

# Introduction

This book collects the experience of the first three years of the social innovation project called Programma 2121. Programma 2121 is a public-private initiative aimed at enhancing the social inclusion of inmates in Lombardy's penitentiary institutions through the promotion of work placements promoted by the Ministry of Justice Department of Penitentiary Administration (DAP), the Lombardy Superintendency of Penitentiary Administration (PRAP), and the Milan Supervisory Court of which Lendlease is a strategic partner. The Programma 2121 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also underwritten by ANPAL, Regione Lombardia, Metropolitan City of Milan, Municipality of Milan, Arexpo, Fondazione Triulza, PlusValue, Fondazione Fitis!, and Milano Santa Giulia. This MoU was signed on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at the San Vittore prison in Milan.

The signatories of this Memorandum of Understanding testify the great interest of the public institutions in an initiative strongly supported by the private sector and focused on achieving a greater impact in terms of numbers of beneficiaries involved, as well as number of industrial sectors involved and of social value generated. The strong participation of the public administration demonstrates the institutions' determination to extend the Bollate prison's model, where the project originally started, to the entire Lombardy prison system, and potentially to the entire national prison system. This could happen under the coordination of the DAP, thanks to the creation of a new office dedicated to the creation of inmates' job placement. The name of the project derives from the Article 21 of the Penitentiary Law that entitles prisoners to work outside the prison combined with the initial 3 years duration of the project (2018-2021) dedicated to developing a model that could be scaled up, hence "Programma 2121". The project started in 2018 with the intention of transforming the presence of the Bollate Prison located in the immediate proximity of the MIND - Milan Innovation District site, the Universal Expo in 2015 site, into an opportunity of community inclusion. The size of the MIND development, also a public-private initiative worth a total of around 4 billion euro with the aim of creating a new

scientific and technological district specializing in life sciences, is such to allow the implementation of a project of this type.

In doing so, the MIND development has transformed what would normally be considered a weakness in the real estate market - the proximity of a prison - into a defining strength. The project started with the dual motivation of contributing to the improvement of the living conditions of the prisoners and their families and contributing to the reskilling of detained workers to be employed in the construction sector. Programma 2121 leverages the innovative capacity of the MIND ecosystem to the benefit of the community by developing new solutions to promote the evolution of the penitentiary system.

The intuition behind Programma 2121 is to value the possibility for inmates to work outside of prison. Even though the re-educational function includes the job placement of prisoners, Programma 2121 was positioned to focus on the construction industry, which offers a variety of job opportunities to prisoners - both in terms of numbers and characteristics of the required tasks - by means of a new partnership model that involves a wide range of public actors and companies.

Because MIND's vocation is to be a center of innovation, the plan was to be also a laboratory of innovation for justice, by creating a project that would allow prisoners' social integration by working first at the construction sites and later in the various realities that will come to life on the site. This is an important element because it represents the meeting of a public interest and a private interest.

Programma 2121, leverages Lendlease's British experience with the BeOnsite project, born in 2008, the Milanese-Lombard culture of work as a means of redemption and to give dignity to the individual, and the Italian Constitution which states that Italy is a Republic founded on work.

Flavio Mirella, of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, at the October Programma 2121 workshop<sup>2</sup>, indicated that the international comparison of different prison administration systems, provide important lessons regarding the reintegration of prisoners. These include: the problem of prison overcrowding and the prison seen as a place where people serve their sentences but not as a place that prepares inmates for life outside the prison. The impact of prison problems continues to be on individuals who tend to reoffend not long after their release, on their families and on the community. Imprisonment mainly affects people living in poor and marginalized backgrounds, who often never had a legal occupation, and who are released where they came from, so have very few opportunities to break the circle of dependence on their previous lifestyle. Lack of stable housing seems to lead to recidivism compared to offenders who did not have housing problems.

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<sup>2</sup> Flavio Mirella *The Project of Social Innovation "Programma 2121"*, transcription of contents of the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 Workshop participants

Public-private partnerships are crucial to increase sustainability and reduce stigmatization. Treatment programmes must be based on the real needs of the market and must not be seen as a means to keep prisoners employed. Prisoners must be provided with the necessary skills for the labor market. In this the private sector plays a key role. Scalability and an overall strategy are needed to make release projects work. Programma 2121 certainly points in this direction. In addition, Mirella<sup>3</sup> pointed out that the experience of Programma 2121 has overcome some of the usual criticalities, thanks to the promotion of the rehabilitative ideal (Art. 27 of the Italian Constitution) and because of the innovative and differentiating characteristics. These include: the presence of a global business; the dimension of a multi-actor collaborative partnership - which unites institutionally and structurally different realities toward the common goal and the approach based on the work placement aimed at social inclusion, able to combine training and work experience in view of an effective and sustainable reintegration into society through work.

The possibility of learning and working, offered to prisoners as in Programma 2121, has the potential to break a chain of poverty and marginalization, contributing significantly to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Particularly goal: 1 - Zero Poverty; 4 - Providing quality education and learning opportunities for all; 8 - Promoting inclusive economic growth with full and productive employment and decent work for all; 10 - Reducing inequality. Governance is also crucial. Most SDGs focus on environment and social but not on governance, which is not only a responsibility of the government. Investments need to be made and sustained and sustainability is not only accomplished through resources but also through partnerships. The objective of rehabilitation is extremely complex because of multiple factors such as the cultural contest, person-related and the prison experience. Firstly, prisoners' rehabilitation and reintegration involve different areas of intervention: educational, psychological and health issues must be addressed. Reintegration, on the other hand, requires the removal of the social and economic obstacles, often linked to the prisoners' family context, but also to the social context in which the reintegration takes place. These challenges need to be addressed focusing on the long-term perspective. In fact, recidivism manifests itself more in the long term, and not in the first months after release. The first Chapter frames the project within the Italian current penal and constitutional system in relation to active labor policies to foster employability. After an initial intervention focusing on work as a tool for security and social reintegration, the chapter moves on to an intervention discussing the active labor policies to foster the employability of prisoners. The Chapter ends with an intervention discussing the reasons for public-private partnership and the importance of an equal pay.

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<sup>3</sup> Idem

After the programmatic framework, Chapter two reports the terms of the MoU of Programma 2121, including the objectives, actors involved and the roles of the public-private partnership. The partnership model is shared in the terms in which it was designed, that is based on the sharing of resources and values with respect to a common objective. This is followed by a discussion that frames and relates Programma 2121 to other national and international experiences, mapping out some best practices to initiate a more targeted and effective design of the treatment interventions to ensure an effective integration into the work environment. It also illustrates the value of a careful management of public-private partnerships and the ability to generate public value.

Chapter three collects the feedback from key stakeholders involved in the project, including a major contractor's feedback that signed the voluntary social clause, and their experience in cascading it down to their supply chain; the participating inmates' feedback collected during their internship or by the third-party evaluator of the project. The book continues with Chapter four summarizing observations on the operational processes related to the placements, starting from a detailed mapping of the placement pathway and a description of the various steps involved. Then it reports the results of the first cycle of Programma 2121. The Chapter continues by providing an overview of the social value created by the project in the first three-year period. This assessment was conducted by a third party auditor as Programma 2121 is one of the projects that are part of the ambitious social objective announced by Lendlease to the market in its 2020 annual report, namely to create \$250 million of social value by 2025 through "shared value partnerships". The results of the spring 2021 assessment are reported. The indicators tracked on a platform assessed by the third-party evaluator were: skills/training, employment, mental health, volunteering, housing/homelessness and differentiated supplier spending to be implemented. As of June 2021, the social value attributable to the first three years of Programma 2121 was \$2.3 million.

The last Chapter discusses two major themes for the development of the project as it scales up. One theme is related to the person and acquired neurodisabilities and post-release employment. This in relation to the need to offer recommendations and support to staff and managers working with these people to maximize successful post-release employment programmes. The other theme regards Programma 2121 as foundation platform for developing innovative financial and contractual schemes capable of making available the necessary resources to ensure the continuity and scalability over time of the interventions also through innovative tools such as the Social Outcome Contract (SOC) that belongs to the "family" of public-private partnerships and represents its evolution. The text concludes by summarizing some key points that have emerged from the three-year period from which to start from for the next phase of scale-up of Programma 2121.