



EUROPRIS

ICT Workshop

September 29th, 2020

- IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE USE OF
TECHNOLOGY DURING AND AFTER THE CRISIS
AN ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

THE VERY FIRST PHASES

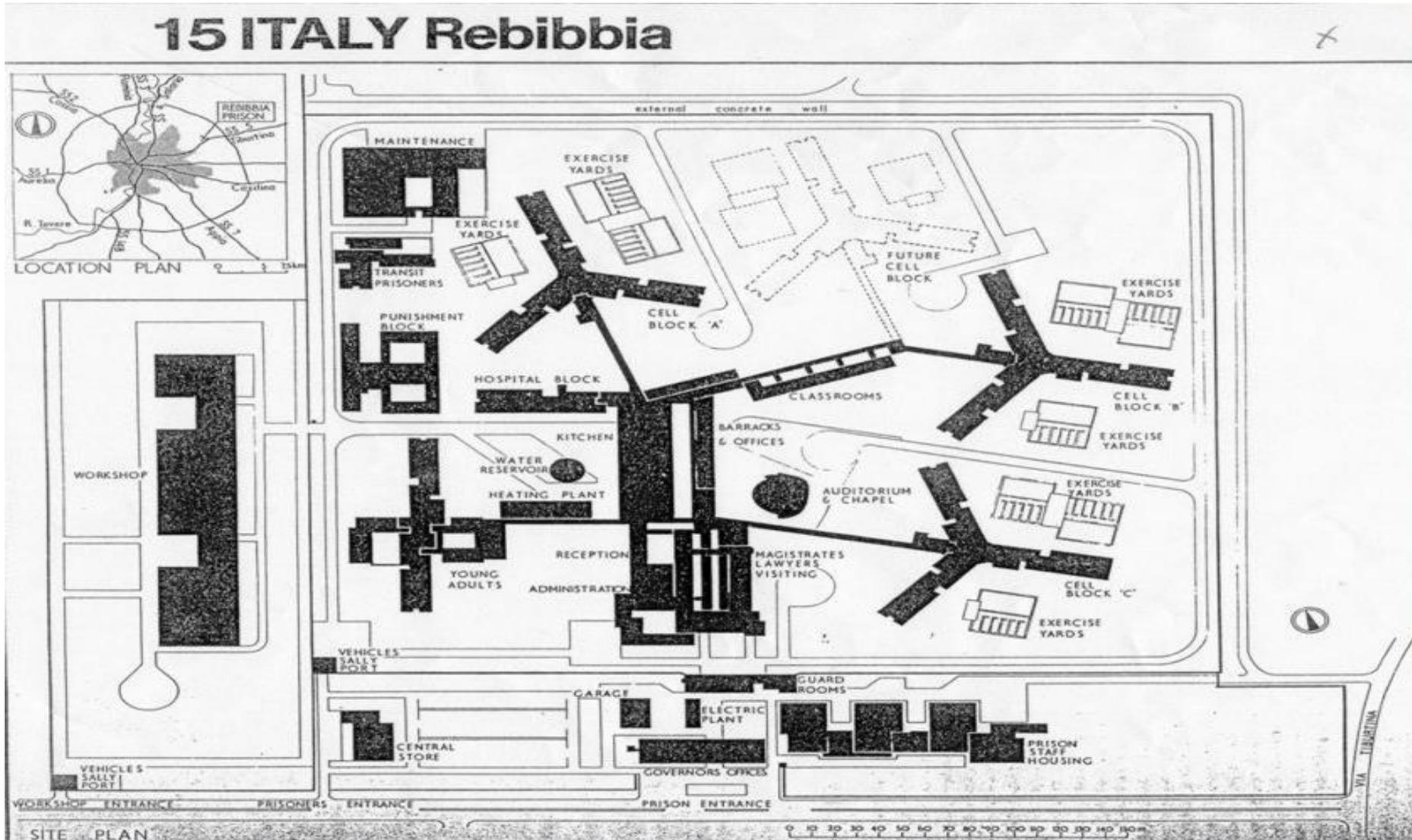
- ▶ Since 22 February 2020, the Italian Penitentiary Administration has been issuing organisational provisions which regulated the healthcare emergency due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Visits in person were suspended, but at the same time some "compensation measures" were introduced

- ▶ Family visits were replaced by free-of-charge video-interviews by PCs or smartphones for all inmates
- ▶ The possibility to make telephone calls also to mobile phone numbers
- ▶ The purchase 1600 Smartphones plus 1600 more mobile phones, in order to allow a larger number of telephone calls to all prisoners (only to selected telephone numbers)
- ▶ Permission to use Skype platform (both via PC and Smartphone) or of other platform for video-calls.
- ▶ Video-interviews with lawyers are always allowed through Skype
- ▶ Use of e-mails to send and receive communications selected and managed by prison e-mail address.

Case Study

Remand prison of Rome- Rebibbia " Raffaele Cinotti"

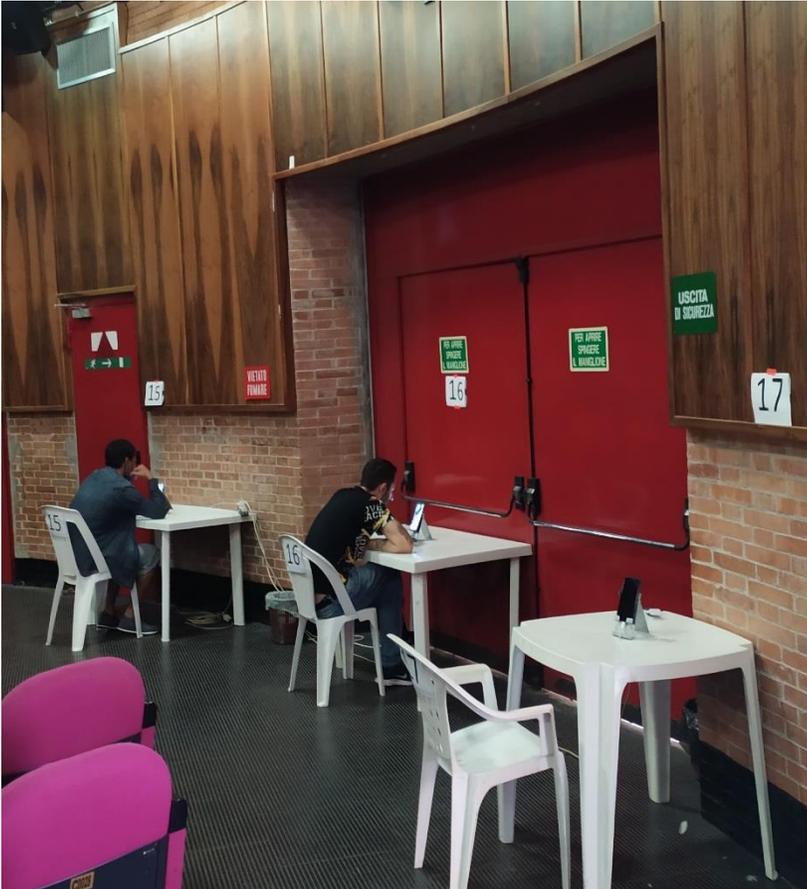


Strategy implemented at the remand prison "R. Cinotti" in Rome

- ▶ In normal times, the remand prison of Rome Rebibbia "R. Cinotti" manages an inflow of 300/400 visitors per day. At the time before the pandemic, there were 1,600 inmates in the prison.
- ▶ Our idea was to use the platform Skype for Business to make interviews with families at a distance.
- ▶ That instrument was already being used in the hearings of the Supervisory Courts.



The IT stations at the theatre



- ▶ Some IT stations were set in the building of the prison theatre, where the inmates could get video-connections with their relatives.
- ▶ Said IT stations were prepared with the help of the private company working in that prison which put at our disposal the wi-fi device and the Internet connection.
- ▶ Both those companies have been working for a long time with the prison and provided their support for free, demonstrating a great sense of civic participation



Challenges and solutions

- ▶ Platform Skype for Business was unfit for a massive use at the same time by all the Italian prisons facilities
- ▶ The same challenges were found while using TEAMS platform
- ▶ The test phase pushed the prison governor and her collaborators to search for an alternative
- ▶ The solution was found in the use of a wi-fi connection through smartphones
- ▶ The Italian company TIM provided for free 15 pre-paid devices.
- ▶ Twenty-two more smartphones were bought by the DAP, with the relevant cards
- ▶ This service allows about 6,550 talks over the period from March to July 2020

In order to guarantee the right to adequate assistance by lawyers for all detainees video calls service was set up.

By using both the Skype for Business and Teams platforms in parallel, it was possible to make about 550 connections over the time period from March to July 2020 with the Courts, magistrates, the Supervisory Judges and any other trial procedures necessary was guaranteed.





The Governor of the “Cinotti” Prison has started every possible action to ensure continuity of school lessons, in particular for those who had exams to take in the short term.



Thanks to the "google students" platform and the use of a system consisting of maxi screens, cameras and audio speakers, the final exams were guaranteed for:

- primary schools (7 students obtained final license);
- High School (16 graduate students);
- College (12 graduate students);
- University courses (30 students continued to follow the activities with tutors).

..lessons learned...

- we had to redesigning a set of procedures tested for years and replacing them with IT-based procedures without having training or adequate means.
- greater safety/security in conducting talks (*i.e. less risk of introducing prohibited items*)
- workflow reduced (*no procedures for physical identification of family members*)



..lessons learned...

- continuity to family links even to those subjects who normally do not carry out visits or talks due to the distance:
 - from one side we have been able to keep on trucks family links
 - in other cases thanks to new procedures we ensure the maintenance of family links; furthermore in lots of cases family links have been activated for the first time



Challenges

- ▶ The experiences shows the real possibility to set up an IT-based system to be placed in parallel with the traditional one hence to provide to prisoners the possibility to choose the way for maintaining their family links particularly for those are spending the sentence far from their place of origin.
- ▶ The same can be applied in the area of right of defense and with the Courts .
- ▶ From the prison staff perspective the IT-based system is an opportunity to renovate their professional role by improving and implementing a more technological approach to their work.



Thank you for your attention

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