Increase the quality of care through communication arenas

**Conclusion**

Communication Arenas supported the collaborative process in which the actors developed the quality of care together.

**Participatory action research can act as a support for change within and between organisations.**

**Background**

Collaboration means that several players will agree to work towards a common goal. In parallel to the overall goal, there are supplementary goals and interests within and between organisations. Differences were often portrayed as enriching and as grounds for developing cooperation, and proved that they can work as preventive factors. This proved to be true in this study, which deals with increasing the quality of healthcare by developing collaboration between healthcare providers.

In a first stage managed actors defined their roles in the collaboration process. Politicians make decisions, managers make plans and professionals implement activities. The strategy emanates from a consensus theoretical perspective, where conflicts are regarded as disruptive elements. Differences and conflicts were ignored and thus the development of cooperation was prevented.

- Were organized on the basis of conflict theoretical perspective, namely that conflicts were considered as a natural part of the process.
- Are defined as dynamic encounter between actors from different organisations and different levels within organisations. Staff who would implement the changes were also involved in the decision-making and planning.
- Have a power imbalance which is handled by lifting minority voices and highlighting conflicts.
- Include conflicts that were handled with the support of a third-party researcher.

Through participatory action research (PAR) and a scientific approach the researcher worked as a development support in the field. The researcher generated material, by participant observation with dialogue and document reviews, about the collaboration process and arranged so-called communication arenas, for the actors involved, in which the material was reproduced and discussed. The aim was to promote development of the process through participation and communication between different groups, both between management and staff within and between non-profit organisations, local social care and a regional hospital.

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