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THE PRISONERS ASK WHY?

Mediobanca, L'Arte del Vivere con Lentezza and Kasa dei Libri are bringing the second edition of "**The prisoners ask why**" to the prisons in the region of Lombardy

"Why do prejudices exist?"

"Why is reality not what it seems?"

"Why do people find happiness again after being hugged by a child?"

These and many others formed the *whys* asked by the inmates involved in the first edition of *The Prisoners ask why?* project. Diverse and often very profound questions were asked, which deserved considered and empathetic responses. Around these responses, a pathway was developed to allow the inmates to engage in an original dialogue on issues affecting them personally, while at the same time giving the authors themselves an important emotional experience. This formed the premise for the decision to run this second edition of the project, increasing the number of both inmates and writers involved. This year volunteers from Mediobanca will be involved as well, confirming the Group's commitment to supporting social inclusion.

The project is now underway: the questions received through *The Prisoners ask why?* will be addressed to the authors in a calendar of meetings to be held between March and September at five of the institutions participating in the programme.

The first will take place on 19 March 2019 at the "Torre del Gallo" in Pavia, with the participation of **Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti**. This will be followed by other appointments in other institutions with **Marco Balzano, Gianni Biondillo, Andrea Kerbaker, Umberto Galimberti, Giuseppe Lupo** and **Pier Luigi Vercesi** who will meet with prisoners in Milan ("San Vittore" and "Cesare Beccaria"), Pavia again, Bollate and Vigevano.

"Promoting social inclusion is an issue to which we have decided to commit ourselves concretely, starting with the area which is closest to us geographically: the city of Milan and the region of Lombardy", said **Francesco Saverio Vinci**, General Manager of Mediobanca. "Human capital has always been the heart of both our professional and social activities, and in the latter we have been focusing increased attention of people in disadvantaged situations of various kinds. The idea is to help the people who are held in the prisons participating in the initiative to maintain a dialogue with the outside world through the words and faces of the authors and volunteers they will be meeting".

"The decision to put on a second edition of *The Prisoners Ask Why?* is especially praiseworthy because projects with human and social value should never be allowed to just end", said **Andrea Kerbaker**, founder of Kasa dei Libri.

"We should never stop asking questions; many of us have stopped asking them too early. This project invites the participants to discuss, reflect, search for their purpose in life, an exercise which is valuable for everyone, not just those behind the walls of a prison", commented **Bruno Contigiani** of the association L'Arte del Vivere con Lentezza.

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The numbers

Five prisons: "San Vittore" Milan, Pavia, Bollate, Vigevano and the "Cesare Beccaria" institute for underage offenders in Milan.

Around 200 inmates will be involved in the project.

Seven authors: **Marco Balzano, Gianni Biondillo, Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti, Andrea Kerbaker Giuseppe Lupo, Umberto Galimberti and Pier Luigi Vercesi.**

Participants

Mediobanca is a listed banking group offering specialized banking services. It is the leading investment bank in Italy, with a significant presence throughout Europe as a whole. The Group is also now one of the leading Italian operators in consumer credit and in wealth management services to affluent clients. Founded in Italy in 1946, Mediobanca has always combined tradition and innovation, offering its clients specialized, innovative, bespoke products. An established reputation based on professionalism and discretion, combined with capital quality and solidity, make Mediobanca today the ideal business partner for companies looking to grow in Italy and Europe.

Kasa dei Libri is a private space founded by Andrea Kerbaker devoted to the written word. It is situated in Largo Aldo De Benedetti 4, Milan, where it houses the owner's collection of some 30,000 volumes, and promotes culture and the written word through exhibitions and meetings. *Kasa dei Libri* is active in putting together high-level cultural projects and initiatives which are diverse, and never dull, ranging from reading marathons to specific meetings on the exhibitions being held in Italian museums, in conjunction with many companies ranging from Intesa Sanpaolo to Pirelli, from Telecom Italia to Skira or Altagamma.

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 slowing down as the first step in gaining awareness of self, others and the environment and then acting accordingly. It organizes 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 Italy and elsewhere, in strongly disadvantaged areas such as slums and prisons. The partners' reflections have resulted in three books that have been translated into various languages. 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 primarily of all the writers who have chosen to participate in the initiative free of charge and of numerous other partners, the following in particular: Milan regional prisons administration office (prisoners and treatment); 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; VI Opera San Fedele; Gruppo Carcere Cuminetti; Commissione Cultura di Bollate. All this is possible through the co-operation of the heads of the prisons



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concerned: Stefania D'Amico, Pavia; Fabrizio Rinaldi, Milan Bollate; Davide Pisapia, Vigevano; Giacinto Siciliano, "San Vittore" Milan; Cosima Buccoliero, "Cesare Beccaria" institute, Milan), and the police chiefs and officers working in the prisons and the educators.