

CEOQA

LTC network

Quality and cost-effectiveness in long-term care and dependency prevention



POLICY SUMMARY: ITALY

Recognition of informal care skills – Piedmont region

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Policy theme	Case management, coordination of stakeholders, new services
Design and implementation level	Local design, locally implemented
Policy objective	To improve home care delivery
Start date – End date	Experimental project: 2008 – 2015. The activities have continued after the experimental project through local projects.

Aims

- to support the legal employment of privately hired home care workers
- to support the quality of home care provided by such care workers
- to support families in the management of these private care workers
- to promote new specialized integrated services

Implementation

Over time, private home care workers, often migrants who are traditionally hired by Italian families to support them in providing informal care (popularly referred to as 'badanti') often accumulate important care skills, though usually without any structured training.

Since this expertise is also useful in professional care provision, the official recognition/certification of these skills via dedicated training programmes, which also facilitate formal employment contracts, has been the focus of an ad-hoc programme promoted by the Piedmont region. Carried out in collaboration with provincial governments and other local stakeholders since 2008, this initiative aims to enhance the effectiveness of home-based care delivered by privately paid migrant care workers.

For this purpose, the Piedmont region created tools to identify and assess (informally acquired) care skills, and to establish services to support and organise this process through certification and mentoring methods. In 2010, the tool was tested by means of a survey, assessing care

workers' self-reported skills. Based on the survey results, a special commission can decide on further tests, including simulation, to validate the capacities declared by the care workers.

In addition to the skills recognition component, the programme also supports local networks of services for people with home care needs. This includes information, reception and orientation training, matching families' demand for home care with skilled carers' work supply, and helping both sides with the administrative management of employment contracts.

Lastly, the programme also includes subsidies to households who need temporary replacements for care workers who are participating in the assessment and training sessions of the programme.

Local helpdesks throughout the region provide information, training (inception and orientation), brokering (matching demand and supply) and administrative support (management of employment contracts).

The assessment, recognition and certification of informal skills as well as related training activities are performed by a

Implementation (continued)

designated 'skills assessment team', consisting of care experts, trainers and representatives of the public employment agency. This includes an analysis of the individual's CV, an in-depth interview and a preliminary identification of skills, as well as a practical assessment of care expertise through simulation methods.

Individual competencies are certified and combined, so that care workers who qualify can become 'certified personal assistants'. This certification is partly recognised within the Piedmont region, and can thus facilitate the acquisition (through an additional formal training) of the country-wide acknowledged professional title of 'health and social care worker' ('operatore socio-sanitario'). When the assessment of skills indicates that an individual is lacking specific competencies (especially in the field of health care), these may be acquired by completing specific training modules that are offered free of charge.

The programme was made possible by the creation of regional networks involving public and private stakeholders, including informal actors (e.g. parishes), who are often very active in supporting families looking for private care workers. Apart from the region's public administration, local authorities, social enterprises, trade unions and voluntary associations participate in the initiative.

In total, eight local networks were created in the region, following a joint programme. Each network manages the programme within its area, thus adapting the implementation to the local needs, to allow for a better match between the general aims and the specific local context. However, there is a constant and systematic exchange between the networks, in order to prepare for a wider, more long-term and sustainable strategy.

At the regional level, collaboration and co-design are fostered through the technical committee of the programme, consisting of representatives from the training, employment and social policy agencies of each of the eight local networks (while users – families as employers, private carers as employees – are not represented in the technical committee). Each network chooses its own method of promotion, often however referring to pharmacies and supermarkets as ideal locations to recruit potential end users for the programme.

In 2016, after the experimental phase, the program was funded again by means of national and European funds. The new program aims to keep on running the networks, services, and tools already implemented and promote a reorganization of the network's governance, following a recent reform of local governance adopted in Italy in 2014.

Target group

The programme targets two groups of beneficiaries: older people with LTC needs (and their families) and privately paid home care workers (usually with a migrant background).

Eligibility criteria

All families with older people with care needs and care workers living in the Piedmont region are eligible.

Resources

For the implementation of the experimental program over €1.2 million was invested over four years (2011–2014).

Since 2016, new financing has been granted by European projects and national funds, in the period 2016–2018, reaching an expected amount of approximately €2,5 million.

Performance assessment and monitoring

Since 2015, the services developed by the programme to support the role of household-based privately hired care workers have been included in Piedmont's system of accreditation and certification of services.

Evidence of success (outcomes, quality, satisfaction, awareness)

In 2013, the experimental programme achieved the following outcomes:

- 26,863 people received information and an initial consultation/orientation from programme staff after contacting the front office;
- of these, 12,000 care workers and 2,519 families became users of the programme's

services;

- 1,192 care workers have been employed with a regular contract;
 - 32 training courses have been organized, attended by 617 care workers;
 - 383 families received cash-benefits to support the regular employment of privately hired care workers.
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Transferability/Uniqueness

The scheme is not easily transferable to any other context, unless it presents similar characteristics to the context in Piedmont and Italy generally. In any case, it is difficult to achieve the large number of stakeholders

involved in this initiative. The strategy used (i.e. local networks and new, integrated services), however, is more likely to be transferred and adapted to different contexts.

Is this an emergent practice? (degree of innovation)

Partly, in the Italian context, where similar initiatives have implemented with the same aims.

However, the degree of innovation of this specific initiative is quite high, since it has led to an in-depth change in the local system of care delivery.

Sustainability

Sustainability will depend on the choices made by Piedmont region, but the services are already considered as part of the ongoing care delivery system, so it is likely to be high.

Critical assessment

n/a

Academic literature on this action

UNECE Policy Brief on Ageing No. 17, Migration and older age, July 2016 (see page 14 on Piedmont scheme). Available at: www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Policy_briefs/ECE-WG.1-24.pdf

Conclave, M., Facco, M., Casanova G. (2012). Il Ministero del welfare a sostegno del lavoro privato di cura. Qualificare.info, April. Available at: www.qualificare.info/home.php?id=600

Documents

In Italian

www.regione.piemonte.it/diritti/web/pariopportunita/assistenza-familiare
