

**Associations, Services and Local Governments,  
some experiences in Florence (Italy)**

Pino Pini

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# Outlines

- National, Regional and local issues in Italy
- From Psychiatric hospitals to local communities, the decentralisation process (law 180-1978, the Psichiatria Democratica movement)
- The growth of mental health associations in the 90s
- The role of Municipalities, a Florence experience
- Good practices for social inclusion and community development
- The “Joint Experiences and Local Mental health Systems project”

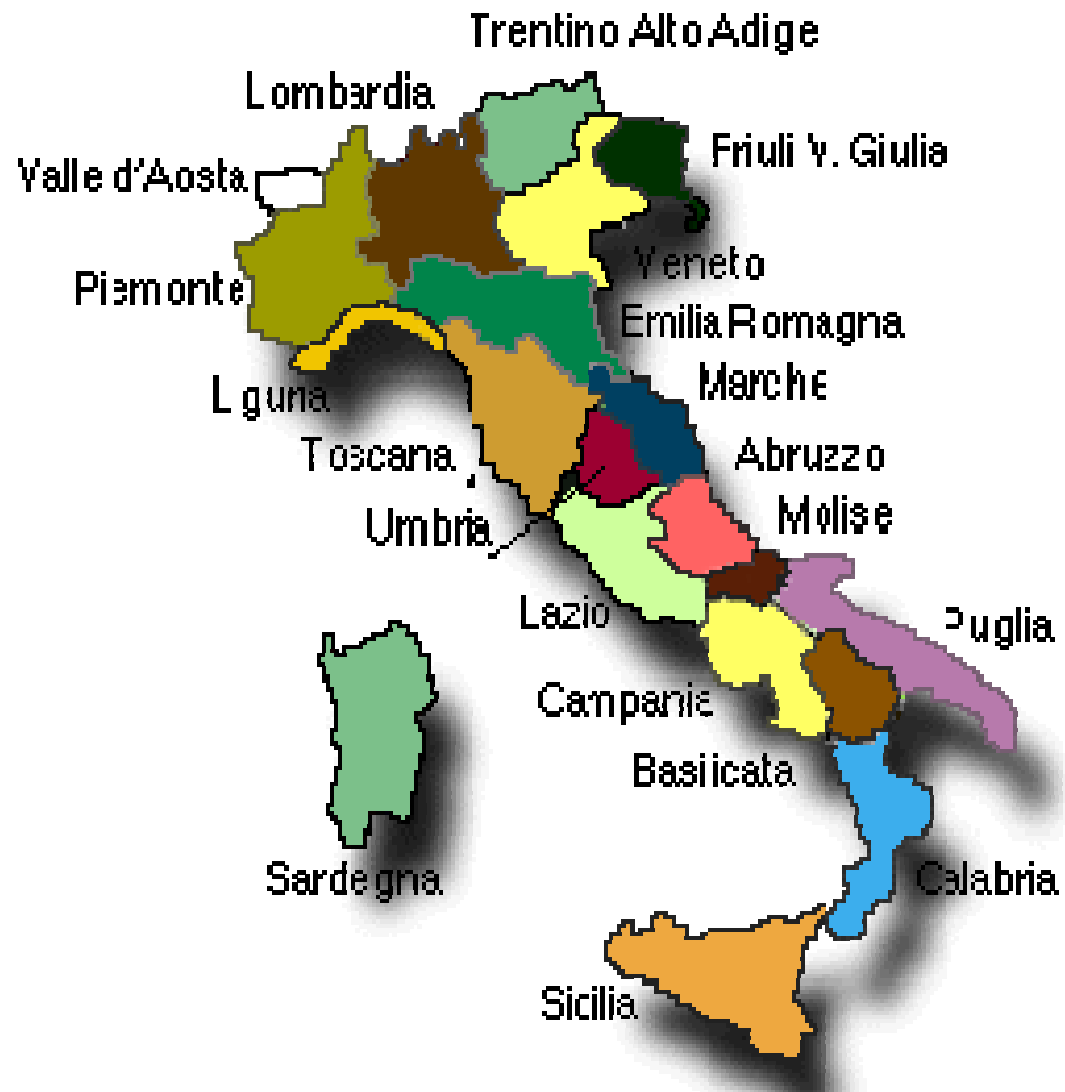
# National level

- **Italy 60.000.000 people divided into 20 regions**
- **The health reform has been established in 1978, the biggest social reform after the 2nd world war (law 833 which incorporated totally the mental health law 180 approved some months before on the same year).**

**The state makes frame laws**

- **Health has been totally decentralised to 20 Regions which are responsible for the health and social services delivery and organisation**

Italy 60.000.000



# Tuscany Region

- **Tuscany 3.500.000 people divided into 12 Provinces (counties)**
- **There are 12 territorial Health Trusts (Aziende Unita' Sanitarie Locali) almost corresponding with the 12 Provinces**
- **and 4 University-Hospital Trusts (Florence -2-, Siena and Pisa)**
- **Tuscany Region has recently decided (unique in Italy) to establish the so called Società della Salute**

**Mappa province della Toscana**



## **Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale (USL) (Health Trust)**

- It is the cornerstone of the reform (law 833 1978)
- All the territorial and hospital services – social services included- are under the USL (except the big specialistic university hospitals)
- The General Manager of the USL is nominated by the Region

# **Società della Salute (Health Society)**

- **The Società della Salute (Health Society) is an organisation that gathers the community health services with the social services.**
- **The board of the Health Society is formed half by the Health Trust and half by the Municipality (ies). This gives responsibility to the municipalities.**

- **Mental health services are going to be part of the Health Society. This stress the point that mental health is territorial. For beds in hospital it is necessary to make agreements between the Health Society an the Health Trust**
- **The President of the Società della Salute is a local politician**
- **There is a participation commettee for associations**
- **There are now 34 Health Societies officially established, but most of them are still in a experimental phase**

## Le Società della Salute in Toscana



# **From the support of services to independent associations**

- After the closure of the psychiatric hospitals (law 180) some service psychiatrists decided to be involved in local politics to better know the community.
- A local Psychiatric Service and a Florence City Borough in 1980 made links with a voluntary association of the territory, Casa della Cultura, in order to find alternatives to the therapeutic approach of services.

- Trough this experience it was possible to create exchanges with other countries and to know international user movements and mental health associations as ERC-WFMH (now MHE)
- In the early 90s also in Italy mental health associations as AISMe began to be established. They themselves now were more and more able to develop direct relationships with the local Municipalities and with the Services

# Relationships between AISMe and the Florence and Prato Municipalities

- AISMe since 1994 has stimulated the Florence and Prato Municipalities and many other places in Italy to:
  - be involved in the celebration of the World Mental Health Day, then developed as Mental Health Month in Florence.
  - create the municipality mental health boards (Consulta della salute mentale)
  - work together at the Joint Experiences and Local Mental health Systems project
- The influence of MH associations certainly brought relevant changes at Region level and at national level. Innovative laws and action plans for decentralisation and for inclusion in the local community have been produced

# **The “Joint Experiences and Local Mental health Systems project”**

- Exchange of experiences and education-research programs among different places internationally wanting to establish structured collaboration among mental health associations, services and local municipalities on different issues
- The project began in 2002, following previous initiatives mainly focused on user self help and involving different subjects (as MHE and ENUSP) in different places.
- Now the project is going to involve Florence-Prato (Italy) and Glasgow-Lanarkshire (Scotland)

# **Examples of Joint Experiences:**

User self help groups

Voice hearers user self help groups

Relative self help groups

Sport groups

Art groups

Working groups

Housing groups

Research groups

Theaching groups

Organizing conferences groups

# Our auspices are:

- Establish permanent relationships between local governments, services and associations to better meet needs and aspirations of people of the community
- Use of instruments to monitor those relationships to compare them nationally and internationally
- Help by local governments and services to develop independent associations avoiding manipulations and power games