

SCIENCE POPULARIZATION

Tools and strategies to communicate effectively

Science popularization implies to bring science to the general public, to disseminate scientific knowledge and to foster a scientific way of thinking among people. In particular science popularization refers to public understanding of science and public communication of research projects. In this way science popularization is a powerful tool and a strategic measure to build a modern society, not only disseminating all the main useful knowledge and skills but spreading a general approach and a common culture. In general conflicts between science community and public opinion are connected to people's distrust but also to scientists' prejudice. In fact many scientists believe that the general public is not qualified to understand scientific issues even though the barrier is often due to the use of technical jargon and wrong communication. On the contrary every topic can be the object of science popularization, it just depends on the communication skills of who is in charge of the dissemination.

THE TRAINING

This training provides PhD students with the basic knowledge on how to effectively communicate the goals and the results of research projects. Taking into account the scenario, the different targets and the specificity of each subject, the learning program delves into the use of the proper language and into the selection of appropriate contents and messages. The program also develops an analysis of the involvement of science in the information process and it examines public opinion expectations considering the essential role of media as a fundamental intermediary between the scientific community and the public. The training then aims to illustrate how to endorse research starting from its complexity, not only the sectors with most direct impact on the daily lives, but also those less visible or hardly perceptible. For this reason the program includes simulations and exercises in the classroom and direct involvement of the participants who will be able to experiment with different forms of communication the presentation of their research activities in relation to the different targets and contexts.

THE PROGRAM

April: 6th – 13th – 20th – 27th

May: 4th – 11th – 18th – 25th

June: 1th – 8th

h 16.30 - 18.30 – Aula Pezzuoli – Surgical clinic III, sixth floor of University hospital

Introduction to communication

Scenario – Goals and strategies – Target and audience – Tools and timing

Messages and contents

Selection of contents and messages – Communication path and main steps – Catching public opinion's attention

Science popularization

The use of proper language – Distinction between the known and the unknown – Communicating what is invisible

Communicating science to an audience

Visual communication – Verbal communication – Body language – Gaining audience confidence

Communicating through the mass media

Media framework – News and information flow – Interviews and press conferences

LECTURER

Elisabetta Mutto Accordi is a communication consultant focusing on science popularization and sustainable development. She holds seminars at different universities and she works with organizations and companies. As freelance journalist she runs a news column on sustainable development for an Italian national newspaper.