GRUPPO ABELE’S MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Gruppo Abele is a non-governmental organization founded in Turin in 1965 with the purpose to share and find solutions to problems and issues of social exclusion.

All along its history, Gruppo Abele has been interpreting the condition of being a citizen starting from the contradictions we can notice in the street, that is seen as a place of isolation but at the same time as a space where relationships and meetings take place. The street represents, symbolically and materially, the deepest hardship and the most difficult situations of exclusion: drugs, AIDS, alcoholism, mental illness, prostitution, homelessness, immigration, but also a place where culture, proposals for change and attention to prevention can find their space. In addition to supporting those who have more difficulties, Gruppo Abele's activity has developed in three simultaneous lines of action: social, cultural and political, combining reception areas for people in need with initiatives of prevention, training, and information.

The underlying belief is that services cannot be the only answer to situations of distress but it is also necessary to stimulate a new cultural approach to the problems that affect our social context and generate exclusion and marginalization.

GRUPPO ABELE: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

Gruppo Abele is structured in four different departments: vulnerability and victims, residential care and drop-in centres, education and publishing sector.

The departments manage 40 different activities and projects in order to implement tailored paths leading away from hardships and marginalization.

First-help services

Gruppo Abele’s first-help services are varied and include:
- Drop-in centers for vulnerable people;
- Residential care for people with drug and alcohol addiction problems and people living with HIV/AIDS;
- Shelters for the homeless;
- Residential care for mothers with children in difficult situations;
- Legal support to migrants;
- Integration paths for women victims of human trafficking as envisaged by article 18 and 13 of the National Law on Migration;
- Support to victims of crime.

Other activities

- Education

Gruppo Abele has implemented various projects in the field of education, ranging from targeted policies against school dropout, to peer relationships and addiction prevention. Gruppo Abele works constantly with schools, providing training on specific themes. Many activities are also targeted at students’ parents and teachers with the aim of building citizens’ awareness.
Family
An important area is dedicated to Italian and migrant families through several activities such as language courses, childcare and support groups. Every Tuesday Gruppo Abele organizes meetings on different issues that have involved 1800 people.

Research
In order to support and integrate its counseling and rehabilitation actions, Gruppo Abele has implemented many cultural initiatives: a Study Research and Documentation Centre and a specialized library, a training agency named “Università della Strada”, a publishing house (“Edizioni Gruppo Abele”, with a catalogue of about 100 titles), as well as monthly periodicals (Narcomafie, Animazione Sociale).

International cooperation
In 2001 Gruppo Abele was recognized as a NGO for its development cooperation projects in Cote d’Ivoire and Mexico. Commitment to international cooperation focuses primarily on the creation of projects promoting and supporting change processes in contexts dominated by situations of injustice and insecurity.

Employment
Gruppo Abele also collaborates with Consorzio Abele Lavoro, a consortium that offers an educational space and real and concrete possibilities of reintegration into social life to more than 500 people, and tries to consolidate a type of economy that could be more favorable to the most vulnerable population.

Gruppo Abele’s network
In the logic of bringing together skills and competences to better address problems, Gruppo Abele is at present part of: CNCA (National Coordination Committee of Hospitality network), LILA (Italian League for the Fight against AIDS), Libera (Associations, Names and Numbers against mafias), Banca Etica, Forum del Terzo settore, CNND (National Coordination against New Drugs), CICA (Italian Coordination of Residential Facilities for people living with HIV/AIDS), Italian Centre of Mediation, ECPAT, Caritas’ National Co-group against human trafficking, inter-regional co-group against human trafficking.

Gruppo Abele’s campaigns

Riparte il futuro
Promoted by Gruppo Abele and Libera, “Riparte il Futuro” is the largest digital campaign against corruption ever organized in Italy. The goal of this civil and political campaign, is to fight one of the most serious problems afflicting Italy, a problem that penalizes the daily lives of all Italians. For more information: http://www.riparteilfuturo.it/

Miseria Ladra
This is a campaign promoted by Gruppo Abele and Libera with the aim to eliminate poverty and place the need for improvement in welfare, social policies, integration and public investments at the centre of public and political debates. For more information: http://www.miserialadra.it/

Illuminiamo la salute
‘Illuminiamo la Salute’ is a joint project involving Libera, Gruppo Abele, Coripe and Avviso Pubblico. It includes National Health Service workers and aims at improving legality and ethics and preventing corruption within the health care system. For more information: http://www.illuminiamolasalute.it/
**VICTIM SUPPORT**

**OFF**

**Introduction**

Gruppo Abele has always dealt with the problem of violence in all its aspects. Gender violence runs through many stories that we come across daily.

In the nineties Gruppo Abele created OFF, the first project aimed at victims of crime and violence, that was specifically focused on gender violence.

**Off Services**

- **Shelter for mothers and their children**
  Targeted to Italian and immigrant pregnant women or women with children, who are victims of domestic violence or live in a vulnerable social context, it offers: legal help, individual psychological support, support groups, employment programs, childcare.

- **Drop house**
  It is a centre for vulnerable Italian and immigrant women and their children (with or without documents) experiencing a disadvantaged situation. The centre offers childcare, cultural activities, computer literacy courses, Italian language courses in order to make the women aware of the opportunities offered locally.
**- Oltre lo specchio (Beyond the mirror)**
A help desk for transgender people or people undergoing gender transition that daily face social exclusion from family and society. Psychological and physical violence are often present in their lives.
“Oltre lo specchio” offers legal help, employment programs, psychological support, health-related services, shared apartments.

**- InTi legal help desk**
Since 2002 this help desk has offered legal help to victims of crime, gender violence and human trafficking. It also organizes training for police officers, social and health workers on the issues of violence.

**- Mediation of conflict/ Restorative Justice**
Gruppo Abele has been one of the first organization in Italy to start mediation projects. The project are aimed young and adult citizen in vulnerable district and schools.

**RETE DAFNE (Dafne network)**

"Victims of crime should be recognised and treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner without discrimination of any kind (…)"**Directive 2012/29/UE**

The purpose of Directive 2012/29/EU is to ensure that victims of crime receive information, assistance and adequate protection and are allowed to participate in criminal proceedings.

The directive stresses the importance for the victims to receive information on the existing services from the competent authority (police, healthcare workers, doctors) that acquires therefore a key role in preventing a second type of victimization caused by the victims’ feeling of being left alone.

For all these reasons Gruppo Abele, in partnership with Turin Public Prosecutor's office, province of Turin, Municipality of Turin, Turin public health service (ASLTO2), Ghenos association has created “Rete Dafne”. This local network offers to the victims of crime legal and psychological/psychiatric support and mediation of conflict in close collaboration with the competent authorities. Moreover, Rete Dafne organizes several training addressed to police officers, prosecutors, health and social care workers.

Gruppo Abele considers networking with public bodies and other local associations dealing with the same issues absolutely fundamental. For this reason Gruppo Abele takes part in the Local Consortium against Gender Violence (Coordinamento Cittadino e Provinciale contro la Violenza sulle Donne) promoted by the Social Observatory of the Province of Turin. Gruppo Abele’s network also involves police officers that meet vulnerable people daily, in order to support the victims by providing legal and psychological help.
Introduction

Human trafficking can be defined as one of the most terrible violations of human rights and an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being.

Italy has taken a number of important steps to combat trafficking in human beings.

Gruppo Abele has taken part in this important process, showing its political commitment. This NGO actually participated in the inter-ministerial forum that led to the drawing up, and subsequent approval of Article 18 of the Immigration Act (1998).

This article states that the victims of human trafficking are entitled to apply for a residence permit by following two procedures: a social path and a judicial path. They offer the victims of human trafficking possible access to assistance and social integration projects that are run by NGOs.

At the moment the project on prostitution and human trafficking, offers the victims protection and integration programmes through its many activities; it runs help desks where the victims can ask for psychological and legal support, a shelter for victims of human trafficking and it organizes prevention through outreach street work.

All Gruppo Abele’s initiatives are characterized by integration between cultural projects and political commitment with plenty of attention given to information and training. Gruppo Abele provides training on Trafficking in Human Beings for outreach workers, police officers and social workers. In addition, Gruppo Abele’s Documentation Centre conducted several studies on the specific issue of prostitution.

Services implemented

• Help desk

Gruppo Abele’s helpdesk is directed at victims of trafficking who arrive at Gruppo Abele after contacting the national toll free number, while others are sent by the police, the local police, local institutions and other NGOs, or are people who arrive by word of mouth of those who have already used the service. The main objectives are: first support, accompaniment to services, counseling on addressing the requests for help and the exploitative situations of the victims. After the first interviews, the person is usually taken in charge and assisted throughout the process of social protection, that includes: completion of regularization procedures, search for suitable labour and
housing resources, as well as other services for the whole period of the programme. The objectives also include health protection, accompaniment to local social services and legal support, accompaniment to the consulates of the victim's country of origin; intercultural mediation; psychological support to those who request it.

**Toll Free number (800 290 290)**
This number was introduced in 2000 on the initiative of the Department for Equal Opportunities. Gruppo Abele runs the Piedmont and Valle d’Aosta location with a 24-hour service in both regions. The toll free number against trafficking offers opportunities for help not only to the victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation but also to all men and women victims of labour exploitation and begging.
Over the last year, the Piedmont / Valle d’Aosta location has continued its collaboration with public bodies and private social organizations in the region, the Police and public prosecutors.

**Help desk “Trampolino”**
This support service assists victims of trafficking in the final phase of their social reintegration. It is directed at those who have completed a reintegration programme in a community, or are living in the area and have already started the process leading away from human trafficking. In both cases, the people involved must already possess a residence permit.
The main objective of the service is to assist the people in the delicate phase of their “release” and help them fit more easily into a completely different life. The support offered by the service aims at increasing their independence, their professional and linguistic skills and self-confidence, encouraging them to act against their greatest weaknesses (money management, maintaining a job, etc.).

**Legal help desk “InTi”**
Gruppo Abele’s InTi legal service was established in 2002 to offer a complete and correct interpretation of the national and international legislation concerning the protection of victims of trafficking. This important service avails itself of the support of ASGI (association of lawyers specialised in immigration issues). Over the years, the role of the service has gradually expanded and changed to respond to constant modifications of immigration legislation. Designed to operate in Piedmont, it is today a national benchmark for associations and organizations and it collaborates with small and big associations and legal firms in Italy.
The services available are:
- Information on the current laws dealing with assistance to victims of trafficking and start-up of a social reintegration process;
- Guidance to public and private local social services;
- Archive containing national and international case law material;
- Publication of texts examining in detail the issues pertaining to art.18 and the norms about immigration;
- Organization of training and seminars targeted to a wide range of beneficiaries, from migrants to local organizations, associations and other relevant stakeholders;
- Advice to local and national associations dealing with assistance and support to migrants and victims of trafficking.

**Casa Gabriela**
Casa Gabriela was established in 2001 to meet the needs emerged from the toll-free number and increase the sheltered housing available in the city, given the shortage of this type of resource. The service is open 24 hours a day, every day of the week, including holidays. Gabriela is therefore a protected shelter and an emergency housing facility that can be the basis for a social inclusion project. The available places are maximum 7. Casa Gabriela aims to support and assist people in the first part of their new path in life out of the street. During that period the women will get used to the rhythms of “normal” life and experiment shared home management. At this stage the women are also accompanied to different health services for medical examinations and in order to complete the legal procedures for identity documents and residence permits. The community offers: accompaniment to health services for medical examinations; accompaniment to administrative offices and / or the Police for the formalities requested to obtain identity documents and residence permits; intercultural
mediation services; organization of Italian classes, practical workshops, basic computer courses; leisure activities.

• **Street Unit**
The activity, founded in 2007, organizes two weekly outings with a social worker, a mediator (of a nationality compatible with the nationalities of the people present the area) and a driver. Gruppo Abele’s Street Unit monitors the phenomenon in order to obtain immediate information about: places involved, the women's cyclical changes of place and movements, forms of sexual exploitation, living and working conditions of migrants victims of forced prostitution, new nationalities involved in the prostitution market. In particular, the Street Unit offers:
- Health information through appropriate educational material in different languages;
- Distribution of medical supplies;
- Distribution of relief supplies;
- Individual support through guidance to local services and opportunities, accompaniment to health and social care services and support in the procedure for obtaining an health card;
- Accompaniment to Gruppo Abele’s services: help desk and legal and psychological support.
Since its start, Gruppo Abele has been working with young people, organizing training and prevention initiatives in schools and different areas of the municipality of Turin. In 2000, Gruppo Abele created a specific working group, Piano Giovani, that is responsible for coordinating, designing and implementing actions targeted to young people. Such activities extend in different directions and cover several areas: schools, the street, youth policies, prevention projects and adult training. Piano Giovani’s mission is to help developing individual skills and resources, support the youth on their progress towards independence, enhance their importance and potential in local and national contexts by encouraging their participation in local communities.

**Activities in schools**

Interventions in schools are managed by Settore Scuola with the aim to create an integrated path where the different stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, families, local bodies) interact in an educational context. The team has involved 2000 students in 49 different schools, 540 teachers and about 100 families.

Educators and trainers run various activities on specific issues: school dropouts, prevention of old and new addictions (i.e. new technologies, online social networking, gambling), relationships (conflicts, emotions, and lifestyle). We aim to act as a support for all the people involved in the education system, in an attempt to enhance the role of education at a social level.

The ‘Settore Scuola’ is constantly working with the municipality of Turin, local bodies, authorities, and other associations like Libera and Save the Children in order to network with different institutions. In 2015 a free after-school service will be opened in the premises of Gruppo Abele in order to prevent early school leaving.

**Educational street work**

*Settore Strada* operates in *Barriera di Milano*, an urban area mainly populated by immigrants. The work on the street allows the team (one educator and two mediators) to meet and follow a large number of children and adolescents, about 1340, at risk of dropping out, hardship and social exclusion.
Educational activities start from accompaniment to local service and school support to recreation (soccer tournaments, volleyball and other free activities). The team also provides information on how to have access to scholarships or work. An important part of the work on the street is the possibility to meet the adolescents' families in order to have an impact on more levels.

**Youth policies**

Piano Giovani’s youth policies are focused on two main ideas: implementation of concrete actions promoting new models of citizenship for the youth and the establishment of multidisciplinary relationships enabling us to experiment new forms of local social economy.

According to the first main idea special attention is given to real-life contexts where recognition of rights, citizenship, participation and access to information, are the core of our commitment that is shown through the delicate task of building social cohesion.

Our commitment in the construction of citizenship targeted to the youth is aimed at enhancing the relevance of young people in local and national contexts by stimulating their participation in the life of local communities through innovative strategies and synergies between youth and adults.

The main activities are:
- development and implementation of youth policy interventions involving public bodies in informal and formal working groups;
- training for trainers and educators interacting with young people;
- training for administrators, in order to build shared paths about youth policies, that will bring together personal development and social and economic development in the areas involved.

The second main idea focuses on the promotion of social economies and relationships between citizens. The main aim is to build projects implementing actions managed by young people, which will produce resources and tools and will also promote processes of social cohesion. Actions have to be taken at a local level in order to reduce inequalities and introduce a powerful change.

Together with the Emilia Romagna region Piano Giovani has experimented a structured path that has put into practice this kind of approach. It involves local administrators and young citizens who are working together on local issues. The main point considered is what young people can bring to the community in terms of social innovation.

Piano Giovani works in this direction with several activities: it assists groups that launch experimental experiences in different areas, meets various organizations working in this field and promotes networking between them and local administrations. It also produces written materials and reflections on this issue and involves foundations in financing projects.
ADDICTION SERVICES

Introduction
Gruppo Abele provides a range of services for people who are affected by drug addiction and alcoholism.
Gruppo Abele’s mission is to support people experiencing situations of vulnerability and help them to improve the quality of their lives, in collaboration with public and private services and associations operating in the field of health promotion.

Specific services

Help desk
The addiction service, that has been operating in Turin since 1973, is aimed at all those who are facing different types of hardships. The service is open to people with addiction problems of every kind (drugs, gambling, internet, alcohol) and offers help to their families as well.
After the first contact by phone or directly at the help desk, an appointment will usually follow during which we will explore the person’s individual story in more detail and offer, if necessary, access to a rehabilitation path for the individual, with the possible involvement of other family members.

Drop-in service
This service receives homeless or addicted people and meets their basic needs (shower, needle exchange, food). The staff also offer support and individual counselling. Most of the people using this service are young male migrants. In 2014 the service received about 2500 people.

Residential treatment centers

- **Drug Crisis Centre** - It is a centre for the observation of the people needing urgent assistance and support, with a severe clinical condition related to addiction.
- **Cascina Abele** – It is a therapeutic community for drug addicted couples, also with children, who need a rehabilitation treatment.
- **Cascina Nuova** – It is a therapeutic community for people with an alcohol addiction problem. It is run by Aliseo, an association that, in collaboration with Gruppo Abele, offers support and a rehabilitation treatment to alcoholists.
- **Cascina Tario** – It hosts people with AIDS or HIV positive people who live in a condition of extreme distress.
- **Apartments** – they are offered to people who have already experimented residential care and would like to experience more independence.
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Gruppo Abele has been present for 32 years in the city of Grand Bassam in Ivory Coast with a project addressed to young people that live in highly disadvantage conditions. The project also involves the entire population of Grand Bassam through various cultural and support activities. In 2011 Gruppo Abele has started a cooperation project in the State of Oaxaca, Mexico with the collaboration of Sikanda, a non governmental organization founded in 2009. Gruppo Abele and Sikanda work with vulnerable families and social groups like the pepenadores: informal waste pickers who live and work in the city dumps.

MISSION

Gruppo Abele’s mission is to improve people's lives, to eliminate discriminations and inequalities, to protect and promote disadvantaged people's rights, to support education and training people living in difficult social context, with particular attention to women and children, create a network with NGOs and local associations that share our aims, to bring together different cultures and enhance the exchange of knowledge.

ACTIVITIES

IVORY COAST

Communauté Abel is Gruppo Abele’s first international project, founded in Grand Bassam in 1983 to contribute to give new dignity to the weakest. Communauté Abel's was founded with the Ministry of Justice's collaboration and its main aim is to improve education through cultural initiatives, counselling services, educational programs, professional training for boys and girls aged 14-21. Besides its work in Grand Bassam’s different areas and district Communauté Abel works through three different branches:

- The Carrefour Jeunesse, a place where kids and adolescents meet to play. Over the years it has become a landmark for the whole community of Grand Bassam, not to mention a means of opportunity and risk prevention for youth thanks to its numerous social, educational, cultural, and sports initiatives;
• The Centre Abel which provides professional training in woodworking, agriculture and farming and housing to its occupants and it is 7 km (4.34 miles) from downtown Grand Bassam on an area of 24 hectares (60-acre), close to the lagoon;

• The Center for Documentation and Research, a permanent window for observation, analysis and needs’ identification of the context where we work. The CDRF conducts outreach to villages and schools by organizing debates, plans prevention and awareness meetings.

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<tr>
<th>Centre Abel</th>
<th>Carrefour jeunesse</th>
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| • 45 young people  
• 90 meeting and training | • 566 people have follow literacy courses;  
• 1.149 medical examinations;  
• 16,845 meeting in the library;  
• 13,870 participations in cultural activities;  
• 13,680 offered meals;  
• 112 beneficiaries of professional training;  
• 200 young people have follow our computer classes; |

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MEXICO

Since 2011 Gruppo Abele has been present in Oaxaca that one of the poorest states, with the second lowest Human Development Index in the country. Gruppo Abele collaborates with the organization Solidaridad Internacional Kanda AC (SiKanda) through projects and activities addressed to pepenadores, the informal waste pickers who live and work in the city dumps and to vulnerable families and disadvantaged schools.

ACTIVITIES

Gruppo Abele and Sikanda promote environmental education and its protection through school gardens, recycling and upcycling activities transforming organic garbage into fertile soil through vermicompost. These activities involve 7,500 direct beneficiaries Valles Centrales and Mixteca regions and in Oaxaca State. The main aim is to fight against discrimination and empowerment of marginalized groups, to promote in public policies in order to enhance poor communities’ lives and reduce social exclusion.

Wormculture project

The project aims to improve solid waste management and promote inclusive recycling in the Huajuapan de León Municipality through partnerships between local government, civil society and informal recyclers. The project enhances the community protection of the environment, improves health conditions of the population, promotes the social inclusion of Pepenadores and improves their income through the production of worm compost.