



**International Conference in Milan
11-12 March 2016**

**Alternatives to imprisonment: identification and exchange of
good practices.**

LIBRA's President Speech
Mr. Angelo Puccia

Good Morning, I am Angelo Puccia, I am the President of LIBRA, the Co-ordinator of the European project "**Alternatives to Imprisonment. Identification and Exchange of Good Practices**".

First of all, I wish to thank to...

I trust that questions, interests and also concerns that prompted all of you to join us here, can find -in these two days of debate and confrontation- useful and meaningful answers for your daily work inside the Justice System, as well as on Alternative Measures and Restorative Justice field.

I also hope that this conference will serve to question ourselves about how our **societies**: nationally or globally intended, are changing and which can be the role that individually and collectively we are called to act:

- toward those who commit crimes,
- toward who is victims of these crimes,
- and toward those who observe them indifferently. Indifference that surely often lurks irresponsibility and lack of empathy towards the social effects that crime in itself can lead to all, as a community.

The commission of an offense, even before a **transgression of a Law** or a precept, is the **creation of a Damage**. Of damage to a direct victim or to an indirect victim, in the case where the society as a whole has been affected by the crime.

The crime is a social fact, a social conflict (in the opinion of who is speaking at now), a negative behaviour that affects all of us, **even if we are involved on it or not**.

Humanly, we cannot justify and perhaps even understand these facts.

Well, we believe that it is precisely when we are dealing with people who committed those crimes, we have to ask ourselves if a *Pensée Unique* (Single Thought/Single Mindset) which proposes us as **the only plausible solution more PRISONS, more inflictive PUNISHMENT and more WALLS** (ideological, emotional, political and sometimes physical walls), is really the right answer to **build a safe, free and solidary society**.



With words of the great friend of mine, prof. Sandri: to build a **Restorative Society!**

Instead -again in my opinion-, it should be better to invest in our own **Critical Consciousness**, asking us, with power, what we can do concretely: individually and collectively to get out of a distressing condition of impotence against those **SOCIAL CONFLICTS** that touch us so closely in our hearts and make us live a freighted and alarmed life. An **Insecure Life** that this big and long crisis seems to have awakened with vigor.

To many of us, it may seem rhetorical to talk about **RESPONSIBILITIES** in front of such serious issues such as those just mentioned, but again ladies and gentlemen, I think it is very important for us, as researchers/practitioners/policy makers and so on, to strengthen a **primary sociological concept**:

THE TIME OF DELEGATION IS FINISHED!

Now, what is necessary is that **each of us is willing to handle its responsibility toward conflicts and crimes** and, again, that each of us is willing **to do it TOGETHER**, collectively with the Others, and in the "Others" there are offenders, victims and us.

Get out of our contradictions, our daily conflicts, our victimization sense "is" and "can be" our **CHOICE!** It's up to us!

It's up to us, again individually and collectively to decide to make this choice or whether, on the contrary, **continue to demand punishment and retribution, instead of restorative solutions**, for example through Alternative Measures to Imprisonment.

*My dears, It would be enough to ask ourselves, **which kind of treatment we would reserved for us, if we were suspects, accused or guilty of having committed a CRIME? ...a MISTAKE?***

Comprehension? Empathy? Pardon? Or clemency?

Personally, I say you: **RESPONSIBILITY!**

I claim for responsibility in who is judging me (the Judicial Authorities or the Community in a broad sense).

I would ask to those who are judging me to allow me to reflect on my responsibility, and finally, I would ask to be able **to repair the damage that I caused to the victim**, if possible.

Only in this way, the **punishment path** can assume a restorative meaning toward the victim and **the offender can demonstrate not only to be his/her own fault!**

So, recalling *Sir Shakespeare*, the question, the ethical question is: ***Be or Not Be Restorative? Be or Not Be Alternative?***

In the 2016, LIBRA Association is celebrating its six years of activity, lavished in the research and design and development into criminology, victimology and social issues. We are men and women who have chosen to dedicate their daily commitment to some very important issues for the development of our society.



We do it every day with passion, relying exclusively on our seriousness, honesty and responsibility. We do not believe to be neither better nor worse than others are. We are different and this feature has allowed us, over the years, to guess that a debate is useful and fruitful, also, if it is able to stand out from the crowd.

Since the 2010, we deal with criminology focusing in particular on the **environmental and social conditions** that constitute the *humus* on which deviant and criminal phenomenon born and increase, believing that a **social vision of the criminal dynamics** could consider unitedly and at the same time the actors that participate it: the offender, the victim and the community as well.

I am going to conclude.
Sometimes introductions and presentations may seem pompous and emphatic.
I do not want certainly to take this risk.

My thanks, on the contrary, are sincere and addressed to all of you.

By the Italian delegation of LIBRA, I really want to thank all the conference speakers, who have chosen to devote part of their time and their energy to argue with all of us on very important themes. **Punishment, Prison, Alternative Measures and Restorative Justice** are very important themes on which we need a broad and serious debate.

Finally, I wish to send a warm hug to three women for me very special: Francesca (my wife), Annachiara and Lucrezia (my two little daughters), **my personal luck**. The real reason of my continued commitment for a better future.

Really Good Luck to All of You!
Thank you!