

Adapting the Wheelchair Skills Program (WSP) for the Italian Rehabilitation Context: Translation and Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Anna Berardi

Associazione Italiana di Terapia Occupazionale (AITO) and Department of Human Neuroscience, Sapienza University of Rome

Giulia Bevilacqua, Melissa Calabrese, Arianna Cesari, Alessia Corrado, Francescaroberta Panuccio

Department of Human Neuroscience, Sapienza University of Rome

Rachele Simeon

Department of Neuroscience, Rehabilitation, Ophthalmology, Genetics and Maternal Child Health (DINO GMI), University of Genoa, Genoa, Italy

Paula W Rushton

Université de Montréal

Background

Between **65% and 95%** of those who need a wheelchair do not have access.

Inequitable access constrains *mobility, participation, and health*, amplifying caregiver burden and social costs.

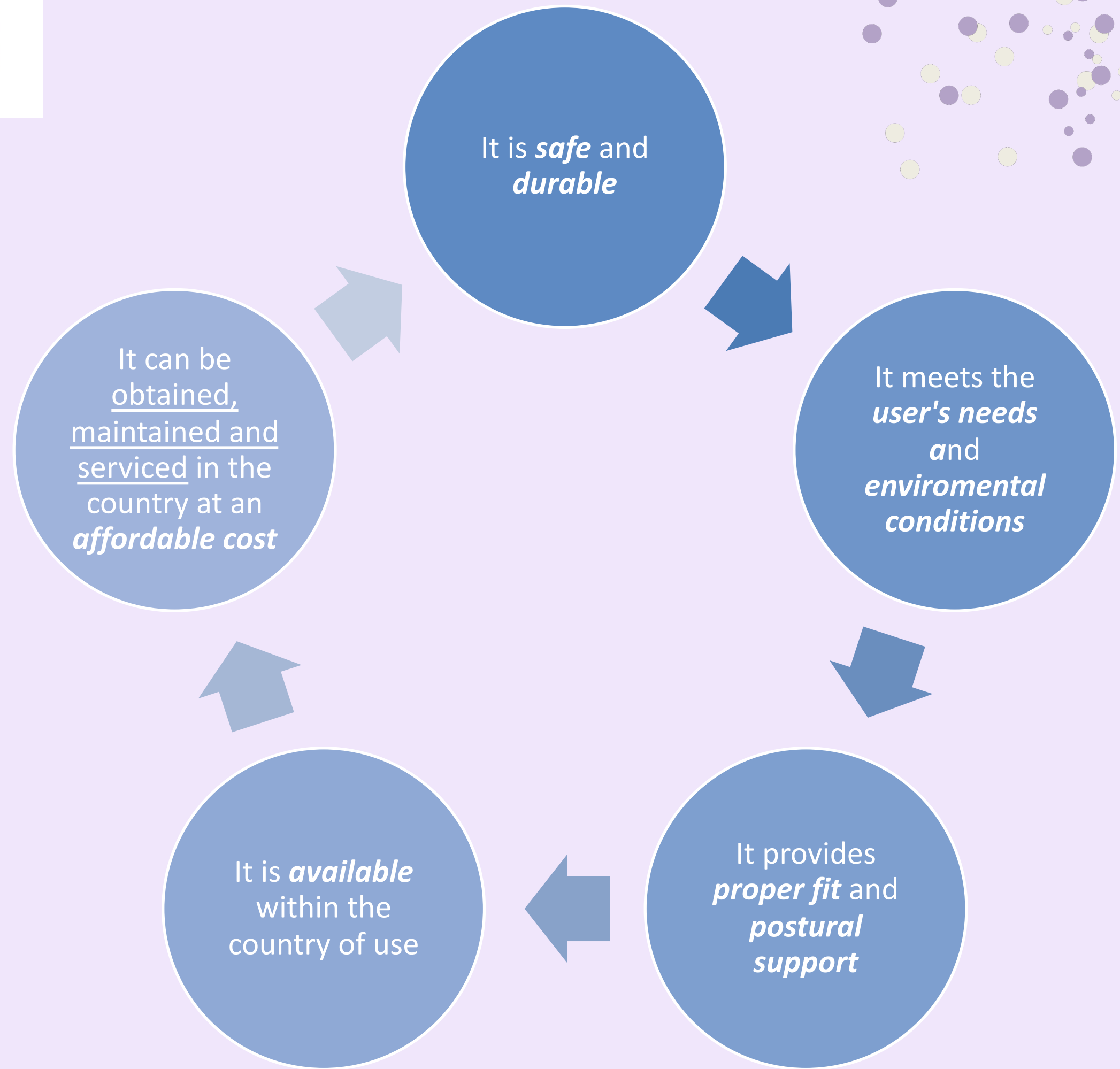
Global unmet need

access to wheelchairs remains profoundly unequal

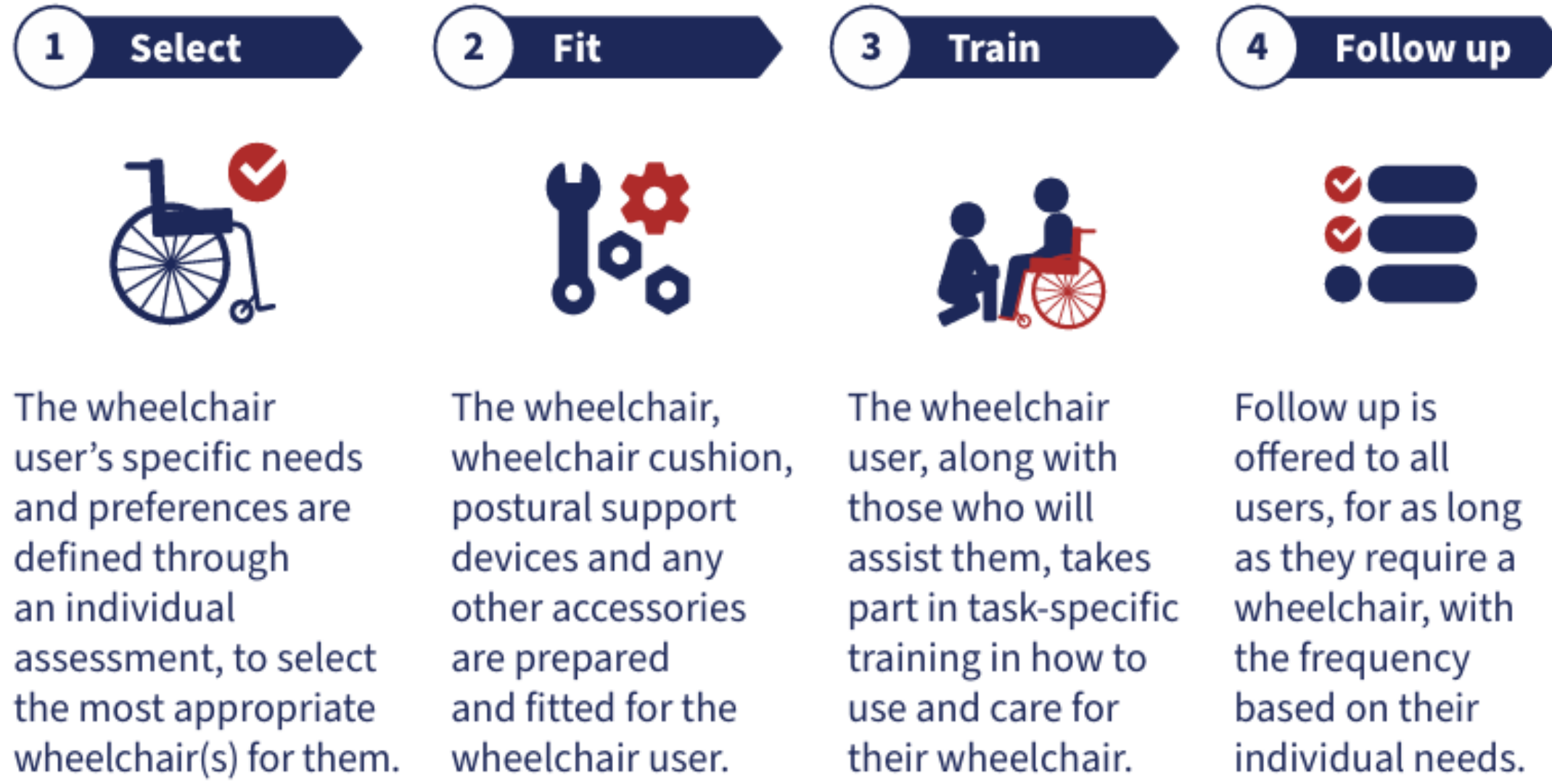




According to WHO, a wheelchair is *appropriate* when it:

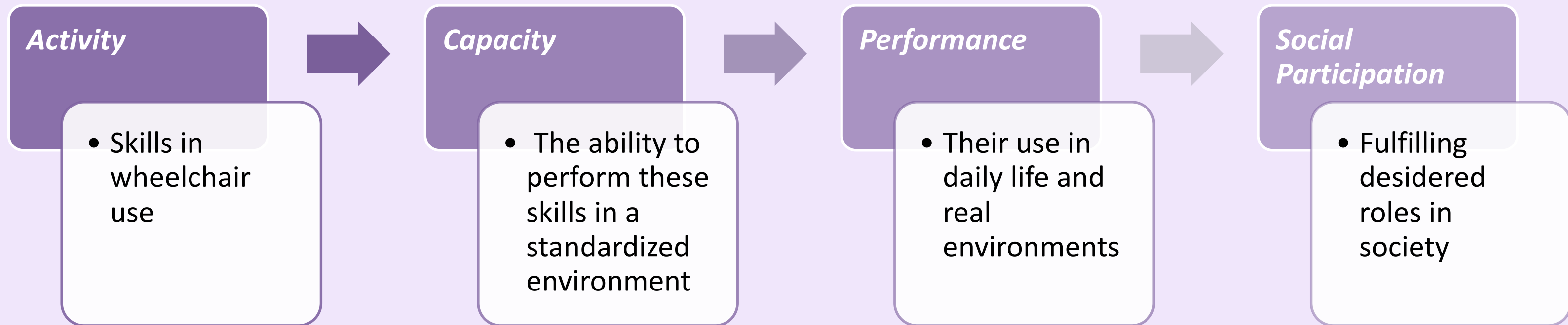


Four Wheelchair Service Steps



Two key elements within this pathway are **assessment** and **training in wheelchair use skills**, for both users and their caregivers.

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)



Access without skills may yield under-use, unsafe use, and reduced participation.



Skills represent a functional interface between device, person, and environment.



Hence, a *structured programme for skills assessment and training* becomes a practical response to the WHO service model.

WHEELCHAIR SKILLS PROGRAM

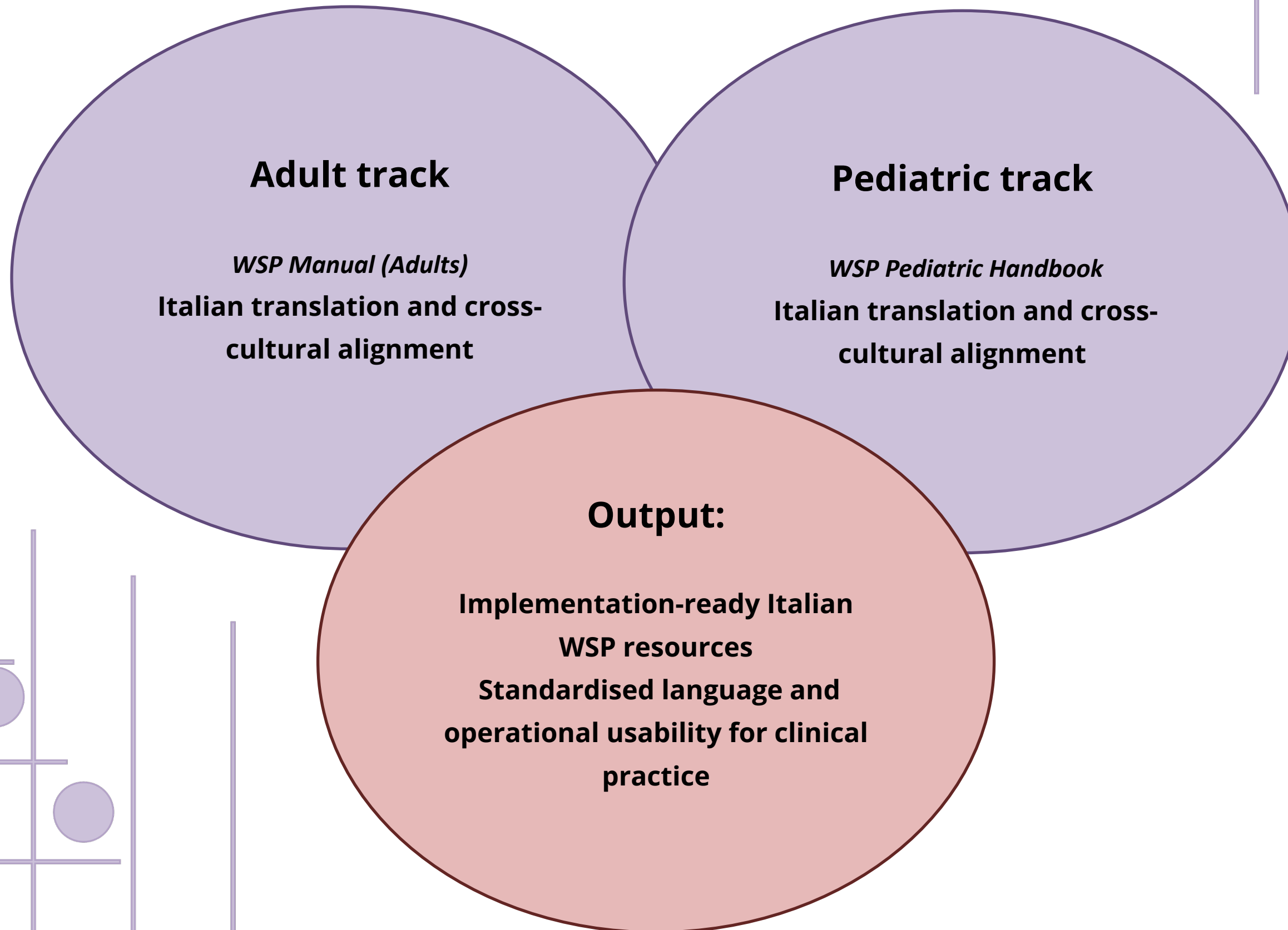


The WSP is a free, evidence-based set of *protocols* for assessing and training wheelchair mobility skills in daily life.

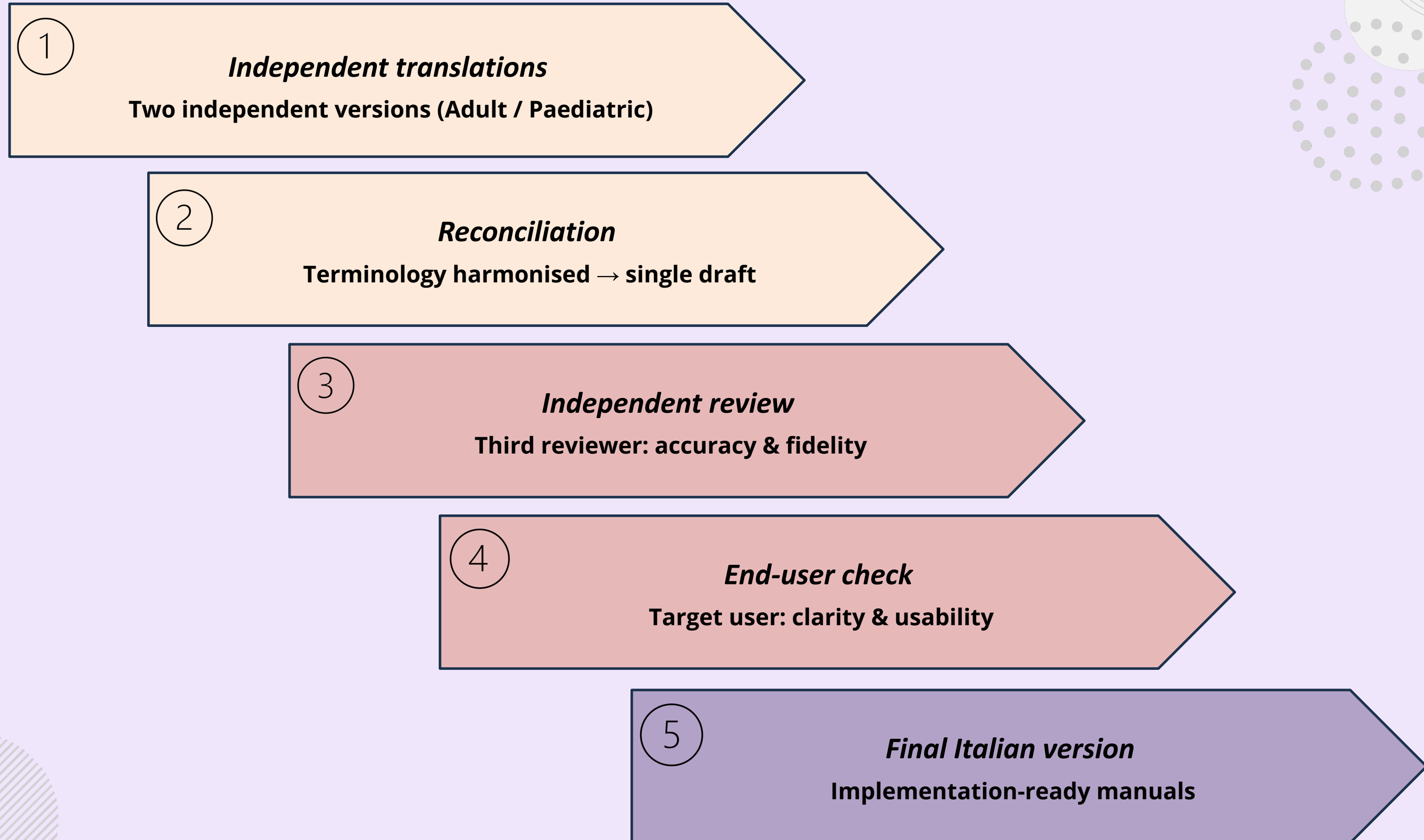
Use: manual and powered wheelchairs, scooters; includes caregiver training; applicable across all ages and settings.

Italian WSP package

Two parallel resources, one implementation objective



Methods



Cross-cultural adaptation



CHALLENGES

Language barriers

- High-density technical terminology.
- Non-equivalent expressions between English and Italian.
- Role terminology and safety instructions were not readily transferable to the Italian context.

Adaptation and content alignment within the Italian context



HOW WE ADDRESSED IT

Language barriers

- Standardised Italian clinical lexicon and harmonisation across sections.
- Prioritised conceptual equivalence; rephrased to preserve intent, not syntax.
- Clarified roles and safety language to match Italian clinical routines and governance.

End-user review to assess clarity and usability



Outputs

Two Italian manuals (adult and paediatric) delivering internationally recognised resources for **structured wheelchair skills training**

Significance

Strengthens **occupational therapy practice in Italy** through **evidence-based, standardised** training resources

Supports professional development and consolidates **best practices** across community and **rehabilitation services.**

Next steps

Roll-out of these resources **across services**

Clinician orientation to facilitate uptake and consistent delivery

Post-implementation feedback



*Thank you for
your
attention.*