

Target population: People with disability and their families

Mission:

- To support people with disabilities through identifying and responding to psychosocial needs that traditional public services often cannot address.
- To change the way people with disability are perceived in the society.

Funding: Public social services in Turin in partnership with associations and professionals.

Context

The Prisma project was inspired by an analysis carried out by professionals working in the local social services for people with disability. These professionals were coming across people with needs they were not able to address. Even though most people were being managed by the public social and health care system, some needs remained unmet, especially those related to psychological wellbeing and social inclusion.

The project idea was to design and create non-standard answers by working in partnership with local associations. Therefore, the project initiators began reflecting on their roles as public servants. They changed their approach, starting to meet people with disability and their organizations as equals and valuable in co-planning of the activities. In the future, they want to spread their approach to other public institutions and services.

From 2008, every three years the local administration and more than 20 associations renew a partnership agreement. Among the partner associations there are also migrant associations, which play a crucial role in providing cultural mediators when the person with disability is a migrant.

Governance & management

A partnership agreement is signed every three year between local social services and associations. Currently, 24 associations have signed the agreement, but more associations are involved.

Governance is very light: relationships among social services professionals and associations are kept informal to guarantee fast intervention.

What this initiative is about

Every participant in the project takes part in the definition of his or her personalized plan, responding to their needs and giving value to their assets.

Our strategy for people-driven care

Person-centred support of people with disabilities cannot be pre-defined. Based on individual needs, the project workers knock on doors to build supporting networks and improve participants' autonomy. They also help to integrate the different services and people involved in individual's life.

How are citizens engaged and empowered?

The person with disability is empowered to recognize and identify his or her need, to claim right to self-determination and make decisions. Hence, the participants do not receive a service, but rather build it together with professionals and association representatives.

Services

The project offers the following services to persons with disability (among others):

- Counselling
- Psychological support
- Peer support
- Inclusion in self-help groups
- Make-up therapy
- Information about sexuality and disability
- "Fiore di Loto", a gynaecologist practice where doctors are trained by women with disability and which is linked to anti-violence service
- Recreational activities (art, sport etc.)
- Search of alternative housing options (ex: co-housing)



Impact

- Every year the Progetto Prisma supports about 160 persons with disability.
- The project is considered good practice by Italian organizations like Federsanità ANCI, and has received various awards. In 2008, the specific initiative "Fior di Loto", received an award from the Italian Network *Healthy Cities WHO*.
- The yearly increase in number of people joining the self-help groups is an indicator of the project's impact.



Insights (Key learnings)

- If you want to change culture, start with yourself: the project started with professional self-reflection about their approach towards people with disability. From this, they went from a provider-receiver model to a horizontal collaboration where each participating part learns and develop together.
- Horizontal relationships and learning make reciprocity possible. Experiences from the project show that persons with disability often stay and run their own projects to give back to the community. This is what Progetto Prisma calls "social work with a community perspective".
- Support networks are detrimental to person's autonomy and self-determination.
- The public-private partnership is effective thanks to horizontal relationship, availability and absence of bureaucratic rigidity.
- The word of mouth has been more important than formal information in spreading information about the project.

