



Involving formal and informal education contexts in surveying climate change knowledge and perception among the local population

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In Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (north-eastern Italy) schools, educational activities, informal settings and communication media (television, web and social networks) were involved in carrying out a survey about knowledge, perception and attitudes concerning climate change in 2017-2018.

Institutional local organizations in charge of weather forecast and climate studies, such as ARPA FVG – OSMER, are being increasingly involved in communication and educational activities regarding climate change. According to their specific role, they can act as a bridge, connecting global climate change evidence and worldwide policies to the local context and population. Communication and education are at the core of this process, and understanding the views, concerns and attitudes of the local audience about climate change is essential to successfully undertake this task.

In Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (1.200.000 inhabitants, about 8.000 km²), the regional meteorological observatory (OSMER) belonging to the Regional Environmental Protection Agency (ARPA FVG) has been carrying out communication and educational activities regarding weather science and climate since the early nineties. Interactive educational experiences, often involving peer-tutoring, have been developed through fruitful collaborations with local schools, while communication activities addressing the general public include organized events (e.g. conferences) as well as initiatives in informal settings (eg. food and wine or sport events). Furthermore the observatory reaches a relevant number of people through its website (1.600.000 average monthly visits), social networks (e.g. about 8500 Facebook fans) and collaborations with the mass media.

All these collaborations and assets were involved and proved very useful in setting up, piloting and carrying out (in various waves, mostly on-line) a survey investigating what local people know about global and local climate change, their perception of the seriousness of the issue, the effects they detect in their everyday life, which are the impacts they are most worried about, who in their opinion should tackle climate change, the importance of mitigation and adaptation policies, whether they have taken or are willing to take personal action to fight climate change and what actions they have taken, what are their sources of information and what organizations they regard as “trusted messengers” concerning climate change.

High school students were involved in piloting the questionnaire as well as in promoting the survey both among their peers and in informal settings. More than 2500 respondents (1000 during the first week) answered the on-line questionnaire, which was kept as short and “attractive” as possible. The results are very interesting and to some extent even surprising.

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