to offer, this would mean that many kind of risk messages to be communicated (e.g. through an all hazard approach). Naturally, there are some actors that already provide regular information related to influenza prevention, flood, storms and power outages.

All crises differ from each other and that's why crisis management always demands also creativity and flexibility (Tikka et al 2013, 67). How to get organized in a crisis is managed by plans, models, training and rehearsal and especially embedding this into the organization culture (Coombs 2007; Marra 1998; Tikka et al 2013, 67). The focus of crisis management needs to be on the (potential) victims, and other citizens affected, and their needs for information and (Tikka et al 2013, 127). Comfort, Ko and Zagorecki (2004, 306) mention three different kind of principles to support and help in crises: you can either act as blind, one at a time, or proactively together (Tikka et al 2013, 56). As mentioned by the interviewees, proactive cooperation had been implemented by two NGO offices with the local municipalities for several years with good results.

Conclusions from other studies show that if one wants to prepare thoroughly for crisis, the focus should be more on generic functions than detailed issues. The previous experiences about crisis can be accepted as a concrete exercise and a learning process being part of preparedness work. (Eriksson 2009.)

When NGOs are accepted as equal partners and possibly even consultants, this partnership can benefit both parties and create a win-win situation. Instead of managing stakeholders as NGOs and citizens, collaborating with them would be meaningful in crisis preparedness. The way to let the relationship develop is by communicating. The different parties then begin to understand that following common principles enhances the likelihood to succeed. Community resilience can be defined as a strategy for crisis readiness and it includes strengthening the relationships and networks in the community. (FEMA 2011.) Partners need to be in an equal position and where there are different duties and tasks for people in the network, there has to be a feeling that everyone's input is needed and appreciated.

7.3 Limitations and future research

The key point when making an interview is trust: the interviewer has to tell interviewees the purpose of the interview and protect their anonymity. It is also recommended that the interviewer should be interested in interviewee's answers and comments. In interviews the truth can also be limited, because the interviewees do not always say what they really mean or think.

According to Rastas (2005, 93) the researcher has to understand that besides the interviewee's opinions, also his/her own way to understand the topic is always influencing the interview situation and the material produced from the interview. This includes also the way how the interviewer takes into consideration the differences and similarities between the interviewee and herself/himself.

Due to these reasons there is no pure objectivity in research, especially in qualitative research. However, the main problem can be avoided when the researcher understands his/her role as a researcher who has power to influence on the research and the methods. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 16-17.)

Non-hypothesis in qualitative research means that the researcher does not have presumptions or hypothesis about the research topic or the results of it beforehand. Our observations are loaded with our previous experiences. However, these do not have to limit research actions. It has been recommended that the researcher should be surprised or learn something new during the research. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 19-20.) In order to make this happen, the researcher should be open minded when selecting the key findings from the material instead of noting only those matters about which one already has an opinion beforehand.

According to Eskola and Suoranta (2008, 21) the main part of the scientific study is composed from, so called, common sense and practical experiences and attitudes. Huberman (1987) estimates the ratio between science and "common sense" is 20/80 (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 21). In the interview analysis and interpretation, it can be difficult to separate one's own opinions from scientific views. Is it so that one has collected just those scientific frameworks believed in? In this study the researcher tried to be open minded and see the topic of the research from new perspective.

For future research, it would be useful to in greater depth investigate the role of NGOs in crisis preparedness especially in other types of NGOs. It could also be useful to investigate good examples of collaborative preparedness activities by a municipality

and NGOs. Another interesting study would be to interview municipality managers about risk management, crisis preparedness and the position of the communication function in their organisation in relation to developing social capital and collaboration with NGOs.

7.4 Implications for practice

There are several improvement actions which could be done in cooperation between municipalities and NGOs with the perspective of increasing mutual cooperation and communication on behalf of the citizens. Most representatives of one NGO recognized that both their local offices as well as the Central office could be more active when making the first contact with the other party (municipality) in the pre-crisis phase. When NGOs already have good experiences about cooperation in some areas, they could multiply this approach to other areas and support their local offices to contact the municipalities in their area. One way to build and maintain trust is through regular meetings (Lewis et al. 2010, 469). This is valid especially in the phase you have not yet worked together.

Preparations for crises are worthwhile even if those particular crises do not take place, with flexibility in mind: well done plans, training, self-assessment with the help of crisis communication scorecard can be utilized in different situations. By arranging these activities, insight in what it takes to create fast and cooperative communication will be increased, and through simulation crisis training the organization will better understand the value of communication.

The biggest challenge might be that municipalities have not found time and do not seem to find it important to concentrate on improving their crisis management. In the case of a crisis the municipality's social and welfare functions and the management group of the municipality are needed for crisis management, so at least those functions should be well prepared for crisis. Some helpful materials were cited in literature part of this study such as the Handbook for emergency planning in social services (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2008) and general directions for crisis management by the Municipality Association (kunnat.net 2009). Both of them emphasize NGOs as collaboration partners in crisis situations.

The Finnish Red Cross can be seen as a promising collaborator from the point of crisis management, as the third sector can nowadays be seen as an interesting partner from the point of view of municipalities and the state in today's tight economic circumstances. It has been proven that in crisis situations municipalities' resources often are not enough, but that there is a need for trained people to support in crisis

management (Tikka et al. 2010, 9-10.) Besides the Finnish Red Cross, there are also other NGOs recognized as having potential when supporting crisis preparedness and activities in other phases of crisis management.

However, efficient cooperation depends on several matters. It demands a common language in order to make sense of the technical jargon often used as well as a shared working culture, as not all potential participants, for example, are used to make fast decisions. It also requires clear structures and protocols to define roles and tasks, and facilitate the coordination of communication activities. Training and simulations prepare organisations for the exceptional division of labour and changing roles and responsibilities that characterize highly uncertain situations. (Ulmer et al. 2007; Palttala & Vos 2011, 40.)

The recommendations provided in this chapter can lead to an approach closer to the ideal of high quality crisis communication as described in, for example, the CERC model, where the timeliness of communication, an active response to first warning signals and a human way to inform residents are all taken into account. The NGO volunteers can support municipalities in these situations, especially when the cooperation and collaboration have already been established and agreed on before the crisis. Following common principles will enhance the likelihood to succeed in crisis management.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TOTAL WORKING MODEL OF CERC (REYNOLDS & SEEGER 2005, 52-53)

1. **Pre-crisis (Risk Messages; Warning; Preparations)**

Communication and education campaigns targeted to both the public and the response community to facilitate:

- Monitoring and recognition of emerging risks
- General public understanding of risk
- Public preparation for the possibility of an adverse event
- Changes in behavior to reduce the likelihood of harm (self-efficacy)
- Specific warning messages regarding some eminent threat
- Alliances and cooperation with agencies, organizations, and groups
- Development of consensual recommendations by experts and first responders
- Message development and testing for subsequent stages

2. **Initial Event (Uncertainty Reduction; Self-efficacy; Reassurance)**

Rapid communication to the general public and to affected groups seeking to establish:

- a. Empathy, reassurance, and reduction in emotional turmoil
- b. Designated crisis/agency spokespersons and formal channels and methods of communication
- c. General and broad-based understanding of the crisis circumstances, consequences, and anticipated outcomes based on available information
- d. Reduction of crisis-related uncertainty
- e. Specific understanding of emergency management and medical community responses
- f. Understanding of self-efficacy and personal response activities (how/where to get more information)

3. **Maintenance (Ongoing Uncertainty Reduction; Self-efficacy; Reassurance)**

Communication to the general public and to affected groups seeking to facilitate:

- More accurate public understandings of ongoing risks
- Understanding of background factors and issues
- Broad-based support and cooperation with response and recovery efforts

- Feedback from affected publics and correction of any misunderstandings/rumors
 - Ongoing explanation and reiteration of self-efficacy and personal response activities (how/where to get more information) begun in Stage 2
 - Informed decision making by the public based on understanding of risks/benefits
4. **Resolution (Updates Regarding Resolution; Discussions about Cause and New Risks/New Understandings of Risk)**
Public communication and campaigns directed toward the general public and affected groups seeking to:
- a. Inform and persuade about ongoing clean-up, remediation, recovery, and rebuilding efforts
 - b. Facilitate broad-based, honest, and open discussion and resolution of issues regarding cause, blame, responsibility, and adequacy of response
 - c. Improve/create public understanding of new risks and new understanding of risks as well as new risk avoidance behaviors and response procedures
 - d. Promote the activities and capabilities of agencies and organizations to reinforce positive corporate identity and image
5. **Evaluation (Discussions of Adequacy of Response; Consensus About Lessons and New Understandings of Risks)**
Communication directed toward agencies and the response community to:
- Evaluate and assess responses, including communication effectiveness
 - Document, formalize, and communicate lessons learned
 - Determine specific actions to improve crisis communication and crisis response capability
 - Create linkages to pre-crisis activities (Stage 1)
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APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES (CITIES)

First, the themes of crisis and crisis communication have to be defined, e.g. crisis is sudden situation, when information needs of citizens will increase and the crisis can't be controlled totally by the organization itself. Something bad has already happened, but the situation will be worse, if the organization does not react to it. Crisis communication is connected to crisis management and it is faster communication than in everyday situations. Communication is understood as strategic task. If crisis communication fails, crisis management will fail, too. The questions are here translated from Finnish into English.

1. Background information about the interviewee

- a. Job title/responsibility area
- b. Position in the organization (e.g. does she/he belong to the management group of the municipality, who does she/he report to)
- c. Have you been involved in some crisis as communication officer/manager? Please describe to me in what kind of crisis and what did you do in the crisis?
- d. What kind of crises have there been in your municipality or in the neighborhood during the last five years?

2. Crisis preparedness of the municipality in question

- a. Does your organization have a crisis communication plan?
- b. Does it include different units of your organization, too, or do they have their own plans (e.g. education, health and social welfare, culture and motion)? (ask for copies)
- c. What kind of target groups does your crisis communication plan include?
- d. Do you have also statutory preparedness plan?
- e. How do these two plans (crisis communication plan and statutory preparedness plan) differ from each other?
- f. What do they have in common?
- g. When have you drawn up these plans?
- h. How often do you update these plans?
- i. How often does your organization have preparedness simulation training concerning crises?
- j. What kind of simulation do you have and do you participate yourself in these trainings?
- k. Has your organization done risk analysis?

- 3. Municipalities' stakeholders (especially NGOs) in normal circumstances and in crisis circumstances**
- a. Have you listed in your crisis communication plan also different NGOs and community groups which could support your organization both in normal conditions and crisis situations (e.g. The Red Cross, sport associations, the church etc.)?
 - b. Have you decided who in your organization are responsible for cooperation to NGOs (both to start cooperation and maintain the relationships)?
 - c. Do those who are responsible for cooperation with these NGOs have the contact information of NGO'S personnel to be used at once if needed fast?
 - d. Have you agreed what communication channels do you use with these organizations (NGOs) both in normal conditions and in crisis situations?
 - e. Have you listed what kind of cooperation would be need from NGOs during crisis (e.g. manpower, facilities, psychosocial support, communication activities)?
 - f. Have you clarified if the support NGO's is free of charge?
 - g. If you do not have these organizations mentioned in your plans, do you have cooperation with some of them in everyday conditions?
4. What kind of support would you need in crisis circumstances from volunteers like NGOs?
5. Are the stakeholders mentioned in your crisis communication plan adequate? Should there be more of them? Why?
6. What kind of challenges have you had when cooperating with NGOs? Why? How could you solve these kind challenges?
7. If you were cooperated more with NGOs what could probably be most challenging to work with them (both in normal circumstances and in crisis circumstances? Why? What would help you to solve these challenges?
8. What would you personally see the most challenging when thinking of your organization's preparedness for crises? Why?

APPENDIX 2 (CONT.): QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWEES OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NGOS

1. Background information about the interviewee:
 - a. Name, job title, responsibility area
 - b. What are the targets (vision, strategy) of your organization?
 - c. What kind of organization structure do you have in Finland? How wide is your organization in Finland?
 - d. Is your organization committed to e.g. some political principles?
 - e. Are you involved in your job in cooperation with municipalities?
 - f. How well do you know special features of public sector's (ministries, police and rescue forces, municipalities) crisis communication?
 - g.
2. Has your organization had a role in some municipalities' risk management or pre-crisis communication activities?
3. If you have been involved in municipalities' pre-crisis activities what kind of role have you had and what has it included? *e.g. training, courses, manpower, facilities*
4. What kind of experiences do you have about cooperation with the municipalities both in crisis circumstances and in pre-crisis situations (normal conditions, risk management conditions)?
5. How could you develop cooperation and mutual understanding in pre-crisis situations with the municipalities?
6. What would be the most important things (max. three things) in successful cooperation with municipalities?

APPENDIX 3: MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS AND SUPPORTING RESCUE SERVICES OF VOLUNTARY RESCUE SERVICES (VAPEPA)

Member Associations

Autoliitto www.autoliitto.fi
 Finlands Svenska Marthaförbund www.marthaforbundet.fi
 Folkhälsan www.folkhalsan.fi
 Johanniitat www.johanniitat.fi
 Maa- ja kotitalousnaisten Keskus www.maajakotitalousnaiset.fi
 Maanpuolustuskoulutusyhdistys (MPK) www.mpky.fi
 Maanpuolustuskiltojen liitto www.mpkl.fi
 Maanpuolustusnaisten liitto
 Mannerheimin Lastensuojeluliitto www.mll.fi
 Marttaliitto www.martat.fi
 Metsästäjäin keskusjärjestö www.riista.fi
 NADA-Suomi/Finland ry www.nada.fi
 Reserviläisliitto www.reservilaisliitto.fi
 SF-Caravan www.karavaanarit.fi
 Suomen Kylätoiminta www.kylatoiminta.fi
 Sukeltajaliitto www.sukeltaja.fi
 Suomen Lentopelastusseura www.lentopelastus.fi
 Suomen Latu www.suomenlatu.fi
 Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu www.slu.fi
 Suomen Meripelastusseura www.meripelastus.fi
 Suomen Metsästäjäliitto www.metsastajaliitto.fi
 Suomen Mielenterveysseura www.mielenterveysseura.fi
 Suomen Moottoriliitto www.moottoriliitto.fi
 Suomen Palveluskoiraliitto www.palveluskoiraliitto.fi
 Suomen Partiolaiset www.partio.fi
 Suomen Pelastusalan Keskusjärjestö www.spek.fi
 Suomen Pelastuskoiraliitto www.pelastuskoiraliitto.fi
 Suomen Punainen Risti www.punainenristi.fi
 Suomen Radioamatööriliitto www.sral.fi
 Suomen Reserviupseeriliitto www.rul.fi
 Suomen Rauhanturvaajaliitto ry www.rauhanturvaajaliitto.fi
 Suomen Suunnistusliitto ry www.suunnistusliitto.fi Suomen Taksiliitto
www.taksiliitto.fi
 Suomen Tiepalvelumiehet www.tiepalvelumiehet.fi
 Suomen Tiepalvelumiesliitto r.y.
 Suomen Työväen Urheiluliitto www.tul.fi
 Suomen Uimaopetus- ja hengenpelastusliitto www.suh.fi
 Suomen Veneilyliitto www.veneilyliitto.fi

WWF www.wwf.fi

Supporting associations

Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto www.ek.fi

Naisten Valmiusliitto www.naistenvalmiusliitto.fi

Suomen Naisjärjestöjen Keskusliitto www.naisjarjestojenkeskusliitto.fi

Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö www.sak.fi

Suomen Humanitaarisen Oikeuden Seura

Suomen Kuntaliitto www.kuntaliitto.fi

Suomen Lääkäriliitto www.laakariliitto.fi

Suomen Osuuskauppojen Keskuskunta www.s-kanava.net

Tapio www.tapio.net

Työturvallisuuskeskus www.tyoturva.fi

APPENDIX 4: THE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ASSOCIATION

The rural women's advisory organization

Finnish defense guild's federation

Maanpuolustusnaisten liitto ry

Reservien Upseerien naisten perinneliitto ry

The federation of women veterans in Finland

Soldier's home organization

Suomen lottaperinneliitto ry

The Finnish national rescue association (SPEK)