

Elapsed time: 40 years. What do youths think about the 1976 Friuli earthquake, natural hazard and seismic safety?

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The celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Friuli earthquakes are an opportunity for North-eastern Italy to refresh the memory and awareness of living in an earthquake country.

In this framework, the seismological department of OGS (Centro di Ricerche Sismologiche, CRS) has proposed several initiatives and activities for various audiences (<https://versoi40anni.wordpress.com/>; Saraò et al., this session).

We present here the first results of a survey that we proposed as entrance test for the students (and teachers) visiting our lab, from February to June 2016.

The 10 survey questions was to be compiled on-line in anonymous form and on voluntary basis; 374 people filled out the survey at the time of writing of this summary. About 90% of the compilers are students, mostly of secondary schools (15-20 years old), the remaining 10% are their teachers. Equally well represented are the municipalities in Central Friuli, damaged by the devastating earthquake in 1976, and Trieste the principal town of Friuli Venezia Giulia region, about 80 km from the epicentral area.

The picture we gathered is not encouraging. The knowledge about physical facts (where, what) of the past earthquakes is usually blurred, better known is the social impact (deaths).

Youths have vague ideas about the major local natural hazard they are exposed to; sometimes their answers seem to be influenced by rumours on local media, or driven by teachers' interests. Their beliefs about the frequency of occurrence for devastating events like the 1976 earthquake span over decennials, centuries, thousands of years; the age of the interviewed does not matter. The underestimation of seismic awareness is binned with a distorted vision of defence strategies that are declined for post-earthquake conditions only.

What good news, then?

The students have a realistic perception of the vulnerability of their school, conscious that non-structural damages may be their main risk; they seems to be well trained to react to emergency. And the youngest the pupils, the highest their scores!