

## PRESS RELEASE

### INTESA SANPAOLO AND SEMI DI VITA COOPERATIVE PRESENT THE (RI) ABILITA PROJECT

#### **In Bari, a social agriculture initiative for the employment of young people in the criminal justice system**

*Bari, 22 June 2021* – Intesa Sanpaolo and the Semi di Vita Cooperative of Bari presented today the project “**(re) Abilita - Social agriculture initiative for the employment of young people in the criminal justice system**”. The initiative, which extends over a period of two years, aims to support the training and job placement of about 20 young people, promoting opportunities for redemption for young detainees in the Juvenile Penal Institute Fornelli of Bari and young people subject to alternative measures to detention in the local community.

The event was attended by **Elena Jacobs**, Head of Social Development and Relations with Universities of Intesa Sanpaolo, **Alberto Pedrolì**, Regional Director for Basilicata, Puglia and Molise of Intesa Sanpaolo, **Giuseppe Centomani**, Director of the Juvenile Justice Center of Puglia, Basilicata and Campania, **Giampaolo Romanazzi**, Mayor of the Municipality of Valenzano and **Angelo Santoro**, President of the cooperative Semi di Vita. **Don Angelo Cassano**, representative of the Bari chapter of Libera, Associations Names and Numbers against Mafias, and **Raffaele Diomede**, Head of the Day Centre of the Educational Community for minors in the penal area Chiccolino of Bari, also made contributions.

The (ri) Abilita Project thus meets the need for social reintegration of young people on the margins, a process aimed at regaining social and cultural dignity through work, an indispensable tool for improving the quality of life and offering concrete opportunities, as borne out by some data. According to a study carried out by the Department of Penitentiary Administration (DAP), the percentage of recidivists among those serving a sentence in prison is 68%, a value that drops to 19% in the case of those serving an alternative sentence, confirming the fact that inmates who have started work experience show a significant reduction in the rate of recidivism. (Source: Ministry of Justice).

*“With the (ri) Abilita project developed in Bari, Intesa Sanpaolo confirms its commitment in terms of social responsibility and takes action in important structural areas of the Inclusion and Cohesion mission of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan by promoting work as a rehabilitating force for young people in fragile conditions, focusing strongly on education and facilitating the regeneration of the common good. We are supporting the third sector in its work in an important area of southern Italy, as part of a process that we have been undertaking for some time and which sees us working alongside the best social organisations in the country,”* said **Elena Jacobs**, Head of Social Development and Relations with Universities at Intesa Sanpaolo.

*“Giving young people in the criminal justice system a chance to redeem themselves through work is a very important mission for us. Having Intesa Sanpaolo as a partner to support the project with the actions foreseen by (ri) Abilita has allowed our cooperative to expedite the processes of job placement on land confiscated from organised crime. An important chance for the community for which we work, aimed at leaving the world a better place than we found it,”* said **Angelo Santoro**, President of Semi di Vita Social Cooperative.

### **Training and job placement of young people involved in the project**

Specifically, the young people will be included in the social farming projects of the Semi di Vita Cooperative, including: *“La Fattoria dei Primi”*, an initiative started on a 26-hectare plot of land confiscated from organised crime in Valenzano in the Metropolitan City of Bari and awarded in 2018 by the Municipality to the Cooperative and in the social garden in the peripheral district of Bari Japigia, which Semi di Vita launched in 2014, creating opportunities for community rebirth in a particularly complex area of the city.

They will also take part in the “Cardoncelleria Fornelli” project, supported by the Ministry of Justice, which by 2021 plans to create a 330-square-metre greenhouse for the cultivation of cardoncelli mushrooms and a 70-square-metre packaging workshop inside the Fornelli Juvenile Penal Institute in Bari. At the Cardoncelleria, Semi di Vita will give life to the production by directly involving the young inmates in a training program that provides for the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge in agriculture, economics and business management.

(ri) Abilita is thus intertwined with these three important social experiences and initiatives, thanks to which the young people involved find a setting in which to learn the basics for a future job and opportunities for full reintegration into the community.

The partnership between Intesa Sanpaolo and the Semi di Vita Cooperative is further strengthened by the synergy between various functions of the Bank, which, in addition to co-planning and financial support, make their know-how available to the young beneficiaries by offering **training modules on economic-financial literacy** created through the voluntary association Vobis, formed by former bank employees with the aim of offering their professionalism to make credit a “right of many”, and the availability of **For Funding**, Intesa Sanpaolo’s crowdfunding platform, to raise resources useful for the implementation of important Semi di Vita projects or for support in carrying out daily activities. A fund-raising campaign, which will close on 30 June, was launched following the theft of the tractor recently purchased by the Cooperative and in just a few days has raised over €32,000, thanks to a prompt response from the Community and numerous supporters who have offered their support from all over Italy. For more information: <https://www.forfunding.intesasanpaolo.com/DonationPlatform-ISP/nav/progetto/semi-di-vita>.

*Press information*

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