



## **The Calabria – Messina earthquake of December 28, 1908: remember to reduce the risk.**

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At 5:20 a.m., on 28th December 1908, one of the most catastrophic earthquakes in history occurred in the Messina Straits. Southern Calabria and north-eastern Sicily were severely hit: in few seconds Messina, Reggio Calabria and numerous villages on both sides of the Straits were devastated. Shortly after the earthquake a tsunami followed. Waves up to 12 meters high hit the Straits and the entire eastern Sicily coast.

This is the strongest earthquake (magnitude 7.1) occurred in Italy in the twentieth century. The picture of the total damage was catastrophic: the estimated number of deaths is of around 80,000. In Messina the victims were about 60,000, corresponding to 40% of the population at the time, while in Reggio Calabria 12,000 were killed out of 45,000.

To mark the centenary of this disaster, we arranged a program of different initiatives:

- 1) a photographic calendar with many information about the town destroyed and the tsunami effects ([www.ingv.it](http://www.ingv.it));
- 2) a special workshop for general public to reconstruct what happened 100 years ago, to understand what we know today about earthquake and seismic risk, and how we can reduce the damage caused by earthquake;
- 3) many EDURISK training courses for more than 500 teachers of nursery, primary and lower secondary schools in Calabria and Sicily. These courses are based on a multidisciplinary approach and the educational experiences had been fitted to the specific local environment of each school, from the geographical, historical and cultural point of view ([www.edurisk.it](http://www.edurisk.it)).
- 4) participation in ERMES 2008's activities to improve public awareness on seismic risks.

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