



Surveying climate change knowledge and perception among the local population: a fruitful low cost experience carried out employing the assets and media of a local weather forecast service

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In Friuli Venezia Giulia region (north-eastern Italy) an online survey about knowledge, perception and attitudes concerning climate change (CC) was carried out in 2017-2018 among the local population, collecting answers from more than 3400 respondents.

Educational activities, in schools and informal settings, and communication media (television, web, social networks) usually employed in the weather forecast context by the Regional Meteorological Observatory (ARPA FVG - OSMER) were involved in piloting, promoting and administering the survey, with no extra costs: only in-house resources and an online free tool were employed. Despite the survey not being planned and conducted by professional pollsters, its results seem very interesting and somehow even surprising.

The presentation will outline: the general background and the local context of the survey; how it was set up, piloted, promoted and administered; its results.

GENERAL PREMISES

Institutional local organizations in charge of weather forecast and climate studies are being increasingly involved in communication and educational activities regarding climate change: they can act as a bridge, connecting global CC evidence and policies to the local context, by capitalising on their own assets such as: locally relevant datasets and statistics; being considered as a trusted messenger by the local audience; reaching a relevant number of people through the Internet and the mass media.

Understanding the views, concerns and attitudes of the local audience about CC is essential in this process: hence the need and purpose of a tailored survey.

LOCAL CONTEXT

In Friuli Venezia Giulia (1.200.000 inhabitants) the Regional Meteorological Observatory has been carrying out communication and educational activities regarding weather and climate since the early nineties, in formal and informal education settings, via its thematic website and social networks, through local radio and TV broadcasts.

THE SURVEY

Communication & education collaborations and assets were involved and proved very useful in setting up, piloting (May-October 2017) and carrying out the survey (November 2017 - March 2018).

The survey investigated:

- what local people know about climate change, how serious is the issue in their opinion;
- the effects they detect in their everyday life;
- which are the changes and the impacts they are most worried about;
- who in their opinion should tackle CC;
- the importance of mitigation and adaptation policies;
- whether and how they have taken or are willing to take personal action to fight CC;
- what are their sources of information;
- what organizations they regard as “trusted messengers” concerning CC.

Over 3400 respondents (1000 during the first week) answered the on-line questionnaire, which was kept as short and “attractive” as possible. The results are usefully informative and to some extent unexpected.