



# What recommendations should we follow to communicate about wildfires?

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## CONTEXT

Extreme wildfires are becoming more and more recurrent. The emphasis on suppression together with climate change and land abandonment are contributing to the rise of extreme wildfires, which have unequal impacts on people and the environment. This is calling for new ways to deal with, relate to, and communicate about wildfires.

Isabeau explains that **Wildfire Communication** enables us to coexist with fire. One of its key aspects is that the needs and lived experiences of communities are put in the centre, making wildfire management more socio-environmentally just. Her report gives a broad range of recommendations and resources for wildfire communication.

## OUTCOMES

### WHY do Wildfire Communication

- It contributes to communities' resilience by strengthening community-led action.
- It mitigates possible conflicts and tensions between different actors.

### WHO communicates to whom

- Bidirectional communication between experts and communities through participatory processes.
- Leave no one behind: recognise diversity and foster inclusion.

### WHAT to communicate

- Messages adapted to people's level of understanding, interests, and needs.
- Relevant topics for the community, to develop general resilience beyond wildfire prevention and preparedness.

### HOW to do Wildfire Communication

- Through participatory, inclusive, trustful, and creative processes embedded within local contexts.
- With people trained in working with people and knowledgeable about their reality.

### WHEN and WHERE to communicate

- Continuous communication throughout the disaster cycle.
- In combination with other events already being organised.
- Whenever possible, outdoors, as it fosters place-based pedagogy.



Sharing experiences outdoors is an example of Wildfire Communication.

## IMPACT ON WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

The empowerment of local communities, by working together with them as well as integrating and validating their knowledge, opens the door to more socially just forms of living with fire.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For policymakers

- Foster dialogue and participatory processes with communities around wildfire management.
- Facilitate and support (in)formal networks in the territory.
- Promote training for communicators to develop skills in participatory, and place-based communication.

### For emergency responders

- Centre communicative actions around the communities' knowledges, interests, and needs.
- Incorporate storytelling, art, and other creative methods.
- Create spaces that allow sharing emotions and validating lived experiences.

**FULL REPORT:** Ottolini, Isabeau; Arenas Conejo, Míriam; Prat-Guitart, Núria; Uyttewaal, Kathleen; Pandey, Pooja; Rodríguez-Giralt, Israel; Cifre-Sabater, María. (2023). A toolkit for fostering co-creation and participative community engagement with vulnerable communities at risk. Freely available at <https://t.co/EnLgOfWirO>

### Collaborators:



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