



## THE STREET THAT WALKS: THE JOURNEY THROUGH HEALTH NEEDS AND PRACTICES OF AN EMPOWERING COMMUNITY WITH CITIZENS, UNIVERSITY AND SERVICES

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**Introduction:** Fiorivano le Viole (FIV) is an association of social and cultural promotion formed by inhabitants of a neighborhood of Perugia, engaged, since 2012, in an urban regeneration opera according to a community participation model. FIV built a partnership with Experimental Centre for Health Promotion and Education (CeSPES) of Perugia University in order to discuss about Health considering the community where people live, the appropriate context to take action on Health and Mental Health issues and community participation as a strategy to build solidarity networks of acceptance and support. The partnership highlighted the need to consider the Primary Health Care (PHC) services as part of this network. FIV and CeSPES have therefore developed an action research to enhance the network between community and PHC services, assessing population health perception and needs with the aim to promote practices producing Health, with the perspective on services reorientation in a proactive and participatory way.

**Methods** A multidisciplinary working group (WG) formed by members of FIV, CeSPES, anthropologists, Municipality of Perugia staff, and social and PHC services workers and managers, immigrants-aid organisations and medical students has been established. The working group defined the project objectives, the qualitative and quantitative research tools (depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, demographic and epidemiological research, HIA tools) and methods to involve citizens and services workers.

**Results** The first WG meetings were addressed to establish a common language through sharing experiences and views on Health, FIV health promotion role and services mandate. The result of this planning is an action research project to be modulated over time by the results of the different data collection methods and their discussion. The project is involving about 1000 inhabitants and 80 health and social services workers, early results are currently emerging.

**Conclusions** The participatory planning resulted in a training path for the whole WG. The design phase represented a step forward to the construction of the territorial network, including community and services, culturally sensitive, proactive, in dynamic relationship with the forms of everyday life and therefore able to acting on inequalities, to fight the violation of fundamental rights and promoting active citizenship, therefore able to produce collective health in a concrete historical reality.



## CYCLING IN AN EMPOWERMENT PATH: CHANGING UNIVERSITY AND THE CITY THROUGH STUDENT PARTICIPATION

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**Introduction** University not only is a place of culture and formation, but also a living space embedded in a local community. Students can contribute to changing academic and urban settings to make them healthier and responsive to their needs. In order to enable this transformative growth of students and settings, University should adopt listening and participation tools.

Our purpose is to build a health promotion (HP) practice through a participatory and coherent approach, answering to students' health needs and affecting academic and local community.

**Method** During the course of HP at University of Perugia Medical School, we tested a teaching methodology according to HP principals, facilitating students' empowerment. Students were asked to develop a working group HP project based on their needs. These projects were not intended as mere practices, but to be presented to stakeholders for implementation. HP lecturers assumed the role of guarantor in the implementation process.

**Results** Out of the 31 projects presented one had as its objective the promotion of bicycle use. The group perceived in Perugia the discomfort to adopt sustainable mobility, confirmed by a high motorisation rate (69.5 cars/100 inhabitants) and a low cycle-paths rate (0.37 km/10000 inhabitants). The aims of the project were: reducing traffic and pollution, improving quality of life and facilitating low cost and sustainable mobility. The proposals were strengthening the existing bike-sharing service and creating cycle paths, connecting residential areas and university centres. The students group with lecturers submitted the project to cycling associations, academic authorities and the city council. The resulting working group (WP) ran a survey addressed to all university students to detect mobility flows through which the cycle paths and the place where to build the bike-sharing station have been defined. The WP also set assessment tools and obtained funds.

**Conclusions** The HP course participatory method enabled an empowerment process for students, dealing with the possibility to express their needs and their ideas to change the environment, from the strategies to be involved in decision-making up to political action. This method suggests that University can be an engine to modify cultural and physical aspect of the local community.

We strongly believe that University has the power, then the duty to avail itself of participatory tools with the aim of promoting the students, university and local communities health.