

Dr. med. Thomas Emmenegger

FMH Psychiatry and Psychotherapy

President of Olinda, social and cultural enterprise

Dr. Emmenegger, graduated as medical doctor in 1981 from the University of Basel, began his professional career as a psychiatrist in the early 80ies in the Italian mental health reform movement (Trieste, Rome, and Naples) and in Switzerland (Liestal).

Dr. Emmenegger worked as an adviser to national governments and key development partners such as WHO and UNOPS in several international and national programmes and projects in Europe, East Europe and South America at national, regional, and district levels. His areas of expertise include mental health system development, local development and social entrepreneurship programmes with public-private partnership.

In 1992 Dr. Emmenegger founded in the Psychiatric Hospital of Milan the cultural and social enterprise Olinda. Olinda aggregates different non-profit organisations whose mission is to combine human regeneration and urban regeneration, whilst transforming the large area of the Psychiatric Hospital situated in a suburb of Milan into opportunities of local development and social inclusion, such as the implementation of cultural and social enterprise activities (restaurant, bar, catering, youth hostel, theatre, cultural events).

In 2007 he was asked by the Direction of the Organizzazione Sociopsichiatrica Cantonale (OSC) of the Canton Ticino (Switzerland) to develop and implement innovative strategies for crisis and long-term care introducing different models of relationship oriented intensive care. In a five-year reform program, he promoted in the Public Psychiatric hospital of the Canton Ticino (Mendrisio) an open treatment concept with open doors without seclusion rooms and physical restraint.

In his professional activities in Italy and in Switzerland, he was always both, a social entrepreneur and a doctor/psychiatrist. He is conducting several teacher activities on postgraduate schools (Universities of Rome, Milan, Trieste, Lugano) and is senior expert of several research programmes on social and mental health innovation dynamics.

His work was rewarded by the “Premio Franco Basaglia” in 2008. He is co-founder in 2010 of the International Permanent Conference on Mental Health, Trieste.

Born in Lucerne (Switzerland) November 11 1953