

US Acli PILOT TEST

Over the past few months, we have built the alphabet of sport, reread and analyzed the rules of rugby and the principles of fair play, described the teammate, listened songs of the Italian singer Francesco De Gregori and discussed about our own lives, how sport is helping the inmates during their path, how much it has united them and how it sometimes becomes a space and time of 'freedom'. De Gregori himself sings 'It's not by a penalty kick that you judge a player' and this is a bit of the message that perhaps we should learn too: prisoners have committed a crime, serious or not serious, but they have the chance to restart from that mistake to reach a new self-awareness.

*However during the time we have spent together, we have realized how much sport can really unite everyone, despite the differences that become an opportunity for confrontation, dialogue and knowledge of oneself and of the other. For everyone. And so it was, including me.
(Rosa De Angelis, Intercultural mediator, SIMCAS staff)*



The Italian pilot test was developed within the prison of Bologna named "Dozza", that is one of the Italian prisons characterized by overcrowding and high percentage of immigrants: on a total capacity of the institute of 502 prisoners, the prison population is represented by 756 prisoners of which 404 are foreign ones.

This numerical data represents both a value and a need, with the purpose to organize activities able to create dialogues among different cultures and languages.

Within the Dozza prison there are many activities/services/interventions aimed at inmates, thanks to the institutional and social networking of the area. USACLI has already implemented sport activities in this prison and prisoners are very interested in that (they spend a lot of their free time playing football and have formed a rugby team).

The prison of Bologna has been hard hit by the current pandemic, both because of Covid-19 infected prisoners and unrests and following protests, dealing with reduced meetings with their families and leave due to the coronavirus emergency.

The activity has been focused on two main areas, which have been crossed in terms of topics and objectives: rugby and empowerment of Italian language.

About 20 both foreign and Italian prisoners have been involved in the activities, developed in collaboration with reference figures in the area of the treatment regarding prisoners. The beneficiaries of the activities are in the age range 20-40 years old, especially coming from other European countries and also from African and American countries. In addition to the subjective difficulties related to the detention period, all the prisoners involved daily experience problems of coexistence and integration because of the situation of overcrowding, of their migrant background and due to lack of knowledge of the Italian language.

Starting from the awareness of this critical aspect, the project had the objective to support prisoners in a concrete way, helping them to find a new perspective of themselves, both individual and relational, and that could be the value added in their personal path within the Prison.

Therefore, the whole activity, has regarded: training meetings dealing with the discipline of rugby and other sessions focused on the ethic of fair play; teaching Italian Language using texts, songs and musical pieces that tell about a social sport, solidarity, a space for learning positive values and principles. When one arrives in a foreign country, people generally tend to learn the 'words of need', because they are functional to the first needs related to integration in the new territory. SIMCAS pilot test chose instead the words of inclusion, emphasizing sport as an area for both the teaching and learning of Italian as a Foreign Language - LS for short. The choice was also dictated by the methods that could be used, which were more relevant to the objective of creating a light context, as far as possible, and rebuilding a climate in which everyone could be a protagonist. During all the meetings, participants have been encouraged to play an active role, in order to feel themselves valued as people, with ability and limits, and not identified just as a number.



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