

emBRACE

AT A GLANCE

Title: emBRACE - Building Resilience Amongst Communities in Europe

Instrument: FPx, Funding Scheme

Total Cost:

EC Contribution:

Duration: 4 years

Start Date: 1 October 2011

Consortium: 10 partners from 6 countries

Project Coordinators:

Prof. Debby Guha-Sapir, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Université catholique de Louvain – Brussels, Belgium; and Dr Maureen Fordham, School of the Built and Natural Environment, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

Project Web Site: www.embrace-eu.org

Key Words: resilience, disasters, disaster footprints, interdisciplinary, integration, human impacts, knowledge-sharing groups, peer-to-peer learning exchanges

THE CHALLENGE

In 2010, a total of 385 natural disasters killed more than 297,000 people worldwide, affected over 217 million others and caused US\$ 123.9 billion of economic damages. Even in Very High Human Development Countries (VHDC), natural disasters have claimed more than 127,500 lives since 1990, affected over 59 million others and caused more than 1,543 billion US\$ of damages (data from CRED <http://www.cred.be>).

There is much variation in disaster impact which is related in part to people's vulnerability, about which there has been considerable research in recent decades. Of more recent origin is the growing interest in societal resilience. The **emBRACE** project adopts an interdisciplinary, socially inclusive and collaborative disasters research ethos in which it aims to improve the pan-European framing of the resilience concept. The project will develop a conceptual and methodological approach to clarify how the resilience capacity of a society confronted with natural hazards and disasters can be characterized, defined and measured.

To maximize the benefit of existing information and new ideas on resilience, various stakeholders and experts will be incorporated into different knowledge-sharing groups. There will be an ongoing engagement with some of these stakeholders alongside programmed consultations at various times during the development of the framework and model, case study work, and also the reshaping of concepts, guidelines and databases focused on disasters and societal resilience.

A key aspect of the **emBRACE** project is the seeking out of those people and groups not normally included in such fora; not as *subjects* of research but as *partners* in the research and *experts* in their own right (e.g. through Peer-To-Peer Learning Exchanges with grassroots groups).



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of the **emBRACE** project is to build resilience to disasters amongst communities in Europe. To achieve this, it is vital to merge research knowledge, networking and practices as a prerequisite for more coherent scientific approaches. This we will do in the most collaborative way possible.

Specific objectives

- Identify the key dimensions of resilience across a range of disciplines and domains;
- Develop indicators and indicator systems to measure resilience concerning natural disaster events;
- Model societal resilience through simulation experiments;
- Provide a general conceptual framework of resilience, 'tested' and grounded in cross-cultural contexts;
- Build networks and share knowledge across a range of stakeholders;
- Tailor communication products and project outputs and outcomes effectively to multiple collaborators, stakeholders and user groups.

METHODOLOGY

The **emBRACE** project is methodologically rich and draws on partner expertise across the research methods spectrum. It will apply these methods across scales from the very local to the European.

emBRACE is structured around 9 Work Packages. WP1 will be a systematic evaluation of literature on resilience in the context of natural hazards and disasters. WP2 will develop a conceptual framework. WP3 comprises a disaster data review and needs assessment. WP4 will model societal resilience. WP5 will contextualise resilience using a series of Case studies (floods, heat waves, earthquakes and alpine hazards) across Europe (Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey and UK). WP6 will refine the framework: bridging theory, methods and practice. WP7 will exchange knowledge amongst a range of stakeholders. WP8 Policy and practice communication outputs to improve resilience-building in European societies.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The **emBRACE** project will develop a widely tested and acceptable framework (or frameworks) with more than academic utility. This it aims to do through extensive stakeholder involvement from the global, through the international, to the more local. The results will help to provide recommendations on effective yet efficient ways to adapt generic resilience assessments to local contexts in Europe with an explicit recognition of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences. The **emBRACE** project seeks to impact policy and practice environments which seek to integrate the normally separate domains of disaster risk reduction and climate change. Resilience policy is still unfolding as understanding of the concept grows. This gives the project an excellent opportunity to make an impact on this developing policy field.

PROJECT PARTNERS	
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