



Contrary to common belief, imprisonment doesn't necessarily end the pursuit of happiness so characteristic to most people. Deprived of freedom, the inmates have found an alternative form of freedom and happiness through meditation, laughter yoga and the like. The search for happiness doesn't, however, end with words - rehabilitation and reinsertion schemes are often vital for rebuilding the bridge between the ex-inmate and society. UNRIC investigated the case of Italy with two experts: Giorgio Pieri and Nicola Boscoletto.

"Freedom is an essential condition to be happy, but not the only one," Giorgio Pieri from the 'Community of Pope John XXIII' Association outlined. He is director of an innovative and educational rehabilitation centre based in Emilia-Romagna, Italy, which combines the efforts of both prisoners and volunteers to educate the inmates in new values leading to a happy life. "Prisons are unnecessary, expensive and inhuman and do not help people in their path towards a renovated happiness," Pieri stated while confirming the impact of the approach; the recidivism rate of the prisoners going through the program has fallen from 75% to only 8%.

According to Pieri, a fully rehabilitated person is no longer dangerous and can finally find happiness in a brand new life. Such progress is made possible with the help of volunteers, mutual help among the prisoners, forgiveness of family and friends and human and spiritual development. An important part of the new found life is working as a part of society - a view shared by the other interviewee, Nicola Boscoletto.

Boscoletto is director of the Rebus Consortium based in Padova, Italy: a cooperative which aims to re-educate prisoners by teaching them a vocation so that they can rejoin civil society with strong professional competencies. "I see the difference in the facial expressions of the prisoners as a result of having learned a vocation. Accomplishing a positive goal after struggling

for a long time because of their criminal activities makes them feel more self-confident and thus happier," Boscoletto stated.

Both Pieri and Boscoletto have a dream of further expanding their current efforts - giving prisoners and ex-prisoners a second chance, a return ticket to society. The inmates should not be viewed only through their mistakes but rather as people with potential and the possibility of finding their path towards happiness.