



Amici di Nico Ltd, Social Enterprise, officially started as Parents' Association for Autism, on December 10th, 2007, by the will of the current Legal Representative, Dr. Maria Antonietta Bove, by reason of Nico her autistic son.

Its legal seat and first operating office is located in via Campania, 6, in Matino, in the Province of Lecce, South Italy, Puglia,

Other operating centers are located in :

- Via Custoza in Matino, (Le)
- Via Lecce in Matino
- via Pietrazzeddri 7, in Lizzanello, (Le)
- via Giuseppe Trono 53-55, Mesagne, (Br)

The personal motivation, which was rapidly shared by numerous families, had determined the willpower to imagine a Life Project which could take into consideration not a single service but rather a web of services of human and social responses capable of taking care of the autistic person in his/her entirety.

Amici di Nico, as an Association, was conceived with the purpose of offering assistance and activities of social rehabilitative and educational nature, particularly aimed at individuals affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder, where by Autism is intended a highly disabling psychological development disorder, which, in the majority of cases, persists in adulthood and which evolution depends mainly on the precocity and specificity of the habilitation actions prompted during childhood.

"Amici di Nico" Autism Treatment Services implements a system capable to look after the autistic individual in a "global" and "longitudinal" context, meanwhile providing support to each and every resource around the individual, starting from the family surrounding to the school, to different territorial agencies, lifetime, from the launch of the early interventions through the "After we have gone" phase, as suggested by the Regional and National Autism Guidelines.

In accordance with the above mission, Amici di Nico has carried out special focuses on coordinated interventions:

- in the familiar surroundings
- in the rehabilitative and psychological educational process
- in the scholastic integration process
- in the complementary inclusive and leisure time process.



In order to ensure significant, competent and appropriate responses to a wide range of specific needs, Amici di Nico has implemented since 2007 up to date, specific services currently active and institutionally authorized:

- Social and Educational Rehab Daytime Centres in agreement with national health care System in Matino and Lizzanello (Lecce);
- Three Clinic Centers for Autism providing Diagnostic and Behavioral Treatments services for Autistic children Aging from 0 to 18 years old in Matino and Lizzanello;
- Social-rehabilitative Residential Community in Matino (Lecce) ;
- A Clinic Center "Officine Autismo" in Mesagne, Brindisi;
- Home Specialized Assistance Services for Autism and Neurodevelopmental disorders
- School Assistance Service led by Behaviour Analysts and specialized assistant operators
- Positive Cooperation with the local social and working network to implement Job Training projects for young autistic people

The further and continuous education and training on new approaches on autism as far as the application of new protocols achieved in the last two years have helped us to identify personalized interventions for severe problem behavior for children and adults.

Instead of relying on long term treatment options, often with punishment component, the relative effectiveness of functional communication has been proved in many of our students, as well as the analysis has demonstrated an encouraging behavioral maintenance via social positive reinforcement.

Our commitment now is to continue on applying functional communication training to as many as possible of our students with severe behavior problems, guided by our Analysts who are working hard to guarantee evidence-based results.

As a result of our continuous high education in autism, we can proudly say to be one of the first in South Italy (the only ones in our Region Puglia) to successfully perform the new approach deriving



from the functional Communication Training by Gregory P. Hanley (PhD, BCBA-D University of Florida).

Encouraged by the signs of success we then proceeded with an additional team dedicated to severe behavioural disorders and food selectivity treatments, including specific behavioral training to reduce stress and inappropriate behaviours during blood and other clinical and instrumental tests. (EKG, EEG, primary orthodontic care, etc.).

The model of intervention utilized of cognitive-behavioural type based on the principles of the Applied Behaviour Analysis let alone satisfying the scientific rigor parameters, it also involves the fulfilment of a

profitable collaboration amongst the different sources that work around the single individual, creating thus an interaction which allows the reciprocal exchange of competences and support between the various systems, aimed at improving the quality of life of the autistic persons and their families.

The main goal is, therefore, to provide them with an “environmental interlace” capable to deal with the complex problems given by the disorder condition itself, and resulting “habilitative” throughout the expertise of each and every player of the sector, and the sharing of an individualised Network Project with the Territory.

Being inspired by the principle of taking charge of the person in his-her entirety, therefore, the interventions offered foresee an intensive action in each single and specific sector, aimed to acquire autonomy, communication and relational skills, as well as adaptation of the person to the group, according to punctual psycho-pedagogical and educational criteria.

In order to achieve the afore mentioned goals, Amici di Nico performs and organises its activities by promoting at its best the interactions with the territorial institutions appointed for the development of health and social services, with schools, with training institutions, with work and sports environments, with the families of the beneficiaries, and mainly with the latter, by enabling an enhanced valorisation of the educational steps and by optimising the success of the therapeutic targets to attaining best possible social integration.

Such a scenario aims, furthermore, to support operators and volunteers' training mainly by means of the organisation and promotion of Specialist Masters and Training Courses in “ Applied Behaviour Analysis(A.B.A.)” recognised and approved by the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board in collaboration with various Research, Training and Information Institutes, approved at National and International level.