ESTRATTO

Generative Communication paradigm and the project ‘scientia Atque usus’ (sAu)

Community building strategies in health communication

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Health communication is a strategic research field that should also help develop community building strategies to involve experts, researchers, citizens and also institutions, enterprises and associations to generate value for a healthy society. [...] What kind of communication can we use for that? Action research is a well-established research methodology in the social sciences, which is used to pursue transformative change while taking action and doing research at the same time. Within this context, the project called 'I Cantieri della Salute' - in collaboration with Federsanità di ANCI Toscana and the Tuscany Region - aims to strengthen cooperation between institutions, associations, health services and citizens.

***“scientia Atque usus”* (sAu): the project to create communities**

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scientia Atque usus

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"scientia Atque usus" (sAu) is a community building initiative based on the Generative Communication Paradigm[1], carried out in Italy by the Center for Generative Communication of the University of Florence and by the Lab CfGC inside a technological pole in Prato. Thanks to the 27 collaborators involved in the research group - different by gender, geographical origin, specializations - sAu consists of numerous transdisciplinary and transectoral research-intervention initiatives - now 19 of those are active - with a focus on health communication (relating also to prevention, well-being, environment and agriculture).

In this sense, sAu is a community of people and projects to experiment new ways to communicate products/services generating social, cultural, economic value for the development of the territory. The Generative Communication Paradigm allows all the people involved to cooperate in projects through the identification and involvement - since the formalization of the initial idea - of an increasing number of stakeholders who are given a proactive role in the implementation of the project and in the use of the product/service.

The main aim is to share knowledge, skills and competences in the various initiatives, involving subjects from the scientific world and the society as a policy maker/manager/citizen etc.. The ultimate goal of sAu, as its name suggests, is to activate collaborations and synergies between the world of research (*scientia)* and the social, productive, institutional and third sector (*usus*)[2].

The integrated system of digital tools to develop projects

sAu (www.scientiatqueusus.org) is first and foremost a community of many projects - active in different socio-economic and cultural sectors - whose objectives are:

- to promote a new culture of project management that helps to strengthen every initiative through the creation of a network of connections among stakeholders who traditionally do not dialogue and do not collaborate with each other (both in the implementation phase and in the use of the product/service);
- to act concretely to transform the vast deposit of Common Goods available - but not yet put to use - into a resource. A resource able to give socio-economic and cultural value to projects, which - in turn - contribute to feed the same deposit of Common Goods.

Engagement and involvement of citizenship represent the engine that generates the added value of the projects themselves and they guarantee the quality and the efficacy of all the actions realized.

To achieve these objectives, the research group has developed an integrated system of digital tools available to all partners and stakeholders: their aim is to enhance knowledge, experiences and critical intelligence of the various subjects involved, reducing the routines that dominate the most common automation systems.

The elements that make up this integrated system include:

- *Officine di Usus* (http://officinediusus.scientiatqueusus.org): an environment of design, management and monitoring of projects which is configured as an experimental site

[1] Luca Toschi (2011), *La comunicazione generativa*, Milano: Apogeo

[2] *"scientia Atque usus"* is an expression used by Julius Caesar in the *De bello Gallico*, which recalls the risks involved from keeping the production of knowledge separate from its real contexts of use and application. C. Iulius Caesar, Commentarii de bello gallico, L. II / 20.

which predominates the need to design innovative solutions, concrete, never experimented before.

- *Officina di scientia* (http://officinediscientia.scientiatqueusus.org): a journal in which a shared culture is elaborated in a participatory way, adapted to the new communicative paradigm.

Relating to these two features, the research group is working also in the implementations of a learning/training management system called *sAu Academy* and a library - *sAu Library* - to share resources even outside the communities of the projects.

Communicative paradigms in comparison

The Generative Communication Paradigm - by its inclusive and participatory nature - considers communication as common-action: a tool to develop community building strategies involving different actors of the territory (citizens, associations, companies, institutions, research institutions).

The main conviction behind Generative Communication is that - if you want to communicate a service or a product - you need to create communities of interests, objectives and values that collaborate proactively in the development of the product/service itself. Only by making the most of the contribution of each stakeholder from the early stages of design, it is possible to define effective communication strategies (especially in the social and health area) able to give answers to the needs of the communities taking into consideration the specific social determinants of health of each area.

Here are two examples of active experimentations.