

Is it possible to attenuate some “post-seismic vibrations” among the public? Experience from the Mw 6,3 L’Aquila earthquake.

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This work describes all the activities of information, following the earthquake of April 6, 2009 L’Aquila (Central Italy), aimed to the Department of Civil Protection (DPC), to the operators involved in emergency, to the people affected by earthquake and teachers of schools opened immediately after the earthquake and in September.

These initiatives arise from different experiences and skills gained in recent years in seismic risk reduction projects and in the field of information and emergency management.

Just after the April 6 earthquake, the COES (Centro Operativo Emergenza Sismica, Seismological Emergency Operational Center) has been installed in the DICOMAC (Directorate of Command and Control - which is the central structure of the DPC that coordinates the emergency activities in the areas affected by the earthquake) in the Guardia di Finanza headquarters in Coppito (L’Aquila).

The COES has been a reference information point for all people involved in the crisis management and has provided also psychological support to the rescuers and to the earthquake affected population.

Other targeted initiatives have been organized:

- 1) the EmerFOR project targeted to the teachers living in the first aid tent cities (April-June 2009);
- 2) the “La Terra tretteca... Ji No!” project targeted to the L’Aquila residents living in the first aid tent cities (April-August 2009);
- 3) the “La Terra tretteca... Ji No! – Ritorno a scuola” project targeted to the schools in the most damaged areas (September 2009).

These initiatives has been extremely useful to answer to the informative needs of the general public on three main topics:

- 1) basic knowledge on seismology and Italian seismicity to better understand the seismic sequence evolution in Abruzzo;
- 2) a detailed scientific information on the seismic sequence evolution (but anyway easy to understand);
- 3) basic knowledge on the emotional response to catastrophic natural events like earthquakes and, if necessary, psychological support to the people shocked by the earthquake.

This experience shows the importance of efficient communication by specialists during emergency period because they can provide answer to scientific topics that would otherwise remain mysterious or poorly explained.

This information activity has proved to be extremely effective during the post-earthquake period (when aftershocks are possible) and also some months later

the main earthquake, when normal activities have been started.