

Working for reintegration and employment of incarcerated persons in Brazil

EUROsocial contributes to the implementation of productive activities in the Brazilian Association for Protection and Assistance to Convicts (APAC) in order to improve levels of socio-occupational reintegration of incarcerated persons.

Like other Latin American and European countries, Brazil faces significant challenges in the area of prison policies, especially as regards overcrowding and high recidivism rates, which in Brazil reach 85%.

EUROsocial has supported the Federal Government of Brazil within the framework of its efforts to improve reintegration policies by collaborating with Brazil's National Prison Department (DEPEN) and the APACs. As a result of this collaboration, a model has been established for implementing productive activities in prisons, using the experience of social cooperatives operating in Europe as a reference.

Implementation in the APACs

APACs are non-profit civil organisations that have been managing several public prisons for the last 40 years in the interest of humanising sentences and promoting the human rights of incarcerated persons. This is a pioneering and innovative method characterised by the absence of weapons and police in prisons. Without ignoring aspects related to conviction and arrest, it uses a methodology that emphasises education and socialisation as a means of facilitating social reintegration.

The results in these prisons are very good; recidivism is 10-15%, compared to 85% in ordinary prisons, and costs are one third lower. A decisive factor in achieving these results is the partnership between the association and civil society.



EUROsocial has supported the road map for implementation of this productive model in APACs by favouring the exchange between Brazilian institutions, the Italian organisation Cooperativa Sociale Giotto and the Department of Prison Administration (DAP) of the Italian Ministry of Justice.

Implementation at the national level

Along with establishing Cooperativa Sociale Giotto's model in the APACs, the Government of Brazil has created a committee comprised of all the institutions in the prison system to prepare a guidance document for prison policies called "Programme for Security Without Violence". This will be used to disseminate the APAC model at the federal level, as well to implement social cooperatives in the system to facilitate the socio-occupational reintegration of incarcerated persons.

Challenges of Brazil's prison policy in figures

- > An increase in the prison population of **136%** in the last 12 years.
- > Low level of schooling: **16%** illiteracy and **63%** without primary education
- > Low recidivism **85%** overall, compared to APAC **10-15%**

Experience transferred: Cooperativa Sociale Giotto



Cooperativa Sociale Giotto is a European initiative well-known for its brilliant results in occupational reintegration of incarcerated persons. The consortium employs 135 inmates and recidivism for those that worked while serving their sentence, in the framework of alternative measures, has dropped to 1%.



Mutual learning between regions

Latin America and Europe share two central problems in their prison policies: prison overcrowding and a high level of recidivism (around 70%) in individuals who serve their sentences and are released.

This information is key to establishing the exchange actions



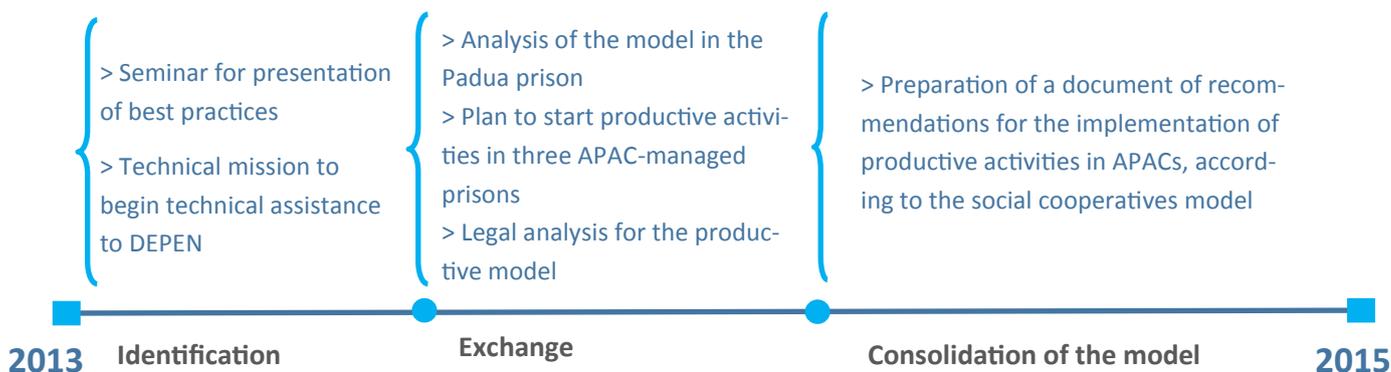
between the two regions with regard to strategies for socio-occupational reintegration of incarcerated persons.

The support provided by Brazil has helped to lay the groundwork for a return of benefits in Europe and provided the opportunity to undertake experiences similar to the APACs in Italy and Europe, given the positive results in terms of reduction of recidivism and costs. Along these lines, the European Commission is evaluating the possibility of preparing an implementation project in several member states for pilot plans that incorporate best practices from Cooperativa Sociale Giotto and the APAC model.

Inter-sector: Employment and Justice

This intervention illustrates the intersectoral dimension of EUROsociAL, which tackles complex problems and strengthens interaction between different thematic areas, sometimes assuming the role of catalyst in the coordination of stakeholders within countries. In this case, the socio-occupational reintegration of incarcerated persons action, whose fundamental working line supports productive activity models inside and outside prison, is carried out on an intersectoral basis, combining the intervention of stakeholders from two of the programme's thematic areas, employment and justice.

Roadmap



Civil society participation

Although EUROsociAL is a programme intended primarily for cooperation between government agencies, in some of its areas it is essential to include civil society and take into account stakeholders in civil society who play key roles in ensuring that public policies promoted by EUROsociAL function correctly. This is the case of the working line dedicated to occupational reintegration, in which collaboration between civil society organisations from both regions has been key to the success of the exchange and the reform of prison policies.

Coordinating partners:



Operating partner:

