

In writing of the contribution Juan made nationally and internationally I am very conscious that many people may have longer or more direct experience. I can, therefore, only speak from what I know, have observed and experienced over a period of 30 years.

It was almost inevitable when Juan committed himself to work for CelS that the organisation would not be confined to Rome or to Italy. His life from childhood, and especially in the world of classical dance and of film, had always been international. In many ways he was a nomad who, when he was settled, was unsettled and who roamed the intellectual and physical worlds in search of ideas, inspiration and experience.

A first contribution which Juan made came directly from the earlier part of his life. The work of CelS was becoming focussed on drug dependence and how to give assistance to people with drug problems. There was limited experience in Italy and Juan started to search for ideas and information. Through the International Council on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA) he learnt of new approaches which had begun in the USA and were now being introduced into Europe. He travelled to The Netherlands and the USA to look at the ways in which people with drug problems were being treated and rehabilitated and was introduced to the concept based, or hierarchical therapeutic community. People from other European countries had earlier made this same journey. Most had been medical doctors, usually psychiatrists, who were used to the idea of medical treatments being universally applicable. The genius of Juan, gained from his experience in many countries, was to recognise that ideas and programmes had to be embedded in the history and culture of a country and a locality. They could not just be imported and expected to work. This is now a standard assumption and generally recognised, but in the early 1970s it was new and radical.

A second and equally important early contribution was his strong belief that before you start a new programme you had first to be firmly grounded in the basic techniques required for that programme. This again came from his experience in the theatre. In ballet only through knowledge of and competence in classical techniques was it possible to experiment with new forms and more avant-garde choreography. So in working with people with drug problems, the first step was not to provide a direct service, not to learn on the job led by staff on loan from a programme in another country, but to establish a training institute to build skills and competence. And this became a major contribution to the development of therapeutic community programmes not just in Italy, but also in Spain, Argentina and subsequently in many other countries. It is still likely that you will meet people today who fondly remember the training they undertook with CelS, inspired by Juan.

Wanting to draw on the ideas and experience of the leading figures in the field of dependencies the next move Juan made was one of the most daring. In 1978 CelS hosted the 3rd conference of what was then the Therapeutic Communities Section of ICAA, although it had not yet opened its first community, San Carlo. The conference not only brought the leading figures to Rome but also gave CelS an international profile and allowed it to continue drawing on experience from around the world for many years to come. With the opening of San Carlo, Juan continued to read widely drawing on the theories and practices of writers in psychology, sociology, philosophy as well as on his own experience and observations. As CelS developed its own philosophy – Progetto Uomo – drawing on the European traditions of solidarity and enlightened humanism, he felt the need to confront the two schools of therapeutic community. There was the American, hierarchical model which focused on treatment of dependencies and the European, democratic model which was focused on responding to mental health problems.

He proposed that, in 1984, CeIS should not only host the 8th conference of the World Federation of Therapeutic Communities but that there should be an Institute with a more restricted attendance. The Institute would bring together experience from the two different traditions of therapeutic community and seek to explore their approaches and relevance to each other. That Institute is still talked about in awe by those who were present and remains a major reference point in the development of therapeutic communities for addiction treatment. There have been efforts to replicate it but they have never managed the same impact. This may in part be because TCs are now firmly established and there are not the same opportunities for a radical challenge to practice and theory. But another major factor was the vision of Juan and his capacity to create the dynamics for challenge and change. That capacity was also reflected in the organisation of the conferences held in Rome. They were learning and networking occasions, but they were also theatre, staged and choreographed to allow CeIS and all the participants to get the greatest benefit possible. It was from these events that the lifelong commitment to CeIS of people such as Harold Bridger, Maxwell Jones, Don Ottenburg and George De Leon arose and it was to Juan, with his gift for languages and his enquiring mind that they turned.

Also at the national and international levels, Don Mario and Juan sought to create environments in which networking and learning could occur to assist in the development of services and in promoting effective treatment for problems of dependency. It was in this spirit that they were leading figures in the establishment of the Italian Federation of Therapeutic Communities, the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities and the World Federation of Therapeutic Communities. Juan was always very clear that CeIS should not manage services outside the territory of Rome, but was also clear that sharing and learning from others was essential to maintain a dynamic and committed therapeutic treatment programme.

In 1985, guided by Juan, CeIS gained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This status was important for CeIS to work with UN bodies, in particular the drug control agencies in Vienna. CeIS became and still is an active member of the Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs, currently providing the Chair. It also developed links with the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) and through this was able to initiate work in Bolivia as well as support the development of organisations in many other countries. The developments in Bolivia offer a good example of the approach taken by Juan and his enormous influence. He recognised that social development was as essential to impact drug cultivation as it was to impact on drug consumption. The work in Bolivia was therefore focused on a range of projects designed to develop infrastructure, improve social and health conditions and respect the cultural and historical heritage of the people. This approach is now standard under the broad label of alternative development. In the 1980s there was no such comprehensive approach and crop substitution was the theme, without the markets or the means of transport to make other crops a viable source of income. Within the UN drug control agencies alternative development and ideas about how this might be achieved were initiated to a large extent by the inspiration of the ideas coming from Juan and the enthusiastic support of the then head of UNFDAC, Giuseppe Di Gennaro.

Subsequently CeIS has been engaged in innumerable national and international activities and has been a point of reference for individuals and organisations around the world. It is difficult to attend a conference or meeting almost anywhere in the world where Juan could not offer contacts or where someone would not ask after him and recall meetings with him which had enthused them with new ideas or opportunities. He was and he made CeIS an intellectual explorer always seeking for the best, always offering ideas but never

possessive or concerned by ownership – at least for himself. It was this quality perhaps, above all else, which made him so respected and so influential in a world of competing egos. He never sought the limelight but it was drawn to him by his personality, his intellect and his openness to what might be possible. And it is because of this that so many people around the world now mourn the loss of a mentor and friend.