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Teaching Geosciences through practical activities to enhance global citizenship education in schools with a high dropout rate

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Most students living in disadvantaged areas do not trust that their school education will have much bearing on their future and become disaffected from school as early as in lower secondary school.

We here report the results of teaching Geosciences through several practical activities carried out in suburban schools characterized by a high dropout rate. The lectures were given in the framework of the STEM project Next Land, which has the overarching goal of instilling interest towards scientific topics into young students and promoting the role of scientific education for sustainable development.

We propose a sequence of four laboratory activities on the subject of natural calamities (e.g. earthquakes and tsunamis), which are based on the use of both manual and IT skills.

The didactical experimentation has been conducted on 21 seventh-grade classes (age ~12) involving about 350 students from the area of Naples (Southern Italy). The final aim of the teaching is to test the potential of the Geosciences in generating attitudes and behaviours of solidarity and responsible global citizenship.

All the proposed activities try to make students aware that they are part of a connected global system, therefore through these lectures we attempt to help these young students to put in perspective their local reality in a larger one.