



Co-mapping labs: a participatory design of risk maps

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The European Flood Directive (2007/60/EC) requires Member States to make flood hazard and risk maps available to the public. Still, making flood risk maps available is not enough to inform public about risk, they need to be interpreted correctly. Which are the elements that make risk maps actually suitable and clear for non-expert citizens? Which is the information expected by local technicians in flood risk maps? In order to answer to these questions, co-mapping labs were conducted within the project “Flood-IMPAT+: an integrated meso & micro scale procedure to assess territorial flood risk” in the city of Lodi, Northern Italy. The labs involved representatives of the civil society, economic activities and local institutions responsible for flood risk management. They were asked to analyse risk maps produced within the project with respect to its components of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and damage in order to collect guidelines for increasing communicative effectiveness of the maps. Contributions from participants were fundamental to understand the type of information and language that make risk successfully represented for and understood by different stakeholders. Currently, the same maps provided in flood risk management plans are consulted by those who are involved in planning processes, emergency overcoming, risk mitigation or simply exposed to risk. On the contrary, co-mapping labs highlighted the need to produce maps calibrated on stakeholders’ needs, i.e. that supply different information according to the map final use. Moreover, effectiveness of the tool map itself was questioned, especially for elements whose exposure and vulnerability change frequently in time. The request for a more flexible tool, like Information Systems, arose. In conclusion, co-mapping labs had the added value to be an experience of collaborative inquiry and participatory design in risk communication, supplying suggestions and recommendations that should be incorporated in the design of novel risk maps.