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CONSCIOUS

An inter-systemic model for preventing reoffending by perpetrators guilty of sexual abuse and domestic violence

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ANNEX D 4.1

CONSCIOUS Project: model for the evaluation of the socio-economic impact

Rehabilitation or Punishment? Directions from Conscious Project

This intervention is ideally placed as an attachment to the impact assessment model of the Conscious project developed by this University and the Amapola association following the assignment received by the Office of the Guarantee of the Rights of Detainees of the Lazio Region. On that occasion, in presenting a methodological reflection on the tools suitable for assessing the impact of the project in relation to the recidivism of the beneficiaries of the same, a model for assessing the socio-economic impact of the project was proposed. In fact, the question was, in the face of a dominant rhetoric that requires exemplary penalties against subjects, who are often highly reprehensible offenders, what social advantage an economic investment could produce aimed at encouraging social reintegration processes for the crime perpetrator.

On this point, it must be premised that a binding interpretation of art. 27 of the Italian Constitution, where it establishes the rehabilitative function of the punishment, would not require further efforts to justify the implementation of treatment programs aimed at reintegrating the offender into society. However, as mentioned, there is a recurring temptation to accept uncritically a penalty model that, in the name of the particular gravity of some crimes, enhances a function of the penalty aimed at the mere neutralization of subjects who, due to the serious crime committed, would lose that right to resocialization affirmed by the constituent fathers. Therefore, the projects that aim to provide opportunities for social reintegration for convicted following particularly serious crimes acquire the burden of having to justify the social and economic usefulness of the proposed activity. The first part of the evaluation report extensively wrote on the nature of the phenomenon of recidivism, on the methodological tools aimed at analysing its extent and on the social significance of the reduction of recidivism rates, especially with regard to crimes against the person.

More complex is the issue of the economic utility/convenience of a project that promises to invest in the resocialization of people who have committed crimes within the family. The question, to which we have tried to answer, is whether it is "worthwhile" to invest economically in projects aimed at the resocialization of people who have committed these types of crimes or whether, on the contrary, this investment is excessive compared to the results achieved in terms of reducing recurrence.

On the subject, we can find some investigations that have suggested intervention in the field of prevention. The study conducted a few years ago by the Intervita association, entitled *Quanto costa il silenzio? Indagine nazionale sui costi economici e sociali della violenza sulle donne* (How much does silence cost? National survey on the economic and social costs of violence against women, 2013), had presented a detailed list of costs, material and immaterial related to the phenomenon of violence against women. The researchers indicated among the main health costs, the costs for psychological counselling, the costs of drugs, not to mention the judicial costs or those related to legal costs and anti-violence centres. Furthermore, the loss of labour productivity of the victims is identified as significant indirect costs. Finally, numerous costs are not strictly monetary, but can be placed within a social dimension: the perception of insecurity in the family and relational context, the de-structuring of ties, reflections in the school and educational environment. The central theme highlighted by the report is the scarce effectiveness of prevention policies. The serious impact of gender-based violence on the socio-economic fabric of our country is therefore attributed - correctly - to the numerous inefficiencies in the field of prevention that characterize our system. Naturally,

a not very attentive - if not a silent accomplice - cultural approach to domestic violence has a significant weight on them.

In our case, as part of the evaluation report, a complex tool was proposed to calculate the socio-economic impact of the project. It was therefore questioned how much of the activities suitable for reducing the phenomenon of recidivism could contribute to reducing the costs associated with violence in the family environment. In preparing the model, it was at the same time stressed that the use of this tool has proved to be rather complex in many situations as it is based on the collection of numerous statistical data, of different origins (judicial, health, related to criminal execution, etc. .), whose availability does not seem obvious.

In this regard, the case of the Conscious project has shown that in the Italian context the collection of reliable statistical data is particularly difficult. Specifically, it was possible to experience how the requests addressed to courts, local public administrations, health companies and other public administrations responsible for issues affected by the project, turned out to be a failure. Even after numerous reminders and requests, it was not in fact possible to reconstruct the judicial and/or health data related to gender-based violence in the territorial scope of the project.

Among the variables indicated as relevant, it was possible to reconstruct the cost of the anti-violence centres present within the Lazio Region. In 2020, the Lazio Region supported the Anti-Violence Centres present in the area with the sum of € 972,000 plus € 416,000 for the establishment and maintenance of the Safe Houses, according to the following scheme (Table 1).

Table n.1 Lazio Region: measures to support anti-violence centres and safe houses. Year 2020

Lazio centre	Anti-Violence	Amount	Safe Houses	Amount
Tivoli		67.000,00	Distretto Socio-Sanitario Rieti 5	104.000,00
Fiumicino		67.000,00	Distretto Sociale "A"	104.000,00
Latina		67.000,00	Distretto Socio-Assistenziale Fr A	104.000,00
Aprilia		67.000,00	Distretto Socio-Sanitario Lt 1	104.000,00
Frosinone		67.000,00		
Frosinone		67.000,00		
Ceccano		67.000,00		

Rieti	67.000,00		
Valle del Tevere	67.000,00		
Ariccia	67.000,00		
Nettuno	17.000,00		
Guidonia	17.000,00		
Rocca Priora	67.000,00		
Anguillara Sabazia	67.000,00		
Sora	67.000,00		
Fiuggi	67.000,00		
Total	972.000,00		416.000,00

Source: Lazio Region

Naturally, these are cost items that cover numerous expenses and professional involved in the intervention to support victims of abuse in the family. Nonetheless, these are considerable expenses, indicating a significant - and constant - incidence of the phenomenon. A reduction of the same cannot fail to be based on medium-long range preventive strategies, as indicated by the best criminological literature (Oddone, 2020). At the same time, the treatment approach towards offenders cannot be neglected. The reduction of recidivism, through projects that favour forms of re-entry into society characterized by projects capable of reducing the levels of conflict, are almost unanimously identified in the literature as effective tools to reduce the perpetuation of violence in the family (Levine, Meiners, 2020, Reed, 2020). Furthermore, a lower incidence of the phenomenon affects the pressure on courts, health services, reception facilities, etc.

These interventions, it must be stressed, do not present an excessive cost. In the case of the CONSCIOUS project, the treatments carried out, net of the pauses imposed by the national lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, concerned:

- C.C. from Frosinone: I group from April 2019 to February 2020;
II group from May 2020 to October 2020.
- C.C. Cassino: from April 2019 to July 2020 (suspension of groups March-May)

- External clinic: I group from April 2019 to February 2020;

II group from May to September 2020.

The total cost of the proposed interventions was € 41,551.60, represented almost exclusively by the costs of the personnel involved.

Therefore, if we compare the situation in Frosinone (Table 2), we can see how the costs of 18 months of socio-rehabilitation intervention are lower than those supported by the Lazio Region in interventions to protect the victims. It must be stressed that these are cost items that should not be interpreted as alternatives but rather, as a complementary intervention framework where, within the instruments dedicated to the protection of victims, interventions aimed at limiting the phenomenon must necessarily be included. Here it is possible to reiterate that these interventions actually constitute a very small slice of the costs incurred by the public body in dealing with the phenomenon.

Not including these costs, on the contrary, would lead to a blind pursuit of the protection of victims and the punishment of the guilty, without a real strategy of prevention and limitation of the phenomenon that, on the contrary, appears to be of absolute urgency.

Table 2. Measures realized in Frosinone city hall

Conscious Project	Anti-violence centre "Nuove opportunità a sostegno delle vittime di violenza"	Anti-violence centre "Mai più ferite"	Social care district FR A
€ 41.551,60	€ 67.000,00	€ 67.000,00	€ 104.000,00

Source: Frosinone Health Department, Lazio Region

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