



CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES



Save the Children

ABRUZZO
EARTHQUAKE
RESPONSE

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 **Save the Children**
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PREFACE

Due to wars, conflicts or natural disasters, about 300 million children are victims of particular events where their fundamental rights fail. For years, Save the Children has been working to support them, and many programs have been developed to guarantee children's protection in emergency contexts, both nationally and internationally. In particular, **"Child Friendly Spaces"** have been created to put into effect the principles and approaches of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** to pursue the five protection priorities defined inside the document: **"Save the Children Child Protection in Emergencies: Priorities, Principles and Practices"**.

More specifically, the right to protection from physical harm, psychosocial distress, family separation, recruitment into armed forces or armed groups and exploitation and gender-based violence. The Child Friendly Spaces provide children with a safe environment where they can take part to playing, socializing, educational activities and where they can express themselves during a process of life rebuilding. Just as the adults, children and adolescents need to perceive a structure, a purpose and a meaning for their own life.

The on field-experience suggests that by creating adequately familiar structures and habits, children and adolescents have a positive psychological response both during and after the emergency, achieving a sense of normality, despite all the upheavals and changes around them.

The intervention conducted in four tent cities in L'Aquila and surrounding areas contributed to this return to normality and, through a variety of psychosocial and educational activities, intended to guarantee as much as possible the development and the involvement of children and adolescents, who joined our Child Friendly Spaces from April to October.



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monkey
= always
butterfly
= FLA
a ball
warning danger
morning
July
day
tomorrow
to sleep
a small



INTRODUCTION

Just after the earthquake on 6th April 2009 which hit the city of L'Aquila and other nearby districts, **Save the Children Italy** decided to intervene by opening a CFS (Child Friendly Space) inside four tent cities¹ in order to give support to children and adolescents, providing them with a physical space where to be welcomed, involved and protected in all their rights, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In particular, by following a protocol adopted by **Save the Children Alliance** in emergency contexts, the staff immediately had to identify and implement a range of different psychosocial, recreational and, in a second time, educational activities for children and adolescents in the tent cities built by the Civil Protection for the homeless population. This was the first experience for Save the Children Italy in the management of an emergency in its own Country.

Actually, this handbook wants to be a precious tool for operators, volunteers and all those people who, in a national emergency, have to face the same harsh situations and to start activities and games involving children and adolescents. This not only by filling up their post-event free time with “entertaining” activities but also actively contributing in re-establishing a condition of “normality”. It is also essential to create conditions where children and young people can experiment new forms of sociality and community, find psychosocial support, reactivate or re-discover their skills or abilities, learn, share and participate. Acting promptly in an emergency can obviously be complex since many details are often considered just in a second time. Save the Children's team immediately tried to develop a recreational and educational program that, despite the limitations due to the situation and to the needs connected to tent city life, was as much as possible close to the pedagogical and educational method offered by the Convention – and clearly – sharing this approach with the operators who directly interacted with children and adolescents, helping them to simplify the organization of every single activity. In addition to a short training and to the sharing of guidance material, we have created some guidelines for the realization of a daily and weekly planning inside the “Child Friendly Spaces”.

The activities we offer are the result of a methodology more and more adopted and based on the respect of the fundamental principles inside the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The activities also focus on the experience and knowledge of the local cultures and habits that operators manage to keep and share with children and adolescents joining the tents, as well as with their parents and the community represented in the tent city. The activities offered are those actually realized inside the camps of L'Aquila, taking inspiration not only from clues found by operators and team within games and educational activity handbooks or from elements experimented in different situations, but also from the local context. We therefore believe it is important to keep these elements into account, specifically in the Italian earthquake emergency context, so as to come back to a “normality” situation soon.

Photo: Save the Children





PART ONE

Practical devices,
organizational and
methodological
advices

1.1 Participatory approach

Save the Children, in its emergency interventions, adopts a participatory rather than welfare approach, in the belief that in this way the intervention can be sustainable and proceed in the long term.

To this end, Save the Children tries to facilitate the inclusion of the community and to avoid the unwillingness and the loss of trust in the future. This by involving the different subjects in the realization of the activities: the first addressees (girls, boys and adolescents), their families and/or those in charge of specific functions inside the tent cities (responsible for the kitchen and the canteen, camp chiefs, etc.) It is not all about keeping the children and adolescents “busy”, but also identifying - with their very help - those activities which may help them recovering and sometimes discovering the competences and skills that children can not carry out anymore, for example, at school because of the emergency.

Consequently, it is important to create opportunities for children and adolescents, both boys and girls, to experiment cooperative forms of socialization or to rebuild emotional bonds with their peers or with adults, inevitably changed by traumatic events. Indeed, they will not necessarily find their schoolmates, friends or neighbors inside the camps, hence, most of their relationships will have to be rebuilt from scratch.

1.2 Goals and general principles for the planning and realization of activities

In this perspective, we have identified objectives and general principles that we believe – six months work experience can confirm it – should be shared with people designing and implementing the activities addressed to children and adolescents.

- **Principle of participation in the definition and management of the activities.**

This by choosing the times and ways which allow the addressees of the activities to take part in the decision making and organization process, selecting themes, rules and materials used in the realization of activities. It is important to work with and not only for the children. This becomes essential especially when dealing with adolescents, who generally tend to manage their time independently.

- **Principle of non-discrimination and principle of inclusion: that is taking into account gender differences, potential personal difficulties, different competences (linguistic, for example, in the case there are children from foreign families), possible disabilities, etc.**

This is essential in the planning and realization of all the activities so that no one is excluded *a priori* and everyone can take part to them according to his/her will, without being forced. The experience in the tent cities showed us how each child and adolescent has his/her own personality and, in situations of deep difficulty, as in case of an earthquake, he/she has different ways and times to react. It is also difficult to find a dimension inside the new spaces created inside the tent city (the life inside the tent, the meals in the common canteen, the toilet queue, the school inside a tent, etc.). Different are also the ways to create and re-establish the relationships with both peers and adults.

The activities proposed, should also take into account these differences and for their organization, they should have a sort of flexibility and adaptability so that all children and adolescents can take part to them according to their availability and capabilities. It becomes essential to take care of the roles that each of them can assume, the tasks they can deal with, the real possibility to contribute and to succeed, avoiding situations of both competitiveness and frustration caused by the fact that the child or adolescent cannot do any of the activities proposed.

- **Right of expression and attentive management of the relationships among young people** and between operators and young people.

This translates into a facilitating communication inside the group so that everyone has the chance to express himself/herself and to make sure that everybody's identity is respected, helping mechanisms of cooperation among peers and avoiding situations of competitiveness.

If it is important to take care and encourage the relationship among peers, by avoiding and preventing situations of conflict or by helping the young people to deal with possible conflicts, the relationships among adults and peers has to be monitored and managed consciously too.

Adults, educators, operators and entertainers play a specific and important role and they are likely to be considered as key figures from the young people taking part to the activities. Therefore, it is important to take a specific care in the language used, in behaviors that might not be fully appropriate to children (as it can be smoking inside or near spaces dedicated to the activities). Attention should also be paid, by those who run and manage the activities, to the respect of the same rules they shared and they are willing to transmit to any participant: punctuality, right management of materials and respect of both playground and surrounding environment, honesty in relationships, capability in not discriminating but respecting other people's rights, etc. One might consider these as obvious prerequisites, though the everyday life experienced inside the tent cities, together with all the discomfort of the camp life itself, frenetic times and the continuous emergencies or issues to face, make everything so easy to forget. That is why, it is essential to keep in mind that, for young people, good behaviors and coherence of adults are worth a thousand words and recommendations, often even more than the rules shared and showed on posters on display. If at the end of the project - just to offer a real example, the "Child Friendly Space" tents were still intact, comfortable and rich in games and materials, it is definitively thanks to the fact that the operators had realized, at a certain point, the importance of managing and organizing the space and the surrounding area. This happened through the involvement of young people in cleaning up activities as integral and natural part of the time spent together.

- **Taking care of the relationship with the community**, facilitating the communication and the exchange of information as a kind of constant report so as to receive suggestions and observations about what realized in the camp with children and adolescents. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of both functions and peculiarities of the space dedicated to children, should be strengthened together with possible collaborations inside the tent cities.

As a matter of fact, we experimented the importance of not isolating children and teenagers from their context that, though deeply changed, it is still present even in case of an earthquake. Children and young people were more willing to take part to activities having a real meaning and not only finalized to a simple temporary entertainment. In some cases, it was essential to propose workshops which allowed them exploring the spaces of the camp, creating useful or decorative items ("house numbers" for the tents) or helping in establishing solid relationships with important figures in

the new everyday life (managers of the kitchen and canteen, for example) or with preexisting figures (managers of sport associations, small bars, etc.).

In practice, this can be translated into:

- regular gatherings with children's and adolescents' families taking part in the activities;
- attendance to the meetings in the camp and contact with other representatives and actors (managers of the kitchen, services, camp manager, etc.) in order to receive useful information to communicate to young people or to coordinate the activities;
- contact and relations with the camp representatives for the planning and realization of community activities such as theatre plays, children periodicals, creation of objects useful for the camp (signs, decorative accessories, streets name and tents numbers), kitchen activities, etc.

1.3 Organizational advices for the activity planning

To all these main and general points, we added more organizational ones with the aim of better planning the activities. They are listed as suggestions to be followed in order to have a clear picture of the key points.

- **Proposing different activities according to the age group and, when possible, having two separated times or spaces.**

It is possible that older children decide to take part, manage and work together for the management and realization of different activities, which is important for the acknowledgment of their active role, the organization of cross activities, and for the development of emotional bonds as well.

- **Proposing different activities (creative, sportive, manual, reflexive, etc.), trying to guarantee a certain organization and continuity, avoiding a merely daily, improvised and short-lived planning.**

In an already complex situation, where the day times have been changed by the events, offering some regularity, a normal schedule of what is planned for the week, can help children and teenagers in defining their tasks and in rebuilding a normal routine, useful to take control of the personal balances. This is essential especially when the school fails and children and young people have to reorganize their time. Obviously, the planning, even if structured, has to be flexible. This in order to be readapted according to the needs and potential critical situations: from the bad weather to the necessity to move the space activities to another place or area of the camp; but above all when children and adolescents have some difficulties in taking part to the activities, suggesting new ones.

In different moments, there can be the need to talk and discuss about issues and subjects concerning the new everyday life or one's feelings, but also the need to have a less structured and freer moment.

- **Proposing significant and relevant activities to the beneficiaries, according to different age and gender, context, cultural references, habits and pre-emergency situation.**

It is also important that children, specifically teenagers or pre-adolescents, perceive the sense, the relevance of what they are offered without thinking it as a mere way to "keep them busy". It is therefore essential to transmit them the feeling that games and workshops are a chance to learn, create, express oneself and process their experience. Activities should also be



Photo: Luciano Zaneccchia/Save the Children

conceived as an opportunity to meet other people (also outside the camp), to contribute in some ways to the camp life or, at least, to the group life (for example, manufacturing useful items or creating entertainment activities addressed to those who live in the camp, etc.). The direct involvement of young people in the scheduling and discussion of the activities is therefore crucial since they are the main actors in this process, able to contribute to the decisions about what to do and how to do it.

- **Enhancing and promoting creativity.**

This because it meets the general goals described above and also because children and adolescents can often be a precious source of practical suggestions leading to unexpected developments, though always close to their actual needs and/or wishes. After the identification of some of the main activities² for the planning of a weekly and bi-weekly scheduling and considering what has been said, the following indications are aimed at providing the operators managing the spaces and times dedicated to children and adolescents with simple practical suggestions.

A kind of check list or useful reminder for those who experience complex situation and who operate in adverse conditions, where taking into account multiple variables and unexpected factors is the only strategy.

Creative/manual activities

(painting, drawing, realization of items for the decoration of common spaces and playing areas, use of recycled material, etc.):

- adopting a participatory methodology to identify one theme (or different themes) to work on;
- sharing and making the goals of proposed activities and possible outcomes explicit. That is, for example, the creation of an object one may use again for another game, an useful object for the community, the decoration of a space or of something personal, etc.
- respecting times and tasks so that the participants can manage to complete the whole productive process in a defined span of time, since the activity has a beginning and an end or separate times, such as, for example, divided sessions over the week.
- having adequate and available materials that participants can freely choose from.
- knowing the proposed technique (drawing, painting, etc.) in order to manage and guide the work, answering to possible questions, etc.

Communicative activities or activities aimed at developing/recovering specific abilities and public awareness

(movie discussion, press review, children's periodical editing, creation of a blog, photography, videos, theatre workshops, etc.).

- adopting an active methodology in the identification of one or more themes to work on and in the negotiation on everybody's responsibilities and tasks, especially for those activities where the collaboration among the participants is essential, as for the creation or the editing of children's periodicals, blogs or for the realization of a show, etc.
- sharing and making the activity goals explicit inside the group of participants (personal acknowledge, realization of materials useful for the group and/or the community).
- giving the production times and splitting the work in realistic and consequential phases, avoiding possible failures and uncompleted processes.

- giving clear and realistic objectives, so that everyone can have an adequate role, thanks to diversification and to the possibility that everyone can take part to the activities according his/her possibilities and intentions. Avoiding impossible tasks or competitive situations.
- having sufficient and adequate materials.
- mastering the themes proposed (for example, films topics, traditions, etc.), in order to adequately answer to any question.
- promoting what is realized and created inside the group and when possible outside, through the involvement of other actors inside the community or whoever may be precious in the given context or for the group of participants, such as the school, other specific targets, etc.

Sport activities

- adopt a participatory methodology in the identification of the sports to play and in the setting of the game rules/ turns, etc.
- take care of the organization (by verifying the accessibility to the place, definition of timetables, etc.).
- avoiding any exclusion in the activity, making it accessible to anyone according to gender, age group, specific interests, etc.
- promoting the relationships and the team development, avoiding any individual or team competition mechanisms.
- strengthening trust and self-confidence of each member.
- verifying the possibility and the interest in doing the same activity over the time or, instead, replacing it with other sport activities.
- evaluating the possible involvement of the community or of other groups of teenage boys and girls from other camps by organizing small competitions or by identifying a common gathering area in order to encourage normal interpersonal relationships which failed with the creation of tent cities (for example, class mates divided in different camps or unable to meet because of the school's closure, etc.).

Recreational activities not necessarily structured

(free games, team games, board games, trips, outings, etc.)

- adopting a participatory and inclusive methodology, facilitating, for example, the negotiation and the sharing of game rules or the space management where children and kids can play, as well as the materials that can be used.
- this can be made remembering that, even if activities and moments are not structured, the adult is always there ready to intervene when needed.
- having adequate materials and spaces that children and kids can easily, independently and safely access to.

A weekly planning example of interchanging activities, according to different user groups is listed below:

1. Manual and creative activities	Twice a week (more times for younger children)
2. Communicative activity (e.g. photography)	Once a week
3. Communicative activity (e.g. Cineforum)	Once a week
4. Communicative activity also to the outside (e.g. blog and/or children's periodical)	Twice a week
5. Sport/recreation /open air activities	2/3 times a week
6. Creative and communicative activity (writing, music, nursery rhymes, fairy tale workshops, etc.)	Once a week (more times for the children)

1.4 Choosing activities according to the moment: from severe emergency to post emergency

Having clear methodology and objectives, ensuring that operators working with children and adolescents are aware of and familiar with them, should be a valid prerequisite in every working environment.

Anyway, one should keep in mind that during an emergency there are different moments and phases to be considered, also when choosing the activities to propose. Times and ways are therefore important also for the planning of more structured and freer moments, managed independently by the participants. The table below shows the common reactions to an emergency suggesting the activities to do³.



Photo: Save the Children

PHASE	COMMON REACTIONS IN CHILDREN	APPOPRIATE AND RECEPTIVE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT
<p>Phase 1 Acute emergency outbreak (first two days).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torpidity, shock and confusion. • Feeling that what happened “is not real. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure and comfort (first psychological assistance).⁴ • Promote culturally appropriate rituals for the process of painful events. • Help the access to the information on the catastrophe and on the subsequent humanitarian commitment. • Find and take care of lonely children.
<p>Phase 2 Reactions in the first three or four weeks; ongoing rescue operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense pain, horror, rage or mood swings. • Need to do productive activities in a safe environment where to process the painful events. • Try to give a sense to what happened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread the information on common reactions to unexpected situations (involvement of social leaders). • Find and communicate what the adults can do to support their children and come back, when possible, to any kind of everyday life activities. • Remember that most of the people generally recover over a natural course of time. • Start with children games and activities according to their reactions and needs (see the manual Games and Activities). • Rapidly involve the children in the organization of activities inside the Child Friendly Spaces. • Allow the free play and some open sessions, aiming to order, organization and predictability. • Provide children with basic psychosocial information and carry out some simple exercises to overcome the critical phase. • Start recreational activities.
<p>Phase 3 From three to four weeks until the stop of the activity inside the Child Friendly Space (it can be a period of three months or more in some particular situations).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loss of loved ones starts to “be assimilated” and one tries to understand the sequence of the events and how these will affect the future of the family. • Some children isolate from the others. • Others are in a deep need and are able to take part to concrete activities with an objective which allow them to succeed (though partially) in the improvement of their individual or collective conditions (it could be an assistance/development activity). • Try to take back control of one’s life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer recreational and physical activities. • Offer drama activities, expressive drawing, painting, games with psychological purposes. • Offer art activities and manual works. • Offer cultural activities. • Consciousness and educational activities. • Gradually add activities to stimulate the concentration and facilitate the hope for a better future and relaxation. • Active involvement of communities and parents. • Support and encourage caregivers and adults. • Organize gatherings with caregivers or open days to help them discuss, share and exchange experiences and to spread the information on the reactions of their children and how they can support them. • Encourage without imposing the training of community groups.



PART TWO

Some of
the activities
carried out
inside the
tent cities



2.1 Self-attendance and calendar

Beneficiaries:

children between 4 and 6 years old.

Materials:

colorful cardboards, glue, scissors, markers, tacks or small placeholder for the calendar.

Objectives:

during the self-attendance, the children learn to identify their peers by memorizing the name and the physical characteristics of each other. The calendar facilitates the time orientation in a contest where temporal references are altered. These two activities have been the starting “rituals” of the day, giving the children a sense of regularity and welcoming feeling.

Realization:

the self-attendance was initially realized by painting a tree. On it, some pockets with the written names of each boy and girl were attached. Successively, some personalized cards were realized. On the one hand, the name written in green represented the presence of the child inside the tent, on the other, the name in red, represented his/her absence.

At the beginning of the day, the cards were distributed on the table randomly. Each child had to recognize his name and put it into the pocket, keeping in mind that the green one represented his/her presence.

Attending children were given the task to fill up the pocket of the absent children, by putting the card on the side where the name was in red.

The older children realized a calendar every month. Each morning they had to identify the day of the week, number and month, putting a tack on it. A nursery rhyme or a children’s song accompanied this moment.

2.2 Fairy tale workshop 1: “From the narration to the play”

Beneficiaries:

children between 4 and 10 years old.

Materials:

a bell or a noisemaker to announce the start and the end of the workshop; both classic and modern fairy tales books, Italian or not; a rain stick (or another acoustic instrument) to accompany the opening nursery rhyme; different clothes, items and accessories to create costumes for the play; a puppet or a marionette to accompany the children in the different phases; paper and color for drawing.

Objectives:

the fairy tale is an expressive, educational and affective way to accompany the children through the complex development process and it is also a theme/object which facilitates the listening, expressive and sharing dynamics inside the little group. Thanks to their allusive power, fairy tales offer a reality, which is not definitive, but can transform itself according to children’s creativity and imagination. They also facilitate the transmission of teaching and messages, which can be “useful” in a complex and difficult context, as the one caused by an emergency. The use of a fairy tale can have a reassuring and controlling character, but it also enables children to

transpose the reality of everyday life into different perceptions, expressing themselves directly, revealing their past and emotions through the characters, etc.

Specifically, the activity was aimed to:

- promote the development of the imaginative area;
- stimulate an intellectual curiosity for the reading and the school education;
- strengthen the personal identity;
- prevent the psychological distress following a traumatic event;
- promote the relationship with the other - child and adult;
- facilitate the capacity to be subject to the rules.

Realization:

the workshop was divided into different phases. Each meeting is opened by a nursery rhyme that the children perform sitting in circle together with the presenter, all accompanied by the sound of the rain stick. Then, the narration of a fairy tale starts. At the end of the story, the presenter asks the children some open questions to facilitate the elaboration of the fairy tale subjects and the cognitive acquisition of the opposite good-bad, in-out, etc. Then, a dramatic representation of the story with the identification of the children in the characters follows. In this way, children have the chance to experience different roles and to learn behavioral strategies, adequate to different situations. The closure ritual (nursery rhyme and sound) marks the end of the first part of the workshop. Then, children are finally invited to express, through drawings, what they liked the most about the meeting.



Photo: Save the Children

2.3 Fairy tale workshop 2: “listen and create”

Beneficiaries:

children between 5 and 10 years old.

Materials:

carpets, pillows, fairy tales books, fairy tale box, voice recorder, posters, colors.

Objectives:

the fairy tale workshop “Listen and create” was carried out with the aim to put the children in contact with the reading and to stimulate, inside the little group, the listening skills, the elaboration of contents and meanings in the fairy tale, facilitating at the same time, creativeness and imagination. The listening of the narrative voice and the chance to invent other endings and characters also helped both the collaboration and sharing.

Realization:

in an early phase of the project, thanks to the donations given by schools and children, a considerable number of children’s book was gathered; that allowed the workshop to start. The activity was conducted inside a library built in the camp, conveniently set up with pillows and carpets, to make it a welcoming, safe and pleasant place for the children. Once the group of boys and girls was formed, the operators started with the reading of the fairy tales selected according to different subjects and later invited the participants to invent alternative ends or new characters. The workshop ended with the realization of drawings, posters and/or with the recording of alternative endings invented by the children, then listened again in group.

2.4 Creative play room: creation of games to play in the tent city

Beneficiaries:

from 5 years old and older; with some foresights.

Materials:

recycling materials, wood, cardboard, elastic bands, temperas, colorful posters, dice, glue, scissors, nails, hammer.

Objectives:

this activity, which is more similar to a workshop, was aimed mainly to involve children and adolescents in the planning and realization of games to play inside the spaces dedicated to them in their spare time during the day.

With the realization of the games, they tried especially to:

- facilitate the participation in the choice of the games to realize, as well as for the identification of everybody’s tasks, according to a collaborative approach;
- facilitate the debate and dialogue by allowing a common reconstruction and re-elaboration of the reality and of the past connected to the earthquake and to the new life conditions in the tent city;
- promote, through the game, a positive and constructive approach, thanks to the involvement of the participants on different levels (emotional, rational, manual and creative), in the attempt to create recreational.

Some of the games realized

TENTOPOLY

Tentopoly, from the Italian word “Tendopoli” (tent city) is an ironic and contextualized reinterpretation of the well-known game “Monopoly”.

The rules of the game are the same but the setting is different.

The pieces of the players are moved on a board where names, moves to make, buildings to buy, all refer to the tent cities where Save the Children operated or to the places hit by the earthquake (buildings and roads) with specific references to the places where the camp and the CFS was built.

As for the original game, “Tendopoly” can be played by boys and girls **aged eight or older**. Children of the same age group have been involved in its realization as well.

Realization:

the creation of the game began from an attentive analysis of the “Monopoly” board, by starting to hypothesize, in group, how the name of the places, the “Chance” and the “Community Chest” could possibly be replaced. Through debates and discussions, a correlation between places and things to do related to the camp life was created according to the moves of the original game. Once the parameters of the new version were determined, the board was redefined by writing and drawing all the boxes and the well-known cards “Chance” and “Community Chest”. To realize all this, recycling materials (colorful cards), but also original pieces from the game, like pieces, houses and hotels repainted for the occasion, were used. All colors markers and scotch tape were anyway essential for the making of the new pieces. During the realization of the game many activities were added by stimulating the children in the choice, and therefore, valorization of the places hit by the earthquake (consciousness), by making them work with recycling materials (awareness) and by involving them in artistic-manual group activities. “Tendopoly” turned out to be a good board game one could play with during the free time inside the tent.

OCA-MPO GAME (GAME OF THE GOOSE)

As for the “Tendopoly” game, by using the same workshop methodologies, the game of the Goose, (Gioco dell’Oca, in Italian), readapted to the Abruzzo emergency context, was also realized. The “Oca-mpo” game keeps the technical characteristics of the original game, though placed in a specifically realized cardboard, where one can find places and symbols related to the tent city context or to the area where it was built. Once the new cardboard was planned and realized, the players built personalized pieces in a creative way, using colors and other materials. This game, technically easier than “Tendopoly”, is addressed to boys and girls **aged five or older** though it was realized by children **aged 8 and older**.

WATER TABLE FOOTBALL

(Created in collaboration with the Italian Association *Ludobus-ALI per giocare*). The game is for children **aged 5 or older**.

Children aged 10 years and older divided the construction tasks according to the difficulty. The water table football is a game where two players, by using water nebulizers, challenge each other on a woody field specifically built, where a Ping-Pong ball rolls from one side to the other. The aim of the game is to score as more goals as possible on the rival goal post, pushing the ball with the splashes of water from the nebulizers.

PART TWO

Realization:

recycled wood, easily recoverable from the materials and wastes used for the setting up of the facilities inside the tent city, was used for the realization of the table football. Then it was used a wood board of 80 cm of width and 110 cm of length as well as some 5 cm edges applied around the whole field to delimit the goal posts. Dimensions are approximate since the table football can only be realized according to the materials available. The four corners of the game field were filled up with small triangle-shaped pieces of wood to avoid the ball could stop in the corners. It was essential to treat the wood with a waterproofing flatting, which allowed us to color it as we wished and, above all, to make it waterproof! In our specific case, children measured, cut, varnished and nailed the table football, realizing a game which was successively used also in group activities. Such activity is also considered as an attempt to reevaluate old historical games of the country..

RIGHTS HUNT

As one may guess by the name, it is a treasure hunt where the challenges to overcome are structured according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The realization of this game has different goals and, within the recreational context of the “treasure hunt”, it offers the participants different educational, creative and awareness activities. These activities put the participants in the conditions to know the rights of the child and the related Convention; actions to sensitize to the respect for environment or to the respect for their playing spaces; activities which help the exercise, the collaboration, etc. In some competitions, we focused on more scholastic skills and on the children’s knowledge, asking them, for example, to write a poem of twelve verses in rhyming couplet on the “water” theme. Moreover, in addition to the possibility to use the “hunt” as a container for different recreational-educational proposals, this game involves children and adolescents of different ages. This also allows them to live the physical space of the tent city in a different way: a living place becomes a place to explore, a place to find a “treasure” in, that is, something stimulating.

Photo: Save the Children



Realization:

here is how we proceeded to the realization of the “Rights Hunt”: after having selected, together with the operators, the UNCRC articles that could be “translated” into competitions inside the tent city, we created some cardboards with the texts of the CRC article and the competitions to go through. Once completed, the cardboards were hidden inside the camp. Then the teams of children and adolescents (between 7 and 17 years old) were formed, while some riddles allowed to find the places where the cardboards with different competition were, placed. Having teams with children and adolescents of different ages was due to the fact that almost all the competitions were accessible to everyone, except for those specifically created for the older ones (for example, writing a poem), and to the certainty that the game could contribute to the development of cooperative relationships and behaviors. Older children considered their role of “representative” as a positive experience and they showed themselves ready to support and involve the younger ones in the challenge game. The rights hunt kept the children and adolescents busy for about three hours and ended with the finding of the “treasure”.

In our case, the treasure consisted in a little present for everybody, taken from the donations received and one Mp3 player for the winning team that gained the right to choose the music to listen inside the tent for the following week!

Examples of “challenges to overcome” related to the Rights of the Child⁵.

Challenge 1

ART. 2 (Non-discrimination): Governments should respect the rights of each child: whatever their race, religion, abilities rich or poor, male or female.

Find inside the camp a man and a woman aged more than 60 years old, a boy and a girl aged less than 10 years old and two people of different nationalities who are not in the teams.

Challenge 2

ART. 31 Children have the right to relax and play .

Go inside the common tent and shoot 20 baskets in the bucket.

Challenge 3

ART. 31 Children have the right to relax and play. Each member of the team has to make a sculpture with a balloon. Whoever cannot make it... will learn with the help of the others!

Challenge 4

ART. 28 All children have the right to education.

Count and alphabetize by author the books of the last two shelves of our library.

Challenge 5

ART. 24 Children have the right to health care, safe drinking water and nutritious food.

Go to the canteen and take three big bottles of water, nine small ones and glasses and put them in the fridge of the CFS.

Challenge 6

ART. 13 Children have the right to freedom of expression by talking, drawing or writing.

Write a poem of twelve verses in rhyming couplet on the theme: “The heath and the water”.

Challenge 7

ART. 1 A 'child' as a person below the age of 18

ART. 7 All children have the right to have a name and to be cared for by their parents.

Make a list of names and surnames of all team mates, writing the age of each of them and the class he/she will attend next year.

Challenge 8

ART. 14 Children have the right to think, know what they want and to practise their religion.

Each member of the team writes a note with a proposal for the CFS "I wish I could..."

Challenge 9

ART. 12 When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

Each member of the team writes on a note the activity of the last week he/she liked the most and he/she would like to do again.

2.5 The book clinic⁶

Beneficiaries:

all age groups.

Materials:

illustrated or not illustrated books, stethoscope, plastic glasses, colorful cardboards, scissors, magazines, transparent plastic sheets, permanent markers, name cards.

Objectives:

the basic idea of this workshop is to facilitate in a recreational and educational way the approach to the "book", usually considered by children and adolescents something boring or mainly scholastic. The working methodology has to develop some cooperative behaviours, encouraging discussions, sharing and mutual help opportunities.

Realization:

in this experience, the young people found, at their arrival, two operators dressed like "book doctors" to welcome them, with their identification badge and a fancy name on it. Then, they introduced the books to them as hypothetical patients to be "visited" and "treated". Each participant was then invited to choose a "patient" among a rich collection of used books, which all had specific and different material defects (damaged cover, "unusual" written language – foreign books – torn pages, etc.). In this way, the child or the young boy became a doctor in the "book clinic" giving himself a fancy name written on the badge in order to make his role more "official". The visit of the "patient" started with the use of the stethoscope, and he successively did an x-ray, drawing on a transparent sheet (permanent markers) a particular aspect of the book chosen. Then, on a specific form (medical record), he described the diagnosis and the therapy before the "treatment" started. The working tools were: glue, scissors, press clippings, colorful cards and a lot of fantasy.

The result was a playful and creative personalization, which turned a damaged book, almost to be thrown away, into a little piece of art, considered by children and adolescents as something precious for it was personally "treated" and considered as their own artistic expression. It is

worthwhile to underline here that adolescents can be reluctant in taking part to the activity, because of the difficulty in “taking up the challenge” of activities that may seem not much appropriate for their age. Anyway, if we help them in finding more suitable personal working methods for “treating” different books, they will probably find their personal form of participation. In our experience, for example, some adolescents invented a “repaired” book entitled “How to defeat a sad day” whose pages, illustrated by them (making a collage), narrate through images and slogans their best ways of defeating sadness: “go out with your girlfriend”, “have dinner with some friends”, “be creative”, “dismantle the tents”, “Go to the CFS”, Etc.

2.6 “Let’s re...build” manual workshop

Beneficiaries:

children and adolescents between 8 and 18 years old, with different tasks.

Materials:

wood and working tools: all the materials used are recycled and/or borrowed from the Civil Protection: it is the remains of material provided by volunteers and no more usable for ordinary works at the camp. Some of the materials used to ultimate the works (new wood panels and outside flower boxes) come from private donations⁷ though they can still be easily found.

Objectives:

the manual workshop called “Let’s re...build” was carried out inside the “Child Friendly Space” tent of the Paganica camp N°2, in an intermediate period of the Abruzzo Emergency project, in conjunction with the relocation of the tent from one camp to another.

The idea of rebuilding was actually born in a transition phase, with the aim of personally involving the children taking part to the activities inside the tent, planning and reorganizing their spaces and having a main role inside the sharing and cooperative dynamics of the group. Moreover, this “rebuilding” activity helped children develop planning behaviors and mentality to be shared inside the group so as to redefine constructive hypothesis to overcome a traumatic event. Throughout a “rebuilding” project many are the tasks and duties that can be done, this allows any participant to find original and personal ways to contribute to the realization of a common project. This also encourages the expression of personal taste and ideas, as well as the abilities and competences often unexpected, the group can treasure.

Realization:

the operators encouraged the children contributing with their ideas to the organization of the new tent-space where educational activities had to be carried out. During several debates, the adolescents expressed the need to provide the tent with a space protected from rain and they started to secure a waterproof tarp. Gradually, the enthusiasm in building something useful led to the creation of a building workshop.

They called the activity “Save the Edimo”, inspired by “Save the Children” space and by “Edimo”, a well-known construction company of the region. The methodology used for this workshop was participatory and it was structured in three phases.

Starting phase:

a few children had the idea, originated from the symbolic need to rebuild and to put in place their own manual skills.

PART TWO

Intermediate phase:

we tried to involve the whole adolescent group attending the Child Friendly Space.

The initial idea was discussed at specific meetings with children in order to:

- Consider children's different point of views on the project idea from a technical point of view (width, pavement, exit doors, covering, improvements, etc.);
- Organize the working teams, according to personal skills and attitudes;
- Discuss with children about the use of the gazebo and its function inside the Child Friendly Space;
- Examine, along with young people the "adequate" behaviors inside the gazebo.

Final phase:

work conclusion; organization and opening of the gazebo implemented with children.



Photo: Save the Children



Photo: Save the Children

2.7 Cooking workshop

Beneficiaries:

children and young people between 5 and 17 years old.

Materials:

ingredients and kitchen tools.

Objectives:

the workshop is originally born from an afternoon activity: make the snack-time a recreational and educational moment, as well as a social but also creative and manual opportunity. A secondary objective was to establish a relation with the camp community and to “bond” the children’s and young people’s activity to other elements, people and places that were part of the everyday life before the earthquake. Essential, in this sense, was the recovery of the culinary tradition, as well as the involvement of elderly people, who provided us with the recipes and assisted us during the cooking process. In this way, the workshop contributed to strengthen the relationship between children/adolescents and the elderly people from the village, reducing the generation gap and stimulating those who, in the tent city context, did not have the means to start special initiatives. Children’s interest and participation was high, also thanks to the snack-time special moment, a well-known school and home habit and a less frequent routine inside the tent city.

Realization:

thanks to the help of local people, we valorized some typical Abruzzo recipes, preparing them together with children inside the Child Friendly Spaces. In some cases, since we needed some specific kitchen tools, we carried out the workshop in collaboration with other structures, such as the camp canteen and the Club House kitchen (Paganica rugby sport association). Guided by adults and by some of the oldest women in the camp, children and adolescents learned to dose and mix the ingredients, to knead, flavor, fry and fill, recovering abilities and basics previously learned and experimented at home.

More specifically, they put themselves to the test preparing the “zeppole” (a kind of sweet doughnuts), fried pizza and “ferratelle” with *Nutella*, all typical local specialities. Here is one simple recipe - though we suggest to follow the tradition - that children know and share gladly.

RECIPE

“ZEPPOLE”

Ingredients:

250g of flour;

½ glass of white wine;

a pinch of salt;

2 teaspoon of extra virgin olive oil; peanut oil for frying;

200g of caster sugar mixed with 1 teaspoon of cinnamon.

Preparation

Put 500 cc of water in a small heavy bottomed saucepan, then add the wine and salt and put it on the stove. When the water starts to boil, take the saucepan off the stove and put the sifted flour in it. Mix vigorously with a wooden spoon, then put the saucepan back on the stove at moderate heat and, always mixing, leave it there for 4/5 minutes, until the pastry will detach and form a ball. Grease abundantly with olive oil a marble shelf, reverse the pastry and let it cool down. Now work it using the rolling pin. Take a little piece off the pastry and, rolling it with your open hands, make three little rolls of less than 1

cm each. Cut them in pieces of about 15 cm each and close them pressing on the two ends, forming a kind of oblong doughnuts. As they are gradually done, place them on a wide sheet of greaseproof paper and, once you have finished, put the frying pan on the heat and fill half of it with the oil. Halfway in the cooking process, puncture the zeppole in two or three spots with a thin stick and, when they will be grown and golden, take them off using a fork and place them on a double sheet of kitchen paper. Pass them on the mixture of sugar and cinnamon and serve them warm or lukewarm.

PART TWO

2.8 Musical

Beneficiaries:

children and adolescents between 4 and 18 years old with different tasks and roles. The children (4-7 years old) had a role in an early phase; the adolescents danced and collaborated to the scenography realization. The older children acted.

Materials:

stage and scenic design (backstage and background realized with wood, cardboards, colors, temperas, glue, scissors, etc.), costumes, music center, CDs, camera, computer.

Objectives:

the main objective of the activity was to help children and adolescents in the group work expressing everyone's creativity, facilitating an environment of collaboration and cooperation, starting from the sharing of roles and tasks. The participants had to try out different and unusual roles (screenwriter, set designer, dancer, actor) developing and carrying out their job in a close relation with each other, enabling the group to strengthen both friendship and responsibility as a whole.

The realization of the musical allowed the experimentation of different expressive languages: narrative, musical, pictorial and body.

Moreover, it allowed affecting different aspects connected to the development of the child and the adolescent, such as, for example, the motor one: by dancing, participants acquired agility, velocity and coordination; they also improved their sense of orientation in space and in the temporal dimension, learning to respect both the choreography and the music rhythms. The final representation had the purpose to create moments of leisure and aggregation for the little community inside the tent city.

Realization:

the musical was set up during the first three months of life inside the tent city. The idea was developed in collaboration with children, wishful to create

an event which could put themselves to the test and show to community members their achievements. In addition, the plot is the result of the children's work who instead of putting on scene a popular play, wanted to express their actual experiences. This was made without too explicit references to the earthquake, in order not to hurt their own as well as the audience's feelings. The same participants opted for a metaphorical story: an unexpected dramatic event creates chaos inside a group of dancers; only through the guide of some teachers, the group discovers the value of common cooperation and commitment in the achievement of a common target. The event has a happy ending: everyone puts on scene the best of himself/herself, in an environment of mutual respect and harmony. The young people committed themselves in weekly rehearsals, until the final exhibition. Those who were not willing to go on stage had the chance to try out different expressive languages for the realization of the musical: screenwriting, photography, scenography and costumes.

2.9 Drama workshop

Beneficiaries:

children and adolescents between 6 and 16 years old, with different tasks.

Materials:

paper, posters, different types of colors, glue, scissors, clothes, stereo, cotton wool, CDs.

Objectives:

the main objective of this activity was to involve all boys, girls and adolescents in the realization of a stage show to be performed during the feast of the patron saint of Bazzano that citizens wanted to set up inside the tent city. The organization of such an important event made the children feel as an active part in the implementation of something which involved the camp community and assigned them a significant role. The workshop also reinforced the relationships with the peers group and with all the adults who, in their own way, felt to be part of the event itself.

Photo: Save the Children



Realization:

in the CFS weekly planning of the activities dedicated to children and adolescents, different workshops have been set up. Each of them was aimed to the realization of components necessary to the show. For example, a painting workshop, essential to the realization of the scene was started. A group of children, with the help of older children, built the scenes, drawing inspiration from some drama stories.

A music workshop, where music and songs were chosen for the show soundtrack, was also set up. Every day, for about two weeks, spaces and time have been consecrated to singing, acting and painting rehearsals. As the days passed by, also the adults approached the game room, curious and motivated by their children's enthusiasm.

With the collaboration of parents, an embroidery workshop, run by Mrs. Vittoria, was successfully started.

Thanks to her, the little girls realized beautiful embroideries, successively offered to the parish in occasion of the consecration of the new church built inside the camp. Both in the first moments of the preparation and after the realization of the show, the participants had the chance to exchange ideas and talk to each other in order to decide together how to realize the event, expressing their own evaluation, personal reflections and problematic issues. Nevertheless, they all agreed on the fact that everyone, caught in the fervent organization of the show contributed in a personal way without arguing for many days.

2.10 Testimony book for narrating and sharing the experience: *“Tent Stories. The voice of the children from the ex - Italtel camp 1”*

Beneficiaries:

children and adolescents between 4 and 18 years old.

Materials:

stationery materials, recorder, computer.

Objectives:

the main objective was to collect the authentic testimonies inside the camp, giving voice to children and adolescents' thoughts and feelings, by different techniques: diary writing, semi structured interviews, re-enactment techniques and drawings. The activity was aimed to give children the opportunity to express themselves and to process the experience connected to the earthquake, progressively facilitating its comprehension, also thanks to sharing moments inside the peer group. Moreover, through the realization of an easily accessible text – for anyone outside the tent and the camp - the workshop reinforced children's self-confidence as well as the respect for their expressive-communicative abilities, avoiding any isolation propensity and restriction inside the tent city. It was essential to identify the objectives of the workshop together with the group and to develop the activity with the aim to create something significant both for who had the task to write and for those who, successively, would enjoy it.

Realization:

after having shared the objectives of this activity, each child had the free choice to use his/her favorite expressive channel. Some of them opted for the writing, others for the oral narration of their own experience which was successively transcribed by one of the operators. Moreover, there have been some working group moments, by stimulating words, which could facilitate

the association of thoughts, feelings or the recollection of episodes connected to the experience. Some of the youngest children realized drawings about their own life experience inside the camp or on free subjects. A final written edition entitled “*Tent Stories – The voice of the children from the former ex - Italtel camp 1*”, was finally realized together with children and through the organization of different testimonies.

2.11 Cineforum

Beneficiaries:

children and young people between 11 and 16 years old.

Materials:

Carefully selected and representative movies for the specific addressees, considering the explicit situation; projector screen or TV; DVD player; projector; film synopsis.

Objectives:

the realization of a movie discussion inside a space dedicated to children and teenagers was aimed to create a recreational and social moment, as the vision of a film can be. At the same time, it wanted to offer reflection and debate themes, which could be significant for the young people, also considering the particular situation caused by the earthquake. Indeed, cinema usually helps processes of identification and/or reflection allowing the audience to face subjects and fears directly, on the basis of a personal reflection, sharing and elaboration with the others.

Realization:

Save the Children staff first created the guide “*The newly-found cinema*”, with a selection of significant movies, adequate to the situation and to the different age group of children and adolescents living inside the tent city. For each of the selected films, the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child were cited; a synopsis and some starting points for a possible debate were offered. The operators could freely choose the movie to propose, watching it in advance and getting information on the subjects, in order to be able to answer any possible questions asked by the children and/or to lead the discussion. After the vision, they tried to create a debate or to propose structured activities, which could facilitate the discussion. More often, the operators let the young people develop the informal starting points, spontaneously originated during the week after the projection; they only brought their own knowledge and opinions.

Among the most stimulating movies there are:

- “Stand by me”
- “Terkel in trouble”
- “Juno”
- “Si può fare”
- “Little miss sunshine”
- “Persepolis”
- “Wall-E”

And other Disney animation movies for the younger ones.

2.12 Intercamp day and creative market

Beneficiaries:

children and adolescents between 8 and 18 years old.

Materials:

paper, cardboards, markers, temperas, glue, scissors, CDs, handmade items, stereo, etc.

Objectives:

the main goal of what we could call “framing” or “container” activity because of its coordination function, were, in the first place: the creation of a non-competitive meetings and play moments between children and adolescents from different tent cities. This in order to help them overcoming the tent camp limits and, at the same time, getting in touch with the other addressees of recreational and educational activities, organized by Save the Children. In the second place: facilitate the collaboration between operators who work in different tent cities, through the planning of an activity which was transversal to everybody’s reality.

Generally, caught by everyday life difficulties caused by an emergency, the operators care about the planning and management of the activities inside their own camp, and few are the occasions to work together to the realization of common activities and/or events. Indirectly, the inter-camp days can overcome, at least for a while, gaps and conflicts connected to different origins and areas of the city, deeply rooted even in the youngest people.

Realization:

for the realization of this activity, the first step was to find a safe and wide-open air space, easily reachable and accessible to everyone, where children and adolescents could spend peacefully the whole day.

At the same time, they chose to define the age range of the participants, in order to orient the different initiatives in an adequate way, avoiding the risks of excessively heterogeneous groups, more difficult to manage and to involve. Once defined the base organization, they created an organizational team made of an operator manager for each camp and a project staff. This was essential to the identification of those activities, which could involve children and adolescents from different tent camps, avoiding all forms of competition, but facilitating the mutual knowledge and collaboration, out of useless territorial rivalries. The experience showed that often adults find it more difficult to work together than children do. It was actually expected that, in some moments, they would have stayed apart according to their origin tent camp, while in other moments they would have taken part to mixed teams. Once chosen the activities to conduct, according to what experienced or realized inside various Save the Children’s “Child Friendly Spaces”, each group was in charge of the organization of a specific activity to propose during the ordinary day. The operators involved young people in this process. Once they were all gathered at the inter-camp day, children did not have any problem in forming mixed teams as for the realization of natural sheds, suggested by the Bazzano team, a group accustomed to work on themes connected to environment respect and recycling issues. Children also used games realized inside the Paganica game room and watched the short version of the musical put on scene some weeks earlier inside the ex-taltel camp, improvised for the occasion in a simple but effective way.

The day ended with a market of items realized by children and adolescents from the three tent camps during the creative and manual workshops of the previous weeks. Among the various creations, “I SAVE” (virtual coins realized by the same children), could be used for the purchase of different objects. In this way, the market enabled everybody to deal with the workshop methodologies and with what had been realized inside the different camps.

2.13 Other activities

In addition to the activities described, there are many others, which can be proposed to both facilitate the meeting and socialization in the first moments (the so-called meeting and group-making games), to involve the children and adolescents in physical and open-air games. In any context Save the Children Italy has been engaged, the operators always tried to find ways which could allow the young people playing in the open air and, when possible, getting out of the camp, by accepting collaborations or offers coming from other associations or groups. Among the activities proposed, for example, an inter-camp frisbee competition, physical activities, football, swimming, excursions, etc.



Photo: Save the Children

CONCLUSIONS

Save the Children carried out activities for children and adolescents, started just after the earthquake occurred, inside the Child Friendly Space until mid-October, except for the Acquasanta camp where there was an interruption on mid-July (after the first 3 months of emergency). In two cases, the ex-Italtel 1 and the Bazzano camp, the tent cities were closed by the Civil Protection before the end of the project. The closure of the tent was for children and teenage boys and girls a real privation, the lack of a gathering and playing area they got used to as the months passed by and which they considered an important reference point.

Life inside the tent city, which at first was undoubtedly not easy to accept for both adults and children, assumed, as time passed by, the character of something similar to the everyday life. Indeed, in spite of the difficulties, children and young people managed to discover and experiment new forms of aggregation and activities quite unusual if compared to the normal context of L'Aquila as a city. Leaving the "Save" tent, leaving the new friends, with no more chance to play, debate, collaborate and grow up together inside their own space, has paradoxically become a new cause of sadness and sorrow, despite returning back home or getting into new houses. We wanted to keep this into account during the last weeks of activity.

The opening and management of playing spaces for children and adolescents require special attention and care, as well as clear and realistic objectives, the adoption of a participatory and shared methodology, the knowledge of common pedagogic references, like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or procedures specifically connected to emergency operations. The experience also showed us the necessity to pay the same attention in the closure of these game rooms and "special" - though temporary - gathering places. Guiding the closure meant, in this case, acting on different levels and deciding how to proceed for each of them. In the first place, we chose to share the sense and actual meaning of "closing" with the operators and educators who conducted the activities inside the camps so that they could feel more secure and capable in facilitating the closure of play areas, best managing the relationship with children and adolescents. This is an important passage especially if, as for our project, the operators are local people who, in some ways, were also victims of the earthquake and its consequences. Indeed, they can feel the need to be guided in a difficult context to reflect in a collaborative way about the end of a phase (a temporary life revolving around the tent city) and the beginning of a new one (the return to a normal sociality linked to multiple places where people come back or go to live in).

Each phase is characterized by a different emotion and planning necessity. A specific training moment was therefore dedicated to the elaboration and sharing of the themes: "closure" and "future". As first thing, a kind of handbook was realized, together with operators, on the basis of personal and emotive reflections, used to codify in the most professional way the operators' behaviors, in order to manage in the most effective way the delicate moment of the closure of both the tent city and the project. In this way, a series of operative indications have been defined so as the staff could take them into consideration both in the days before the camps closure and during the dismantlement made by the Civil Protection.

A second level, always concerning the closure, was about the elaboration of activities to carry out with children and adolescents so that they could, together or individually, express themselves on personal expectations or

possible fears related to the passage to a post- earthquake phase and to the return to their own houses or new homes.

We also decided to guide the children and adolescents towards the closure of those activities previously started, so that they would not be left unconcluded, lost or without a long-lasting meaning. Finally, we proposed to work on the memory of what experienced inside the play area, emphasizing the chance for a possible continuity: long-lasting friendships, acquisition of new competences and skills (manual or expressive, for instance), discovery of new interests (drama, music, drawing, etc.) or the possibility to meet each other in different places. We chose to operate inside the groups in distinct ways. Someone decided to realize a photo book with all comments and addresses of participants; others chose to talk about what the children and adolescents would do or wished to do once the tent cities were closed; others organized simple parties or conclusive and goodbye snacks, involving the families as well.

On the last level there was, as a conclusion, the assessment of the materials created and of the knowledge acquired in a specific context or in the work done in emergency situations together with children and adolescents.

Such evaluation has been realized through interviews and focus groups children, adolescents and parents took part to, providing the information necessary both to comprehend the effectiveness of the proposed interventions and the critical issues to take into account.

The drafting of this manual consequently expresses the will to reflect, develop and share the field experience achieved so that others could take precious and operational cues to use in comparable context or situations.

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Note

¹ CFS were opened in the tent cities of Acquasanta, Ex Italtel 1, Paganica and Bazzano

² “*Child Friendly Spaces during emergencies - Manual for Save the Children team*” - Save the Children, October 2008

³ “*Child Friendly Spaces during emergencies – Manual for the Save the Children team staff*”, Save the Children, October 2008

⁴ The first psychological support includes emphatic listening, non-invasive interest, comfort, avoid too much information and reassurance, do not force people to talk. It is necessary to stay calm, active and friendly.

⁵ “Gioco dell’Oca” is the Italian version of the “Game of the Goose”. “Oca-mpo” is a reinterpretation. Specifically, it is the mix of the words “Oca” (goose) and “Campo” (camp).

⁶ The activity has been carried out with the contribution of the “Giocolenuvole” cooperative of Siena together with Save the Children’s operators.

⁷ Eurocontrol, Belgian company that made a spontaneous donation to Paganica Camp in L’Aquila.

Save the Children

believes every child deserves a future. In Italy and around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm.

When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave.

We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach.

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