



## ***Citizenship and collective goods.***

***University and international cooperation for safety, environment and sustainable development  
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## **GLOBAL HEALTH AS THEATRE PERFORMANCE: A MASTERCLASS ON PUBLIC AWARENESS WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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### **Requested presentation form**

oral

poster

**Max 800 words in Calibri 11**

### **Context**

The public communication of science is one of the most challenging issues in our “knowledge society”: lack of interest from citizens, fake news, difficulty in access clear information are only some factors that make science far from citizens (Annuario Scienza e Società 2016 -2017 – 2018). The question becomes still more difficult when our communication is aimed at raising awareness on specific science issues, with the objective of making people aware of contents and stimulate them to act differently (Bucchi-Neresini 2010<sup>1</sup>; Bauer 2014<sup>2</sup>). In these cases traditional communication formats do not work, because they attract mainly people who are already “sensitive” to the topics (let’s think about public conferences or journalistic articles) and do not succeed in attracting new audience segments. Innovative formats of communication, using creativity and culture, can help in attracting a wider audience, in order to make people curious and closer to themes usually perceived as distant.

### **Doctors with Africa Cuamm and the Global Health Festival**

We want to propose here a specific case of science communication that Doctors with Africa Cuamm presented last April in the context of the Global Health Festival held in Padova ([www.festivalsaluteglobale.it](http://www.festivalsaluteglobale.it)). Doctors with Africa Cuamm has a long experience on Global Health issues, specifically with University students and schools: since 2011 the NGO has been carrying out outreach seminars, academic courses for students, trainings for health professionals in the field of global health and has reached more than 2800 persons in Italy.

Thanks to this experience, Cuamm has decided to organize an event addressed to young people (aged 19-30) in order to raise awareness on global health topics. Usually youngsters do not know what global health is or, possibly, they think it is something very distant from their everyday experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Bucchi M, Neresini F, *Which indicators for the new public engagement activities? An exploratory study of European research institutions*, in Public Understanding of Science, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Bauer M, A word from the Editor on the special issue on ‘Public Engagement’, in Public Understanding of science, 2014 Jan.



### **The project: “global health theatre masterclass”**

For these reasons, Cuamm decided to propose a “global health theatre masterclass”, a cross-cultural activity aimed at involving both students already aware of global health importance and students who were mainly attracted by a cultural opportunity (and who had not been exposed before to global health issues).

The activity was a masterclass composed by 6 meetings for 12 university students from different faculties led by a theatre director and a final performance held in a popular theatre of Padova during the Global Health Festival.

The masterclass on one side gave students basic skills about acting, on the other side it encouraged students to discuss about global health issues: students were free to bring their own experiences, doubts and thoughts. No narrative plot was decided *ex-ante*, but the theatre performance was decided thanks to the contributions of each student. The themes students brought to attention and discussion have been: nutrition, social determinants of health (i.e. richness/poverty or living in cities/living in suburbs), role of education on health, recycling and environmental pollution.

With the help of the artistic director, all the above-mentioned themes conveyed in the plot of a theatre performance, written by a playwright and played by 12 students and 3 professional actors.

The performance took place on Saturday night in a popular theatre of the city center and all the 250 seats (mainly young people) were sold out.

The performance is replicable.

### **Lessons learned:**

- **Cross-cultural projects allow to reach a wider public:** on one side people interested in scientific issues (in this case global health) and on the other side people interested in cultural format (in this case acting classes) who otherwise would never get in contact with the theme.
- **Involving students in the construction of the performance make them closer to the themes and make them act as ambassadors of the project:** audience development has been the key success of the initiative.
- **Science and art/culture should not be perceived as alternative/dichotomous:** they can work together in order to create innovation in communication of science.

**Is this abstract submitted for one of the proposed sessions (see list on website)?** Yes

**If so which one?**

Studenti protagonisti

**Please identify one or more frames for your contribution**

#### **Conference Dimensions**

1. Common goods
2. **Citizenship**
3. Security
4. **Environment**
5. Sustainability

#### **Academic Perspective**

- a) **Education and Trainings**
- b) Research and Innovation
- c) **Partnership and Projects**

### **Other Keywords:**

**Public outreach, public engagement, public awareness, science communication, university students, engagement through arts**