



The general role of cultural factors in citizen empowerment during disaster situations

Social networks, social capital and social identities, all heavily influenced by culture, can help to empower citizens in disaster situations. It is a well-known fact that most citizens in disasters are saved by nearby family, friends, neighbours or passers-by – up to 99% in an earthquake. This is, in part, because people “rise to important challenges and bridge the gaps that formal responders cannot”. A number of studies suggest that certain cultural contexts, such as Buddhist societies, can be more functional in disaster scenarios, as compared to other cultural contexts. Finally, “disaster culture”, which refers to the newly embedded behaviours, knowledge and skills developed in response to disasters, is also an important cultural resource.

Applicable to:

Stakeholders: [Norms/values](#), [Customs/traditions/rituals](#), [Worldviews](#), [Individual/collective memory](#), [Social networks](#), [Power relations](#)

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 social connectedness and the development of a strong sense of community, as these encourage citizens to help each other in disaster situations](#)

Source

[Deliverable D7.3 "Report on cultural factors and citizen empowerment" \(page 20\)](#)

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