

Workshop Theme

Collaborations and partnerships with specific groups and communities

Public health education and promotion through a collaboration between the University “Roma Tre” and the National Institute of Health in Italy.

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An innovative collaboration between researchers in health sciences, academics, school librarians/teachers and cultural mediators was started in Italy in March 2008. This collaboration led to the organization of a cycle of workshops on health information, education and promotion within a wider project of Public Understanding of Science. This experience points out the responsibilities of teachers at all levels in creating the appropriate environment, tools and resources to tackle everyday health related issues that are often disregarded, in view of more pressing school curricula priorities.

The initiative, called “I giovedì della salute” [i.e. Thursdays for Health], is mainly based on the concept that libraries and librarians can offer a suitable opportunity to involve health experts and researchers to foster communication and transfer of concepts fundamental to health education and to a larger extent, health promotion. This initiative did not require special budget, but was realized on a volunteer basis providing immediate feedback and positive results.

The first meetings (March-June 2008) were held at the Faculty of Education in Rome Tre University. Feedback was measured on the basis of perceived satisfaction and answers received to *ad hoc* questionnaires, intended to measure the subjective experience of health information among participants before and after each meeting.

Topics covered in the first set of meetings were: AIDS, tobacco smoking, alcohol abuse, mental health and life skills, inequalities and health, teaching materials. The number of attendees has constantly increased after the first meetings and as well as user satisfaction. A correct approach to the diffusion of health-related issues and the selection of library and university sets as locations where to organize the meetings are undoubtedly the key for the success of the initiative.

New cycles of workshops on different health subjects are planned also providing university credits. Future meetings are scheduled to take place in January-February 2009 and will concern: drugs of abuse (included the so-called new drugs), rare diseases, obesity, natural medicine, safe use of antibiotics, road safety. On the basis of the past experience, emphasis will be given to determinants of health behaviour, to factors influencing health behaviour and to effective health prevention programmes. The results achieved during this second round of meetings will be commented and compared on the basis of the analysis of data from questionnaires.