

The ICF in Italy 2001-2009 First National Meeting

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Abstract On 29th-30th September 2009 in Riva del Garda (Italy), the first national meeting 'The ICF Classification in Italy 2001-2009' took place. It was promoted by WHO Italian Collaborating Centre for the FIC (Family of International Classifications), by Disability Italian Network (DIN) Association and organized by Centro Studi Erickson. This presentation reports on its major contents and on meeting main outcomes.

Introduction

In 2001 WHO approved the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health). In 2002 ICF was introduced in Trieste (Italy) during a meeting with representatives coming from all over the world. In 2007 in Venice (Italy) the ICF-CY (version adapted for children and youth) was presented. Throughout these years, dissemination, training and use of ICF in Italy were widespread and intense.

ICF was spread in different fields involving associations of people with disability. An important collaboration between researchers and public institutions was also created, and political bodies (at national as well as regional level) had a first-line role in the promotion of ICF utilisation. In 2007 WHO officially recognized the primary role of Italian experience in the use of ICF and designed the Italian WHO-FIC Collaborating Centre. The directorate of the Italian CC is the 'Agenzia Regionale della Sanità-Friuli Venezia Giulia', and three research branches are recognized: the Italian Institute for Statistics (ISTAT), the Neurological Institute C. Besta IRCCS Foundation and the E.Medea Institute IRCCS.

The meeting, promoted by WHO's Collaborating Centre and DIN Association and organized by Centro Studi Erickson intended to be an opportunity for going back over these years and for presenting the major ICF-based projects. Most importantly, it was an extraordinary occasion to enlarge and enrich the Italian community of ICF users, and to launch it internationally, given the worldwide connection of the Italian WHO-FIC CC.

Methods & Materials

The conference was held over two days and was preceded by an introductory training day on ICF .

Three plenary sections and five workshops regarding the current major areas of application of the Classification in Italy were scheduled:

- ICF and public policies
- ICF and rehabilitation
- ICF and labour policies
- ICF and school
- ICF in research and university

For each session, invited speakers were selected among the persons which, in the last eight years, contributed most to the application and implementation of the ICF in Italy.

Sessions were attended both by people already working with the ICF classification in their daily practice (clinicians, researchers, teachers and policy makers) as well as by persons who were interested in improving their knowledge on the ICF.

The workshops were the occasion for participants to discuss on the status of their experiences, compare them against those of speakers and sessions' chairs and raise for new developments.

A roundtable on the link between the ICF and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was conveyed: it included policy makers, experts in the field of public health and representatives of associations of persons with disability which participated to the meetings of the UN ad hoc committee.

The event was open to all interested parties, of any profession, throughout the country.

Results

The meeting was attended by about 550 participants with different professional backgrounds. The five workshops have encountered the following rates of participation:

- ICF and public policies–15%
- ICF and rehabilitation–53%
- ICF and labour policies–12%
- ICF and school–13%
- ICF in research and university–7%

The working groups have produced interesting documents for development of new projects, for example a consensus on the timepoint and professional for applying the ICF in rehabilitation.

Conclusions

This event has confirmed that there is an active Italian community working for the development and application of ICF. The Italian experience has also the peculiarity of a strong support of policy-makers and administrators to the development and implementation of ICF-based projects and practices.

Among the outcomes, the creation of a network of clinicians interested in the application and dissemination of the ICF in clinical and rehabilitation settings, and the creation of a network of scientific societies, under the aegis of the Italian WHO-FIC Collaborating Centre are the most important.

The activity of dissemination will be pursued through the release of an Italian portal dedicated to WHO Classifications (www.reteclassificazioni.it), which is intended as a place to exchange opinions and expertise on the future development of the ICF as well as other future health classifications.



From left to right: V Invernizzi, D Ianes, L Frattura, C Francescutti, G Griffo, D Zampogna, R Troiano, M Leonardi, A Martinuzzi, G Fusaro, A Raggi, M Zampolini.

Screen shot of the Italian webportal of Classifications

