Citizen empowerment through crowdsourcing

The widespread access to social media and the intensive use of cell phones among citizens allow (among other things) the high development of crowdsourcing as a people empowerment tool. Crowdsourcing can offer insights and analyses to improve resilience in the face of threats at least in two ways: first, crowdsourcing makes use of ICT and the willingness of volunteers to share content to collectively produce information that could serve as solutions to different problems and contribute to increasing a people culture of constant preparation, anticipation and, more importantly, decisive action – not just by response. Moreover, crowdsourcing "before", "during" and "after" a disaster event generates a proactive attitude among citizens/volunteers that improves resilience (also thanks to enhanced cooperation among actors). This proactive approach, enabled by necessity but also by the accessibility of current forms of ICT, helps people who volunteer to know that they're not alone and that they're part of a much larger problem in society than what they experienced that day. All these issues are related to people empowerment processes, as we can see in the cases of almost all the studied Citizens Observatories in Europe (Barcelona-ES, Delft-NL, Doncaster-UK, Ljubljana-SI, Ostrava-CZ, Vicenza-IT, Vitoria-Gasteiz-ES) and outside Europe (Brazil floods) and also in the 2014 France South-Eastern floods, in Boulder-Colorado, in Tanzania, as well as in the Euro-Mediterranean Seismological Centre system to detect earthquakes.

Note: See source document for full reference.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: Open-mindedness, Communication, Social networks
Disaster Phases: Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery, All disaster phases
Types of Actors Concerned: Non-active citizens
Hazards: Natural hazards, Man-made non-intentional hazards or emergency situations, Man-made intentional hazards

Recommendations:

- Foster the adoption of a culture of disaster prevention and resilience by informing and motivating citizens to take action

---

Source

Deliverable D7.2 "Report on linkages between empowerment practices and specific socio-economic and environmental contexts" (page 41)