

## **CURRICULUM OF THE COOPERATIVE SOCIAL INDEPENDENT L. ONLUS** **Publications and main research conducted in the area of social economy**

The cooperative independent L. was founded in November 1997, on the initiative of nine people with physical disabilities, with the aim to work for the abolition of all the rules and all discriminatory barriers, especially architectural and cultural, to protect the right of people with disabilities to equal opportunities and above all to an independent life, characterized by "a real autonomy in large and small decisions concerning everyday life".

Its activities are reflected mainly at local level, especially during the first years of activity, and then spread gradually towards the rehabilitation centers in Austria and Germany, which are relevantly close relations of cooperation, especially in the first consultation on social and appropriate use of assistive technologies. Even the implementation of projects on accessible tourism and its increasing awareness initiatives and its many collaborative relationships (undertaken at multiple levels with different institutions and companies in the sector of first and second level) have screened the activities and services provided by the cooperative more towards a national and EU level.

The conference "COMPUTER AIDS AND INTEGRATION" organized in 2001 and even more so the one organized in November 2003 in close cooperation with the ESF "OTHER SKILLS - GOOD PRACTICES AND DISABLED PEOPLE" and those organized in 2007 "DESIGN FOR ALL" and in 2008 "ACCESSIBLE TOURISM: THE NEED OF A FEW OR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MANY ?" have contributed to the creation of a network of collaboration and planning at European level in the different areas that relate to the world of disability and cooperation.

Enlargement of the horizon of the activities also contributed to the different ESF-funded projects that have been identified as best practices and publications carried out in recent years (see "Life regardless comparison of European countries on the rights acquired for an independent living", a project of life "The accessible work - Analysis of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, companies subject to the law 68/99, standards for the right to work of persons with disabilities", conference proceedings published by the aforementioned notebook Tecnostruttura F. Angeli Milan 2004, AccessAbility - A guide to computer aids for the integration of people with disabilities; Women and Social Work - Best practice analysis of the activities for the assistance and care).



### **South Tyrol for all – Accessible tourism in the holiday area South Tyrol in Italy**

The project described here as follows, is as an example of best practice. It was realized by the social cooperative "independent L" (L stands for Living), an organization which over the years has monitored and evaluated accessibility of touristic facilities in one of the most beautiful Italian regions: South Tyrol – Dolomites.

Independent L. also has an in-house webcenter, a business unit that offers web-based internet solutions regarding accessibility. The services also meet the needs in terms of accessibility by people with sensory, motor and cognitive skills.

The webcenter has realized some important works; the most outstanding websites are:

- 1) South Tyrol for all - [www.southtyrolforall.com](http://www.southtyrolforall.com)
- 2) Comuni per Tutti (Municipalities for all) - [www.comunipertutti.it](http://www.comunipertutti.it)



"South Tyrol for all" is a specialised tourism portal that gives everybody the possibility of barrier-free holidays in South Tyrol.

This website is a user friendly, extremely lightweight and intuitive search instrument for all those that cannot travel freely, in order to make South Tyrol accessible for people with disabilities, elderly people, families with small children and people with food allergies or intolerances.

"Holidays without barriers" is the slogan that characterizes the South Tyrolean site dedicated to people with disabilities.

Website users can see and book hotels and tourist facilities accessible to persons with disabilities as well.

This online service, unique in Europe in terms of content, allows all people with disability or not, to access the list of accessible accommodations and book the room from their very home.

In its starting phase, the portal born in 2004, aimed at showing the accessibility of facilities. Between 1.600 hotel facilities were evaluated. At that time around 300 structures matched the criteria demanded; this shows that South Tyrol is ever busy in order to enhance its touristic offer by proposing high quality touristic services.

In a second step, the analysis of accessibility has also been extended to structures other than accommodations.

Therefore, the most interesting aspect of the current portal is the vastness of the reviewed structures (not just hotels). On the portal every structure published, whether hotel, restaurant or tourist attraction, is evaluated in an objective manner, letting the viewer determine what is really accessible, according to his personal needs and requirements.

The careful attention to detail makes the portal an indispensable means for all those who live in South Tyrol or who intend to spend their holidays here.

"South Tyrol for all" is not just a rich and useful travel portal, but it is also the official information platform for accessible Tourism in South Tyrol - Dolomites.

The team of independent L. provides accessible tourist information, assistance and advice, in order to help guests plan their holiday in South Tyrol as comfortable as possible. The touristic offer includes barrier-free accommodations, restaurants, tourist attractions, sports and leisure, transport accessible to all.

Thanks to the remarkable work of independent L, throughout the years (10 up to now) and of the people with disability that visited and examined the facilities shown on the portal, the information on the very same show a detailed overview of facilities completed with clear and handy evaluation criteria, that indicate their different degree of accessibility.

Each structure shows a detailed and complete description. The single technical files start from the outer area of the single facility and lead to the inside one.






The portal is very rich in

- Technical files;
- Photos;
- Evaluations;
- Detailed descriptions

Therefore, "South Tyrol for all" offers a comprehensive data-base with information and many photos that describe every aspect of the facilities collected

The evaluation, expressed on each structure by means a variable number of "smiles", refers only to the degree of usability by guests with disabilities.

**Possible evaluations, in descending order, are as follows:**

-  - excellent accessibility  
 Holiday accommodation can be used very well in all areas and the furnishings are adapted to the needs of disabled people (hotels suitable for wheelchairs)
-  - good accessibility  
 Holiday accommodation can be used well in all areas, recommended furnishings adapted to the needs of disabled people are missing or the wellness area is hard to reach
-  - satisfactory accessibility  
 Holiday accommodation as such is accessible but the independent utilization is uncomfortable in some important areas
-  - limited accessibility  
 Holiday accommodation only has restricted accessibility and the independent utilization of some important areas is very difficult
-  - only accessible with assistance  
 Holiday accommodation is only accessible with reservation because the utilization of the offers needs the assistance of an accompanying person

The "South Tyrol for all" team always tries to be objective when evaluating a single facility; however a marginal subjective component remains when the accessibility of a hotel is evaluated, because the needs of disabled people can be classified in many different ways. For this reason the portal advises users to look at the many pictures and read the technical files, as well. In order to find the facility that fulfils their very needs.

The uniqueness of this site is given by the large amount of true and complete information collected and displayed.

Currently the site is published only in Italian and German. But independent L. is presently working on the English version and some new graphic features, in order to adapt it to the application published on the very same occasion. The website will be accessible also to people with visual disability.

2013 the complete restyling of the website was officially published and presented to the public by independent L; together with the matching (and new) application for mobile phones. The application allows guests to get real-time information on accessibility of facilities and entertainment venues in South Tyrol: not only hotels, then, but also restaurants, spas, sports centers, museums, tourist attractions and transport, for a social life, truly autonomous and independent.

**"South Tyrol for all" Website, App & Guides books:**

