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## **BEYOND THE DARKNESS: EDILTECO IN THE 'UNSEEN PROJECT'**

We invited Elisa Stabellini, our HR Manager, to share her experience in the 'Invisible Project,' an initiative she joined through the Corporate Social Responsibility Association. Elisa spent a night with a group of volunteers offering food, water, blankets, and, most importantly, human warmth to the homeless.

Her story deeply moved us, and we want to share it with you. This seemingly distant reality is made up of individuals who once had normal lives—a family, a job—or who came here from another country.

You'll discover we have far more in common with them than we might imagine.

### **The Unseen Project**

The Unseen Project is a volunteer initiative involving Edilteco, the CSR Association, Porta Aperta Modena Street Unit, and the Modena Municipality Social Services network. The project aims to support the homeless—individuals who, due to unfortunate events, live on the streets, sleeping in makeshift shelters like sidewalks, benches, parks, cars, or abandoned buildings.

Through nighttime outreach, volunteers deliver essential items like food, water, and blankets, but more importantly, they offer genuine connection and attentive listening. The goal is to restore dignity to these individuals and, in some cases, help them find new opportunities for renewal.

### **Under the moonlight**

The activity took place at night, under the bright moonlight. Elisa and a group of volunteers visited areas in the city known to be frequented by the homeless: from Porta Aperta Square to the Direzionale 70 complex, the bus station, the Cittadella Church area, and many other corners of the city. They distributed essentials and provided emotional support, listening to the stories of those willing to share and offering help where possible.

Not everyone was ready to talk; some preferred to stay silent and decline assistance. Others found emotional relief in sharing their stories, which the volunteers listened to attentively. These interactions offered moments of comfort and connection to those living on the streets.

## **What we couldn't imagine**

In the city of Modena, about 300 people are homeless. Approximately 60 live entirely outdoors, while the rest find shelter in abandoned buildings, with acquaintances, or in makeshift dormitories. Their stories vary greatly: some ended up in this situation due to misfortune, others chose it, and many face difficulties due to a combination of factors.

It's essential not to generalize, as each individual has a unique and complex story.

Each person encountered during the project carries a distinctive journey. There's an Indian man in his fifties who overcame alcoholism and is searching for work but is hindered by a lack of documents. Lorenzo, originally from Mantova, has consciously chosen to stop working. Giuseppe, a divorced carpenter with a family to support, struggles to make ends meet for himself and his loved ones. Despite their hardships, these individuals maintain dignity and often value human dialogue more than the material goods they receive.

## **The power of human connection**

One day, you wake up homeless.

This situation doesn't occur suddenly—it creeps in gradually, almost unnoticed. Human connection is invaluable. Volunteers emphasize how dialogue and interpersonal relationships are essential for providing real support and inspiring the desire for change and rehabilitation.

Loneliness and a lack of resources amplify the risk of remaining trapped in this condition, but having a support network, even outside one's family, can make all the difference.

We are all vulnerable and could find ourselves in the same situation without realizing it. Often, we don't consider the consequences, and by the time we do, it's too late.

## **A shared vulnerability**

Edilteco's mission is rooted in the awareness of our shared vulnerability. This awareness inspires the company's commitment to building a more welcoming and inclusive community. Through the 'Invisible Project,' Edilteco demonstrates how corporate volunteering can go beyond solidarity, offering tangible contributions to improving the lives of the most vulnerable among us.