



SHARE AND MOVE TO FACE NASTY BUGS

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Parents, healthcare workers, bloggers and

science communicators have launched a positive experience in Italy, with the aim of sharing and promoting scientific information towards an important public health goal: to face the drop in vaccine coverage. In fact, despite the active efforts of the public health system, vaccine hesitancy ^[18] is a constantly growing issue. In October 2015, the alliance between different stakeholders gave rise to a movement called *TeamVax Italy* that, at the beginning of 2016, developed the Italian Charter for the promotion of immunization ^[19]. The Charter is an advocacy tool, a call for action that offers the opportunity to support and defend the importance of vaccination programmes to whoever wants to be committed. Moreover, it is also a tool that can be used by all the institutions and the people involved to raise awareness among decision makers at local, regional and national level.

Six are the principles that the Charter enforces: right to prevention, social responsibility, information, fight against disinformation, communication, quality. Each of these principles go with specific actions, for a total of 45, which must satisfy some requirements. For instance, the possibility to identify a responsible subject, the action feasibility, its institutional acceptability, its potential impact. In order to facilitate the use of the Charter, several potential scenarios have been proposed, based on the role of individual or institution involved. Thus, there are specific actions for public health organisations, for citizens, for educational bodies, for journalists and bloggers.

However, the most important and innovative aspect is that the Charter represents a place where requests and necessities from both parents and healthcare workers come together. Motions advanced by parents involved in the preparation of the document underwent a careful evaluation from TeamVax. In particular, some themes that mostly concern parents have been discussed and then reworked into specific actions, such as:

- the necessity of acquiring transparent, clear and accessible information (Actions 3.1, 3.4, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11);
- the necessary response from institutions either to the new communicative scenario and to the new composition of hesitant parents (Actions 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.7);
- the quality of vaccination services and the support for parents in terms of reception, education and proper assistance (Actions 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.8).

The first draft of the document ? resulted from a collaborative approach and an internal discussion between members of the team ? was followed by a technical evaluation phase. Actions and principles stated in the Charter underwent an analysis by national experts, group members and vaccine commissions of the Regions Puglia, Marche, Toscana and Veneto (in Italy, public health management is structured on a regional level). Comments and advices gathered through this process were then further analysed and discussed, in order to modify and approve the final version of the document. The Charter was then presented and promoted through public events, press releases, televised reports and, obviously, online platforms and TeamVax members' social accounts. It is possible to download the document, subscribe to it and examine its main signers on the dedicated website [20].

The initiative had an immediate success: in July 2016, the Charter had almost 1,000 subscriptions, distributed as follows:

Citizens (32.1%)
 Healthcare workers (30%)
 Students (12.8%)
 Health companies (2.7%)
 Bloggers/debunkers (3.1%)
 Professors/researchers (4%)
 Schools/Universities (1.1%)
 Scientific societies (1.6%)
 Journalists (1.5%)
 Others (10.4%)

In the same period, the website had more than 12,500 views and 5,400 active sessions, with

a 77% rate of new sessions. The most interesting figure certainly is the bounce rate [21] at 49%, which means that those who visit the website tend to extend their visit before signing the Charter or leaving, and navigate through different pages, thus allowing TeamVax to achieve their objective: to spread grounded information on its activity.

The Charter already obtained relevant institutional subscriptions like Regions, faculties of Medicine, provincial Orders of physicians, Italian municipalities, all the main scientific societies involved on this topic, as well as the approval by the Minister of Health, which was committed to giving the most support possible to this initiative. This experience thus represents a solid and effective example of online communication that supports a social mobilisation towards the protection of public health, as well as a successful way to connect all the relevant stakeholder ? institutions, citizens, healthcare workers, students ? in an active and collaborative process. A process that strengthen both the sense of social responsibility and the trust bond with institutions.

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On behalf of TeamVax Italy*

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