



Challenges in communicating research and research careers: lesson learned from the European Researchers' Nights at INGV

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Since 2009 the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV) participates to the European Researchers' Night, promoted by the European Commission, in the framework of Associazione Frascati Scienza (<http://www.frascatiscienza.it/>), with a program rich of events aimed at intriguing and stimulating audiences of all ages about Earth Sciences, i.e. to make the general public aware on activities and roles of INGV researchers. For the September 27th Night, INGV contributed with a program in the INGV headquarters inspired by the INGV Scienza Aperta Open Day held in April: guided tours, as well seminars held by researchers, exhibitions, educational games. We proposed two parallel programs: one devoted to earthquakes, including the visit to the INGV seismic surveillance room, seminars about Italian territory seismic hazard and exhibitions on Earthquakes and Volcanoes; the alternative program included the guided tour of the INGV laboratories (Aero-photogrammetry, Paleo-magnetism beside exhibition on geomagnetism, High Pressures and High Temperatures, Geochemistry, Restoration of historical instruments). In Frascati, we organized educational games, hands-on laboratories and a science theatre performance: "When the sky flashed red", as well as exhibitions at Museo Geofisico Rocca di Papa.

A paper-based appreciation survey, compiled by visitors at INGV headquarter and by the scientific theatre's audiences, supplied our team with feedback, revealing some precious hints about users themselves, appreciation and margins of improvement, both in organization and in content. People of all ages and professions came. For example, a father asked specific paths for children, with even more appropriate language. A boy (aged 11) found the visit to the labs "interesting but a bit boring". It was suggested to prepare specific hand-outs for each visit, and certificates of participation for students. A girl, 9 years old, wrote that such event makes her closer to science world. The frequent comment was the invitation to repeat more frequently such events.

With no doubt, the visit to seismic surveillance room contributes to give more information and clarification about seismicity of the territory, dispel the myth or deepen the debate on deterministic earthquake prediction and regain at least part of the reputational damage following both the earthquake and the L'Aquila trial (Amato et al., EGU2013-12140). Nevertheless, it remains challenging to measure effects of such initiatives on middle terms, and performance indicators are desirable.

It is worth noting that, while INGV organizes this kind of events for several years, it seems that researchers who take active part in this organization are still a limited number. In fact, participants were mainly technician and fixed-term position personnel, mostly women. Is this unavailability related to weak curricular evaluation of third-mission activity in research careers? This requires a reflection. Moreover, a video realized by INGV Osservatorio Etno dealing with working conditions of women in research, presented during the 2012 edition, allows to reflect about the need for more family friendly practices to balance family care and work as well as to promote participation of female researchers to decision making bodies.