

At lunch with Pedro Oliveira

On July 13th, at the 1st interdisciplinary symposium promoted by the B.A. in Global Governance from the University of Rome Tor Vergata, we had the opportunity to meet Pedro Oliveira. He is Professor and senior Associate Dean at the Católica-Lisbon School of Business and Economics. Besides the various academic recognition, he is the founder and co-Project Leader of Patient Innovation.

We had a lunch-interview with him during the symposium, in order to know more about his work and his projects.

The first question that we asked him was about the idea behind 'patient-innovation.com'. As he said, the platform is meant to bring together people who want to fight chronic diseases. At the base of 'patient-innovation.com' there are three concepts: diffusing, sharing and collaboration. As researches show, patients of chronic diseases have developed new ways to live with the disease or to cope with it, which do not come from the medical research but from daily life experience and from the desire of a better quality of life.

When we asked him about the future of the platform, he honestly said that there are no clues on how it is going to evolve. At the moment, the database of solutions is increasing day by day, since the launch of the website in 2014.

Despite the many criticisms posed at the initial stage, in 2016, during the UN "Summit on Science and Technology Enablement for the sustainable Development Goals" 'patient-innovation.com' was nominated as an example of "Commitments to Collective Action". Pedro Oliveira stressed the importance of such award and recognition for the reputation and the future of the platform. As P. Oliveira highlighted, the platform was born for a small community and the language was only Portuguese.

What they did with this platform is to link a need with possible solutions and this can happen in a community where people can share their experiences, P. Oliveira suggested that young people, interested in the social impact of business, should do the same: find the way to narrow the gap between the problem and the solution.

The first part of the symposium was shaped around the word 'imagination'. During the talks, each speaker emphasized the importance of imagination in different fields, from maths to history and business. Pedro Oliveira took the opportunity to stress the important of imagination in innovative solutions for health problems. An example he made was about a mother whose son suffers from the Angelman Syndrome, which causes psychomotor problems. To stimulate him to walk the mother placed colourful balloons on the ceiling. There are many stories like this, which show the creativity of people in difficult situations.

Last but not least we asked him his plans for the future and if he sees plausible the possibility to come as professor at Global Governance. Again, he said that the platform is evolving at an impressive rate that probably he will have to take some time off teaching to focus just on the platform but he did not exclude the possibility to come and teach at GG.



Sara Di Fabio & Pietro Cascarino