



CONFERENCE CONCLUSION

"Finding Education for Female Inmates" Project

Trapani, 24 settembre 2015

Good morning and thank you to Madam Buscaino and all of you for the invitation.

I am Maria Pia Giuffrida, I worked in the Italian prison Administration more than thirty years, before as social worker, than in vocational training programs, and lastly as executive director in Toscana, with the task to administrate all eighteen prison e ten Uepe in that district.

Today I can say that I worked in a male organization, in a male world, I used I male language, with a lot of male or female colleagues, in a stressful system that used to banish, maybe to defend itself from all emotional aspect in order to take care of bureaucracy, of security, of control.

All of you work in the same field and you understand what I try to explain. Prison is a world in which people is afraid to feel emotions, to declare, to admit pain.

In this complicate universe, over crowded of inmates, the female are a low percentage (almost 4%) of prison population and this small number is evaluated, in an simple organizational and economic focus, of secondary importance, as a bad, a wrong investment.

This fact, joined to the underestimated emotional factors, contribute to push in a marginal position the female inmates, and their material, physical, emotional needs.

In spite of these general considerations it is important to remember that in 2008, following an important research on penitentiary female population the

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penitentiary Administration gave an important distinctive feature of gender having issued specific female prison rules

In any case, only a few institutes generally implemented this new guideline and only a few prison operator take charge in a global view of female problems, of their needs and desires.

Also in the alternative measures system the percentage of female sentenced to a punishment on community is a low one (almost 8 %), but the social workers take charge of them in a very different and more effective way, with specific concern to family rule and maternal care.

I apologize for my introduction but I think that all of you knows very well educational instruments and empowerment programs by reason of your personal experience and the Fefi results that gave you news perspectives on this complex field, so I have chosen to give you some different stress.

In Italy, it is fifteen years, some of us we start to consider ineffective punishment archetype even if it join with treatment archetype, as Italian penitentiary laws ask to do to the prison operators.

The first archetype has the focus on the criminal (male or female) who is sentenced with regard to penal law, the second one keep attention to the convicted who has to return to society re-educate.

The other paradigm we are developing in a complementary view is the restorative one that declare the importance to look after the crime victim.

Our experience in this new perspective demonstrate importance of a new way to consider the punishment period that is to say to spent the time to start up again with responsibility chain: the prison operator has to help convicted man and female to assume their responsibility toward one's self, their victim, but also their family, the society, the community where they have to come back after prison.

We try to move towards a relational justice where everybody has to understand that crime is a wrong against society as well as a violation of the individual rights of victims. People who commit a crime, has to assume the responsibility to repair in front of his victim e the society.

We don't enter now in restorative justice paradigm but for to pose a question: how to help female prisoner to assume their responsibility towards their victim? How to talk with her about her crime?

We needs to consider first of all women as criminal according to different criminology theories that often consider women as a legal subject inferior or subordinate and try to understand victim feeling that often follow female criminal?

I don't know but I think that the new perspective permit to woman to have a space and a time to talk of herself, of her relationship, of her fear, of her guilty.

During my professional work in the penitentiary system I realized indeed that the first instrument of the prison operator is to listen, to learn to pay attention to the person prisoned and that one of the most important right of prison population as well as of victims is to be listened.

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