FIRST ITALIAN
CITIZEN SCIENCE
CONFERENCE
ROMA 2017

SETTING PATHS IN CITIZEN SCIENCE:
BIODIVERSITY, NETWORKS, OPEN SCIENCE AND PLATFORMS

November 23-24, 2017
Conference Hall, National Research Council

November 25, 2017
Conference Hall, Civic Museum of Zoology

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS
HEALTH INFORMATION LITERACY AND RESEARCH:
NEW HORIZONS IN THE ITALIAN SCHOOL-WORK
ALTERNATING SYSTEM

Disseminating science outside the boundaries of research is a new challenge for the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS, the Italian National Institute of Health). In particular, communicating research data on health issues is the first step towards health information literacy to promote life skills and healthy lifestyles.

To reach this goal, the ISS has been engaged in collaborating with schools offering seminars and workshops as well as handbooks and leaflets addressed to young people. Training our future citizens becomes strategic to fill the gap between science and society, increasing students' interest in health sciences and providing them tools to gain awareness on responsible healthy behaviours.

In Italy, the Law 107/2015 introduced the school-work alternating system, which requires students from 16-18 years of age to spend a period of time at workplace as a way to implement the training courses and promote student orientation. This has offered the researchers of the ISS the opportunity to host students in laboratories and to make them aware of the value of health research through practical activities.

Using strategies, tools, and languages that can be easily understood by lay people, the ISS experts have developed science communication skills to catch students' attention on both science and health as part of their research commitment.

In 2016-2017, over 200 ISS experts designed 50 training modules with more than 13,500 hours of activity within four public health research areas: environment, biology, prevention, communication. Thirteen schools participated in the project and 260 students attended the modules.

A very positive feedback was given by both students and teachers, who appreciated the ISS high quality scientific contents and the multidisciplinary approach to scientific research. Both these aspects allow integrating scientific and social-cultural knowledge to improve science literacy for a win-win agreement between science and society.

The chance of the school-work alternating system can help in looking at research in a new way towards reaching the goal of a citizen science.

* Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy.