



Abstract

The Role of Education, Self—Reported Knowledge and Environmental Risk Perception in Disaster Preparedness †

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Abstract: One of the dimensions of environmental citizenship is related to the understanding of the structural causes of environmental degradation and it also emphasizes the empowerment of citizens. With increasing threats from climate change impacts, the United Nations emphasizes the importance of local capacities for environmental emergency preparedness. Research shows that education plays an important role in the level of disaster preparedness (for example, refs. [1,2]); moreover, environmental knowledge is an important factor for shaping public-sphere environmental behaviors (for example, ref. [3]). The aim of this presentation is to explore to what degree the level of education, environmental knowledge and risk perception influences the level of preparedness for environmental emergencies in Lithuania. Lithuania is one of the countries where climate change impacts have drastically increased during recent years; thus, it is important to research the role and preparedness of citizens to cope with related threats and to indicate knowledge gaps in the understanding of causal relations. This presentation uses data from two datasets, which are collected during the Risk-Space project in Lithuania: (1) the representative survey of Lithuanian population, conducted in 2020, with 2007 respondents in Lithuania; and (2) experts from municipalities in Lithuania, responsible for civil contingency. Conducted in 2021. Experts number 58 (out of 60) participated in the study. The items that are analysed in this presentation include the following: Independent variables include the perception of specific environmental risks (floods, forest fires, air pollution and water pollution), self-reported knowledge about environmental threats, and the level of education of the respondent; dependent variables include the level of preparedness of individual and municipality to cope with environmental emergencies. Results reveal that the self-reported level of disaster preparedness is critically low both evaluating the preparedness of the municipality where the respondent lives and the individual preparedness. The level of education and self-reported environmental knowledge is significantly positively correlated with the individual's disaster preparedness level; however, they are not correlated with the evaluation of municipality preparedness.

Keywords: environmental emergencies; environmental knowledge; environmental attitudes; disaster preparedness

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are openly available in the Dataverse repository of the Lithuanian Data Archive for HSS: <https://hdl.handle.net/21.12137/Q0YILI>, (accessed on 22 February 2022).

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.



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