



ABSTRACT FORM

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Title of the contribution/Titolo del contributo	The Right to Live in the Community is a Human Right		
Objectives/Obiettivi	To introduce INclude-The Mental Health Initiative, a new independent NGO that promotes the right of all people to live in the community, and to discuss current opportunities and threats to existing good practices and reform in mental health.		

**Contents-text/Contenuto-testo:
Max. 400 parole/words**

One of the most important revolutions in modern Western culture began in 1961, when a young psychiatrist named Franco Basaglia turned upside down an abusive mental institution in Gorizia, less than 50 kilometers from Trieste. He opened cell doors. He unlocked the main gate. He and his wife Franca would go on to inspire fundamental reforms in mental health care throughout Italy, change its laws, and make the country a beacon of best practice around the world.

Today, that legacy – that work, the reason for this conference – is in dire jeopardy of being reversed, here and elsewhere across Europe.

INclude, a new NGO, is here to halt that trend, and preserve Basaglia's example, and Italy's. INclude grows out of a groundbreaking program called the Mental Health Initiative (MHI), launched in 1995 under the auspices of the Open Society Foundations (OSF). It took a long-term strategic focus and a human rights approach to supporting the development of community-based alternatives to institutionalization for people with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities. After two decades of operating, MHI has leveraged its successes by spinning off into a new and independent non profit organization that is working through advocacy, technical assistance, networking and participatory grantmaking. This new entity is INclude – The Mental Health Initiative. Our approach features a strong advocacy role and extending the development of our global network of partners and allies.

INclude currently works in Europe, with a focus on Croatia, the Czech Republic, and Georgia. It has developed partnerships with local organizations and supported the establishment of community-based models that can be adapted, replicated and scaled up in Europe and beyond.

Much headway has been made in mental health reform- there are models of good practice in many places. There is an urgent need to continue disseminating and strengthening them to ensure their long-term sustainability: the survival of many is under serious threat today due to cuts in government funding, the construction of new residential institutions for people with disabilities all over Europe, and the rise of right wing populism globally, resulting in exclusion and segregation of 'the other'. Now more than ever, when space for civil society is increasingly narrow, we must take up our critical our advocacy role. Without an engaged movement of reformers who demand that governments live up to their commitments under the CRPD we risk losing the programs we have, and the progress we have made.