



Communication during an evolving seismic sequence

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Since October 2011 a seismic swarm is affecting the Pollino mountain range, southern Italy. At the abstract submission date the sequence is still ongoing, with more than 500 events with $M > 1$, at least 40 well perceived by the population and a maximum magnitude at 3.6. The area was hit by a magnitude 5.7 event in 1998 that caused one dead, some injured and widespread damage in at least six municipalities. The population main fear is that a large event could follow the seismic swarm as it occurred at L'Aquila in 2009. Among the initiatives taken by Civil Protection at national and regional level, it was decided to try to implement at local scale two communication projects that were thought for "peace time" and not for dissemination during a seismic crisis: the "Terremoto-Io non rischio" project for general public and the "EDURISK" project for school children. The main lesson learned during the first months of the activity are: 1) it is possible to take advantage of the increased awareness and risk perception from the population to attract more citizen toward topics that could go unnoticed otherwise; 2) the Civil Protection volunteers could be a very effective mean to reach a large amount of the population, provided they are carefully trained especially when children are involved; 3) the expectations about earthquake prediction raised from media without any scientific support proved to be the most difficult to be tackled: to overcome this bias risk education in "peace time" is absolutely essential; 4) door-to-door communication is perceived much better than official press release on newspapers; 5) training of volunteers must be limited to a few basic information, with special attention to the local context.