

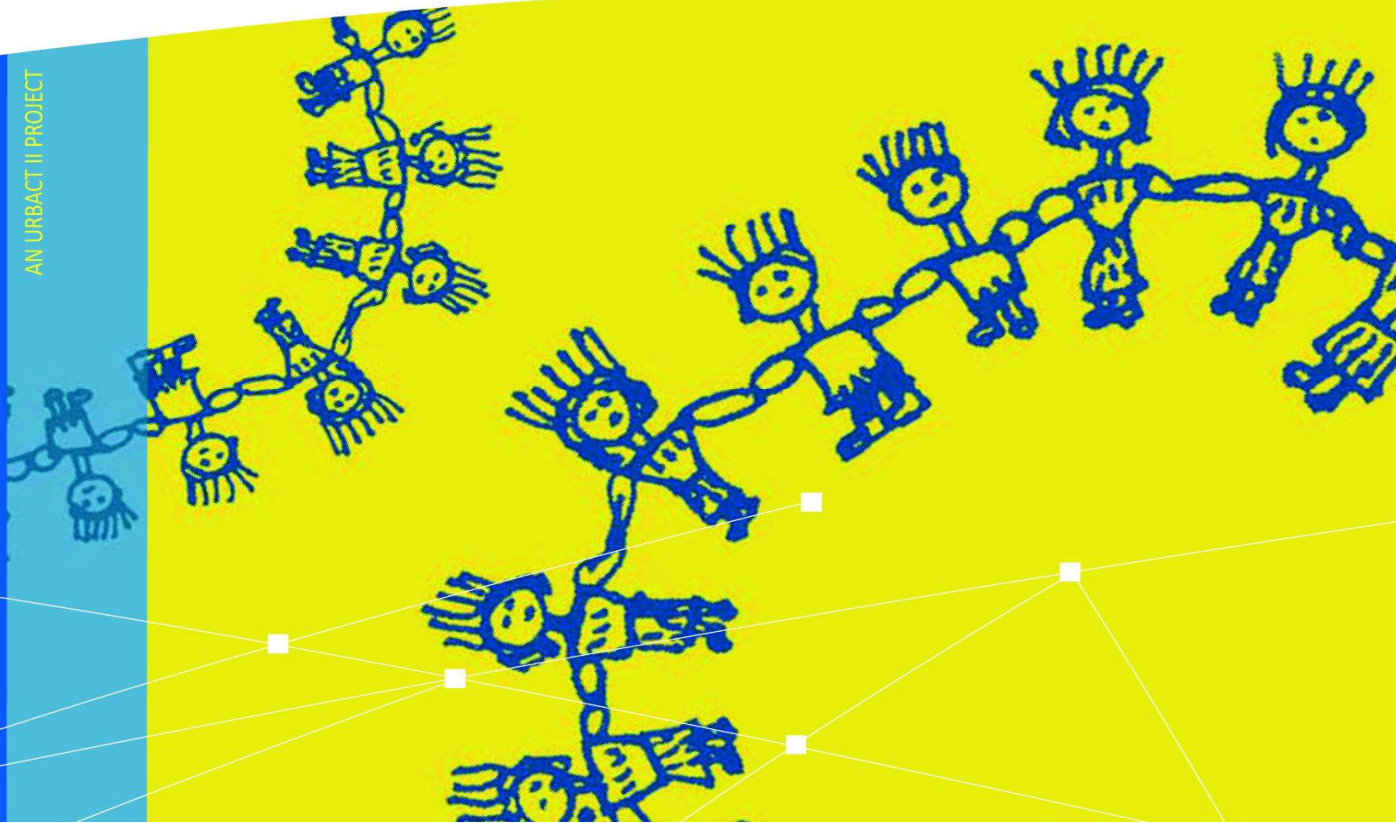


**TOGETHER**  
Territories of  
Coresponsibility

# Lead Expert's Report on Meetings in Pergine-Valsugana

June 2011


AN URBACT II PROJECT



**European Union**  
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	<p><b>URBACT II</b></p> <p><b>LEAD EXPERT'S REPORT</b></p> <p>JUNE 2011</p>	<p><b>Report on visit to Pergine- Valsugana</b></p>
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## Introduction

Pergine is a town in the Trento province in the north-east of Italy with 21,000 inhabitants. The demographic structure has an equilibrium between the generations. Currently, there are more or less 3,400 people (17% of the population) both under 15 and over 65, with the remaining two-thirds of the population, in number around 13.000, between the ages of 15 and 65. The town also has a relatively high birthrate.



The province of Trento is a wealthy region with significant autonomy from national government as well as €800 million of additional national resources with which to support employment and economic development in the province. This enables it to provide significant financial help to the municipalities of the region.

## The Economic Situation

Pergine has a strong co-operative tradition, with many cooperatives in agriculture, industry, artisan crafts and trades and in social services. There is a diversified economic structure with many very small units of production, little dependency on exports, a strong public sector and a lot of tourism activity. All these elements help to explain why the town, like the Trento province as a whole, has been able to resist the economic crisis. The unemployment rate, although rising, remains low.



In the Pergine area there were 1531 enterprises employing 5707 people (data from the 2001 census). There is extensive cultivation of a wide variety of fruit, which often serves as a second income for the producers. The municipality aims to raise the level of innovation and training, especially of craftsmen. It has opened a **Business Innovation Centre** which houses six enterprises, and has two industrial areas, and two more projects for craftsmen.



### The Municipality

Pergine has a relatively small council. The Mayor is supported by seven Cabinet members – ‘assessori’- of whom one **Renato Tessardi sits on the Local Support Group.**



The council chief executive – Segreteria Generale’ – oversees four main departments, namely the local police, the department for public works, the department for citizens services including sport, culture and tourism and the ‘direzione patrimonio’ looking after maintenance of the public highways and streets. In all there are 134 staff while in addition children, youth and family services are undertaken by an arms length municipal association which employs a further 120 people. (see below). The senior councillor is very supportive of the project and considers it as a valuable opportunity to trial new, more collaborative methods of working within the town.

### The Social Situation

The municipality of Pergine approved three years ago a Social Plan elaborated after a sociological study made by the Regional Institute of Social Studies and Research. This study involving 150 people gave a picture of the situation and what could done to promote the well-being of the population. The Social Plan defined twelve actions which are being implemented with the help of the Comprensorio of Alta Valsugana, which gathers 20 communities in the Valley. The municipality Plan aims to encourage the participation of the population, especially young people who do not belong to an association. There is a clear complementarity here with the TOGETHER project which needs to be explored.

One distinctive feature of Pergine is the large number of voluntary associations. One of the most important associations in the social field is ASIF, an autonomous structure placed under the municipality control, which is responsible for all aspects of youth policy including kindergartens. (The definition of youth is wide-ranging, going from birth to thirty –five years old.) Within the municipality there is a lack of kindergartens and also some problems with young unemployed people. There is a **Social Youth Plan**, financed half by the Trentin province, half by the municipality, banks, and the Comprensorio, with an annual budget of 100,000 euros. The Youth Plan is being developed by associations, Cassa Rurale (the main cooperative bank), Comprensorio and several schools. It is already an example of the co-responsibility method since the group decides which actions to finance and how to implement them. To give one example, a group are setting up a new project, “Urban Map”, a photography of all places where young people meet, which is aimed at creating a social relationship between the young people and the municipality.



The Europe Information Point. Pergine has the only point of information about Europe in the Province of Trentin. It diffuses information about European programmes and will be an important mean of dissemination of the TOGETHER experience.

Overall, for the municipality **the main challenges** are to :

- implement the actions of the Social Plan and of the Youth Plan
- develop public transportation
- revitalize the historical urban centre
- promote innovation in the economic sector
- develop a new hospital with a specialization in disabled people and rehabilitation after accidents.

### **Initiatives in the Province**

There is a wider interest within the region in the well-being agenda. The Autonomous Province of Trento (PAT) has just passed a new family law on 2 March 2011 designed to promote the **well-being of families** –‘Sistema integrato delle politiche strutturali per la promozione del benessere familiare e della natalità (Integrated system of structural policies to promote family welfare and fertility).’ Luciano Malfer and his team have been the key architects of this law. He argues that

“well-being is structured family policy. Well-being is for all citizens whereas welfare is aimed at the poor....we are focussing on normal conditions ...we are looking to develop area family-friendly agreements in municipalities across the Province.”

Malfer and his team are developing the concept of ‘family districts’. These are places where there are family-friendly services, for example in restaurants and pubs; where work-life balance is promoted at work; where public transport is accessible to families with young children; where access to museums and leisure centres is encouraged by the use of family cards and discount pricing; where healthy lifestyles and access is promoted by the provision of cycle paths, etc.



In the city of Trento itself, 10 kms from Pergine, these ideas are put into practice by the ‘Sportello Famiglia’ a “Forum of family associations” managed as a not-for-profit association. This has an agreement and funding from the Province to manage a group of services for children and families. With three staff, the Forum provides a range of advice services for families through its help desk, which in 2010 dealt with 2,329 enquiries. But the Forum also acts as the public voice for more than forty local voluntary associations such as those working on drug issues, disabilities, diabetes, leisure and play activities, etc including those working in the Pergine area. In this way the Association has been able to develop a common vision and policy on family-related issues. Alessandra Viola and Valentina Merlini are the two staff who have been most involved with the development of the association since its establishment in 2006. Forum have contributed to the drafting of the new family law, especially to improve an active role or every family in our society so fastly moving. As Alessandra explains it

“We were involved in drafting the law. We shall be involved in the operation of the new law. Article 21 gives us a specific role. The province will consult with the Forum on the configuration and planning of new services.”

Furthermore, Article 33 says that the province will evaluate the policy consequences of this well-being policy and the forum will be engaged in this process too. Here, is an existing practical example of how public authorities are beginning to implement aspects of the well-being agenda and how it can be undertaken with a co-responsibility approach.

## The Pergine Local Support Group

After a period of uncertainty, the project has gained momentum since March 2011 following the visit of the Project Co-ordinator and Lead Expert. Local co-ordinator Clara Briani has established a 17-strong Local Support Group with a wide range of people drawn from the locality, half of whom had previously been involved with the preparation of the Local Social Plan. It is a mixture of key stakeholders with local officials, those involved in running associations, private sector players, representatives from the Province and a priest. The LSG decided on ten focus groups and all LSG members agreed to be involved in setting up the focus groups and have participated in their work.



*The Local Support Group*



*The working women focus group*

The focus groups established were : older people; working men; working women; three different types of youth groups; housewives and pensioner women; a group drawn from an ecological association; school caretakers; and a group which had been on an exchange abroad. The size of the groups varied between eight to twelve people.

By early May, all groups had met twice and the responses to the questions had been collected and were being inputted onto the computer system. A third meeting with all the groups together – the ‘rainbow’ groups – is scheduled for the end of May with a detailed analysis of the focus group work being presented to the full TOGETHER partnership in Salaspils in June 2011.

Both the LSG and the mixed ‘rainbow’ groups will be considering potential pilot actions. Given the wider interest within the Province on the ‘well-being’ agenda, there is the scope here to extend successful pilot actions beyond Pergine and to other municipalities within Trentino. At the same time consideration should be given to the possibility of linking some of the TOGETHER pilot initiatives to the wider development of family-friendly districts within the Province. This is a matter which the Pergine municipality and the regional representatives on the Local Support Group could discuss with Luciano Malfer and his colleagues.

Jon Bloomfield, June 2011