Improving community resilience to natural hazards

How well can a community recover from a natural disaster? According to the results of the European emBRACE (Building Resilience Among Communities in Europe) research project, alongside the size and nature of the disaster, a number of other factors come into play; for example, the personal, financial or natural resources a municipality can call on, how it acts in emergency situations, and how it learns from and adapts to these. The 11 research partners, including WSL, identified through case studies and surveys a series of key factors that can determine how resilient a municipality is against a natural hazard. Factors include whether an early-warning system is in place, how well informed the population is about natural disasters, the strength of their confidence in the authorities, and how well developed social networks within the community are. The project’s findings are available for policy-makers in a handbook, enabling them to be better prepared in future against debris flows, avalanches, floods, heat waves and earthquakes.

Badia in Italy is regularly affected by debris flows. A network of professionals and volunteers provide emergency relief to the community after a natural disaster (December 2012).

www.wsl.ch/more/emBRACE-en