

EGU21-15339

<https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu21-15339>

EGU General Assembly 2021

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Project rAn: Games to promote awareness of natural disasters in young students

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The Earth is an amazing planet. However, it is also an unpredictable and wild one – part of its many charms. Atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere are alive, and can unleash awesome forces on the whole planet, including the biosphere, of which we humans are part. It's important to make young students aware of the fact that we all live in a planet that was not made specifically for humans, and that it is absolutely imperative that our species learns to respect it and its rhythms and cycles.

Human settlements are often located in pleasant areas, with little or no concern about their vulnerability to natural disasters. Authorities, local, regional and national, should make preparations to prevent and mitigate their occurrence, of course. But at least as important is the need to create awareness in the citizens, so they can face any disaster and react in a calm and orderly way. That task must begin at an early age. Other than learning to deal with natural disasters and avoiding panic, schoolkids can exert a powerful influence in the adult members of their families and alert them to the measures they should adopt to prepare for any future occurrence.

In project rAn, EU-funded, we aim to develop a serious game, adjusted to the age of the targets, that will teach them about four types of natural disaster (earthquakes, floods, fires and storms) and make them aware of how to prepare and react in case of one of them striking their city or village. The game will be easy to play, and given the small age of the players will not feature complex interactions. It will include contributions from teachers and groups of students from all Europe, that will be challenged to create small games on the subject, using the Scratch language.