



MEDIOBANCA

THE PRISONERS ASK WHY

As part of the Tempo di Libri fair, Mediobanca and non-profit organization L'Arte di vivere con Lentezza are supporting "The prisoners ask why", an initiative which involves five prisons

Milan, 27 February 2018 - San Vittore (Milan), Piacenza, Pavia, Bollate and the "Cesare Beccaria" institute for young offenders in Milan: these are the five prisons that will take part actively in *The prisoners ask why*, an initiative promoted by non-profit organization **L'Arte di vivere con Lentezza** and supported by **Mediobanca** with the co-operation of **Tempo di Libri**, the annual book fair which will take place in Milan in March 2018.

Based on the schools programme **The Why? Game** promoted by *Tempo di Libri*, and the column which Italian author Dino Buzzati used to write for the *Corriere dei Piccoli* known as *The Whys?*, "**The prisoners ask why**" project brings some of the most authoritative voices in Italian narrative face-to-face with a series of questions, or "Whys?", asked by the inmates of the prisons involved.

"All of us are looking for answers to our questions, people who are in prison more so than most. This is why they write letters, to tell their own stories but more than anything to have answers which on their own they are unable to find", said **Bruno Contigiani** of *L'Arte di vivere con Lentezza*. "Some answers come from books, others from people, allowing them to embark on a journey of discovery. The difficulties faced by them in formulating their questions clearly in the hours they face in prison deserve answers of the same calibre. The prisoners ask why' project is an opportunity to respond to some of these questions and provide answers to some of their Whys?", Contigiani concluded.

The questions collected through *The prisoners ask why?* will be sent in advance to the authors and then answered at a series of meetings arranged in conjunction with *Tempo di Libri* to take place in the five prisons participating in the project.

The first meeting was held on 13 February 2018 in the library of the Torre del Gallo prison in Pavia with the author **Andrea Kerbaker**. The next is scheduled for 21 March with **Gianni Biondillo** who will answer the Bollate inmates' questions, while on 22 March it will be the turn of **Gianfelice Facchetti** at the "Cesare Beccaria" institution. Other meetings will follow at the Piacenza and Milan prisons in due course.

"With this project Mediobanca is reiterating its commitment to promote social inclusion", said Mediobanca Sustainability Manager **Giovanna Giusti del Giardino**. *Following the success of the Sports Camp we ran for the young offenders at the "Cesare Beccaria" institute in Milan, The prisoners ask why? provides a new opportunity for other prisoners: to have a window on the outside world through the answers given by the authors to their profoundest questions".*

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Mediobanca

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L'Arte di Vivere con Lentezza

*Vivere con Lentezza is a project set up in 1999 in the area between Pavia and Milano, which in 2005 became an association with the name **L'Arte del Vivere con Lentezza**. Since 2009 it has been registered as a charitable organization, and so qualifies as a non-profit-making entity. The association's focus is on seeking out new ways for living better, based on the principle of "slowing down" the rhythms of life to understand where we are going and where we want to go. Apart from cultural initiatives such as La Giornata della Lentezza and Leggevamo Quattro Libri al Bar, the association's volunteers are involved in long-term projects valorizing culture, study and learning: in India projects are run in the schools of the shanty towns, whereas in Italy, in the prisons of Pavia and Piacenza, efforts are concentrated on groups which encourage reading out loud and publishing the texts which the inmates themselves write.*

The partners' reflections have resulted in three books that have been translated into various languages, and a co-housing project has been launched in the hills of the Val Tidone area. The web site www.vivereconlentezza.it is a registered review and serves as a focal point for the whole "slow" movement.

Other parties involved

The project works through the co-operation of many different partners: educational services for adolescents with difficulties in the municipality of Milan; the centre for justice and criminal mediation; the network of libraries at San Vittore, which exists as a result of an arrangement with the San Vittore prison sponsored by Caritas Ambrosiana, Casa della Carità, Bibliolavoro, CPIA 5 - Milan, Associazione Mario Cuminetti and the Milan Municipal Council – libraries sector. Regular meetings are held at the Centro San Fedele under the co-ordination of Elvio Schiocchet. VI Opera San Fedele; Associazione Mario Cuminetti; Commissione Cultura di Bollate, instituted pursuant to Article 27 of the Italian prison law, between the educator, volunteers and inmates, who have a role in taking the decisions regarding the way in which the prison lifestyle is organized.

All this is possible through the co-operation of the heads of the prisons concerned: Stefania D'Amico, Pavia; Caterina Zurlo, Piacenza; Olimpia Monda, Beccaria-Milan; Giacinto Siciliano, San Vittore-Milan; Massimo Parisi, Bollate, Milan; the police chiefs and officers working in the prisons and the educators.