

The Challenge

Growing up in Türkiye, earthquake drills were common, but they often felt more like formalities than preparation. I knew what I was supposed to do, but I doubted those actions would come naturally in a real emergency.

This became the starting point of my LiA: *how can earthquake preparedness be taught so that people understand, remember, and act on it?*

A small literature review showed me that this was not just my experience. A recurring challenge in earthquake education is turning awareness into lasting preparedness and action.

The stakes are particularly high in Türkiye. A 2024 study ranked **Türkiye 11th globally for earthquake fatality load**, compared with 28th for Japan. Of course, earthquake mortality depends on many factors, but this comparison reinforced that preparedness matters.

I cannot build stronger buildings myself, but I can work on another part of the problem: helping people develop an “**earthquake reflex**”. Education can also help people understand seismic risk, building safety, and their rights, allowing communities to ask better questions and demand that safety standards are followed.

What does effective preparedness education look like?

Across the literature, several themes appeared repeatedly:

- ☐ Start young and involve parents.
- ☐ Move beyond one-off training towards repeated learning and practice.
- ☐ Teach why actions such as Drop–Cover–Hold are necessary, rather than simply asking students to memorise them.
- ☐ Make reliable preparedness information easy to access and use.

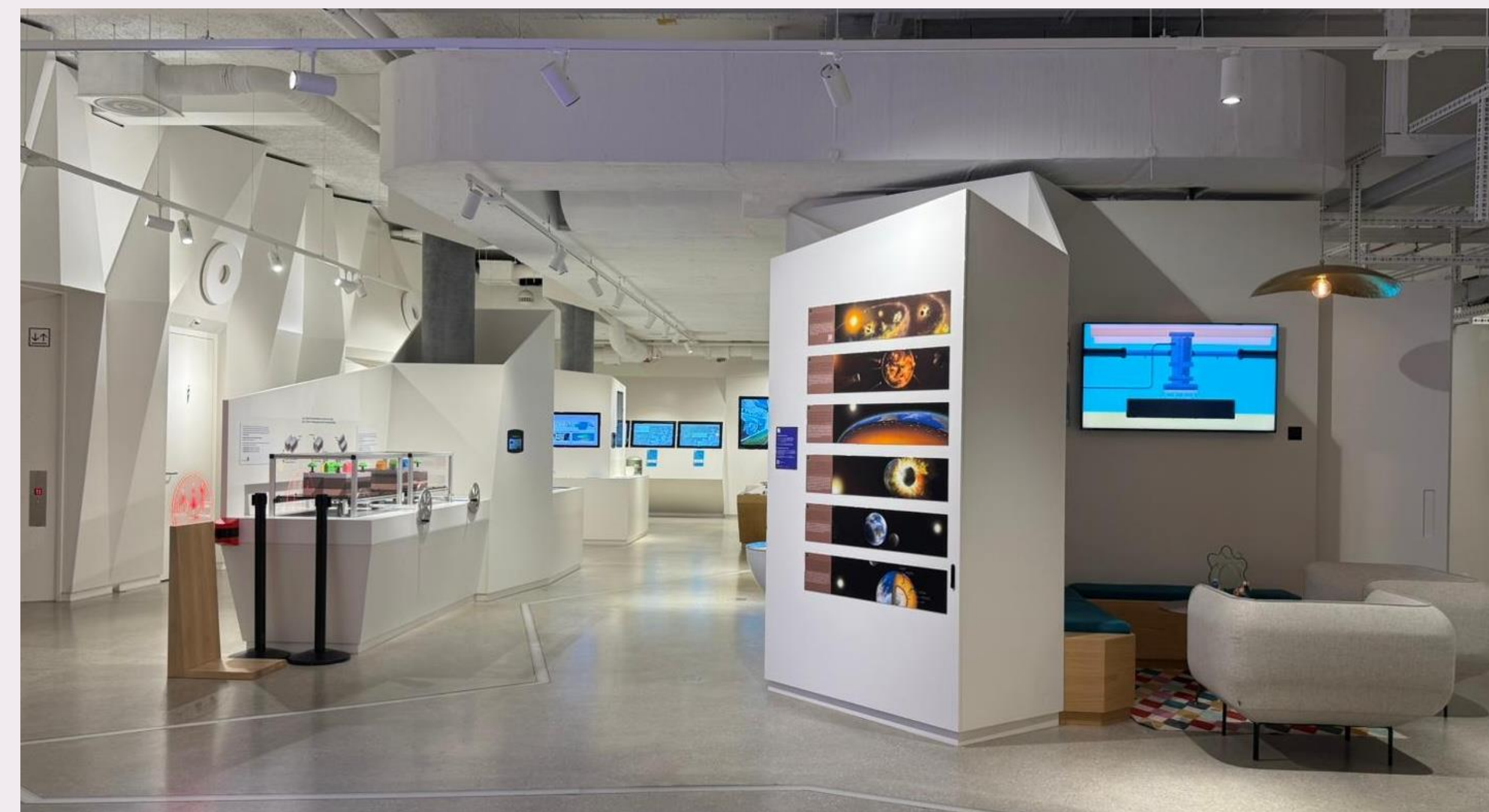
So, before designing my own resources, I wanted to see what this could look like in practice.

I travelled to Switzerland to work with an earthquake education centre, observing how preparedness was taught. I then used these observations alongside my literature review to develop an earthquake workshop for schools in Türkiye and an accessible online resource hub.

STAGE 1: Learning from Switzerland

The Centre Pédagogique Prévention Séisme (CPPS) is an earthquake education centre in Valais, one of Switzerland’s most seismically active regions. Home to Europe’s largest earthquake simulator, it uses interactive activities to teach visitors both the science of earthquakes and how to prepare for them.

Secondary school students across Valais complete a mandatory CPPS programme combining interactive modules and the earthquake simulator. A parent–signed certificate extends the learning to families, while CPPS also trains companies and first responders and opens to the public on weekends.



I worked as a tour guide and translator, helping deliver activities to these different groups. Learning to communicate with very different audiences and to convey the seriousness of earthquakes without creating unnecessary fear became an important exercise in leadership and communication.

A shift in my thinking

I was also there to learn. I attended conferences and lectures at HES–SO Valais–Wallis, where CPPS is based, and spoke with specialists involved in developing the centre’s interactive educational approach. They taught me that the centre’s approach works because it is designed around its audience and their needs.

These conversations changed how I approached my own project.

My objective remained the same. But I realised that I could not simply take a successful Swiss model, translate it into Turkish, and expect it to work. Effective earthquake education has to respond to the context of the community it is designed for.

STAGE 2: From Learning to Action in Türkiye

I brought together the scientific and social lessons from my literature review and CPPS experience to develop an earthquake education website adapted specifically to Türkiye.



Scan the QR code to check out the website

Rather than simply translating the Swiss approach, I spoke with schools in Türkiye to understand what was missing. One recurring gap was easy access to reliable, well–organised information. I therefore designed the website as a self–contained hub where children, parents and teachers can find practical preparedness resources alongside accessible explanations of what earthquakes are and why protective actions work.

The website also goes beyond immediate preparedness, with information on further training, certificates, volunteering and careers for young people who want to stay involved.

To make sure the resource responds to the people it is designed for, I am working with school directors to test it with students and parents and incorporate their feedback. This has also led to an invitation to return to my former school in Türkiye this winter to deliver an earthquake–preparedness workshop.

Impact & Reflections

The biggest lesson from this project was that preparedness education cannot be one–size–fits–all. I learned to question my own assumptions and ask not only whether a solution works, but who it works for. Being a tour guide showed me how differently people understand and respond to the same risk.

This project is only a starting point. Through feedback and my upcoming workshops in Türkiye, I hope to keep adapting and developing these resources so they remain useful to the communities they are designed for.