

Tuesday, October 30th 2012

To Special Committee on
Organised Crime, Corruption and
Money Laundering (CRIM)

To Sonia Alfano, President of the CRIM

Report on the activity of
“Addiopizzo Catania”



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This is a report on the visit of CRIM to Palermo, written by “Addiopizzo Catania” in order to show what the organization has achieved since 2006. We hope it will be useful to providing a more complete and accurate perception of the feelings towards sed crime in Sicily.

*Addiopizzo Catania works to fight against the Mafia by discouraging shop owners from paying *pizzo*, by educating people and challenging cultural norms.*

Keywords

“Addiopizzo”, “Goodbye pizzo”

“Pizzo”, protection money

“Consumo critico”, “Smart consumption”

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1. Schools project

"Addiopizzo Catania" organizes programs in schools, universities and educational institutes, with the participation of judges and shop owners who decide not to pay protection money.

In the classes we teach what the mafia is, why it was created, and how we can defend against it. In 2007, the second year of this project, we met more than 1000 students.

In 2009 we gave the students a questionnaire in order to understand what they know about organized crime and what they think the concept of "legality" is. The results were analyzed in collaboration with Professors from the University of Catania and presented to the press on December 2nd, 2009.

In 2009, 2010 and 2011 we partnered with the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy and with the Faculty of European Languages of the University of Catania. Students that completed this course were awarded with 3 ECTS.

In July and November 2010 and in March, July and October 2011, in partnership with "CET - Academic Programs", we held seminars for American students about mafia and anti-mafia issues. As of 2012, we have become official partners and now we organized that seminar monthly basis.

2. Project 'Consumo critico'

Many citizens are unaware that if they buy from people who pay protection money, they are funding the Mafia. "Consumo critico"

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project aims to support merchants who refuse to submit to the extortion racket, thereby creating a network of consumer aware citizens who commit themselves to going to these shops for their purchases. Our goal is to lend – with legal and psychological help – those who decide not to pay the protection money. Furthermore we support the shop owners who publically declare that they don't pay the pizzo because we think that their decision is an important example for cultural change.

We have compiled a list of “smart customers” who prefer to buy from pizzo-free shops and support them in their decision. On September 30th 2008 we showed the press a list of 2500 people that support this project. Today they number 5000.

The second part of this project was to compile a second list of shopkeepers which is called “pizzo free”. They publically declare that they don't pay the protection money and they are supported by the "smart customers" who pledge to buy pizzo-free goods. On January 30th 2010 we presented to Italian Institutions this “pizzo free” list with 50 merchants from the Catania area. Today this list has over 100 people.

The goal was to draw the public's attention and raise awareness of the phenomenon of extortion. We wanted to create a network of people who are knowledgeable consumers aware of their role and power within society.

3. Solidarity

The daily activities of Addiopizzo Catania make us realize how many difficult situations there are in our country. We realise that the mafia finds its strength in poverty and in despair.

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For this reason, during the Christmas period of 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012, we implemented a project called “Regaliamo(ci) un sorriso” [give (yourself) a smile]. We collect food, clothing and toys and then distribute these to poor people, parishes, relief associations and children.

In 2010 we organized an Easter lottery. The funds were used for:

- the project “A wall against the Mafia” (see point 5)
- to assist an underprivileged family
- to support another association that works in the area of Librino, a very poor part of Catania.

We used the money from the 2011 lottery for:

- to realize a second mural for the project “A wall against the Mafia”
- to help a girl, Laura Salafia, to buy a new house. In July 2010 Laura was returning home after an university exam when she was accidentally hit by a bullet. Today Laura cannot walk and needs a house specially-adapted for her disabled condition.
- To pay the bills of an apartment that the Italian State confiscated from the Mafia and donated to us. (see point 4)

4. Collaboration with the anti-racket associations

Addiopizzo Catania is an anti-racket organization and we collaborate with other anti-racket organizations, especially ASAEC and ASAE.

With the organization ASAEC we organized a lot of demonstrations.

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In 2008 and in 2009 an agricultural businessman from Palagonia accused some members of the Mafia of extortion in Italian court. After this event, for fear of reprisal, no one wanted to work in his farms. We launched the campaign "Pizzo-free oranges", in which we called upon students and citizens to harvest the oranges from this man's farm. All oranges were picked and sold, showing the vulnerability of the Mafia to the public. As a result, members of Addiopizzo were invited by the Italian President to discuss this project in Rome.

Recently, Addiopizzo Catania have organized information sessions in Florence, Bologna and in the centre of Italy because organised crime is not only a Sicilian problem.

5. Catania area

Addiopizzo works mostly in the Catania area. We want to shake indifference, to preserve memory, to stimulate civic pride and public morality.

For the project "Un muro contro la mafia" [A wall against the Mafia], we commissioned an artist to paint three large-scale murals in the city center of Catania.

The first mural consists of the Italian phrase "contro la mafia l'amore per la memoria l'impegno per l'azione". It means that in combating the Mafia, it is important to preserve memory and to take action to change our social fabric.

In order to achieve this, in the second mural we painted the Italian judge Giovanni Falcone, his wife Francesca Morvillo and police officers Rocco Dicillo, Antonio Montinaro and Vito Schifani.

They were killed in 1992 by the mafia using a half-ton of explosives that was placed in a culvert under the motorway between Palermo International Airport and the city.

Fifty-seven days later his colleague Paolo Borsellino died in another bombing in the city center of Palermo with five police

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officers: Agostino Catalano, Walter Cosina, Emanuela Loi, Vincenzo Li Muli and Claudio Traina. The third mural depicts them.

Every year, on the occasion of the celebrations for Catania's patron Saint Agatha, we display banners against *pizzo* and mafia in every part of the city. The committees that arrange these celebrations are suspected of being in collusion with the Mafia. Our intention is to draw the attention of the press and of the people to this issue.

Addiopizzo Catania - with the organization "Libera" - has an apartment that the Italian State confiscated from the Mafia. It is called "*Home of Beppe Montana, Ninni Cassarà e Roberto Antochia*": police men killed by the mafia. In January 2011 Addiopizzo redecorated it, and today it is a cultural center. Where yesterday there was the crime, today there is the law.

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