

# Preface

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This book describes the ADA Project, an action research developed by the University of Florence (Department of Architecture – Florence Accessibility Lab Interdepartmental Research Unit) and commissioned by Tuscany Regional Government.

The ADA Project was already described in a previous book published for Italian readers (Lauria *et al.*, 2017) but this new edition includes the latest research developments and previously unpublished features. Moreover, contents have been organised to appeal to the international reader. New parts were written, others modified, and the bibliography, tables and images were improved and honed. Parts which would not have been meaningful to non-Italian readers have been deleted; other parts were added with the purpose of elucidating for foreign readers certain issues peculiar to the Italian context. The methodological design of the research and its operating tools have been fine-tuned and are described in their definitive version, excluding all the intermediate passages illustrated in detail in the Italian original.

Accessibility of the book was also taken into account, to render the contents truly straightforward for the widest possible spectrum of users, including those who are unable to see images and complex tables. Specifically, alternative descriptions are provided for any non-textual section, to provide the sight-challenged reader with equivalent content.

The book is divided into two sections: the first outlines the theoretical framework of the ADA Project and the cultural principles upon which it is based; the second describes planning stages and operating tools in detail.

Section one examines the personal and environmental factors (both physical and socio-cultural) that characterise life at home for disabled persons and their caregivers. The evolution of the concepts of disability, personal autonomy and independent life are discussed. The issue of adapting the domestic environment is then analysed through the description of sev-

eral methods and tools, and the subject of *housing adaptation* is introduced through the description of intervention strategies and criteria.

Section two is the core of the book: it provides a methodical illustration of the various phases of the ADA Project, its aims, its recipients and beneficiaries, as well as the procedure and tools used, the players and the relationships with the agencies involved. In particular, a tool for data production and needs assessment (the ADA Assessment Model – AdAM) is carefully described. This tool represents the main scientific and methodological outcome of the ADA Project and is reproduced in full in the Annexe to the book.

Since most challenges addressed by the ADA Project are general in nature and might be met in any context, I hope the reader finds food for thought in the research described in this book, as well as some interesting ideas useful for their own work.

In 2018 the ADA Project was first selected as “Good Practice” by the international Design for All Foundation and then won the “Design for All Foundation Award 2018,” in the category “Spaces, products and services already in use.”