



A capacity assessment towards more resilient societies

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Social capacity building for natural hazards is a topic increasingly gaining relevance not only for so-called developing countries but also for European welfare states which are continuously challenged by the social, economic and ecological impacts of natural hazards. Following an outline of recent governance changes with regard to natural hazards, we develop a heuristic model of social capacity building by taking into account a wide range of existing expertise from different fields of research. Particular attention is paid to social vulnerability and its assessment, as well as to risk communication and risk education as specific strategies of social capacity building. We propose to distinguish between interventionist and participatory approaches, thus enabling for a better understanding of existing practices of social capacity building as well as their particular strengths and weaknesses. It is from this typology the presentation will develop two kinds of operational social capacity audits; one for communities and one for organisations. These assessments aim to identify appropriate measures and strategies regarding how to enhance, develop and build different kinds of capacities. By using these assessments participants will be able to identify strong capacities and can refer to the recommendations for tips on how to improve capacities identified as weak. That way deficits and outcomes are defined by those who are most likely to be affected by a future hazard event and most likely to be implementing improvements towards resilience.