

VESUVIUS RISK EDUCATION

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As called upon by the objectives of VESUVIUS 2000 project, the development of a proper environmental risk educational strategy for the Vesuvius area is fundamental for establishing new habits of mind that are conducive for the creation of a secure and prosperous environment. This cannot be achieved by evacuation plans that menace the culture and aspirations of people, but by developing, at all levels of the society, a personal contract with the environment that sees the volcano as an asset rather than a liability.

We should shape the young to the norms and conventions of the adult society while carefully breaking down the fatalistic barriers of the adults that see an escape from the volcano as the only viable option of protection from the fury of the volcano. We must teach the young the knowledge that will ensure that their thinking conforms with what is real and true about the world and develop in each student his or her potential. And we must remind the elders what their parents and grandparents used to practice: a great respect for the volcano and its environment. But since these Platonic and Rousseauian ideas are mutually incompatible we must find a happy integration to ensure that Voltaire's plan for civilization is never abandoned. A volcanic risk educational strategy applied to the school children can be regarded as a process starting with a myth-like construction of the volcano among the very young, then romantically establishing the boundaries and extent of reality about the volcano and its surroundings among the more older children, and then, finally, philosophically mapping the major features of the Vesuvius problem through interdisciplinary integration on the high school and college levels.

GVES [1] includes many volunteers of the territory and has been promoting such an educational strategy in the Vesuvius area schools for the past decade. We have achieved considerable success with the screening of an educational video [2] that demonstrates the possible effects of large-scale eruptions on the territory, and have involved many elementary, middle, and high school level teachers and their children in producing material for a volcanic risk educational book [3]. On the anniversaries of the last subplinian eruption (December 16, 1631) we have been sponsoring yearly get-togethers of school children for the purpose of displaying their art and science on Vesuvius and getting them involved in a larger enterprise of developing new habits that are conducive to the creation of a security culture. In addition, we have delivered over 150 seminars to both children and adults of the territory on the promises of VESUVIUS 2000 and have tried to disseminate these ideas and solicit help from varied international scientific communities. This educational process is slow and arduous, for it requires many years to develop a properly educated adult and changing adverse habits of mind and overcoming the entrenched barriers of the current adult population.

[1] GVES Internet site: <http://www.westnet.com/~dobran>.

[2] Dobran, F., 1995. **Encounter with Vesuvius**. VHS video in PAL/NTSC, GVES, Napoli, Italy.

[3] Dobran, F., ed. 1998. **Educazione al Rischio Vesuvio**. GVES, Napoli, Italy.