

Empower-Kids: nurturing resilience in the younger generations of Castelraimondo

By **Raniero Maggini (Cittadinanzattiva)**

In a historical period marked by increasingly frequent and severe disasters, and driven by ongoing climate change, [Empower-Citizens](#) aims to contribute to rethinking how we manage these events and fostering collaboration among all community actors.

Now more than ever, citizen engagement is vital. Including the younger generations in this process feels like a natural choice. In Castelraimondo, the Italian case study for Empower-Citizens, the Centro Primavera Centre is currently active. Supported by the local municipal administration and managed by the Il Faro Cooperative, the centre brings together 25 children of different ages, ranging from 6 to 11 years old.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of Anna Benigni, head of the municipality's social affairs service, and Isabella Cucculelli, head of Centro Primavera, the 25 very young residents of Castelraimondo have become the protagonists of Empower-Citizens, through a dedicated initiative called Empower-Kids.

But what kind of journey are these children undertaking, given that during the 2016 earthquake they were not yet born or were just over a year old?

They listened to the stories of those who lived through the earthquake, observed the cracks in the buildings caused by the tremors, and looked at the houses and buildings currently being rebuilt. They met with three types of experts: a geologist explaining how earthquakes behave and how soil and rocks react, an architect explaining how houses can be built to be more earthquake-resistant, and civil protection operators explaining how to behave during an emergency. Furthermore, the children interviewed their parents and relatives about their personal experiences. These shared memories spanned well beyond Castelraimondo, touching upon the countries of origin of families coming from Africa, China and eastern Europe.

This path represents a process of personal growth and risk awareness. Learning the steps needed in the immediate aftermath of an event and creating a magical 'emergency backpack' that can help them get through the first few hours without shelter enhances their preparedness.



Children taking part in a guided walk through areas affected by the 2016 central Italy earthquake © Il Faro Cooperativa Sociale

'We are truly delighted with the progress made by the children of Castelraimondo, who have shown such interest and attentiveness to the many opportunities presented to them. It is important that even the youngest members of the community are involved in these processes – something that rarely happens. It is also wonderful to see how their commitment is helping to make this community increasingly united and cohesive'.

– Anna Benigni, head of the municipality's social affairs service