

## **Stop TB Italia**

### **History and funding**

The establishment of Stop TB Italia dates back to 2004 when a group of specialists in Pneumology, Microbiology and Infectious diseases involved in TB health issues pooled their efforts to make things get better. In a high income low burden country such as Italy, TB was considered a disease that had been eradicated.

Originally Stop TB Italia had been working giving priority to social activities such as advocacy and communication, making people aware that TB has never been eliminated and remains a challenge also in Italy. Over the following two years the Association grew and now comprises 69 ordinary associates and 9 members of the Executive Committee.

In 2006 the Association shifted its own Statute to ONLUS that is an Italian acronym which means Not Lucrative Organization for Social Utility. Ever since, Stop TB Italia decided not only to expand its advocacy and communication activities but also to develop, plan and control newsworthy projects abroad oriented to TB control, prevention and basic research wherever possible.

It is better to clarify that Stop TB Italia Onlus is not a public partnership funded by public funds from the National Health System or any Ministry. It is instead a privately-funded association whose funds come from private donors such as companies, banks and the general population. There is no relationship in terms of public funds or public control on Stop TB Italia's strategies but the association has strong connections with the Ministry of Health and its affiliates as regards data exchange and outstanding policy in order to improve the awareness of the disease.

### **Activities and partners**

Stop Tb Italia's main activities are:

Nationally:

- Raising awareness about the global epidemic of tuberculosis and the efforts that are necessary to prevent, manage and control the disease among doctors, nurses, other healthcare providers and the general population
- Advocating for political changes, reforms and funding among decision makers, politicians, public institutions and donors
- Fundraising
- Researching
- Supporting patients (whenever possible)

Globally:

- Supporting projects in developing countries
- Training courses for TB Consultants and national TB program managers in collaboration with WHO Collaborating Centre for Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, Fondazione Maugeri (Tradate) and AO Morelli (Sondalo).

Stop Tb Italia has not established a real partnership but it adopts a partnering approach collaborating with different institutions/organizations depending on the activities it promotes.

Stop TB Italia collaborates with the following centres:

Nationally:

- Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Roma
- Istituto Scientifico San Raffaele, Milano
- Istituto Villa Marelli-Niguarda, Milano

- Università di Milano
- Istituto Malattie Infettive, Milano
- Fondazione Maugeri, Tradate
- Federazione Italiana Malattie Polmonari Sociali del Torace
- Centro di Formazione Permanente sulla Tubercolosi
- Comune di Milano, Assessorato Salute

#### Globally

- Fondazione Maugeri, Tradate
- Istituto Scientifico San Raffaele, Milano
- AO Morelli, Sondalo
- Università di Brescia, Istituto Malattie Infettive e Tropicali
- Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Roma
- Yungar per la pace Onlus

Stop TB Italia main challenge is to **raise awareness about TB in both public and political communities**. Since 2006 we have been implementing advocacy and communication activities engaging journalists, research centres ( Istituto San Raffaele), hospitals (Istituto Villa Marelli-Niguarda), universities and decision-makers.

Particularly every year we organize a TB Day and at least one major fundraising event. Since 2009 Stop TB Italia has decided to link its campaigns and events with music. We believe that music reaches many people, giving us the opportunity to spread our message more effectively and to a wider public. In 2010 and 2011, Stop TB Italia in partnership with the Municipality of Milan and Lilly MDR Partnership has organized an all day long concert for the World TB Day that has had a great success attracting many spectators, mostly young people.

Moreover, in 2011 Stop TB Italia, in collaboration with Federazione Italiana Malattie Polmonari Sociali del Torace and Lilly MDR Partnership, has organized the first edition of the TB National Convention, held in the Senate in Rome. The aim of the convention was to raise awareness about the critical aspects of TB control among decision-makers and politicians urging them to find solutions to better manage and control the disease. The politicians answered with a new legislative proposal and the promise to establish a round table to better define the terms of the problems and propose solutions.

Stop TB Italia Onlus is also supporting four **projects in developing countries**:

- 1) Project in support of TB affected community of Gugulethu,
- 2) Project in support of the program of TB control in a district in Senegal
- 3) MDR-XDR project Burkina Faso University Brescia-HSR
- 4) An Advocacy project at Dharamsala in India

In almost all these projects we have a local partner in charge of the implementation of the project: the Non Governmental Organization Yizani Sakhe for the Gugulethu Project and the Cooperative GIE *Bois Sacré* for the project in Senegal.

Moreover, in some cases, we established partnership with national organization. Yungar per la pace Onlus, for example, decided to develop, plan and propose the project in support of the program of TB control in a district in Senegal with us. Stop TB Italia offers its know how in terms of TB prevention and control and Yungar per la pace offers the logistics and organizational network that it has build in more than 10 years of activities in the intervention area.

## **Thinking through and taking stock**

We could say that stop TB Italia is effectively implementing its scheduled activities and it is fulfilling its objectives. However, Stop TB Italia couldn't established yet a national partnership that covers all the national territory. Being in Milan, our activities not always have the possibility to impact and benefit TB patients and the population in the south. That is why Stop TB Italia needs to grow and build stronger relationship with experts, healthcare workers and advocates in other cities in the center and south of Italy. The idea is to build a stronger and structured partnership that could more effectively control the disease at the national level.