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# Generative Communication paradigm and the project 'scientia Atque usus' (sAu)

Community building strategies in health communication

di Luca Toschi, Viola Davini, Eugenio Pandolfini, Marco Sbardella

in Journal of Communication in Healthcare, Strategies, Media and Engagement in Global Health Volume 14, 2021, pp. 271-273

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Pages 271-273 | Published online: 02 Nov 2021

66 Download citation ▶ https://doi.org/10.1080/17538068.2021.1992989

















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JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION IN HEALTHCARE 2021, VOL. 14, NO. 4, 271–273 https://doi.org/10.1080/17538068.2021.1992989



LETTERS: VIEWPOINTS ON CURRENT ISSUES



Generative Communication paradigm and the project 'scientia Atque usus' (sAu): community building strategies in health communication

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KEYWORDS Health communication; generative communication; communication paradigm; community building; stakeholder engagement

#### Introduction

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? The Generative Communication Paradigm [1] considers communication as a tool to co-design projects in different fields, such as health, well-being, environment, agriculture and sustainability. The main aim of this paradigm is to involve different stakeholders both from the research world and from different levels of society, and to conceive and realize products or services that respond to the existing needs for innovation in the region.

Within this context, we are introducing two interventions—based on the Generative Communication Paradigm and the 'scientia Atque usus initiative [2]'—that we are realizing in Tuscany (Italy) to strengthen the engagement of associations and average citizens in the healthcare system, and to build community on cooperating around the social value of olive growing.

# About the generative communication paradigm

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 from a given geographical area (citizens, associations, companies, institutions, research institutions, etc.).

The main mantra behind Generative Communication is that in order to communicate about a service or a product, one needs to create communities of interests, objectives and values that proactively intersect in the development of the product or service itself. Only by engaging each stakeholder from the early stages of the design phase, it is possible to define effective communication strategies that

would address community needs by taking into consideration relevant social determinants of health.

# Introducing 'scientia Atque usus' (sAu) and its community building initiatives through an integrated system of digital tools

'scientia Atque usus' (sAu) [Knowledge and Experience] is a community building initiative [2] based on the Generative Communication Paradigm, that was launched in Italy by the Center for Generative Communication [3] of the University of Florence and the Lab CfGC [4]. The expression 'scientia Atque usus' was used by Julius Caesar in the De bello Gallico, and refers to the risks involved in keeping the production of knowledge separate from its real contexts of use and application [5]. As its name suggests, the goal of sAu is to activate collaborations and synergies between the world of research (scientia) and the social, institutional and third sectors (usus).

Here are two examples of active projects.

# Transforming every citizenship-related action into an act of participation: Action research for a new communication model in health

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 [6]. Within this context, the project called 'I Cantieri della Salute', [The Construction Sites of Health]—in collaboration with Federsanità di ANCI Toscana [7] and the Tuscany Region—aims to strengthen cooperation between institutions, associations, health services and citizens. Our project includes not only the strengthening of traditional communication channels (institutions-citizenship) but also the creation of bottom-up (citizenship-institutions) trajectories for participation to promote the engagement of various stakeholders in the co-design of health

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**Q KEYWORDS:** Health communication generative communication communication paradigm community building

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# Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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# **Additional information**

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# Viola Davini

*Viola Davini* is a research fellow at Center for Generative Communication (University of Florence) and holds a PhD in Innovation and Rural Development. She has expertise in the design of communication strategies to strengthen relationships between the university and local communities.

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