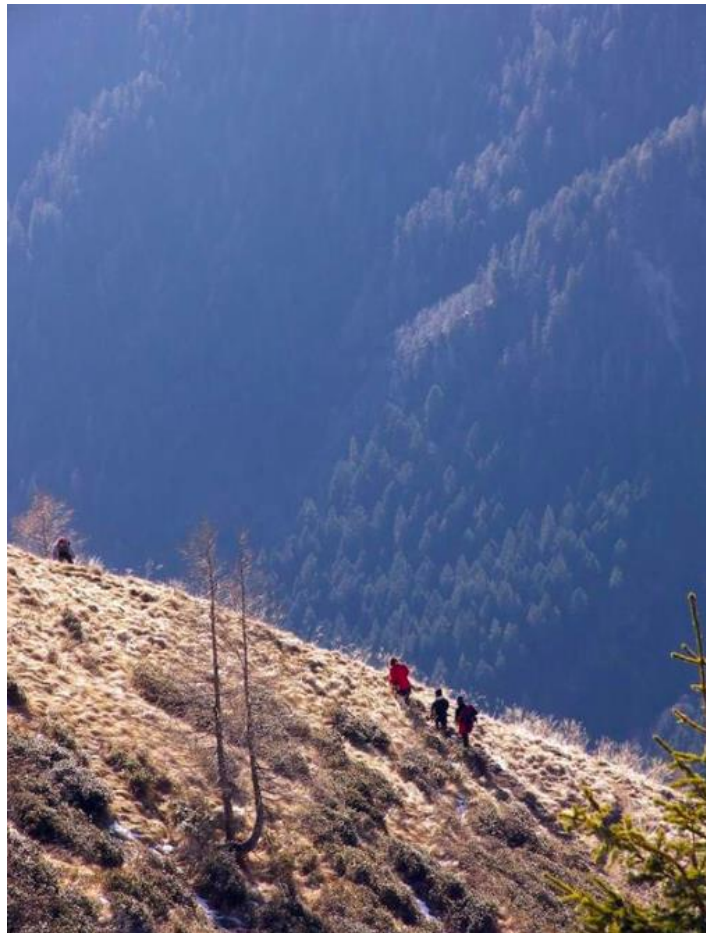


## Funding Application

MOTION – MOuntain Therapy to ImprOve meNtal health



## Executive Summary (max 850 characters)

### Please add an attractive description of your project

Scientific literature shows that physical activity is generally associated with lower levels of mental health problems and seems to promote self-esteem, social competence and self-perceptions.

Casa Aurora is a therapeutic community based in Venezia Mestre and is specialized in therapeutic / rehabilitative treatment for **mothers** diagnosed with psychiatric problems and **borderline personality disorders (BPD)**, together with their children.

Casa Aurora, in collaboration with the NGO Equilibero, intends to **integrate the conventional psychological care** that already provides to its patients, with an **original methodological approach** defined as **mountain therapy**, focused on addressing mental health problems through doing **physical outdoor activities**.

The project MOTION will combine mountain-related physical activities with subsequent **mentalization laboratories and a public photography exhibition**, with the aim of offering patients a better quality of care and facilitating their path towards recovery.

### Background (max 1,000 characters)

#### What are the challenges that the project is going to address?

Borderline personality disorder is a mental illness that causes intense mood swings, impulsive behaviors, and severe problems with self-esteem, and **can seriously threaten parental skills**. Besides medical, psychotherapy and pharmaceutical treatments, also **psychosocial treatment** can positively affect BPD patients' quality of life and contributing in achieving better treatment results. Therapeutic approaches such as **physical activity** associated with **'normal' social interaction and mentalization**, play an important role in in facilitating the path towards a successful recovery.

#### Describe the evidence for the problem and context.

Casa Aurora is a Therapeutic Community that offers short and long term residential treatment to **women suffering from drug addiction**, that have been diagnosed with **psychiatric problems (post-traumatic stress disorders, personality disorders) and BPD**, together with their children. Casa Aurora is very active at local level and during several years of activity has hosted 15 mothers, between 16 and 30 years old, and 16 children; 83% of them are from Veneto Region and Venezia province.

#### Who will ultimately benefit from the new or improved activities?

Casa Aurora has a **recovery orientation** and put in place therapeutic and rehabilitative programs focused on the whole person and lifestyle changes, not simply on abstinence of drugs. This project intends to offer new **psycho-educational activities** addressed to mothers with their children as an important step towards recovery. Participants will be involved in **group activities**, with an emphasis on **social learning, active involvement, mutual self-help and responsibility**. The main purpose of the project will be rehabilitation, but also **prevention** towards children potentially exposed to a risky environment because of their context of origin.

Objectives (max 750 characters)

Please describe SMART objectives.

The project has its focus in the following, prioritized, objectives:

S	<i>Specific</i>	<b>Strengthening the link between physical activity and mental health</b> as a positive combination that concurs in improving treatment results, though the organization of mountain excursions with the aim of enhancing social interaction, improving mother-child relationship and free-time quality of participants.
M	<i>Measurable</i>	<b>Facilitating rehabilitation of patients</b> incorporating evidence-based questionnaires and surveys to track and monitor patients progress. Indicators will enhance transparency and accountability and will also help to understand what will work and what will have to be improved.
A	<i>Achievable</i>	<b>Enhancing quality care</b> though continual improvement of services offered by Casa Aurora, ensuring always better treatments informed by evidence and lived experience.
R	<i>Relevant</i>	<b>Reducing stigma and discrimination</b> against mental illness and BPD by promoting social inclusion, education and openness to the 'external' world through a photography exhibition that will allow to share the lived experience without inequalities.
T	<i>Time bound</i>	<b>Improving well-being, self-confidence and self-perception</b> trough a specific program that will last 24 months.

Project description (max 4,000 characters)

What is the project's approach/method in addressing the challenges?

Mountain therapy fits into a comprehensive recovery program in place at Casa Aurora, which focuses on **gradual overall lifestyle change** of patients. Mountain therapy is based on adventure, intense physical challenge, risks exposure and primordial contact with nature. The philosophy at the basis of mountain therapy promotes an intense physical challenge, an arduous struggle, **as a symbol of the uphill battle** hikers face each day towards recovery from drug addiction. Patients are in contact with external wild world, leaving behind every day routine and schemes. Exposure to risk require concentration to face it and handle it. Hiking and climbing mountains require **perseverance, resistance, mutual-help and willingness to overcome mental barriers and fear**. The great sense of achievement from the challenge contribute in boosting self-confidence and self-awareness, increasing the capacity of introspection and the ability to recognize oneself as an individual.

What are the project's main expected results (outcomes and outputs)?

Main results and outputs of the project will be:

- 1) To define a common and sustainable framework of cooperation between Casa Aurora and EquiLibero, in order to maximize social initiatives towards the local community and boosting cooperation at local level
- 2) To produce further evidence on positive effects of integrating physical activity in patients' treatment, thereby enriching the portfolio of psychological and pro-social initiatives promoted by Casa Aurora.
- 3) To increase the quality of care on the basis of measurable KPIs included in questionnaires and surveys provided to project participants
- 4) To create a momentum of reflection and education against social barriers and stigma addressed to common people living in the territory, through the organization of a public photo exhibition documenting the 24 month project
- 5) To put in place prevention activities addressed to children living in risky conditions because of their context of origin.

Who are the actors the project will work directly with?

- 2 Educators from Equilibero, with a Degree in Science of Education, experts in hiking and climbing
- 1 Educator from Casa Aurora, with a Degree in Science of Education, expert in groups management and organization
- 1 Psychologist psychotherapist from Casa Aurora, expert in EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing)
- 1 Expert in psychoeducation for development mental health, from Casa Aurora
- A group of volunteers form Equilibero, to organize and hold meetings after each excursion
- 1 doctor of general medical practice

Describe the target groups, duration and timeline.

- Target groups:

The project will target 2 groups of mothers and their children treated at Casa Aurora.

Each group will experience two types of mountain excursions: one only for mothers; one for mothers together with children.

- List of activities and description:

The project will be articulated as follows:

- Preparatory meetings before every mountain excursion:** meetings will be held at Casa Aurora by trained psychologists and educators from Casa Aurora and Equilibero. They will take place 2 days before the hiking tour and will last 3 hours. The main goal will be that of mentally prepare patients and assess, through a questionnaire, their motivation, expectations and a self-evaluation on competences during free-time. Patients will be also informed of organizational aspects and hiking path which will vary depending on children involvement.
- Hiking tours in the mountains:** Hiking will take place in the mountains nearby Dolomiti or Friuli mountains and will be a whole day activity.
  - Hiking only for mothers will last 4 to 5 hours and will be intermediate-advanced level of difficulty.
  - Hiking for mothers and children will last 3 to 4 hours and will be low level of difficulty.

For every excursion patients will be provided with a photo camera. There will be free time to take photos and create a 'visual diary' of the experience.

In total, 30 hiking will be organized, 15 per group (10 only for mothers; 5 for mothers and children)

- Laboratories of memory:** the aim of the Labs will be that of re-elaborate and rethink the lived experience, also with the help of pictures, under an emotional point of view, reflecting on sensations, on past traumatic experiences and on expectations for the future. This will be done through the process of *mentalization*.
- Organization of a **public photography exposition:** at the end of the project a public photo exhibition will be organized in Venice, to share and communicate the outcomes of the project, with the most important aim of sensitizing public opinion, to tackle the stigma and prejudice and increasing public awareness concerning mental illness.

- Timeline:

Activities		2019												2020											
		jan	feb	mar	apr	may	june	july	aug	sept	oct	nov	dec	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	june	july	aug	sept	oct	nov	dec
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>Project Start</b>																									
<b>Preparatory meeting / Hiking</b>	Group 1																								
<b>Memory Lab</b>	Group 2																								
<b>First Annual Report</b>																									
<b>Photo Exhibition Organisation</b>																									
<b>Second Annual Report</b>																									
<b>Project End</b>																									

Expected Impact (max 750 characters)

How will the project ensure that outputs and outcomes have a lasting effect beyond project duration?

The mission of Casa Aurora, as a therapeutic community, is the *rehabilitation of patients*, through a path designed to lead them to relearn or re-establish healthy functioning, skills, and values as well as regain physical and emotional health.

This project aims at having a positive impact on treatment results, facilitating the process of recovery. The goal is for Casa Aurora patients to leave the residential treatment together with their children not only drug-free but also employed or in school or training, and able to offer to children a healthy and risk-free lifestyle.

For this reason, rehabilitation for mothers brings along *prevention* for children. Long-term impacts of the project can be measured on children that, coming from a risky environment, would normally have more chance to be engaged in a risky living. Rehabilitating mothers means also guaranteeing a better future to children, preventing them to absorb and learn wrong and destructive behavior.

Reporting (maximum 500 characters)

How will you evaluate and report on activities and outcomes?

- Two annual reports will be delivered at the end of Y1 and Y2 summarizing project outcomes and the series of activities organized. They will also include recommendations and a roadmap for the set up and continuation of *mountain therapy* as an integrative treatment for patients diagnosed with BDP and psychiatric problems.
- Interim progress will be assessed through questionnaires based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

## Budget Table

Timing	Objectives	Activities	Cost type	Amount
March 2019 to October 2020	Organization of mountain therapy activities	Preparatory meeting	Training and staff costs (1 new staff member for Casa Aurora)	€4,000
		Mountain excursions	Transport (van rental 95€ per day + 20€ gasoline = 115€ per day; 115€ x 30 days of activity = 3450€);  Staff costs Associazione Equilibero (200€ x 30 excursions = 6,000€);  Mountain equimpment rental (1050€)	€10,500
		Memory Labs	Staff costs + photo printing	€700
December 2019 / December 2020	Annual report (Y1 and Y2)	Producing annual reports	Writing costs	€200
November 2019 to December 2020	Photo exhibition organization	Coordination and management of the exhibition	Staff costs	€1000
		Exhibition room rental	Exhibition room rental	€900
Total Direct costs				€17,300
Indirect costs (15%)				€2,595
Total Costs				€19,895
Requested funding				€19,895