

What remains after we move; looking back at Comune Emergenza

In 2016 two strong earthquakes hit central Italy. I have been, at the time, holding space locally for a Hub for the online course "U.lab: transforming business, society and self"¹, and had felt the call to respond to this emerging emergency. The positive response to the idea from co-hosts Eliana Baglioni and Deborah Rim Moiso and the environmental education centre Panta Rei brought to the birth "Common/local Emergence". A 5 days event and participatory program directed to both people affected by the earthquake directly and possible allies to connect, exchange and plan for the future, using innovative social and human technologies, theatre and facilitation.

Now 3 years later I would like to look back and try and map the ripples and social impact of the event and our collective intention. **Measuring impact of Comune Emergenza is not an easy at all, mostly because of the complexity of human ecosystems and the invisible and intangible aspect of social fields, and the lack of data which is sufficiently consequential (with clear link of cause and effect). Still, I will try to map it with the data I have available and divide it into 4 categories: Content, Context, Energy, Relationships.**

CONTENT

The content that was shared in those 5 days varied between informational content (through an online conference and presentation by Eliana Baglioni), creative content (through storytelling and theatre workshops by Hector Aristizabal and Uri Noy Meir), and meta content (through facilitation by Deborah Rim Moiso, Eliana Baglioni and Uri Noy Meir). The impact in term of content could be measured through the application and transmission of content from the meeting by participants of the event to a bigger circle of people. Or in other words, the multiplication factor of the information and methods shared. While we lack much of the Data of how this aspect, manifested fully, we do know that several of the participants, including ones from the affected area, have continued in further training in both creative tools (theatre) and meta tools (facilitation) and have been applying it in their local context. In particular we can mention Francesca Ercoli that have organised a follow up training in her local project in earthquake effected area and is an inspiring young local leader and example of resiliency, Michele Battistella who joined further training and is offering creative workshops through various international and European programs, and Patrizia Vita who continued to train in creative and meta tools and have been applying those know-how as an inspiring local organiser and community leader in the earthquake-affected area.

CONTEXT

The impact on the context can be seen as concrete results, direct or indirect, on the context in which we operated, that is, post-earthquake central Italy. On the one hand, it is hard to say that big transformation is visible on the macro scale. Because of various structural flaws 3 years after the earthquake, out of more than tens of thousands of damaged homes only mere hundreds have begun reconstruction and the vast majority of ruins have not yet been cleared yet². Still if we look at smaller scale territorial impact that is connected to the social agricultural activity led by Francesca Ercoli, a Comune Emergenza participant and inspirational leader of Il Salto³ (the Jump) social agriculture activities, that have not let the earthquake impact her efforts if anything has encouraged her to step up and step in is generating some very impressive impact. Since 2016 Il Salto has hosted more than a 100 workshops, gatherings and training for Eco-sustainable development and socio-cultural transformation. It has also started to produce its organic spelt Pasta production and recently began to produce organic cosmetics from medicinal herbs.

¹ <https://www.edx.org/course/ulab-leading-from-the-emerging-future>

² <https://www.today.it/attualita/terremoto-centro-italia.html>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/ilSalto/>

Another CE participant, Patrizia Vita, have shown great resiliency and community leadership in her community of Ussita⁴, after 1 ½ year living in her camper and animating a territory almost empty from inhabitants, in 2018 she finally entered her new home and is a prominent voice active for just and effective Reconstruction of the territory.

ENERGY

Energy is that invisible flow which animates our actions and our lives. The impact of energy generated by Comune Emergenza is probably the hardest of all type of impact to measure, as it is most complex and difficult to see with the naked eye. What I can do is to look at it from my point of view as co-host and facilitator in this event, and see in what ways energy generated moved and still is moving. CE was for me a great moment as a facilitator and opportunity to collaborate with a great friend and mentor, and teacher of theatre for eco-psycho-social well being, Hector Aristizabal, as well as share and apply Theory U and Social Presencing Theatre 4D mapping techniques to make visible shifts in social fields. The 4d Map we did was of the case presented by Francesca Ercoli was the first one I ever facilitated. Following CE I connected further with CE participants, Gabriella Delfino and Francesca Scafuto. From 2017 till 2019 I have collaborated with Gabriella Delfino on capacity building project applying Theory U to the complex system of welcoming immigration in the region, as part of project Puzzle⁵. With Francesca Scafuto we have kept and engaged in generative conversation on ways to integrate embodied knowing and creativity to complex societal issues. And while a project we have applied to with other partners for the TIM foundation to create a game and app to playfully reconstruct the dreams and memories in the earthquake affected region was not chosen to be funded, our conversation did generate various smaller-scale collaborations. Like a presentation to her calls in an American college on Theatre for eco-psycho-social well-being. Francesca has recently been invited to present in a discussion in the Italian parliament on life skills and innovation in the education system, mentioning also Social Presencing Theatre and her work in the college⁶. This is only two of the generative interaction and energy flow that I have experienced following CE.

RELATIONSHIPS

When I refer to impact through relationships I am talking about how an event is able (or not able) to generate generative relationships between its various stakeholders and participants. Like I mentioned above two such generative relationships have been activated or supported by CE with Francesca Scafuto and Gabriella Delfino, this together with the connecting with Francesca Ercoli whom I visited and met more times after CE. A generative relationships tends to radiate into the context and affect more people indirectly. For example the beneficiaries, and various stakeholders I met through Gabriella Delfino, the American college students I met through Francesca Scafuto, and people of Il Salto project I have met through Francesca Ercoli, all of those and all other interactions created through the others those we all met through CE can be seen as a **generative relational web, that might not create any visible social impact on the short term, but is the tending to the relational soil⁷ that allows for innovation, creativity and wisdom to emerge, expand and grow.**

⁴ <http://www.antimafiaduemila.com/home/di-la-tua/237-vedi/69455-terremoto-patrizia-e-la-vita-che-torna-a-ussita.html>

⁵ <https://medium.com/presencing-institute-blog/puzzle-project-acting-from-an-emerging-future-47ee2115d0ee>

⁶ <https://webtv.camera.it/evento/15222>

⁷ <https://medium.com/presencing-institute-blog/social-field-resonance-how-to-research-deep-structures-of-the-social-system-544d68654abf>