

Tallinn University of Technology / Estonian Academy of Arts

Design & Technology Futures Masters Programme

THE POWER OF HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN IN  
SENSITIVE CONTEXTS: A HOLISTIC SYSTEM TO  
SUPPORT FEMALE VISITORS TO FAMILY MEMBERS IN  
ARGENTINIAN MALE PRISONS

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INIMKESKSE DISAINI JÕUD TUNDLIKES KONTEKSTIDES:  
TERVIKLIK TUGISÜSTEEM ARGENTIINA MEESTE VANGLATES  
PERELIIKMEID KÜLASTAVATELE NAISTELE

MASTER THESIS

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## **Inimkeskse disaini jõud tundlikes kontekstides: terviklik tugisüsteem Argentiina meestevanglates pere liikmeid külastavatele naistele**

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## **Thesis Task**

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### **Thesis topic:**

English: The Power of Human Centered Design in sensitive contexts: holistic system to support female visitors to family members in Argentinian Male Prisons

Estonian: Inimkeskse disaini jõud tundlikes kontekstides: terviklik tugisüsteem Argentiina meestevanglates pereliikmeid külastavatele naistele

### **Thesis main objectives:**

- 1.** To understand, synthesize and analyze the visiting system in Argentinean federal men's prisons focusing on the journey of female visitors.
- 2.** To explore the possibilities of intervention with the objective of providing a holistic support system for female visitors in Argentine federal men's prisons.
- 3.** Design a solution to provide holistic support to female visitors, their children and family members in the different phases of the journey inside and outside the prisons.

### **Thesis tasks and time schedule:**

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# Abstract

In this thesis, I have researched the visiting system in Argentinian male federal prisons, to make a holistic design proposal to improve the visitor journey. The case-study has been conducted on the example of the Ezeiza federal prison. The female family visitors who participated in this work belong to an NGO, Association of Relatives of Detainees (ACIFaD)<sup>2</sup>. The Argentinian Federal Penitentiary Service accepted to be interviewed and to show their facilities in the areas of administration and security control, for me to observe and analyse the service and the system of visits.

In the current system of visits, there are two perspectives: on the one hand, how the prison administration views it and on the other, how the journey works for the mostly female visitors. Women are the majority of the visitors received by the prisoners in the male prisons. The analysis of the visitor journey drags in other themes that have to do with the social meaning of punishment, and the *taboo* of being a relative of a prisoner. The prisoners' families often suffer the security controls in prison but not only that. The social condemnation that comes with having a family member in detention might even be a heavier burden.

In this work, I try to understand what the feelings and emotions of the female visitors are regarding the journey in and out of prison, and everything that comes along with having a family member in prison. How they organize their days around the visit, and how they support their families from the outside, often being time constrained because of these double obligations. As they themselves said in an interview, they support their family inside the prison and outside the prison.

In order to achieve this, I focused on the methodologies of human centered design and social design, with anthropological approaches in order to carry out both fieldwork, to help sustain the design proposal that emerged in the co-design session but also in the observation sessions, and interviews that we had during the research period of three months. As a result, a holistic system was proposed that is prepared to support and assist female visitors in their journeys.

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<sup>2</sup> Civil Association of Relatives of Detainees (Asociación Civil de Familiares de Detenidos) is a NGO aimed at working with relatives of detainees.

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# 1 Introduction

During my BA in Social Anthropology, I wanted to look for ways in which anthropology could merge with other disciplines to create real-life and social applications that could benefit people. Some years before applying for the MA in Design & Futures Technologies at TalTech, in 2018, my family and I went through a difficult time. The word 'prison' entered our family life: my father was imprisoned for political reasons. An ultra-right-wing government took over and imprisoned the community and social leaders who were vocally in their way. This included indigenous leaders, leftist leaders, and politicians from the previous government. It was a difficult time for our family and left an emotional scar in me.

At that time, it was our turn as a family to become visitors to the federal prisons, as we had never set foot in one before. We didn't understand what it was like to enter one - as you will see, the same happens with the participants that I interviewed for this thesis. The first time I went, I was impressed by the number of women queuing to enter, at 40 degrees heat, with their children directly in the sun, without a water tap, toilets, or shade. It was a shocking experience, and I felt the urge to talk about it.

I couldn't understand how this visiting system worked in such an inhuman way. Injustice was somehow exposed in this context. Vanina Ferreccio describes in her book "The Long Shadow of Prison. An ethnography of the extended effects of incarceration" how prison takes hold of women who must visit them. The long shadow of the prison walls does not only affect the prisoner's sentence, but also his or her family. It shouldn't be like that: a person that is not convicted of a crime should not be punished. But, as you will see, the protagonists of my thesis, the female visitors who visit their male relatives in prisons, also have to bear a sort of punishment. I'd like to make it a bit lighter for women.

In this thesis, I wanted to work on the whole process of a prison visit, which takes up a lot of time and energy all during the week, not only during the admission process. Although the admission process has improved a lot in the last few years, I was surprised to learn there is still a long way to go. And thanks to the cooperation of the

Federal Penitentiary Service and the Association of Relatives of Detainees (ACIFaD), I was able to observe, understand and rethink possible solutions to the weak points of the visiting process. Or, I should say: *we were able to*, because as you will see, women are active participants in the design process.

This topic and this kind of approach that combines anthropology and design is, of course, personal for me. But it has a context in design discipline as well: in the last years, the discipline of *social design* has developed. The approach has its roots in the Bauhaus movement and the Ulm school in the 1920ies till the 1950ies, continued in product and industrial design (Dreyfuss 1955; Papanek 1970; Margolin 2002). One of its most famous contemporary and commercial proponents, the world-famous design agency IDEO, has stood against the idea that ‘designers’ should only be “a group of privileged people”, who “brought shiny objects, big ideas, new ways of living” which later are “discarded in the technology graveyard”. According to IDEO, design can do more than discardable products, it can “support, facilitate and empower culture”. This is what social design is about: “creation with the community, facilitating the conversation and meaning through contribution of ideas, beliefs and rituals”, “promoting dignity and respect” to make its members' life better. Social design considers “cultural traditions” and “cultural beliefs” because of the differences between them - a design that works in one culture might not even have a place in another (IDEO 2015). In short, this is what I’m aiming to do with a group of often under-privileged women who have not received enough support - and often receive the opposite of support - from the Argentinian society.

I investigate and address the process of visits made by women, often with children, in Argentinian federal male prisons. These women may be the wives, mothers, sisters, girlfriends, aunts, grandmothers of the detainees. The aim of my work is to understand what their journey is like, at what point it begins, what emotions run through them during these visits, and how to make their visiting journeys better. These women are a lifelink to the prisoner, they provide him with home-made food, clean laundry, and other necessities - something that male visitors, who are also fewer and less regular - generally just don’t do. As we will see, they make an enormous unpaid contribution to the well-being of their relatives in prison, while suffering anxiety and stress in the process.

This thesis maps the women visitor's journey by detailing their activities and challenges before, during and after the visits through their own accounts. Also, not less importantly, the view of the Federal Penitentiary Service will be added to the mix. These accounts will then be included in the design process, in which I will use co-design sessions where participants will be encouraged to develop their ideas for possible and feasible solutions. I would like to propose, or rethink together with the women visiting prisons and the guards of the penitentiary system, a new way to organize the visiting system and the protocol to be followed, to provide a more supportive environment for them during their visits to prisons.

However, it is important to stress that any changes in the protocols of visits can only be made by the Federal Penitentiary Service. Argentinian federal prisons follow protocols, each one dedicated to a specific issue. If the prisoner must go to the doctor, there is a protocol, if the prisoner wants to work, there is another protocol, and so on.

In the case of visitors, who are mostly women with children, there is a protocol that comes from the Federal Penitentiary Service and must be complied with, as exactly as possible, by all the prisons in the national penitentiary system. Women and children visiting prisons must follow the visiting protocol because it is vital to preserve the safety and integrity of visitors, workers and persons deprived of their liberty. This is something that this design thesis must take into account in its proposed solution.

That a prison protocol is there to make it safe is almost self-explanatory. But how can the protocol be designed in such a way that women and especially mothers do not respond to the question "what is it like to visit a prison?" with "it's a trauma"? To have a very close person in prison is traumatic enough - how can we make the security protocol less traumatic? How can we provide the visiting families with an experience that is at least satisfactory, respectful of their time and their mental integrity?

I have already stated that the protocol is something general and compulsory to all prisons. In anthropological research, it was impossible to work on all the prisons in Argentina. So, I took the example of Ezeiza's Federal Penitentiary. It is important for me as a researcher to clarify that this was where my father was held.

So, in line with the social design paradigm, I will work with the people involved to propose a design solution that has three addressees: two direct ones and an indirect one. Firstly, this thesis aims to provide a better visitor journey and a holistic support system for the women. Secondly, this thesis aims to provide help to the Federal Penitentiary Service to make their visitor service better, whilst maintaining a required level of security. Thirdly, this thesis aims to raise the topic of the visiting women in Argentinian society. The third task is the vaguest and the most ambitious because it involves working with quite widespread prejudice. But opening the discussion from a new point of view is the only way to gradually reframe the role of a woman whose male relative is in prison. I think taking an anthropological and a design view on the topic are actually very good ones because they raise the question from a new, unexpected angle.

Again, it is important to acknowledge that whether they be mothers, wives, daughters, grandmothers, sisters, or aunts, *they* are innocent of any crime their family member may have committed. As they described, “this is not usually seen as such in society, and the social condemnation is not only for the prisoner, but it also extends to their family members”. It does not seem to be a subject that awakens interest or empathy in society and, if talked about, the subject matter might be treated with superiority and abuse. Such cultural traits are not easy to change.

When, in the Argentinian society, the discussion on improving the prison system is brought to the table, it is not seen as a priority, or perhaps it's even seen as something not to be improved at all. This happens not only because it is believed that punishment is necessary and must be mean but also because once the prisoner is in prison, he ceases to be society's "problem". The prison system is the invisible function of a society. Prison is almost outside the borders of society. It makes everyone involved a bit dirty.

Mauricio Manchado, researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council in Argentina (CONICET), works on the symbolic order, discussing the meanings that prison constructs, "which do not arise capriciously, but rather the social order as a whole has been creating a discourse on the prison population that maintains that they are 'the surplus, they will not be able to do more than this, they will be thieves

all their lives, the social waste, and prison reinforces this". This kind of discourse might appear in many countries, but it is so particularly vehement in Argentina that it is both extremely unequal and widely perceived in society itself as dangerous. These perceptions, whether close to truth or not, can make up an entire thesis on, for example, critical discourse analysis. Here, we must conclude that this kind of discourse is something that has influenced my participants' everyday life to a very large degree.

After my personal experience, I always thought about the women relatives of prisoners, especially the mothers with young children: how brave, loyal, and hardworking they are, supporting two families, the one inside and the one outside, as they themselves describe it. This is something that might be hard to understand from afar. I guess some readers will think throughout the thesis *why do the women even bother?* I, from my personal experience, can answer: there is no way we, my family and I, could have left our father alone inside. It was a great comfort to see him every weekend, it made us happy to see him happy for home-made food, but, most importantly: it was so necessary for my father to see us, his family, a bit of the outside world, something different from his everyday life in a confined space. It is important for family ties and for the mental health of all the family.

Now, as a design student, I feel I have the chance to write about it and influence something so meaningful and important to me. I told the women I needed them to do it together with me: to co-design a proposal for a new protocol for prison visitation at the federal level. A proposal that would address a different format, respecting security codes, but also providing a more satisfying experience for women and children who go to prisons several times a week. As for me, the women who have participated in this research, represented the patient wisdom of humility, the best kind of wisdom. I knew that I had chosen the right topic.

## 2 Framework and the ethnographic method

### 2.1 Ethnographic fieldwork

#### I.II Meeting with the participants

The research consisted of female relatives of detainees in different Argentine federal prisons. My first contact with the Association of Relatives of Detainees (ACIFaD), an NGO that unites the women (and some men) in this situation, was through Patricia Tevez. At first, I contacted her for an interview, and she invited me to participate in the meetings that are held every Tuesday, both face-to-face and online. Depending on the week they sometimes take place face to face and sometimes online, so that relatives of detainees from other parts of the country can participate as well. At the ACIFaD the relatives meet - although most of them are women, just a few times I saw men participating - to talk about their situation, how they feel, should they need advice with the practicalities, or legal advice, etc. They attend mainly to tell each other what they are going through, to encourage one another and to share with other women the feeling that no one who is not in their place could understand.

There, I met the 5 participants of this thesis, whom I also interviewed and asked to join in the co-design sessions. They invited me to partake in their meetings and allowed me to take notes, observe and try to translate the situation they immerse themselves in every week to spend time with their loved ones.

#### II.III Semi-structured Interviews

This research consisted of 10 semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with a question guide that was used as a basis, leaving room to open other questions, or delve deeper into topics that the participants felt the desire to talk about. Although the questionnaire was the same, I altered the order of the questions from interview to interview and, in some cases, the wording. In addition, this flexibility allowed the interviewees to spark new questions because their stories were different from each other. The interviews were conducted in Spanish. This method, despite its flexibility,

allows to collect reliable and comparable qualitative data. Thus, it allowed me to ask spontaneous questions by following relevant issues raised by the participants.

## I.IV Participant observation

Participant observation is the most natural and the most challenging of the qualitative data collection methods. In this case, it helped me to connect my participants' experiences through immersion and participation.

The fieldwork took place between February 2023 and April 2023. It was three months in total. It took place at the Ezeiza prison in Buenos Aires Province and in the ACIFaD in the City of Buenos Aires where there were different weekly discussions on topics related to prison visits. Also, the association helps them to find legal support in procedures that are difficult for them to understand by themselves. I was part of the meetings, carrying out my participant observation.

With this research methodology, it is possible to discover and analyse aspects of social environments that use rules and norms that participants may experience without speaking explicitly, that operate at automatic or subconscious levels, or that are even officially outside the boundaries of the discussion (Guest et al., 2013: 75). During these months I had to neutralize my personal understanding to carry out a faithful translation of what I observed, heard, and saw.

## 2.2 Research question and hypothesis

I started off with a fairly simple design research question: "What is the female visitor's journey in Argentinian prisons like, what are the pain points and how can I make them better, using the social design method?"

I deepened my understanding of these women's feelings at the meetings to which I was invited to participate in ACIFaD and refocused on what weighs on them, what goes through their hearts and minds; how they live the experience of visiting a loved one in prison, with the bureaucracy or with the security methods used by the prison, plus the

social condemnation that this represents. I will develop these themes later in this paper.

During the fieldwork, I had to reformulate the research question as the project progressed. I started with wanting to understand what the experience was like, the user journey of the women visitors during the security checkpoint entrance, then I understood how they felt and thought of rephrasing the question. My goal started with improving the security system to enter the visit, and then I broadened the research question to not just about the visit day. My original research question could accommodate a week-long visitor's journey, so for the duration, I wouldn't have had to change it.

But then there is the larger cultural context that influences the women even more than single parts of the visitor's journey. This is why part of the research question is to understand the taboo around this topic. My main project is to design a support structure that assists women, both in their experience inside the prison and outside of it.

Based on this, my updated research question is: "What kind of difficulties does the societal condemnation of everything connected to prison present to women who have relatives in prisons, what is the female visitor's journey in Argentinian prisons like, and how can I contribute to improving the social context and make the journey better, using the social design method?"

The research question was defined during the process and adapted to what emerged during the fieldwork. It is no longer only about the journey in prison, the traumatic experience that it represents and the time that it demands. It is also about the isolation they feel as time goes by, how to deal with their children's situation when they are young and as they grow up. It aims to take a holistic view of their situation and help them in it.

### 2.3. Contextualizing the federal penitentiary system in Argentina

In order to understand the context, I am working with, I will introduce the prison system in Argentina. Everything written here is based on fieldwork, observations,

interviews, readings, co-design workshops, surveys, and discussions with the participants of this thesis.

Federal prisons in Argentina are under the general management of the Federal Penitentiary Service. It is a centralized state office under the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights that manages all the assets and implements rules and reforms that derive from the law and from policymaking at the ministerial level. Decisions and rules are generally uniform to all prisons and are implemented in a clear subordinate manner. There are also provincial prisons that have been created by the local administration but, to keep the focus and because I didn't have much contact with people experienced with the provincial prisons, they are left out of this research.

Federal prisons in Argentina are divided into four fundamental areas: 1) the security area, 2) the administrative area and 3) the professional area. In both the security and the administration area there are the workers of the federal penitentiary system who are divided according to their tasks within the scheme. In the professional area there are working teams of different professions, such as social workers, psychologists, lawyers, etc. Then there is the 4) health area where all the doctors, nurses, health specialists, etc. are working. They have clear divisions and clear protocols on how work should be conducted in each area.



*Figure 1. National Federal Argentinian Prison of Ezeiza. No author*

The Ezeiza prison complex consists of 6 units which are subdivided into sectors and sub-sectors. And an entrance unit to the penitentiary. Each unit can hold

approximately 348 inmates, who are divided into shared cells. The total number of prisoners is estimated at 1945 (*Complejo Penitenciario Federal I*, 2023).

People deprived of liberty are divided in two: those who have been sentenced, and those who are under pre-trial detention, which means that they have not yet received a sentence and are awaiting trial.

When a prisoner enters the penitentiary system, they enter as processed prisoners who are within the judicial framework and who have not yet received a sentence. Social workers have the complementary function of analysing, observing and accrediting the visits received by the prisoners. Only the prisoner can authorize who enters and who does not, according to their preferences. This means that a prisoner, if he wants to, can also ban his family from visiting.

There is a head of visits at a national level, and then each prison has a head of visits, who applies the national protocol at a local level and is responsible for security during visits. This means that the prison's head of visits can adjust the national visiting protocol and reconfigure it according to the physical space and security requirements.

The prison system has been quite active in developing a better visiting service in recent years. In 2017, several changes were implemented within the visiting system in Ezeiza prison. The former Federal Director of Visits, Alejandro Flores, told me that these changes were intentional, thought through and suggested by the social workers inside the prison. The prison personnel thought about how it could work, together with social workers, security workers and management on board to understand the need for this change but also to shape it together. There is an element of design method in this.

In the process, they understood that the visits positively affected the prisoners. This is a fundamental insight that became the basis of all change - that the prisoners need interaction with the outside world not only for their psychological well-being but also for having the motivation and possibilities to be integrated into society after serving their sentence. In short, visits help to re-socialize the prisoner which is the end goal. With this insight in mind, the prison staff-initiated modifications that were adapted to the prisoners' needs, and tried to take into account the different situations of the visitors, most of whom are employed and have to work during business days.

One of the most significant modifications they arrived at is that visits can be mixed. There is no longer a separate day for women and men. Now, they can enter together, e.g., a woman can enter with her sons, or mother and father can enter together. This measure was to help the insertion of the prisoner in society, a way to bring them closer to their family and the smell of home. Over time it happens that the prisoners incorporate new values and codes inside the prison that move away from their families and their previous values, so this was a way to reverse that situation positively. This change was also good for the family.

At the same time there is a list of what can and cannot be taken inside the prison. This is modified every month, prohibiting the entry of products that have compromised security of the prisoners and the workers inside the prison, according to the head of visits in the prison. This creates issues for the female visitors, and I deal with this issue in my design proposal.

## 3 Cultural context

Good design must take into account the cultural differences, even the minuscule ones. Something that might be useful in Estonian or Norwegian context, might not serve at all in South America. The cultural context sets the scene, it helps to define the challenges and any proposal must take it into account to the maximum extent possible. The difference of cultural contexts is why design needs anthropological research; it also explains the need to tailor design solutions specifically for every context. This chapter introduces the Argentinian cultural context in which the women who visit prisons must live. It explains why so much of the burden falls on them and its cultural motivations; it also opens the panorama of *taboo* that surrounds prison and is often the heaviest burden.

### 3.1 Women, the breadwinners in and out of prison

The women I spoke to show incredible loyalty and resilience adjusting and carrying on with unpaid care work they are undertaking. They deal with the prison bureaucracy, they bring home-made food, clean laundry, and other essentials to the prisoner, always thinking about the wellbeing of the loved one who is in prison. Latin American women are under a heavy care burden already in a more conventional family setting, because of a deep-rooted patriarchy (further explained in the next subchapter), but based on what I've seen, the prisoners' female family members have it two times harder.

The sentence is felt both by the convicted person and the family. In a way, the prison enters the prisoner's home, and the whole family lives in its shadow. Said by the women themselves in the meetings, this work of supporting the prisoner becomes a heavy burden where many emotions float around and come to the surface. They have described it as having to support two families, the one outside and the one inside: the women are the intermediaries for the prisoner between the world inside the prison and the world outside. In supporting the prisoner, they are the ones who reassure, the ones who care, the ones who love.

They must deal with situations that exceed them. For example - and this is especially challenging for poorer women who cannot pay for legal services and who have a limited access to state-paid councils -, they have to understand and deal with prison bureaucracy. This puts women, more often than not with limited education on judicial matters, in places where they have to become their own researchers, to understand how legal and bureaucratic language works. To stay afloat in this totally new context, they have to learn a lot of new skills and they have to find incredible strength to live this kind of life.

Andrea Casamento, founder of ACIFaD, told at TEDxRiodeLaPlata that she went from being one of the people who called for security and an iron fist against crime, to having her son arrested because the police mistook him for a boy who had stolen three empanadas<sup>3</sup>. She faced loneliness, and her son's incarceration in a very helpless situation. She had to move into her mother's house and rent out her own house to earn an income, because having a family member in detention meant having a full time - and unpaid - job. In Figure 2, there is a female visitor carrying her bag with goods to the visit admission area in Ezeiza prison.

Andrea also has two other children who were very young when this happened. She talks about how she avoided telling them that her brother was in prison, until a friend suggested that she told them the truth because the children thought their brother was dead. She finally decided to tell them, with much regret, asking them please not to say anything at school, since she had been rejected by adults for this matter, and the other children's mothers would not want their children to play with them. The stigma attached to the family, and especially to the female breadwinners, is very cruel. And they don't have the support they need.

It is what many of the women I spoke to have to live with on a daily basis. They are the ones who must "support two families, the one inside and the one outside". They start with confusion to finally become superheroines who must deal with a situation that is condemned by society, "and at the same time receive judicial and police mistreatment

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<sup>3</sup> Empanada is an inexpensive Argentinian street food.

every time we enter a prison”. This befalls them, even though they have done nothing criminal to deserve it.



*Figure 2. A family visitor walking to the security control area. Photo by Pedro Lázaro Fernández*

Unimaginably, some of my female interviewees do all this - preparing their visits for days and awaiting their entrance to the prison for hours - twice a week, knowing that this will never end. They are the women of prisoners serving life sentences.

### 3.2 Why are women the caretakers? Cultural background

The Argentinian anthropologist Rita Segato, in her book "Against Pedagogies of Cruelty", discusses how the construction of patriarchy has taken place in Latin America. The ways in which women have historically been functional to capital by working at home, supporting, caring, cooking, cleaning, and exercising the unique multifaceted roles in which women have been culturally placed during post-colonialism. It refers to patriarchy as a primordial political system, not a cultural one. The first form of inequality, and of usurpation, power and prestige, of authority and sovereignty, and which has for a long time been called, according to Segato, the prehistoric patriarchy of humanity. Moreover, she claims that we are going through a process of paradigm shift.

In one of the interviews, a participant asked me: "Have you been to the women's prison?" Her point was that no one goes to visit female prisoners, except for other women. Where are the fathers, brothers, grandfathers? That same question came up when I went to the prison for the first time, where are the men? Surely, they must appear according to the men's scheduled visiting hours (men-only visiting hours still exist alongside the new family visiting hours) - but when I went at that hour, there were very few men there, and those carrying 20kg bags of produce were almost nonexistent. The majority in the meetings of ACIFaD are mothers and wives; and my hypothesis is that sisters and daughters come instead if there are no mothers and wives.

The role of caretaking is so structurally assigned to women in Latin American cultures that it is difficult to step back and stand elsewhere. In many families, men don't take part in any family duties, except for, maybe, construction work and car repairs. But for everything else, the women are responsible.

Another phenomenon that patriarchy brings is the marginalization and shaming of women. I will not open the whole context but bring just an example that is important in the context of this research. Even among women there are comments about a prisoner's mother suffering more than a wife. Within patriarchy, there is a hierarchy of pain: a son in prison is not the same as a husband in prison. Mothers have to feel that they have failed, that they educated their sons badly, that it is their fault that their son is in prison. Somehow, the same moral burden is not put on fathers... At the same time, wives are to blame but less than mothers.

It could be said that wives do not feel that patriarchal moral burden of feeling that they have failed, but rather how they handle the situation of their children - who are the ones who have to live with the context of a father who is not present on a daily basis-, adds to the social burden. They have to protect their children from being marginalized, by other children or their parents, because their father is in prison.

### 3.3 Societal symbolism: an emotional entrance, *taboo*, and isolation

When I contacted ACIFaD, they invited me to participate in their hybrid weekly meetings, every Tuesday: sometimes in a historic building in the center of Buenos Aires, sometimes via Zoom.

With Patricia Tevez, who was my main contact with the association, we entered the building and greeted everyone. I told them about what I wanted to work on, how to improve the weak points (or “pain points” in design language) in the journey of their visits. I said that I wanted to do it together with them and that my idea was to conduct interviews and understand how the current visiting journey in the federal prison of Ezeiza works, to give a concise example.

The women were incredibly happy that somebody - *anybody!* - from outside their group should take up their problem. I could see that they were not at all expecting it. They helped me a lot during the research and I’m deeply grateful to them.

One of the meetings that ACIFaD invited me to participate in was just before March 8th, International Women's Day. So, the women discussed the patriarchy. In Argentina, women are confined to certain roles. But also, the cultural context has been changing and there has been quite a general demand for equal rights, including discussions about inequality, femicide, and violence against women. This change in context should then also take place here, where women have to take on an extremely heavy and stressful task, while the male relatives, in a very large majority of cases, do not feel and assume the same responsibility. The female visitors’ rights are a part of this fight for equality. But these kinds of things tend to change slowly, over a large period of time.

At the first meeting I participated in, the women described their initial feelings when they find themselves in a situation where someone close to them is imprisoned: they don't understand what is happening. They feel lost, in deep confusion, trying to understand what is going on and what is going to happen. The women's descriptions

shared the concern and vulnerability about how their family members will be treated inside the prison. They are worried that the prison will ruin their loved one, they feel desolate about the situation. They worry about what he will eat, how he will sleep, how he will be treated, who he will be inside with. Suddenly, a new realm enters their life that will come to dominate everything they do.

All this is set against the backdrop of different family contexts. For example, a mother with two children who is left alone to deal with them because their father is in prison - she now has to deal with this completely new situation. Then there is the mother whose son is in prison for a crime he committed, and she looks after him from outside the prison. And a wife whose husband is in prison, and she is the one who supports him and their family. Another woman has been taking care of her husband who has been deprived of his freedom since she was very young. And then there is the confused daughter who does not understand what to do or how to relate to her father in prison. Every story is unique, yet they share the same thread: it is hard emotionally, as well as practically, on the women.

Among the stories, what kept recurring was the thought that it would never touch them - the curse of prison entering their lives. They go round and round the thought of why this misfortune has happened to them. The imprisonment of a loved one comes as a total surprise to many of the women. They feel guilty about it.

The weight of social condemnation in part makes the person take it that way. It is too painful. At the same time, it isolates the person who has to go through it. They must come to terms with difficult identity questions because up until a minute before receiving the news, many of them used to think like the rest of society. They, too, had been sure that criminals go to jail and that they have to pay for what they have done and that's it.

Now, after this painful transformation, the situation is different: many of them have internalized the issue of punishment, of prisons as we know them, of how to help a detainee to be inserted into society. They have had to reinvent themselves and their beliefs. They become the altruistic helpers of their male relatives inside prison, trying to hold up family ties and an illusion of normality. For a person who hasn't gone through it, it is difficult to understand.

During the interviews, when I asked about their first experience of being a visitor in an Argentinian federal prison, the answers of the women I interviewed repeated, as it can be seen in the Figure 3 there are many layers of emotions involved: "it was traumatic, a shock, horrible", "it was sad, I felt a deep uneasiness for finding myself in a very different world". Also, they had no idea what they had to do. They had no idea how to move, where to go, what to wear, the food they brought couldn't go in, and they didn't understand why some food was allowed and some was not, or why they couldn't wear any black clothes. These concrete prohibitions or dress codes might be different according to the prison. Over time, they come to understand the system through experience, talking to the other women and reading information from the prison administration on the prison information board.

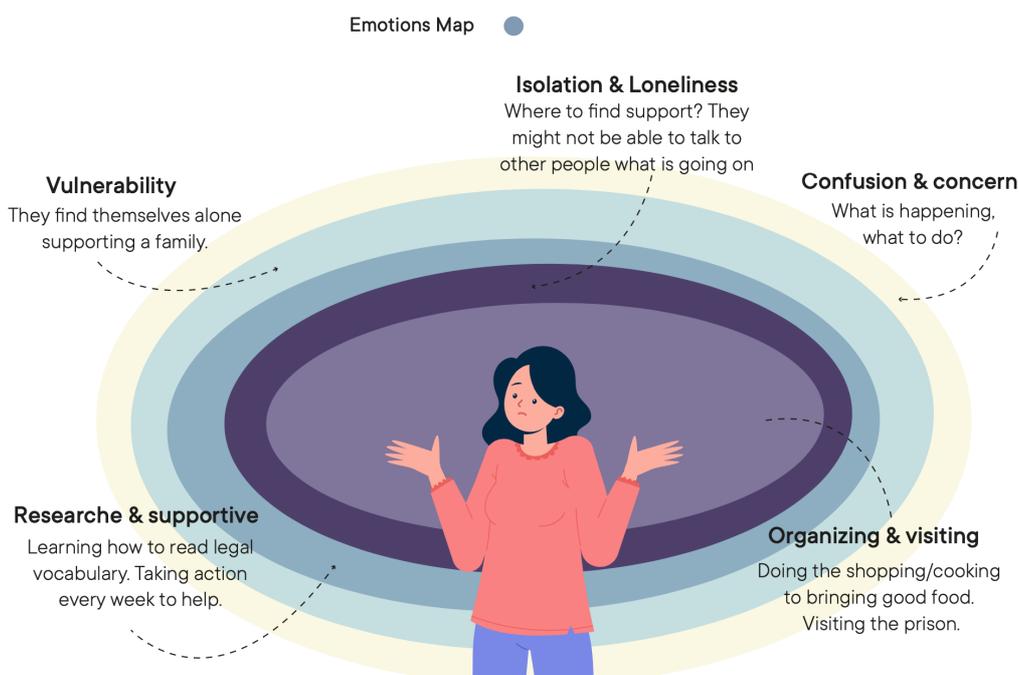


Figure 3. Emotions map of female visitors

Take, as an example, the story that emerged from one of the interviews I conducted for this thesis. Patricia Tévez is the mother of two adult children, one was born before her husband was imprisoned and the other already while he was in prison. She told me that she was 17 years old when she first went to prison to visit her partner. When I asked her what that experience had been like, she replied: "I was scared, very scared, I didn't know what I was doing or where I was, I hadn't even taken my ID card, I didn't

know what to do, I didn't understand, and other women explained to me what I had to do". Feeling lost in the face of a new and terrifying situation is something that is repeated with each new story: we will come back to this as we trace the user's journey.

The women have to become very good at bearing the burden they were involuntarily given. As I describe in figure 3, there are many roles that women face that bring along a succession of emotions and feelings. Quite a lot of them evolve around shame: by having a son or a husband in prison, also the women feel "ashamed".

One of the most poignant moments during the research was with a middle-class mother and housewife who has her son in detention. At first, she felt a lot of guilt as a mother, about how society looked at her, with her son being a convicted criminal. As she described "we were middle class, we had the basics to survive, and suddenly I began to see that my son was leading a life that we couldn't sustain". It would be easy to judge that she didn't quite have the courage to ask where all this money was coming from. But judging is the easiest way to distance oneself and close the issue without a thought given to how to improve it. She told me what it was like as a mother to visit her son, and what it was like for the family, "it's hard to explain in words but it really is a tragedy when it happens to you". As I said in the introduction, prison intrudes your home and your daily life. She was distraught about the situation, and as she was telling me about her week, and how it was the day she was going to visit her son, she looked at me and said that her son made a mistake, she knows he is a good boy, and he has a good heart.

I have stressed that my interviewee was middle-class because of a very clear border between middle-class and the poor. The ones who are in prison and who are usually perceived as criminals by the same middle-class are the poor. In this case, the middle-class woman found herself in a world that was so utterly unexpected to her and did not reflect her class expectations for life.

It might be because she - and all the other women I interviewed, plus the thousands I haven't - have entered *taboo* territory. Behavioural patterns are often referred to as norms and taboos that have a guiding effect on our life. The way we behave, dress, eat, drive, and even our sex life, are governed by norms and taboos and social codes that

are built into the foundations of the social structures to which we belong. (Hoffman et al., 2008) And on that basis we determine the pyramid of values to which we relate.

The difference between taboos and social norms is the interpretation we make of them, and how society deals with them. Certain norms are so strong that they are considered sacred. Whenever an individual's behaviour deviates from a norm, this act has repercussions for other members of society, who then punish the deviant individual. (Hoffman et al., 2008) In our case, also the mother, the wife or the daughter are considered deviant individuals, touched by the taboo, and they might be cut out of their normal social circles.

Also, this is how the prison taboo tends to limit the in-depth social discussion of the prison apparatus, beyond the myths that may circulate in society about what happens inside the prison, which are partly created by fiction and feed a thought that is sometimes far from reality. This taboo complicates the life of these women infinitely, making the life of these women harder to a great degree: even if the visits protocol is the most human-centered possible, it will not take away the awkwardness and the pain of being shut out of large parts of life because of their association to a prisoner.

Over time, the feeling of isolation creeps in on the women because what happens to them is not widely talked about in society. Social discourse, when it does address these situations, tends to contaminate not only the prisoners but also their families. The *taboo* factor that comes with having a family member in detention, the prejudice of the people around you, the feeling of being singled out by society, plays a role. The social condemnation of prison and prisoners is so great that the weight they have to carry inside is even greater.

In more than one case, the interviewees told me that they cannot talk to other family members about this, that they have even hidden the fact of imprisonment from their closest relatives or have broken off relations because of this “issue”. Some of them have broken off relations with relatives, some have tried saving themselves saying that he has gone on a trip for a while. But in some cases, the relatives and friends get to know the truth and stop talking to them. Also, relations might be cut off because of different

opinions about it - basically, because of family fights. This leaves the women and their children isolated.

Isolation brings loneliness. The women are left alone both dealing with the situation of their loved one in prison and dealing with the part outside of the prison.

At a meeting, a mother divorced from her son's father came to ask for help and guidance. In her story, she said that she doesn't know how to tell her son that his father is in jail. But the son does ask where his father is, where he is, why he is not coming. The father was detained at the International Airport. Although she had visited a psychologist asking for help with this situation, she was not convinced by his advice. It was then that she decided to go to ACIFaD to understand from the perspective of women who had gone through this and to orient herself as to what to do and how to handle this situation that affects her as an ex-wife, and mother of a prisoner's child. Among all the advice and suggestions, it came out that all the mothers had been through the same thing, and that most of them hid from their children for as long as they could that their fathers were in prison.

The stories the women tell their children to protect them are as imaginative as fiction. One woman described that her son had been going to prison since he was a baby, imagining that they were going to visit his father in the factory where he worked. That was until one day that her child began to read, began to ask questions, and began to understand. But he also realized that the lie was to protect him, as she said, from social condemnation, from mistreatment and bullying at school. So, he carried on with the factory-story, although already knowing that it was not true. But this kind of double life comes with a price on the mother's, not to mention the son's, mental health.

Another woman explained that her older, 26-year-old son has been in prison for 2 years, and that her other son, by then 7, was very young when his brother was arrested. At first the mother quoted Roberto Benigni's movie "Life is Beautiful" to describe how she handled the situation with her son, telling him that they went to his brother's house, that he lived with a lot of other people, that the policemen were doormen to protect them. With sadness, she described that they as brothers wanted to see each other, but it was complicated because the 7-year old cried inconsolably every time the

visit was over. This, in turn, caused the imprisoned brother distress to such an extent that he asked his mother to not take the little brother to prison anymore. Even though the mother agreed and did not want to take him anymore - to save everybody of pain - , her younger son begged her to still take him because he wanted to see his brother. This meant that they had to learn to understand that pain, that the moment of joy of seeing his brother ended with a moment of pain. They hope that one day they will be able to spend more time together.

In ACIFaD meetings, the women express gratitude for the support they receive in this space, on issues such as the prison entering their family space, on how women have to support two families, the one inside the prison and the one outside. They bring out the lack of psychological assistance for themselves and their children, who do not know how to deal socially with the situation of having a loved and close relative in prison. In this situation they have to live with the social condemnation on their backs.

Patricia Tevez speaks of ACIFaD as a community, and as a circle of women and family members who have come together in search of support. It is an association that works collectively to accompany and strengthen the families of people deprived of their liberty in dealing with the consequences of imprisonment. The organization is an excellent example of self-help and solidarity with other women in the same difficult situation.

## 4 The visitor journey

### 4.1 A change in paradigm the Federal Penitentiary Service

The Latin American penitentiary system is characterized by the low resources allocated to prisons. With these few resources, attempts are still made to improve the service provided. And since 2017 it has been about prevailing and addressing strategies that have to do with the prisoner, and their environment.

In the interview with Alejandro Flores, the former Director of Visits at the Federal Administration of Prisons, he described how the protocol is in line with the national Law number 24.660. He describes in the interview that since 2017 the federal penitentiary service understands that family links in visiting spaces have to be intervention strategies so that the social integration of the prisoner is positive. Now, this is a powerful idea. The women are not only helping their relatives, but they are also helping the society by giving a positive impact to the life of the ex-prisoner, once free.

Previously, visits were seen as a question of access to a right that had to take place in conditions of security. Under the light of a re-framed purpose, they revised that logic, and understood that they had to work with family relationships, consider their ties and work on them with strategies in terms of criminogenic interventions, so that when the prisoners are reintegrated into society it will be in a positive way.

Flores describes this process of visiting the prison as good as possible in the given context. To change the culture, it requires a lot of effort from the Federal Penitentiary Service and society to work with it. A way of thinking and doing, and above all of feeling, must change. The adaptation of the protocol from 2017 improved the visiting spaces, and in terms of the security service at the time of entering the prison made it less invasive for families. Still, there is a lot of work to be done.

An anonymous interviewee for this thesis, a social worker, said that the prison service in Argentina operates under a mentality that derives from a punitive approach towards

detainees and their families. And that to change this would require years and more consistent decisions in terms of the preparation and training that prison service workers themselves receive. Finally, he said that although since 2017 they have been working with changes such as, for example, there are no longer manual body controls before entering the prison, which were considered invasive, despite the continued existence of manual security control for food and products. Another good development, according to him, is that the penitentiary card was digitized, meaning that the same card can be used in all federal prisons in Argentina. Nevertheless, there is still a mentality in society that evokes the punishment of the prisoner and his or her relatives.

In the interview with the former director of visits of the federal prisons, Alejandro Flores explained that this transition of re-adapting the visiting protocol to the needs that emerge from the prison service towards the integration of the detainee into society, for when their sentence ends. And an adaptation to the families who began to organize themselves to ask for changes to improve the visiting service. This process began in 2017, and goes hand in hand with regulatory adaptation, training, awareness-raising and, fundamentally, work outside, in society. It cannot be overlooked that this process is taking place in a context in which society does not demand a positive social integration of the person who has committed a crime. On the contrary, in general, the social demand on the function of the prison has nothing to do with the work that is to be done from the inside. Many people far removed from the prison system see any kind of progress in the welfare of prisoners as something negative because prison is supposed to be hard.

This rethinking of prison functions in terms of the prisoner's re-adaptation to society through the family link as a means of sustaining this process. This change in paradigm has not been implemented in a day, though. It requires in-depth work with the detainees and their families, an effort to change the logic of the visits and design of the visiting spaces. In federal prisons, they are trying to work so that there is no break from the inside world to the outside world, but instead a dynamic integration.

For example, the administration has recently implemented mixed-gender visits - a mother, a father and a brother can enter at the same time, that is part of, according to

the adaptation of the visiting protocol, a dynamic integration. Now, families can see each other's faces, sit at the same table, eat together, have a conversation - it is a way of bringing the outside world in for the duration of the visit. Bringing a bit of home into the prison has been proven to give the detainee motivation to sustain family values and bonds, in many cases instead of criminal ones. This decreases the motivation to just adapt to the new prison culture which could negatively influence their integration into society and of course the society itself. This is ultimately a problem that should be of concern to society: that after his sentence, the prisoner will be motivated to sustain a family by legal means and not fall back to criminality.

In the visiting spaces in the federal penitentiary service, it must be one of the few where there is no break from the inside and the outside, but rather continuity. According to Flores in prison, there are two factors for the prisoner. The *static factor* has to do with their age, types of crime, and the *dynamic factors* are related to whether they have finished school, whether they have substance abuse, links with people who are in the criminal world, and diffusion links. The *dynamic factors* are ones the prison staff is trying to work with.

Prison has the effect of deteriorating the person inside and his or her environment outside. At the same time the family is needed to support the positive reintegration of the prisoner. It began to be seen as a possibility and not only as a right of the prisoner or a duty of the prison service to grant it, but as a joint work for the support of the prisoner inside and outside at the end of the sentence. Family ties are a factor to be valued and weighed up - note that this change in paradigm leaves the women just a bit less alone with the situation.

## 4.2 The visitor journey as seen by the administration

After several weeks of research, fieldwork, and interviews, I would divide the visiting process into two categories. One category is how *the prison service* executes the protocols (appendix n<sup>o</sup>1) and the other category is how *the women* experience it.

As is can be seen in the figure 4. In the case of the prison service the journey is divided into **four phases**. The first phase is the 1) *registration of the visit*, the second phase is 2) *the admission process*, the third phase takes place when 3) *the visitor is inside the prison*, and the fourth and final phase is when 4) *the visit is over and the visitor leaves*.

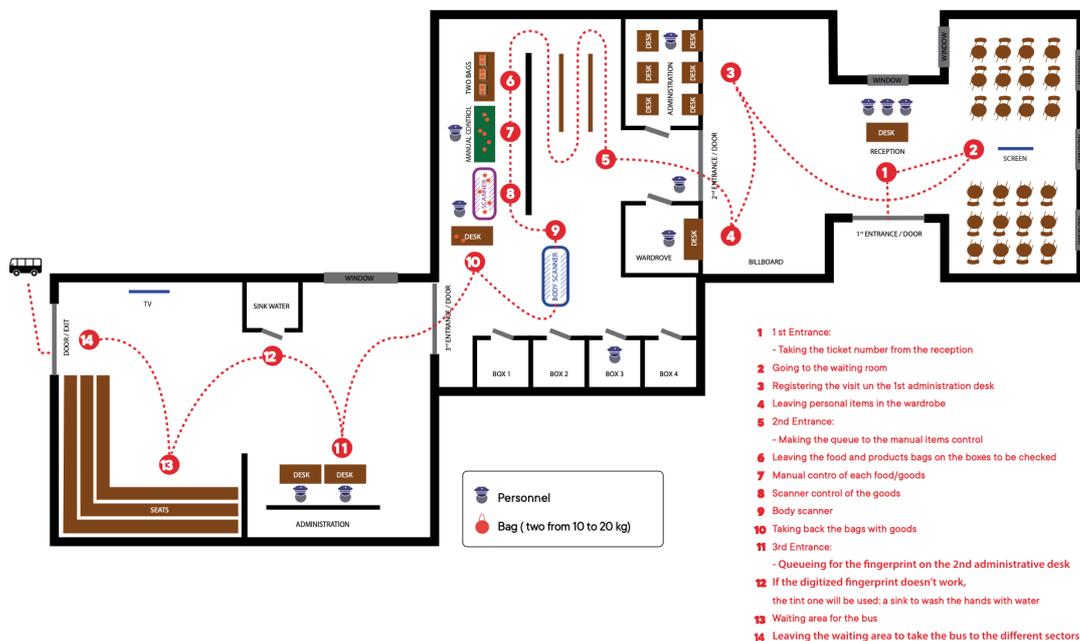


Figure 4. The current visitor journey map (appendix n°3 for a bigger view)

In the first phase of 1) the registration of the visit, the visitor must enter, pass through the reception desk, pick up a number and take a seat. In the waiting room there is a screen indicating which number is next and where to go. This procedure is for visitors who already have a visitor's card.

If the visitor doesn't have a visitor's card this procedure is done with the administration, which gives 20 numbers per day to make the card or renew it. This causes problems for the women which is described in the sub-chapter on how they view the visitor journey.

Once the visitor is called with their unique number, they are given a piece of paper with their name, date, and time of entry into the prison. They then go to the control room and leave their valuables there and sign a logbook.

The second phase is 2) *the admission process*, which is divided into sub-phases. Once visitors have left their valuables, they enter the hall where security checks are carried out. When they enter, they must line up at a desk with boxes, as if it were an airport, where they must place their bags with merchandise to pass to the first control. This manual security control for food and products, the penitentiary service proceeds to check the bags that the visitors bring in product by product. The number of products per person varies, and they can bring in between 5, 10 and 20 kilos of products, quantities are limited, and they will bring as much they can afford economically and physically.

The procedure consists of opening each packet of food with a knife and transferring it into a transparent bag that the visitor brings with them. This is done by the prison staff; visitors are not allowed to interfere. The same applies to cooked food, as only dry food can be brought in, some fresh food such as dairy products, but no meat. Meat must be cooked and is checked by pricking it with a knife. Among the most common complaints from female visitors is that the same knife with which they prick meat, open laundry soap, and pick a croissant filled with caramel. The women have prepared the food for hours, of course they are upset!

The participants I interviewed said that over the years the service has changed. Among the design strategies used so far by the visiting directorate of the federal penitentiary system is to improve the service by incorporating more technology, while at the same time meeting the demands of families. In 2011, they started using scanners inside the prison, in the visiting area, with X-ray technology. Those who have been attending the prison as visitors for more than 10 years described how they found the security check to be invasive before. Afterwards, 5 years ago, despite going through the body scanner, they had to go through a room to undress and prove that they were not carrying any dangerous objects. This was not because of a dubious image in the scanner, this procedure was repeated to all women. In recent years, however, this has been modified, leaving only the manual control of the body in case it is necessary because

of a dubious image. Otherwise, the prison officer tells the visitor to go through and that everything is fine.

After the manual check of products and food, the checked bags are scanned and deposited at a counter where they await their owner.

In the third phase, 3) *the visitor is inside the prison*. The prison has an entrance unit, six modules with persons deprived of liberty, and the Penitentiary Hospital (HPC). They must pass through desks where there are usually two policemen who take their fingerprints to allow them to enter the restricted part of the prison. At the end of this part there is a waiting room where they can take a seat under the air-conditioning - something that was recently installed and is very important in the hot weather of Argentina.

There, they wait for the bus that goes through the different modules of the complex. Each module is divided into wards, which have individual cells and a common area. To enter the module that corresponds to them for the visit they must give the ID plus the paper that was given to them at the entrance to the policeman who is at the door of the module and who is going to admit them and call the prisoner they went to visit. And so, the visit begins, while the policeman goes to look for the prisoner, who is also subjected to security checks. The visitors enter the visiting area where there are tables, seats, and toilets. Usually, a table with chairs is set up and a tablecloth is placed on it by the visitor to wait for the prisoner. The tablecloth makes it a bit more like normality.

In the fourth phase: 4) *the visit is over and the visitor leaves*. At this point, the pre-announcement that the visit is about to end is made, and the guards begin to prepare to register the detainees and open the door for them to enter their sectors. The female visitors leave the space, leaving through the same entrance door, as they leave, the guard will give them their ID card, and with it plus a number that was given to them in the cloakroom they leave the visiting sector, they wait for the bus to take them back to the entrance, which is now the exit, and when they reach the exit they walk down a corridor that takes them directly to the cloakroom to collect their valuables, and end their stay in the Ezeiza prison.

### 4.3. Including technology in the visit system as result of the COVID-19 pandemic

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, visiting time was 5 hours. After the pandemic, where there were no visits for a while, when the visits came back to normality, they were reduced to 3 hours. Interviewees say that it is more organized than before. As was the case all over the world, they had to forcefully adapt to new security systems, and look for new strategies to avoid crowding visitors. The administration organized a scheme of visits that moved from day to day after COVID. Before, the visitor always had the same group on Saturdays and Sundays. After the pandemic, the day on which the module receives visits moves one day a week, e.g., if this week the visit is on a Sunday the next one will be on a Monday, and so on. This, of course, puts extra pressure on any kind of employment arrangements the women might have.

On the other hand, they started with the system of visits during the pandemic which was online, Zoom and Skype. For prisoners who have family members far away, and who were not receiving visits anyway, it was a way to have contact with their loved ones from the outside world. At the same time, they left the two computers they have for digital visits, so that the prisoner does not lose contact with their family member, friend, etc. In this way, many prisoners re-established links that they did not have before because of distance.

The electronic visiting system was also beneficial. As one of the participants described, when the children are young, they come to the prison to visit but as they grow up they become more limited with their visits. In this case, the video calls established a bond of parent and child that would otherwise have been neglected.

In most cases, women talk about the relationship/bond that incarcerated fathers have with their children. In the case of teenagers, mobile phones are a good way to parallel the relationship. Or teenage children can show the house, the room, their objects, what they do, the family dog. Through technology, prisoners establish communication with the daily life of the teenager, and thus give the role of parent to the prisoner. Another example was that of a prisoner uncle who met his baby nephew through an online visit.

Somehow it also gives the possibility to communicate with other relatives, friends, etc. where communication was almost non-existent due to the possibilities of access to visits. Working hours, and access to prisons by public transport, are in many cases limited, which makes it difficult for other family members to visit frequently. The technology of online calls has introduced the prisoner for a short time to participate in family everyday life.

#### 4.4 The women: weekly preparation for the visiting day

As previously explained, one of the conclusions I reached after the fieldwork is the division of the visitor journey into two categories, two ways of looking at it, two sets of necessities and perceptions of it. One category is 1) how the prison service executes the protocol and the second is 2) How the female visitors experience it (appendix n<sup>o</sup>2 and n<sup>o</sup>4). The 2nd category functions together with the emotional orbits (see Figure 1.) overlapping in these women's everyday life.

In the description of the journey many of them say that they prepare everything for a week. When I asked a mother how the day, she visits her son is, she answered: "It's not the day, it's the week. The visit starts the day after I see my son. I organize the shopping. I find out where to buy the cheapest, I cook, I wash etc.". So, let's look at this week, depicted on Figure 5.

Visits take up a lot of time in their weekly schedules, especially considering that prisons are mostly located in distant suburban sites. For example, a mother who goes to visit her son, travels more than 4 hours *before* starting the whole visiting process, which also takes hours. The women are the ones who organize the shopping, call the lawyer, bring the papers, are the ones who bring the prisoner's clean clothes and food, are the ones who support the family member under the pressure of prison life, are the ones who organize for the visit to take place, and do not leave the prisoner alone. They carry on their shoulders the burden of perhaps the most difficult period of their lives.

## Preparing for the prison visit during the week ●



The Power of Human Centered Design

Figure 5. Preparing for the prison visit during the week

## 4.5 Obtaining the personalized prison visitor card

They are all administrative procedures where you have to go to the prison, in this case the Ezeiza Federal Penitentiary, to obtain the card. The first three times you can enter without a card, provided that the prisoner validates your entry. The fourth time you have to go with the corresponding documentation to prove your relationship with the prisoner. For this procedure, in many cases, you must go between 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning to get a number. They give out 20 numbers a day, and if by chance they have all been given out, you must come back another day to do the paperwork. Of course, it also means that there is no visiting that day. There is no online way to know if all the numbers are taken, the visitor has to go to the prison to check availability, which might take several hours, as already described before.

The adaptation of the protocol is adjusted according to each prison, depending on the physical space, the number of persons deprived of their liberty, and the number of staff members. Each prison complex adjusts it according to these characteristics. What all federal prisons are trying to do is to make changes that include the digitisation of documents to avoid the continued use of paper. As of 2020, the Ezeiza prison implemented a digitized archive that is compatible with all federal prisons in Argentina. This was an advance that also came with the adjustments made during the pandemic. Before, the files were on paper and every time a person was transferred to another federal prison, the family member had to go through the whole process from scratch to be able to visit him or her.

## 4.6 The 7 phases of women's journey

Journeys have their high points, low points, perceptions, emotions, and phases. In the case of this thesis, I had to construct two journeys and both perceptions about it. The way the prison service perceives the journey is divided into four phases, which are explained in detail in subchapter 4.2.

The visitors' phases detail what is involved in the preparation for the visit, the transfer to the visit, and the procedure for entering the visit, which is divided into the registration of the visit, the security screening procedures, a second registration of the visit, and finally the visit, and the exit from the visit to start the journey home and face another journey again.

According to the prison protocol and the responses of the women I interviewed, I have divided the visiting journey into 7 phases that women must go through in order to make a visit (appendix n<sup>o</sup>2, n<sup>o</sup>3 and n<sup>o</sup>4). To begin with there is the 1st phase: organization of the visit, 2nd: transport to the prison, 3rd: registration, 4th: security control of goods and body scanner entry, 5th: entry into the prison, 6th: visiting time, 7th: departure and return home. The dedication that comes through in their stories, shopping, cooking, washing the prisoner's clothes, long bus journeys, waiting in long

queues with bored children, going through security, then seeing their family member for a moment and then making the journey home.

This kind of daily routine is unimaginably heavy on the women. I can't change the sentences of their relatives, but maybe I can make some suggestions to make the women's lives a little better.

The first phase begins, according to the participants, the day after the visit to the prisoner (as explained in subchapter 4.5). It involves making a list of the things the prisoner needs, and then, especially in the case of women with fewer resources, looking for the best bargains in the various shops, something that can take several days, doing it little by little each day. And the last two days are spent organizing the bags and cooking the food that is allowed in.

There are two possibilities to just deliver the goods: the first is to visit the prisoner and bring the products yourself, and the second is to go alone on the day of the deposit and leave the bags with products to be delivered to the prisoner.

The second phase is *getting to the prison*. The women have different transportation possibilities. The easiest way to arrive at a prison out of the city in the province, by a highway, is by car. A drive from the city would take about an hour with no traffic. Not all the women are so fortunate to have a car, though. In the spirit of cooperation and to split the cost, some of them have gathered into groups who share a car. This requires that they live close to each other. The most under-privileged arrive by bus. This would be okay if they had to take only one bus, but it's not the case of the women I spoke to, who need to take at least two buses to get there. This prolongs their trip to a few hours, and it represents quite a struggle considering all the heavy bags they carry, especially in seasons of high temperatures.

Generally, on the visiting days, the people who visit are always the same. Each day the visitors see the same relatives of other prisoners, which makes the experience more familiar in time. Many come with children, and everybody comes with bags of goods, which can be up to 20 kilos, in many cases the maximum they can carry in their arms. There is solidarity among the visitors and that gives a bit of comfort in a bad situation.

Here they enter the 3rd phase and 4th phase: *registration and the security control*. To enter a prison, there is a protocol of control and checking of the products brought, be they foodstuffs, hygiene products or cigarettes. For all this, the products go through a scanner in bags. After scanning the bags, the items then go through a manual security check. This consists of transferring the dry foods to a transparent bag, which the visitor himself will carry with them. The policeman at the entrance opens each package with a knife, and when he opens it, he checks that there are no items that cannot be passed inside the packages. The most common items are pasta, *yerba mate* and other typical Argentinian and South American foods. The cooked foods are checked by using the same knife but can be left in the food containers.

The most common complaint among the interviewees is that they will never get used to the manual search. The manual inspection is an ugly moment, it is humiliating, it leaves the person in a state of vulnerability. All the participants say the same thing “the security uses the same knife they use to pick your cooked meat to open your laundry soap. And then they wipe it on a dirty cloth and prick the sweet dough, or a cake”. This is emotionally hard for a person who has put all her love into cooking for the person she loves.

Secondly, the visitor must go through the body inspection scanner, where she has to stand up, raise her arms and, if all is well, pass. If the guards see anything unusual, then the visitor is instructed to go through a manual inspection in a private room where the women have to show their shoes, pockets, and bra. Nowadays, in the manual inspection the police don't touch the visitors, but visitors have to show what they ask to be shown. Before the innovations of 2017, manual search with physical contact was normal, going through very intimate parts of the body, all the more degrading.

Among those interviewed, both the female visitors and the prison workers described that the visitors who want to get illegal stuff into prison are a minority. But to regularize this situation of the minority who want to bring prohibited things into the prison, the staff has to tighten the security measures. As a result, security is more cautious and thorough towards all visitors. Most of the women who have not committed any offense, complained in their interviews about it.

A participant described some unusual occasions in which visitors have brought in prohibited items or substances, after which despite sanctioning the visitor, more rigorous controls have been carried out. Although the person, who tries to introduce objects, substances, etc. that are not allowed, is sanctioned, this situation increases the rigorousness of the general security control, which at the same time is what affects the women who visit their loved ones and have never taken anything prohibited along. It is as they described "mentally exhausting and humiliating".

In the 5th phase: *entry into the prison*, is where the security control of goods and people is completed so that they can enter the prison. In the third entrance is where the fingerprints are taken digitally, and after this registration they can wait for the bus that passes every 25 minutes approximately, because it has to make the tour of all the 7 sectors of the prison. They can wait inside, and the doors are opened for them to leave the waiting room once the bus arrives to pick up more visitors to start another tour.

In the 6th phase: *visiting time*, is when they arrive at the correct ward, they hand in at the entrance door to the sector the ID card, and the ticket that was given to them at the administration when they registered the visit to the prisoner. In that paper it says the name of the prisoner who will receive visits, then the guard goes to look for him. At the time of the visit, while the guard goes to look for the prisoner, the female visitor enters the visiting area, takes a plastic table that is piled up, with some chairs, and begins to prepare the table where they will eat together, drink mates<sup>4</sup>, and chat. They usually all bring a tablecloth from home to give a homier touch to the visitor, as the space lacks a homey feeling.

What the female visitors pointed out is that the visiting space lacks warmth, which makes it difficult for family members to interact with each other. Especially the mothers who have children and the father is detained and said that this hinders the bonding and that there are no spaces where they can play.

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<sup>4</sup> Argentinian national hot drink.

In Figure 6, which I have attached below, I made an outline of what the visiting space looks like according to the participants and my own experience description.

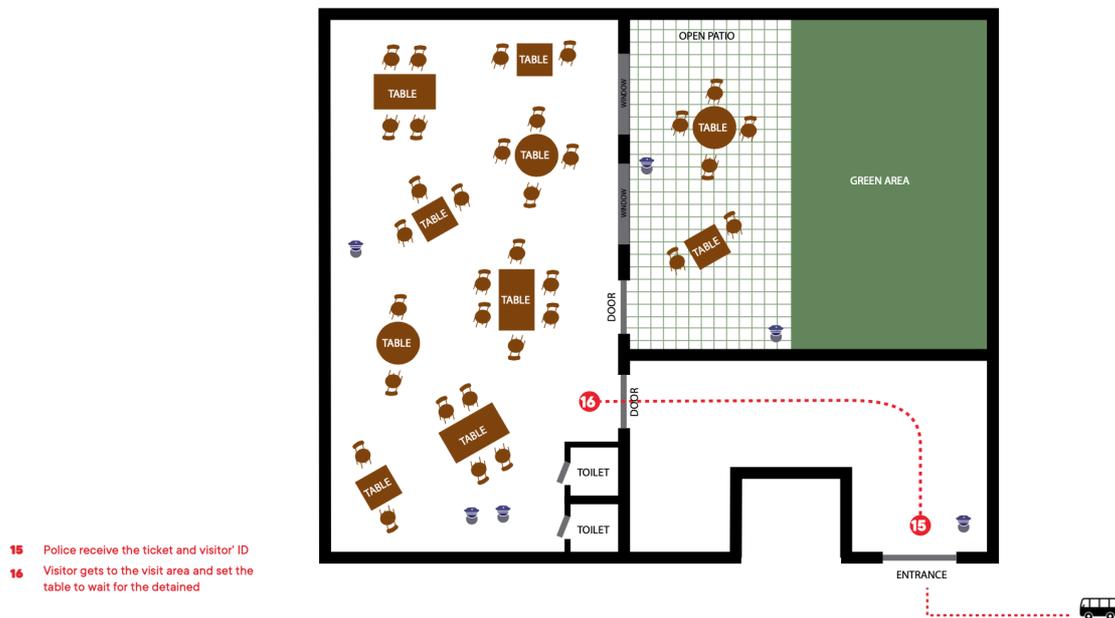


Figure 6. The current visiting area inside the prison

In the 7th phase: *departure and return home*. The visit comes to an end, 2 to 3 hours after the arrival of the visitors. At this point the prisoner has to leave and says goodbye to his family. The female visitors pick up some of the things they brought with them such as food containers, tablecloths, and plastic eating utensils. When the guard opens the door and gives them back their ID cards, they proceed to wait for the bus to take them back to the exit, which was the same place where they entered, with the difference that they leave through a long corridor that leads directly to the closet where they will pick up their valuables and start their way home. In this way the trip continues until they arrive home and start the week again with the organization of the next visit. And so on.

#### 4.7 The female visitor user experience AS-IS

As to summarize, then the journey and the perception of it is divided in two, as can be seen in the subtitle “4.2 *The visitor journey as seen by the administration*”, and in the

subtitles “4.5 *The women: weekly preparation for the visiting day*” and in the subtitle “4.6 *The 7 phases of women's journey*”. Although my main focus is on female visitors to family members in Argentinean federal men's prisons, I have mapped both the prison administration's and the female visitors' perceptions of how the same protocol is executed. As mentioned above, the social condemnation and the social stigma of having a family member in prison leads to emotional and physical stress, and bonding burdens. In this part, which I summarize in Figure 7, you can see in detail the journey for female visitors both inside and outside the prison, and the emotional experience that this means.

Also, in some cases there is a lack of family support, the vulnerability to which the women are subjected by the situation of incarceration of a family member. Some friends distance themselves, family members must be hidden from them, and this makes the situation even more painful and isolated.

Although they find a huge point of support in the NGO uniting the women and some men in the same situation, ACIFaD, sometimes they would like to perhaps disconnect for a while from what they feel, or at least find a different point of distraction, at least occasionally. They fulfil many obligations to support the two families, inside and outside the prison, the preparations, the day of the visit, assisting the detainee both emotionally and judicially. The female visitors occasionally mentioned this desire to do something different, such as taking care of themselves as well. The social stigma is felt within the home, and as described above, the shadow of prison is present in the daily life of the family, in how they organize their days. Because somehow all the relatives of a detainee have felt at least once the guilt of enjoying a good plate of food, or a sweet, while their relative could not.

Mapping of the visitor journey brought out that the information on the visits is not clear, it might be overly difficult to access, and it is not understood from where you have to consult for information. There are physical bulletin boards in the prisons, but to just consult the physical board some people have to travel for hours, or else they will only know about the new requirements on the day of the visit which might limit their entry.

At the same time, the security control of goods is usually carried out manually, with the procedure of knives cutting food packages which are then transferred from the original bag to a transparent bag. Also, said control process is performed with the same knife that is used to open the hygiene products and pick the already cooked food that the female visitors bring on the day of the visit. This part of the journey is what the visitors complained about the most during the interviews.

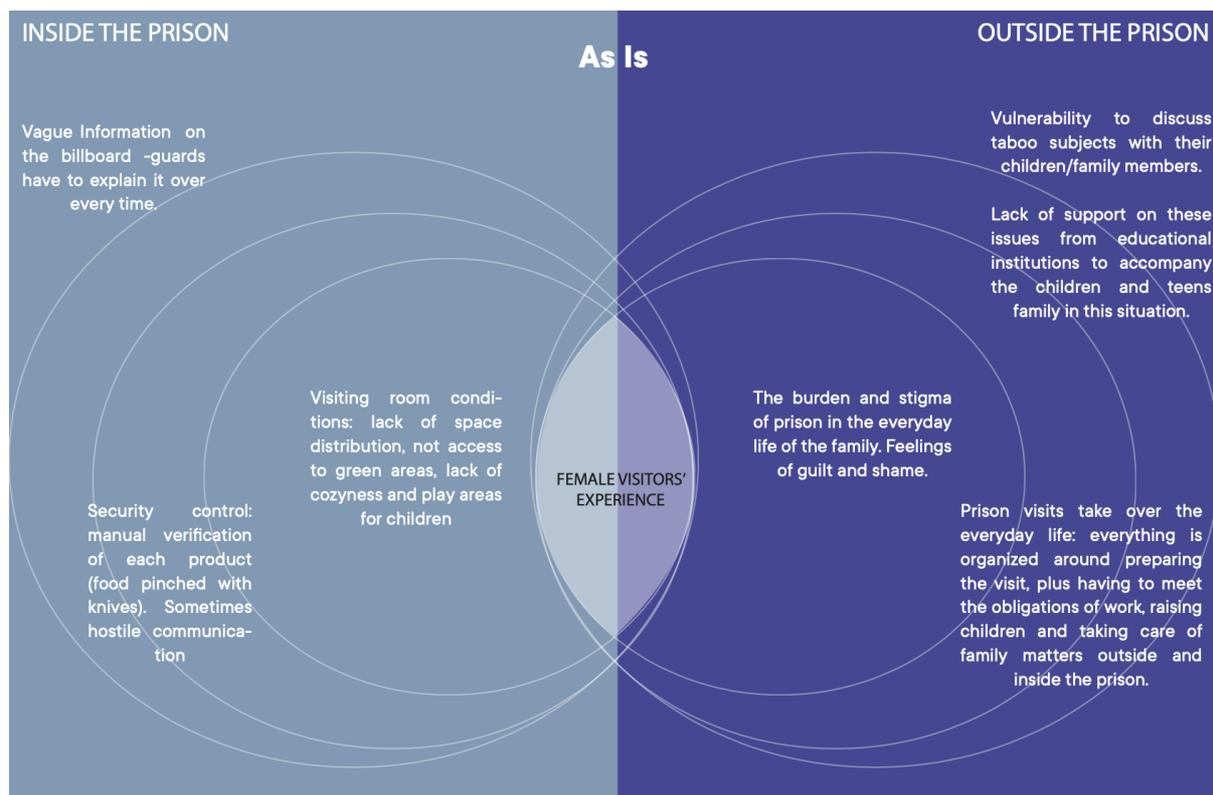


Figure 7. Female visitors' experience AS-IS

One of the most important points that the female visitors mentioned is the state of the visiting room. Besides not being in good conditions, they said that the parent-child bonding is fragmented not only because of the fact that the father is in prison, but also because they do not have a space for playing or interacting with each other in an environment that would support the father-child relationship, so that this bonding could grow. Usually, the children are sitting at the table, and that is the way they have to interact, thus reducing the bond between parent and child, grandparent and grandchild.

On the other hand, the family they support outside is affected by various social factors. Mothers, grandmothers, aunts do not know how to deal with the situation of telling the truth to a child. Because that child who is in school age will run the risk of social stigmatization in the case that his school, or social environment knows that his father, grandfather, uncle is in jail. Female visitors wanting to avoid this risk sometimes decide not to tell the truth because they do not find the tools to deal with this situation. According to the female visitors, the schools are not prepared to deal with these situations.

# 5 The design method

## 5.1 Human Centered Design

Human centered design works best when designers understand the people they design for not only on an intellectual level, but also on an experiential level (Design kit: 2015). HCD is a process and a set of techniques used to create new solutions for the world. The solutions can vary, and can take the form of products, services, modes of interaction. Adopting human centered design places the belief that problems, perhaps the most intractable ones such as poverty, gender equality, clean water, access to housing, are solvable (Design kit: 2015). HCD is, then, a perfect method not only for a successful commercial product or a good public service but also because it addresses the people's needs in such an empathic and comprehensive way.

A designer who picks up a topic from the margins of society has to remain professional, but it is impossible to remain impartial. Empathizing with difficult social issues is not something a researcher does just from theory, but it demands them to truly immerse themselves into the topic, listen to the people affected, and understand what they need. I quote from Husserl who describes empathy as intersubjectivity, a capacity that arises from putting ourselves in somebody else's place. The word intersubjectivity, which describes the core reality of empathy as an encounter between two subjects, is extremely important. Empathy denotes a specific form of basic intentional experience. It is in the talks that society puts its commitment and empathy. (Bošnjaković, Tanja Radionov: 2018, pp 124) Furthermore, taking up a taboo topic requires a different commitment. It seems more general to empathize with an NGO that rescues street animals or recycles batteries than with an NGO that works with detainees and their families. The social commitment and the positioning required to take a stand on the issue demands facing the same social condemnation.

It is those who face these problems daily who have the solution in their hands, and our role as designers is to listen to them, interpret them, guide them, and be the bridge between their perspective on how to solve it and how it could be implemented (design kit: 2015). Something that human centered design offers problem solvers of all kinds is the opportunity to design with communities, understand in depth the people they

want to serve, dream up dozens of ideas and create innovative new solutions based on people's real needs (The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design, IDEO: 2015, p 13).

The process diagram published by the American design agency IDEO describes throughout their design guide three key phases that exist within HCD (The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design, IDEO, 2015 p: 9-14 1) **inspiration**, which is the phase of getting to know people, understanding how they live, their desires, listening to them and observing them. After that comes 2) **ideation**, where you create the framework based on what you have heard, observed, and analysed. This is where ideas are generated, and possible design opportunities are sought, tested, and based on the tests the solution is refined. And finally, 3) **implementation** is where the solution comes to life and can be refined to maximize its impact on a larger scale.

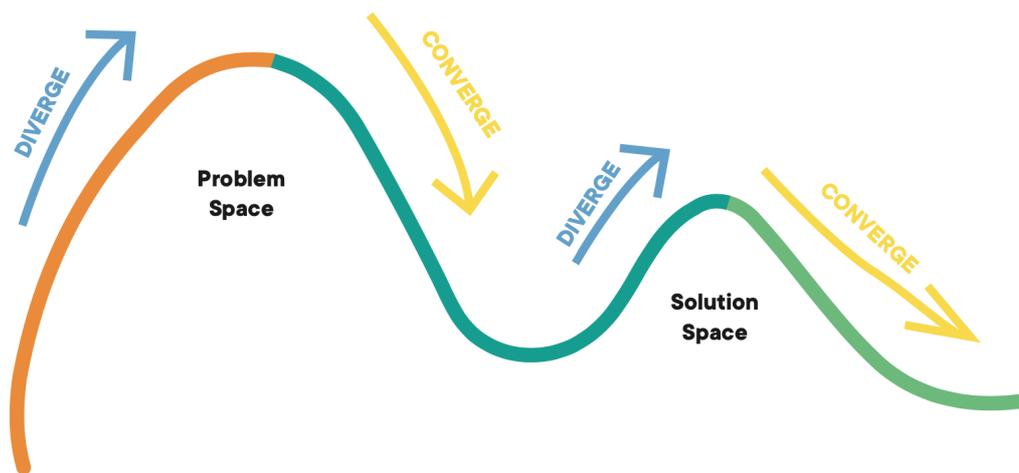


Figure 8. Design Thinking Process (IDEO, 2015)

Because I have a background in social anthropology, the understanding of Human Centered Design came organically to me. The book Human Centered Design Toolkit (Human Centered Design, 2019) describes in detail the three phases of **hearing**, **creating**, and **delivering**. Especially in the first phase, **listening**, **observing**, **interviewing**, it is very close to the work that an ethnographer does to carry out his fieldwork. What is interesting about HCD is the exploration of the needs, behaviours, goals of the people whose lives are to be positively influenced. To see the world through

their eyes, to interpret and translate their way of perceiving. This demands a fairly sharpened empathy, which provides the space for understanding and comfort to the people we are interviewing (Human Centered Design, 2019) .

To approach a project, we as designers have to be clear with the participants. Sometimes our positions as designers might touch on issues that can be sensitive for the people participating, and doing so demands empathy and honesty to communicate what our role is in that scheme. Not only should a designer be empathetic when listening and observing, she should also be honest and realistic in what she could deliver, in order not to set the participants' expectations too high.

In my case, working with women who go through a traumatic experience weekly and come together to support each other to be able to help others, presents a particularly sensitive challenge. It is my duty as an anthropologist and designer to communicate to them what my place is in this project, so that we can approach the project from a clear place and cooperate to move in the same direction.

These are sensitive issues for the women who go through this experience at least once a week, depending on whether they are wives or mothers or daughters. They all have a different journey in terms of the rights they are given. But this has no direct bearing on the design to be proposed. The visitor's experience at the time of entry is key, and this is what women and men of different ages, as well as children, go through.

During the design process I constructed the journey map based on the participants' accounts of how they experienced the prison before, during and after the visit. To make these constructions I made a step-by-step description with timetables included. The same process constructed from the participants' perspective, I made a description of the most painful interactions, the points of contact involved, the obstacles they perceive, and the barriers they encounter during the journey.

In our case, the work is that of re-thinking about the co-design sessions, what would be the weak, painful and uncomfortable points of their visits to the prison. This should then lead to a framework of how to provide more support to them and their children. Once we can identify what they need, we can begin to play in the co-design sessions to understand what would be viable and feasible.

Implementation is the process in which, as it is set in motion, it can be corrected, improved, readapted, rethought, rethought, rethought. Through implementation new possibilities emerge, in this case it will be adapted over time. This design is partly the opening of a discussion on the treatment of prisoners' families in Argentina, but why not also in Latin America. In South America, prisons are a sensitive issue, and the way they are discussed is that they are the last link in society. It is difficult to discuss this issue because there are always other priorities in developing societies, and this does not seem to be one of them.

I believe that debates have a maturation process that, depending on the difficulty involved, may take more or less time, but I am sure that opening debates offers the possibility for that maturation process to begin and not to fester. For that we designers also have to be patient with the fact that we do not see immediate results in the short term, when design is made for a social purpose. Humanity is made of experience and history and demands patience to see the results of a design in which what is at stake is not only the design itself but also the social debate that has not been thought of until now. It is as if design is entering the empirical process of development that starts with a problem to which a solution is found and there begins the ramification from which other difficulties to be solved and considered emerge. When we use human centered design, we are working together with the most volatile resource of all, the human being.

## 5.2 Materializing proximity through Human Centered design in a prison

Ezio Manzini's brief description of proximity in Georgia Tech-Faculty of Design at an open lecture organized by the School of Industrial Design states that "Physical proximity allows us to collaborate because if we are close, we can do something together. But proximity in all languages is also feeling close in relation to others, and this relational proximity, in the end, is care" (Georgia Tech, 2023). In a way care is one of the driving forces of my thesis, if I think of the women who visit their male relatives in prison, they are the ones who care but at the same time ask through ACIFaD for changes in the visiting service, because they live and see the shortcomings it has and

how it could easily be improved. At the same time the prison system is the one that takes some suggestions and tries to innovate based on what they see is more convenient.

Manzini also explains through his examples. He begins his book "Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation" "with the example of the town of Liuzhou in Guangxi Province, China, in which he narrates how a problem, in this case access to good quality food, led citizens to look for a way to solve it. Looking for a way, they learned that in the villages near the city there was a traditional agriculture system that, although struggling, was still surviving in the remote countryside. With the intention of helping these farmers and developing a stable organic food channel, they founded a social enterprise: a farmers' association called Ainonghui. The example above is analysed as social innovation, in which a group of citizens and farmers imagined and implemented a proposal to solve their problems and create an opportunity.

We can observe elements of HCD in this process, such as ***inspiration, ideation, and implementation*** ("The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design" IDEO, 2015 p: 9-14 1). They genuinely follow a logic that fits well with the intuition of human beings. Good design has to follow, pretty much like a stream of water, the possibilities available and propose the most intuitive, the most natural path to solve challenges, while, especially in the case of prison protocol, not compromising security.

This example can also be used with ACIFaD that started to meet 10 years ago because of a shared problem. At the same time, they learned what their rights were and based on that they executed claims that led to some changes that took place. In these cases, we can also see how human beings look for solutions to their problems together.

Even in Ezeiza prison, the former Director of visit, Alejandro Flores, describes that the changes that began to be implemented in 2017 have to do with decisions that were taken jointly to improve the quality of the visit, because they understood that this was the best way to reintegrate the prisoner into society, and that improving this part of the service would then motivate relatives to come more often.

For example, access to public transportation to go to the prisons is limited, uncomfortable - with many timely connections - and in many prisons it does not even

arrive. What the women do is that they organize themselves into groups of four women and find a person who has a car to pay for the service to take them and pick them up. This way they can go by a rental car with all their belongings and arrive in time to start the security checks as early as possible, and make the most of the time.

In his book "When everyone designs" Ezio Manzini describes that when human beings are faced with problems, they tend to use their innate creativity. And their own design ability to invent and realize something new (Manzini, 2015). This is exactly what the women have done, and most probably they have found the most viable and the most comfortable solution to parts of their user journey. At the same time, there is the aspect of the prison designing its own protocol and this is something that the women can't change for now. The interaction between the prisons and their visitors and maybe even future solutions can be facilitated by the HCD method described here at length.

What Manzini exemplifies is that it has always been this way, the human being addressing his problems and trying to solve them, which is related to the acknowledgment of everyday experience. Problems also have different approaches and scales. Also, the spreading of information and communication technologies and the potential they have in terms of contributing to change. Manzini talks about how this could not only solve problems but also constitute a builder of new civilisations. In my understanding, and explained perhaps from a more anthropological perspective, I would say that these are elements that surely play a role in social and cultural transformation and movement.

In the case of Ezeiza prison, and the female visitors, both parties perceive and describe the journey according to their own experiences, and how they develop their roles in society. At the same time, the former director of visits, Alejandro Flores, showed the interest and the changes that took place within the visitors' section according to the needs that arose, and the female visitors, although they recognise that the visiting service has improved, also recognise that there is still a lot of work to be done. There is the possibility of improving the current protocol with a new one that could include suggestions from the visitors themselves, but it is a road to walk, and to build.

For me, focusing on HCD during this thesis was a process in which I had to deal with a painful experience of my own, having gone through the same situation as these women some years ago. During the period I was a visitor I noticed that most of the

visitors were women of different ages with children. It was perhaps the clearest moment for me to understand how women are breadwinners, and the unconditional love these women have for their loved ones. And while they are the driving force behind this thesis, this proposal is something we will do together, including staff, or taking them into account.

This personal experience made it clear to me that I had to work and communicate with both sides, the women visitors, and the prison staff. Carrying out the fieldwork in the prison was intense, as prisons are a taboo subject in society. Moreover, the women knew exactly what they wanted, they have been dealing with this situation for two years and they know very well what their purpose is in the co-design sessions. There is a legal framework to respect, around which possible solutions of what can be applied always revolve.

### 5.3 Co-designing as a bridge towards empathy

To organize the co-design session, I thought about splitting a 3-hour session into two interactive ones. The thing is that many of the participants live far away, not in the city, some closer, but in the end, it was a bit complex to organize. So instead, we decided to do a long co-design session. The participants were 5 women, the same women I had interviewed. In addition to the exchange of information, and the fact that the observation was done with a larger group of women, the interviewees themselves had the predisposition and the time to participate in the co-design session.

My personal experience led me to clearly understand that I should and had to work and communicate with both sides, the women visitors, and the prison staff. Prisons are a taboo subject in society, so the work was intense. Also, the women knew very well what they wanted and what their purpose was with the co-design. They knew what they had been waiting for years, and in this game, although they had been waiting for years for the possibility to say everything that needed to be changed and improved, they started timidly, slowly adding ideas one by one. They wrote down on paper the things that occurred to them, what they thought was best. They even began to think about the staff themselves, to suggest certain changes, recognizing that not all of them

are rude, but that there are some who abide by protocol, and that if the protocol is changed then they will follow that order.

## 6 Design proposal

### 6.1 A holistic system to support female visitors

The women need a support system outside the prison and a decent visitor journey. My design principles are the basis on which I build my proposals: my design has to be **supportive, empathetic, efficient, fast, reliable and safe for the female visitors**. In order to achieve this, I propose to form a holistic support system where women can find a more harmonious service, a friendlier environment where they can find more tools to carry on with their lives. This supportive ecosystem will be a design framework open to new improvements and, hopefully, it will inspire them.

The holistic support is divided into a passive and an active part. The active part has to do with improving the service within the visiting system where time is used more efficiently, where weak points are improved with small changes. For example, using scissors in the manual check-up (if necessary) instead of knives, that everyone considers traumatic and humiliating. At the same time, the use of technologies such as scanners would not only improve the experience of women in the security park, but it would also speed up the work of the guards.

Moreover, an appointment booking system for administrative procedures such as the first prison card or renewals, or any other administrative procedures related to visits and activities which could be found on the web - now, the women have to go to the prison to do these things and if the quota for the day is full, they have to return empty-handed. Also, the incorporation of a section on the website instead of a handwritten information board where you can find the dates of visits with schedules according to the sector to visit. In addition, the creation of an online bulletin board to be incorporated into the current website of the prison, where you can make inquiries about each prison, and about what women are and are not allowed to wear, how to dress. Plus, of course, using the simple tool everybody in Latin America uses, WhatsApp, to inform of any changes. This will create the possibility of fast and updated information flow of the corresponding prison. The visitor journey can be done by improving the way the guards themselves work and building a space of better access to information for visitors, and thus reducing the repeated explanation of the guards.

This is what a well-designed visitor journey should be like: more pleasant for the women and more efficient for the prison administration.

## 6.2 More accessible information

In the current service there are two possibilities to access information. The website, which has recently been updated (appendix n°6), and the physical bulletin board in the prison itself that contains the most updated information about the visits. The only way to gain access to the latter is by going to the prison and having a photo taken of the physical bulletin board, or to ask for the corresponding information. At the same time, there is no way to know in advance of any changes in information, which could disrupt the weekly routine of visitors.

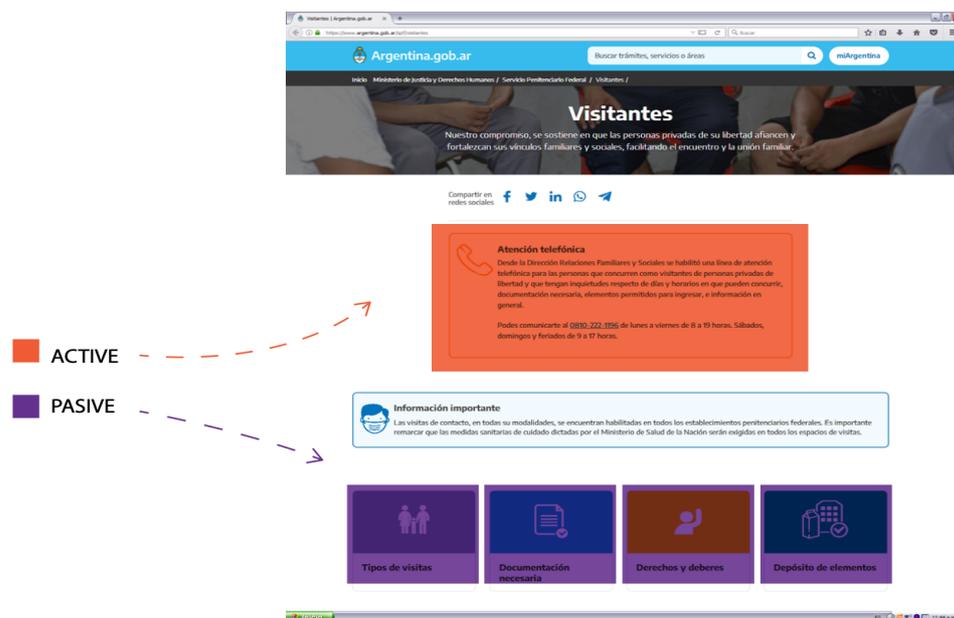


Figure 9. The current web page

In Figure 9, you can see the current website. The active part consists of a phone number for visitor support. The passive part consists of information on who can visit a detainee, the documentation that must be presented to do so, the rights and obligations of visitors, information on food deposits.

The proposed additions to the website will include more active visitor interaction (appendix n<sup>o</sup>7), maintain the **telephone number for visitor support**, and add other information. The active parts of the website will be expanded to include a in the proposal for a new website architecture, such as a **booking system**, to carry out procedures in the prison administration or in the central office of the federal prisons that is in the center of the city, and for some visitors it may be more convenient for work or access by public transport. At the same time an **online billboard** where visitors can subscribe via WhatsApp to receive updates with the modifications of the goods that are allowed to be taken, changes with the visits, and everything related to the visit itself. Also, the renewed website should have a **visits schedule**, with days and times, a federal penitentiary calendar available for visitors to find online.

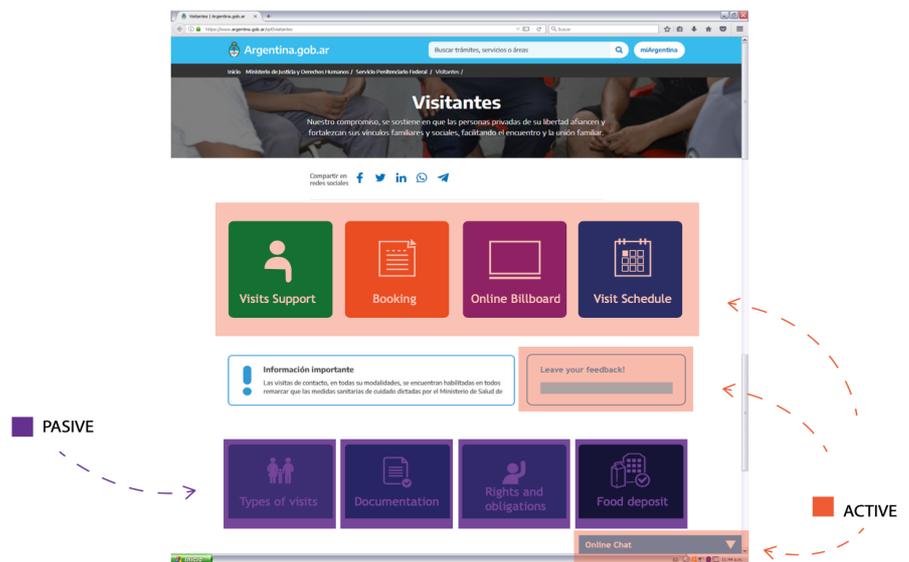


Figure 10. Proposal for a renewed website

Also, a **feedback** system so that any suggestion can be made anonymously, or with a name at will of the visitor. And finally an **online chat** system for queries, or as a guide for those who want to find specific information, which can also give them access to links, and assistance spontaneously and quickly.

## 6.3 Proposal for a new visitor journey

The following figure shows the same space as in figure 4 (appendix n°8). The current visitor journey map shows all the steps that a visitor must follow in appendix 1, 2nd-> How the female visitors experience it shows all the details of each step of the female visitor journey. Considering the commuting plus the accessing procedures to the visit the time spent is approximately 180 minutes, depending on the luck of the day. The purpose of this proposal is to streamline the time of entry to the visit, from shortening the guards' working time.

Comparing figure 4 with figure 11, you'll see the reduction of almost half the number of steps that I propose in this new spatial scheme. The new scheme consists of 8 steps. Initially, instead of 3 guards at the entrance table giving numbers and assisting, a ticket number dispenser will give the number to the visitors, this machine will be operated by a guard.

Then we proceed to the waiting room until the visitor's number is called by the administration that will oversee registering the visit and taking the fingerprints that originally were in the 3rd entrance and were the last step. In this way, we can shorten the administration to a single step. In the part of the 2nd entrance, the control system that exists in the airports is copied. The wall that exists in Figure 1 is removed, and instead of having a labyrinth format, it would be changed to an almost linear format of the security control process. In this new process, the bags would be put to control by the tray that will pass through the latest generation scanner, and manual control would only be done if necessary. This is controlled by the guard in the scanner control of the goods.

On the other hand, while the merchandise passes through the scanner, the person would pass through the body scanner where the waiting time is shortened. If all is well, the visitor will pick up her bags and go to the 3rd entrance, where she will only have to wait for the bus to take her to the visitor's area. In this way, the control is streamlined, without lacking the security that a prison should have. Thus, the control is more fluid, and the waiting time is reduced. For example, 5 visitors could pass through, while others are doing the administrative entry of the visit, and so on.



Figure 11. Proposal for a new visitor journey

The time of procedures and control is shortened. As some visitors register their visits, others are passing to the control part. Also reducing the manual control only to necessary cases shortens the line and time between 25' to 45' depending on the day. There are cases where one can wait much longer, but these are the medium waiting times based on the interviews. This will speed up the time in which phases 3, 4, and 5 will take place, so that the visit can start on schedule resulting in less stress and more support along the procedure

## 6.4 Proposal for a new visiting area inside the prison

On Figure 12 (appendix n°9), we see the new proposed meeting area - it should be seen in comparison to Figure 6, the as-is space. In the co-design session, the women came up with the idea of implementing small changes inside the visiting area of the prison, where there is a green area, and a corner where there is a microwave and a hot water dispenser. In order to make the space more friendly and familiar and to allow the

deepening of the family relationship and bonding. In this new scheme you can see a more dynamic space, where for example the tables are round, which occupies less space, and everyone can see each other's faces, and talk. In the upper left corner, you can see a playing corner, where you can find board games, and also books for children, in case you want to read a story to a child - for many of them, after hours of standing in line and paperwork, it is bedtime -, and, according to women visitors, it can also be a way to create a deeper bond between parent and child, grandparent and grandchild.

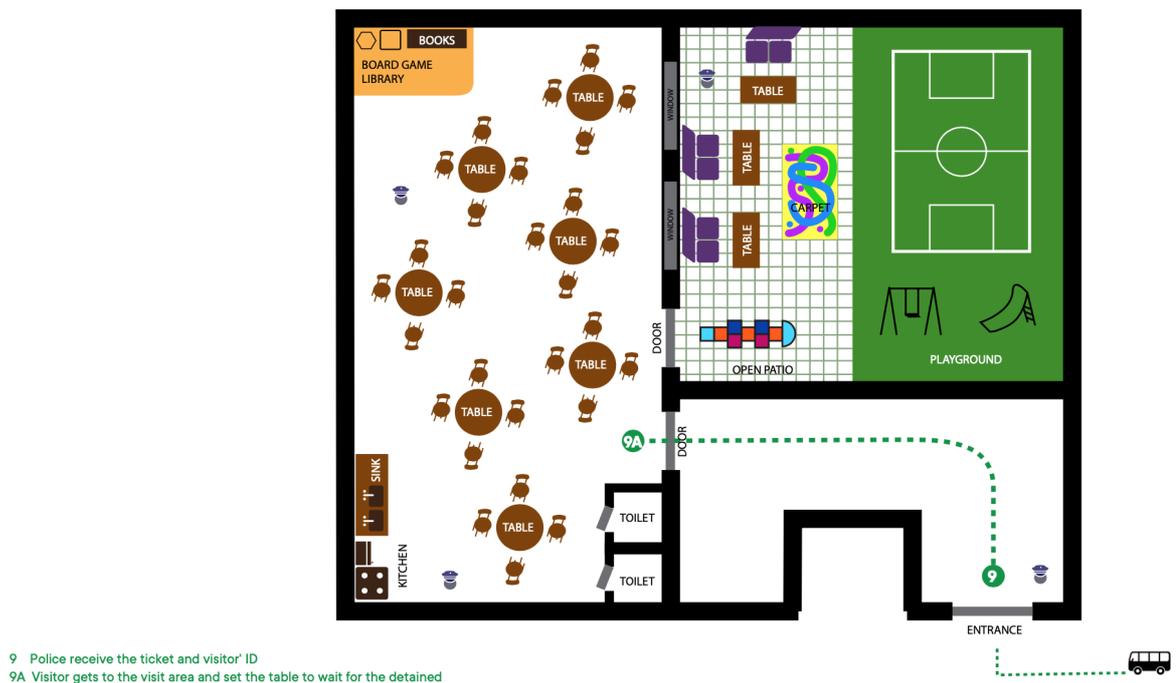


Figure 12. Proposal for a new visiting area inside the prison

In the lower part of the corner on the left side you can see a kitchen. Today this corner has a hot water dispenser and a microwave that is on a table to heat the food that the women bring to eat and in this way share. In Argentinian families, the family meal is a tradition where for that moment they forget the differences and they all sit around the table to share for a while. With these new changes, the family bond is empowered, which the director of visits himself mentioned as a positive aspect for the subsequent reinsertion of the detainee in society and looking for ways to do so in order to positively affect the detainee inside the prison and later outside of it.

You can also see the patio, the inner courtyard, where there is patio furniture, in this case shown as sofas with low tables, and drawings on the floor where children can also play. One of the proposals that the participants of the co-design session mentioned is that there is usually a green area, that sometimes even the detainees themselves could work on keeping it nice and green. They also suggested that there are carpentry workshops inside the prison, and that the same games could be made by the detainees themselves in these carpentry workshops, or they could also take up a collection and buy what is called a soft square, which consists of games for children that are made of soft plastic.

And finally, and perhaps what was most suggested, a small soccer field - as soccer plays an important role in Argentina and is an entertaining and simple way to play. The participants suggested marking on the floor some signs to make it clear that it is a mini soccer field so that children and adults can interact in a sporting way inside the prison.

## 6.5 Proposal for a new guards rotation

This scheme came up as an idea in the co-design session (appendix n<sup>o</sup>10) with the female family participants, who suggested that also doing the same job repeatedly can create a certain fatigue in the guards (the repetition of information, doing the same job), and that it would also be good that all the guards know how to do all the jobs so that the administrative and security process of the visits is streamlined. In this scheme, I propose the rotation of positions, and that all guards know how to do everything, so that no one is systematically repeating one thing every day.

In the scheme with this rotation the reception guard would go to the administration, the administration to the security control, and also to the guard of the 3rd entrance, the guards to the reception, and also to the control room. Meanwhile there are rest periods between shifts, breaks of between 15' to 25' which will be fragmented depending on the distribution of the guards and the number of guards. Once you have reached the reception desk at the 1st entrance, and the waiting room at the 3rd entrance, then the guards can take a break when they finish their turn.



Figure 13. Proposal for a New Guards Journey

This has to be coordinated by the Director of Visits in the prison in a schedule where the guards can know in advance when it would be their time for the break. At the same time besides having a break, and an area where to rest, the rotation system might improve the service and the guards may keep their workflow.

## 6.6 Colmena, a supportive atmosphere for female visitors

The idea of *Colmena*, the spanish word for “beehive” (appendix n°11), arose from a suggestion made in one of the meetings of ACIFaD in which I took part during fieldwork - participating in the meetings, observing them and listening to what they said and expressed. There I understood that they also need a time and place where they can have emotional support to walk their difficult paths. Thinking about the activities that volunteers and professionals already do inside the prison, such as art workshops, yoga, meditation, even singing classes, I thought: why not also do the same activities for family members with a volunteering system? In fact, there are already several interested volunteers who do not know how to reach the different NGOs to offer their services. This type of system works very well in Argentina.

The *Colmena* consists of ACIFaD itself administering these different activities, which would not add much more work to the administrators and managers of the NGO, but

rather ACIFaD itself would function as a link between the volunteer programs, the activities to be carried out and the assistance to group and individual psychological therapies. This system of grouping these activities would mean that they would not be scattered in different places but concentrated in a single one, and in this way, women would be able to access them in an effective way.



Figure 14. Colmena, a supportive atmosphere for female visitors

In the *Colmena*, women would find a space of support, a free moment where they could have other experiences, and help them to approach this process in a more friendly way by participating in a writing workshop, drawing, yoga classes, or meditation techniques, etc. Spaces where they can share other activities with the same women or in the same group where they already find comfort, but doing an activity for themselves, a moment of their own, and in this way, they can express themselves, or incorporate new techniques that support them on this path. But often, just talking to somebody is already a lot.

## 6.7 Support for the family

As can be seen in the orbits in Figure 7, in the part that has to do with the outside of the prison one of the most fragile points was how to support the family that is outside.

The stigma of prison envelops everyday life with feelings of guilt and shame about the situation. At the same time, just the sheer amount of time spent on activities to support a family member in detention makes it almost a full-time job. Being mostly poor women, they also work at their respective jobs plus taking care of the family that is outside the prison. This puts too much pressure on especially the women but also on their families.

All this happens in a social context where prison is a taboo topic, and many of them do not know how to deal with this situation with their children, or even themselves because of the tools they feel they do not have. Adding also to the educational system, which lacks psycho-pedagogical tools to accompany the child or adolescent in this context. The same participants who are mothers of children whose fathers are in prison said that the directors ask about the father, and that from day one they answer only that the father is just not there, because they do not want the stigma and social condemnation to extend to their children.

In Figure 15, I propose a family support system, where some activities could be organized by the Ezeiza prison in conjunction with the prison's social workers. It is about family activities where it is possible to work with the link in which it is desired to deepen. These activities, which could be sports, play time, online games or doing chores together, would help the family to reconnect. These activities could take place within the proposed visitation area where there are more spaces for interaction and could even be divided by age. For example, a group of young children one day, teenagers another day, because it will depend on the tasks or activities that will be designed according to the age of the child or teenager.

On the other hand, online calls because of online visits during the pandemic still exist in the protocol today. I propose to use them more in a way that would help to establish, maintain, or deepen the family bonds.

In his interview, the former director of visits said that in this way the detainee participates in family life and daily life, that the family shows him the house, the family pet, etc., and that in this case the dialogue is more about the everyday nature of the

family, and the detainee can mentally leave for a while his state of confinement. These types of calls end up being beneficial for both sides, the detainee and the family.

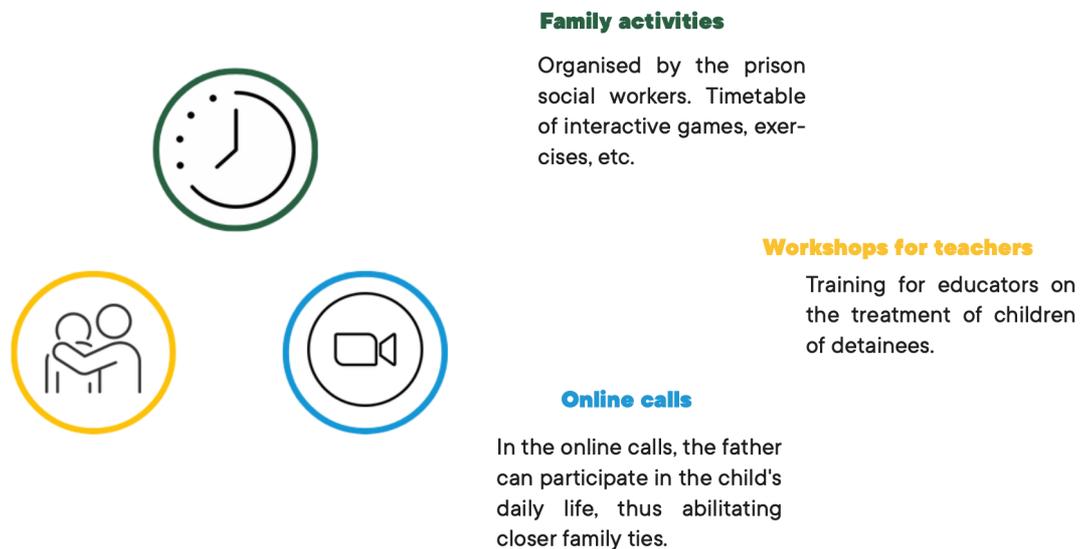


Figure 15. Support for the whole family

And finally, as part of this scheme that supports families, there are workshops for teachers, where teachers annually must take courses either online or in person in which they train on how to deal with different special needs and situations, including the incarceration of a parent. These types of courses help teachers to accumulate points within the educational system which motivates them to attend it and to update themselves.

What I propose in this part is that the Argentinean Ministry of Education itself be in charge of linking this issue to children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, whatever the family relationship with a detainee may be, with a treatment according to the circumstances, which works as a support system for the family, but above all to provide the male relative who is detained and the female relative who is outside, tools on how to deal with this situation. Support and tools that school principals, teachers and professors will transmit to the relatives of the child and adolescent who is still of

school age. In this way, tools are provided to the family, and the child or adolescent can go through this process in a supportive and supportive context.

## 6.8 TO-BE support system

I made the same scheme as with the *as-is* situation with the *to-be*, applying social design to exemplify how the holistic system should work. On Figure 16, we can see in the center the female visitors. The support system is divided between the inside of the prison and the outside, as this holistic system works on both sides conjugating with the corresponding structure. In the case of the inside of the prison the information is accessible and clear, it has the website but also with online billboards that send updates on WhatsApp to notify visitors, and thus they can plan their week or days according to the information received. Improvements shown in Figure 11 and in Figure 12 shorten the steps of the journey from 16 steps to 9, maximizing the care of the visitors and the streamlining of work for the guards.

Also, on Figure 12, an attempt is made to emulate the warmth of home so that the family can feel and identify themselves as such during the visit. For this purpose, a more interactive space is created, with possibilities for children to play, read stories, and make use of the free area.

On the other hand, outside the prison, this holistic system helps women to reduce the stress and pressure they feel with everyday life, to be able to communicate what they feel, to find that point of support, which already partially exists with ACIFaD. But what this holistic system proposes, as shown in Figure 14.

*Colmena*, a supportive ecosystem for the female visitors, is designed for the women to find support points in the different activities that suit their needs, and in this way explore activities that help them to reduce the work involved in having a family member in detention, and also give them tools for the day to day, and in this way carry out the phases of the visit with less of a burden.

Psychological assistance in Argentina is culturally very wide-spread - in this respect, Argentina is quite unique in the world. There are different free telephone lines to call, and the possibility to attend a free visit to a psychologist in the local community center - the medical center, covered in full by social security. What is special is the sheer number of psychologists and accessibility of assistance for everyone.

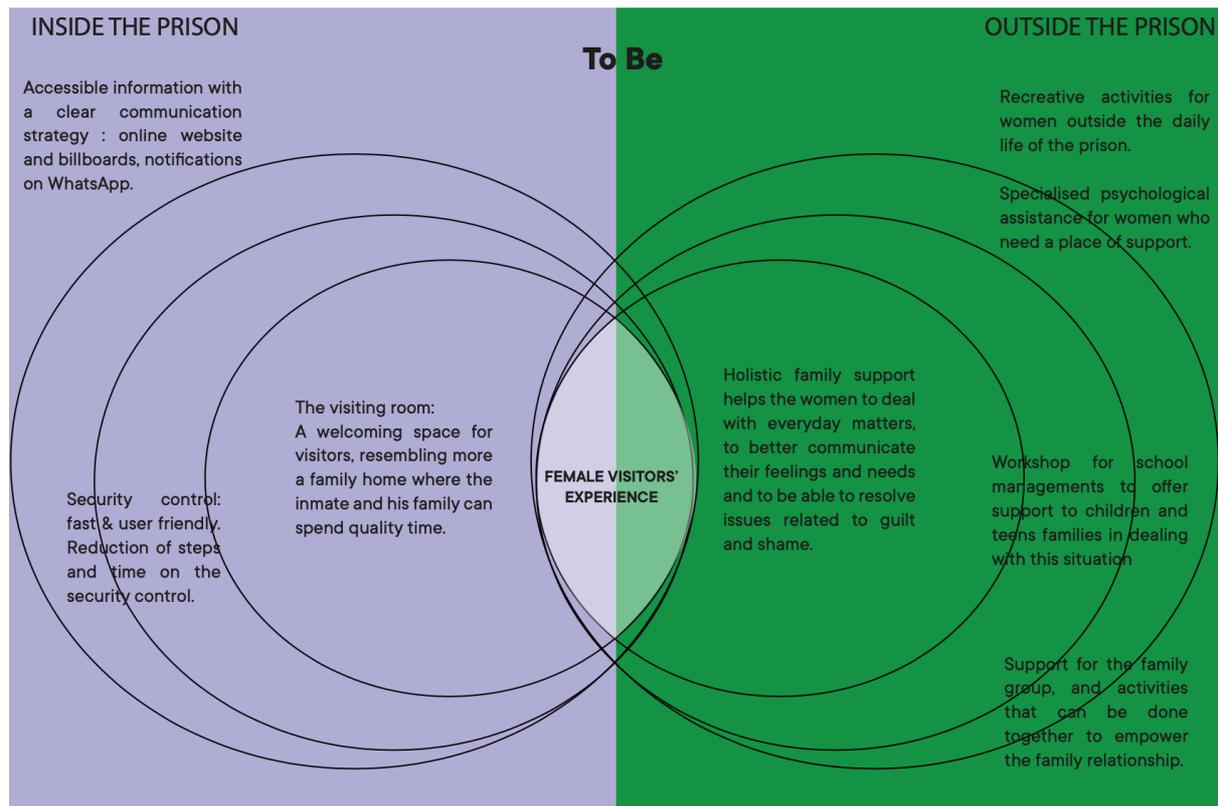


Figure 16. TO-BE support system

Although the women would have access to a psychologist, and surely more than one family member attends one, it might be that there are not so many psychologists who are specialized on the issue of incarceration in the family. For this, a psychologist who deals with these types of situations might be the most suitable to assist and to provide the family members with tools that can help them in everyday life and at home, in how to deal with this situation etc. He or she can attend the weekly meetings at ACIFaD and carry out group therapy. I understand that psychologists have already attended these meetings and worked with family members, so this would not be a new proposal, but it would be part of the holistic support system. Also, I propose that group therapies would be done more frequently.

The workshops for directors and teachers of educational establishments would be on how to provide support to children and adolescents who are going through prison through a family member, and this will provide the families with more tools.

Another point is adding family activities that could be organized by the prison social workers themselves, or volunteers who run different programmes within the prison, such as drama workshops, singing workshops or physical activities. The activities would take place in the prison with the detained family member, to deepen the relationship and strengthen family ties.

All this, the holistic support system is aimed at one goal: to provide the women and their children with a more friendly environment in general and concrete help and tools to deal with issues. It is based on the needs that emerged from the interviews and from the co-design workshops with the participating women themselves.

## 7. Conclusion

I came to this project with a personal story that I had not been able to resolve: the incarceration of my father had been a shock. To have worked with these brave women has provided healing and support also for me. It does not remove all this pain I have inside, but it relieves it. It is also an example of how the ones who are suffering the most can be healers. This realization is important not only for my personal story; it is the backbone to my design proposal.

The thesis' title evokes the power of human centered design to use research and design methodologies that fit to solve problems that have to do with people's everyday lives. Human centered design also shows that those who know about the way they live or what truly happens are the people involved. Through empathy, observing and feeling what the subject goes through, we will understand the problem from different perspectives, which will provide the basis for a design that not only corresponds to the needs of the users but also considers the larger context.

For me, Ezio Manzini is an inspiration in the context of social design, when he points out and exemplifies how this social transformation happens; where a problem arises, so does the need to find a solution. Design accompanied with anthropology gives the tools to the people, with the anthropologist-designer as a facilitator in the middle. The resources I found within the human centered design were organic and natural to me, it was ethnographic fieldwork with design elements in the research methodology.

The synergy that happens between social anthropology and design has a lot of potential in the field of social design - but in any design field -, both disciplines can nourish the other. I think it is an interesting path to work with further. I understood that a design that is to improve people's lives has to include fieldwork and understand how the methodology of ethnographic fieldwork works to find reliable, adaptable and enduring answers. The participants in such fieldwork and design workshops also learn about creating design solutions, providing basic tools to develop their solutions further. This takes us closer to social design that sees every person as a possible designer.

In my case, fieldwork started to drive the process, providing me with both insights and motivation to work further. Fieldwork and the network of people I gained from it, is the beating heart of the design I present.

During the meetings and interviews with the women I understood and noticed that it was not only about the journey and that day of visitation, but about everything surrounding the journey and the daily life of living with a detained family member. I also realized that it had to do with a broader cultural context, the taboo surrounding the situation they live in, the social stigma and social condemnation that comes with living with a detained family member. My goal became to design a support structure that helps the women holistically, both in their experience inside and outside of prison; it also must focus on the traumatic experience it represents and the time it demands.

My design proposal also considers also the isolation they feel over time, how to cope with their children's situation when they are young and as they grow up. Importantly, my research question had to be based on a combination of topics that arose as I delved deeper into the topic.

My initial plan had been to come up with a design for a better visitor journey. I started from a fairly simple design research question: "What is the visitor's journey in Argentinian prisons like, what are the pain points and how can I improve them, using the social design method?". However, since during the interviews and the ACIFaD (an NGO that unites the relatives of prisoners) meetings I was invited to participate, I reformulated my research question. In order to accommodate all the issues the women themselves told me of, I rephrased my research question: "What kind of difficulties does the societal condemnation of everything connected to prison present to women who have relatives in prisons, what is the female visitor's journey in Argentinian prisons like, and how can I contribute to improving the social context and make the journey better, using the social design method?"

During the fieldwork, interviews, observations, and participation that I carried out at ACIFaD, and in the federal prison of Ezeiza, I was able to take insights that were fundamental to understanding how the participating women have to live and feel because of a family member in prison. In addition, I learned a lot about the structure

of the visits, how the female visitors perceive the process of admission to the visit, the layers of feelings and emotions that surround them due to the situation they are going through. Or rather, the social stigma, the isolation they live in, and the burden of caring for the family inside and outside the prison falls on them, mothers of families.

For the female visitors, having a detained family member involves a workload, in fact it is a full-time job. Most of them work because they are the sole breadwinners of the family - prisons are unproportionally full of the poor. Aside from work obligations, they are responsible for the children attending school, and then they must prepare everything for the visiting days in the prison. This takes a whole week of preparation - in most cases, the organization for the next visit begins the day after the visit itself. Because they have to organize what to buy, where to buy cheaper - different products from different shops and markets -, cook it, wash the clothes and bring them back the next visiting day. They also have to take care of the legal issues of the detainee, deciphering prison rules, talking to lawyers, or dealing with the court. All that combination of activities falls on them alone, leaving them alone to deal with them and often unprepared for the challenges.

On the other hand, I understood better the functioning of the penitentiary service and its adaptation of the visitation protocol to a specific prison, both to the physical space and the number of personnel. This led me to focus on what is possible to change, expand, or modify according to the perception of both sides, focusing mainly on how to reduce the stress and the burden that female visitors go through during the visits but also creating a better and a more fluid working environment for the personnel. Although the costs of maintaining the new security protocol have not been calculated, they would surely be fewer than now due to reduction of routine security control steps. Good social design should give a little something to all stakeholders.

As a follow up to this thesis, I will synthesize this thesis into several articles - into a popular scientific as well as a wider public journalistic one. This follow-up activity has to do with opening a social debate, and posing the question of where we put the focus to transform the values we have as a society with the help of design. I think it is vital to reframe the role of the women who visit their family members in prisons, how they support the two families inside and outside the prison, suffering punishment without

being found guilty. It is fundamental to open and broaden a discussion about what happens to the family members, the visitors who can be wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, grandmothers, and what happens to the children in carrying out this situation. To provide tools to the family so that they may know and find a point of support in spaces designed for that purpose, and that society may allow itself to debate and empathize.

I hope my research and design proposal have broadened not only view on what the women with male relatives in prison are going through and provided a wider understanding what kind of support they and their children need, but it manages to give a new perspective of a group of people who deserve dignity, support and, most importantly of all, a life.

## Summary

The purpose of the thesis is to carry out an ethnographic fieldwork on female visitors in Argentinian men's prisons and propose solutions to their problems using the social design method. Most of the visitors are women because they are usually the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, etc. This takes place in a social context where the caretaker tasks are left only and only to the women of the family. This means that female visitors must take care of both the family outside and the family inside, whoever the detained male relative may be. The female visitors must follow a routine that is very heavy for them, taking care of the children, the house, the work, and organizing visits that sometimes take the whole week, which turns it into a full-time job. This happens in a social context that marginalizes and excludes them through social condemnation and the stigma of being a detainee's family member. The extension of punishment is onto them, though they haven't been found guilty.

My research question is about what kind of difficulties the social condemnation and everything related to prison presents for the female visitors who have relatives in prisons, what the journey of the female visitors in the Argentine federal prisons is like, what the weakest points of the journey are, and how I can contribute to improving the social context that surrounds them, and thus make their life better. I have approached the research question by using human centered and social design methodologies, that is founded by ethnographic research by carrying out fieldwork that was done to find the insights that have an importance for the participants of this thesis.

The fieldwork that was carried out was based on meeting with the participants weekly in the ACIFaD<sup>5</sup>, conducting semi-structured interviews with visitors, social workers, with the former director of visits and the current director of visits at the Federal Penitentiary Service that is responsible for all federal prisons, with the director of visits of the Ezeiza prison, conducting participant observation, and carrying out an

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<sup>5</sup> Association of Relatives of Detainees (Asociación Civil de Familiares de Detenidos) is a NGO aimed at working with relatives of detainees.

observation work on the process of visits that the visitors must go through in the Argentine federal prison of Ezeiza.

In my work, I have opened the view of the Federal Penitentiary Service, which describes the phases of visitation admission with exact steps. On the other hand, I analysed the perception of that same admission from female visitors - the result was that the women perceived more phases than the prison service. They described that they had to do the shopping, cook food, make food deposits, take care of their children, work, continue with the judicial follow-up, and that all this fell only on their shoulders.

With ACIFaD, we conducted a long co-design session, which was divided into two blocks: in the first, the participants were able to attach the feelings and emotions they felt during the journey in and out of prison, and in the second, they also attached ideas on how it could be improved based on their needs. Among them was improving the prison's visitor visit system, as it was long, slow, and sometimes a bit hostile.

Through an improvement in the service of admission there is an upgrade in their weekly routine. The whole prison visiting area is going to be turned into a cozier space, more adapted to family meetings. These improvements will reduce to half the steps it takes today in the admission visit process. There will also be more updated information available online, and notifications alerting them of any changes with the visit.

They also mentioned possibilities for institutions to provide support to children, adolescents, and families to give them tools on how to deal with this situation. This was the main motivation to work with a holistic support system, not only the visitor journey that was my initial aim. This holistic system should support the female visitors in providing them with a space of support and an environment where they can share their frustrations, emotions, challenges and perhaps feel a little better.

It is vital that the women find activities outside of what has to do with the daily routine of the sustaining of these two families outside and inside the prison, that they could relieve stress and, with different activities, reduce the feeling of social condemnation. To tighten family bonds, more online calls should be allowed with the detainee,

allowing especially the underage children, but also other family members to have a more casual contact with a family member. Teachers and managers of educational institutions should be more prepared for dealing with these issues so that the children feel safer and better in kindergartens and schools. In addition, a social debate is to be opened, from the anthropologic and design perspective that surely gives a new point of view to the Argentine society.

## Kokkuvõte

Selle magistritöö eesmärk on etnograafilise välitöö kaudu uurida Argentiina meestevanglate naisküllastajate kasutajakogemust ja pakkuda lahendusi nende probleemidele kasutades inimkeskse disaini meetodit. Suurem osa meestevanglate küllastajaid on naised, sest nad on vangi emad, abikaasad, tütreid, õed, vanaemad jne. Ladina-Ameerika sotsiaalne kontekst tingib, et naised ja ainult naised vastutavad peresiseste hooldusülesannete eest. See tähendab, et nad peavad hooldust kandma nii vanglas oleva mehe - hoolimata sellest, millises sugulusidemes see mees naisele on - eest kui vabaduses viibiva pere eest. Vanglate naisküllastajad peavad järgima väga rasket rutiini, hoolitsedes ühelt poolt kodu, laste, oma töö ja teiste kohustuste eest, ja teiselt poolt tegeleda enamasti terve nädala võtvate ettevalmistustega vanglaküllastuseks, mida võiks koormuse poolest nimetada ka täiskohaga tööks. See juhtub sotsiaalses kontekstis, kus neid marginaliseeritakse sotsiaalse halvaks ja stigma tõttu, mis langeb osaks vangi pereliikmetele. Nii laieneb karistus ka neile, kuigi neid ei ole milleski süüdi mõistetud.

Minu uurimisküsimus puudutab terviklikult kõiki probleeme, mida sotsiaalne halvaks ja kõik, mis puudutab vanglat, põhjustab nendele naistele, kellel on sugulasi vanglas, milline on nende küllastajatekond Argentiina föderaalsetes meestevanglates, millised on suurimad probleemid nende teekonnal, kuidas saan ma nende ümber olevat sotsiaalset konteksti muuta, et nende elu oleks parem. Ma lähenen sellele küsimusele inimkeskse ja sotsiaalse disaini meetodit kasutades, millele laob aluse etnograafiline välitöö, mille eesmärk oli leida uurimistöös osalenud naiste jaoks olulisi asjaolusid.

Välitöö viidi läbi vangis olevaid tehes osalusvaatlust naisi ühendava mittetulundusühingu ACIFaD koosolekutel, läbi viies semi-struktureeritud intervjuusid naisküllastajate, sotsiaaltöötajate, Föderaalsete Vanglateenistuse endise ja praeguse külustusjuhiga, Ezeiza vangla külustusjuhiga, ja viies läbi vaatlust vanglaküllastuste turvakontrollis, mille küllastajad peavad Ezeiza föderaalvanglas.

Töös on avatud Föderaalsete Vanglateenistuse vaate külastusprotsessile, milles on samm-sammult ära kirjeldatud turvakontroll. Teiselt poolt on analüüsitud vanglate naiskülastajate taju samast protsessist - tuli välja, et osalenud naised tajusid vangla-administratsioonist palju rohkem faase. Nemed kirjeldasid tervet oma nädalat, mille jooksul pidid poes käima, toitu valmistama, toidu kohale viima, aga samal ajal ka tegelema lastega, käima tööl, tegelema vanglakaristusest tulenevate juriidiliste teemadega. Kõik see langeb ainult nende õlgadele.

Viisime ACIFaDiga läbi ühisdisaini töötoa, mis oli jagatud kahte ossa. Esimeses said osalejad kirjeldada oma külastajateekonda ning vanglas sees ja sellest välja jääva eluga seonduvaid tundeid ja emotsioone. Teises töötoas said nad pakkuda välja ideid, kuidas parandada külastajateekonda vastavalt nende vajadustele. Suur osa ettepanekutest puudutas vangla külastuste korda, mis on ajamahukas, aeglane ja vahetevahel vaenulik.

Töös välja pakutud edasiarendused kaudu vanglakülastustekonda paraneb nende nädalane rutiin. Edasiarendused vahendavad külastustekonna sammude arvu poole võrra. Kogu vangla külastusteruumi muudetakse inimlikumaks ja sobivamaks perekondlikeks kohtumisteks. Samuti pakuti välja ajakohase teabe esitamine vanglasüsteemi veebis ja otseteated telefonile, mis annavad märku, kui miski peaks külastussüsteemis muutuma.

Töötubades osalejad mainisid samuti vajadust, et riiklikud institutsioonid toetaksid rohkem nende lapsi, teismelisi noori ja perekonda tervikuna, et anda neile rohkem võimalusi, kuidas keerulise olukorraga toime tulla. Need vajadused olid peamiseks motivaatoriks, et töötada mitte ainult külastajatekonnaga, vaid tervikliku tugisüsteemiga. See peaks toetama naiskülastajaid, pakkudes neile keskkonda, kus nad saavad jagada oma frustratsioone, emotsioone ja väljakutseid ning mis aitab neil end ehk veidi paremini tunda.

Samuti on ülioluline, et need naised saaksid leida tegevusi väljaspool oma igapäevast kahe - vanglas ja vanglast väljas oleva - ülalpidamist, et nad saaksid stressi maandada ja erinevate tegevuste kaudu vähendada sotsiaalse halvaksapanu tunnet. Selleks, et tugevneksid perekondlikud sidemed, võiks lubada rohkem videokõnesid, et ennekõike

alaealised lapsed, aga ka teised perekonnaliikmed saaksid suhelda oma pere meesliikmega tavapärasemas olukorras. Õpetajad ja haridusasutuste juhid peaksid olema rohkem ette valmistatud selliste perede teemadega tegelema, nii et nende lapsed tunneksid end lasteaedades ja koolides turvalisemalt ja paremini. Kõigele sellele lisaks avab see magistritöö ja selle põhjal kirjutatavad ajaleheartiklid sotsiaalse debati antropoloogilisest ja disaini vaatepunktist, mis avab teema Argentiina ühiskonna jaoks täiesti värskest vaatepunktist.

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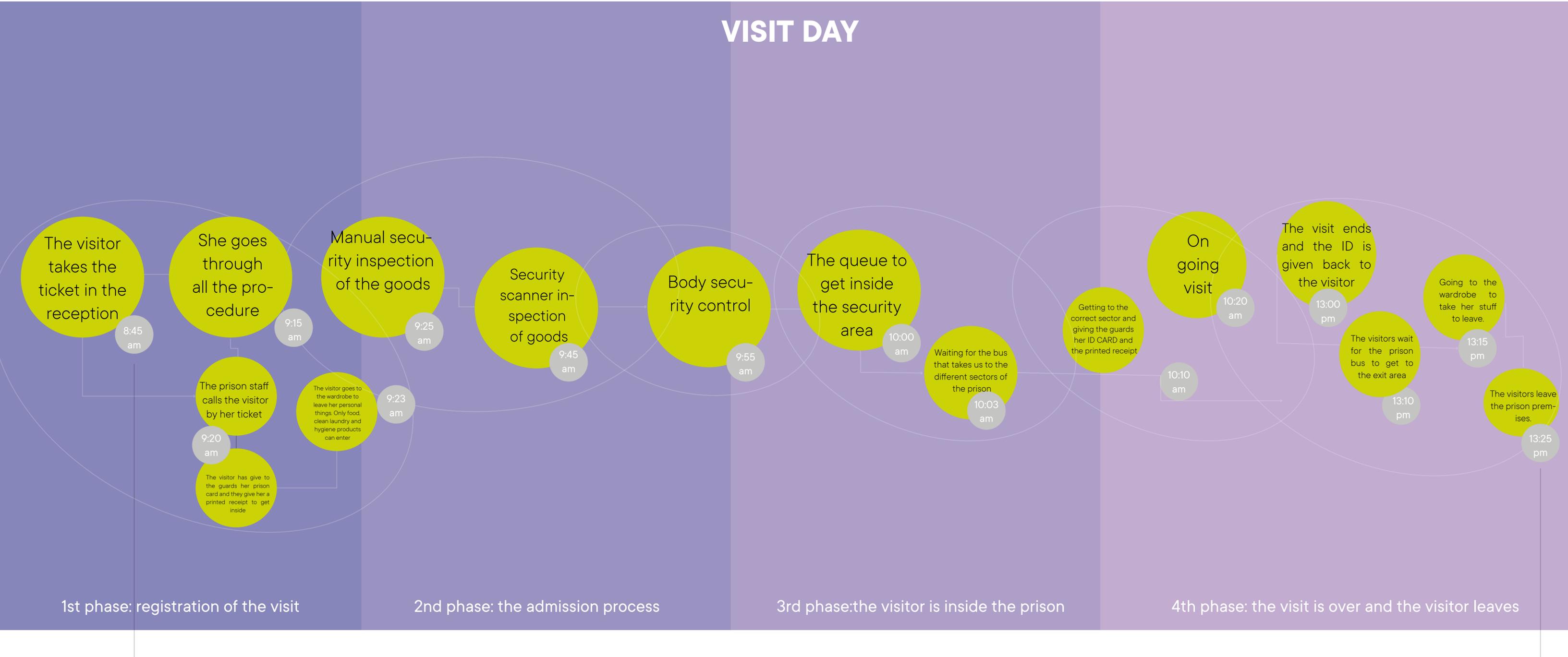
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# Appendix No 1: How the prison service executes the protocol

## VISIT DAY

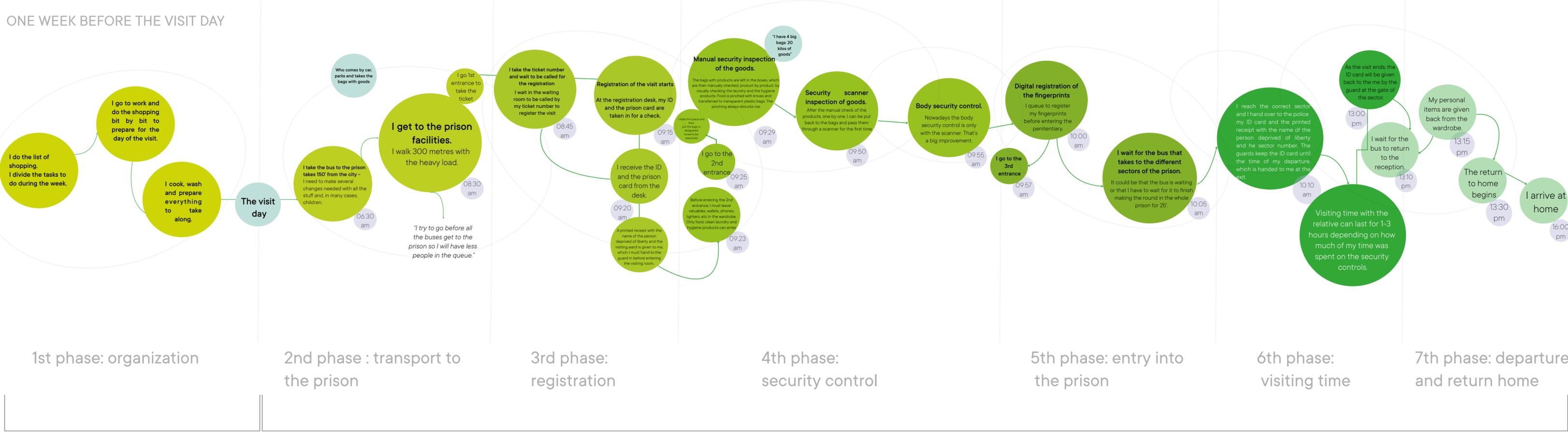


approx 5/6 hrs

# Appendix No 2: How the female visitors experience it

## VISIT DAY

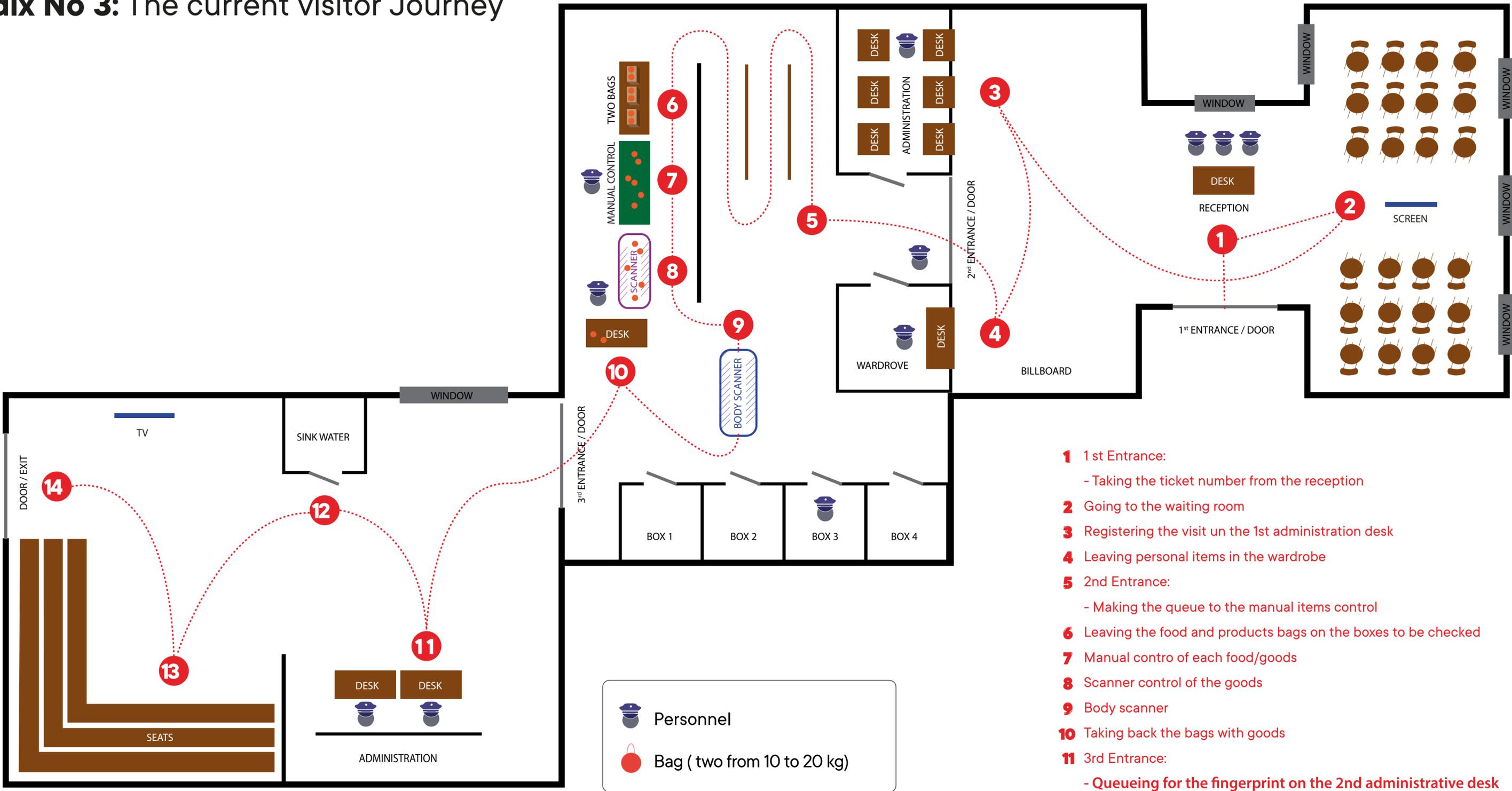
ONE WEEK BEFORE THE VISIT DAY



A week

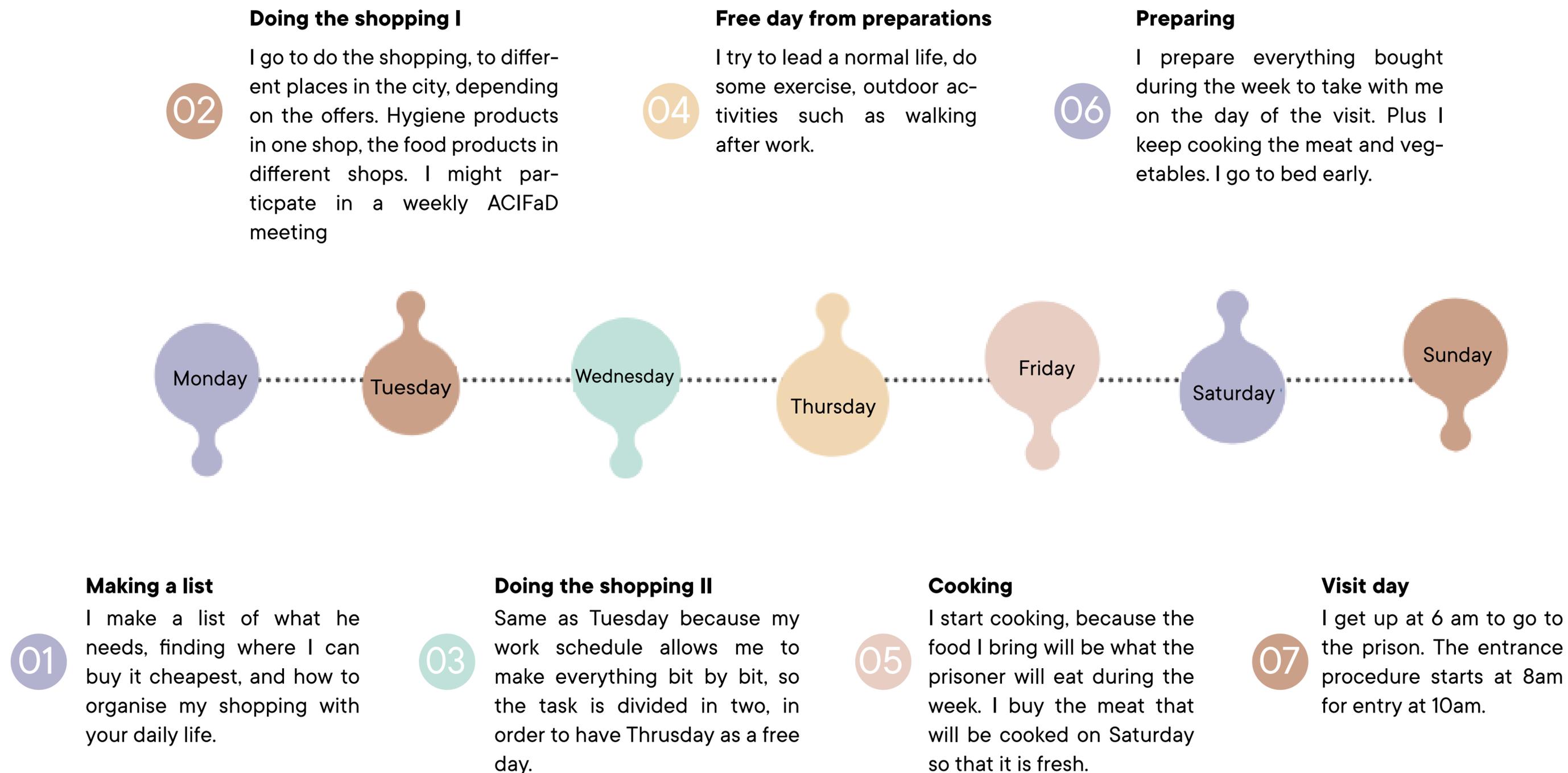
Approx 10 hrs

# Appendix No 3: The current visitor Journey



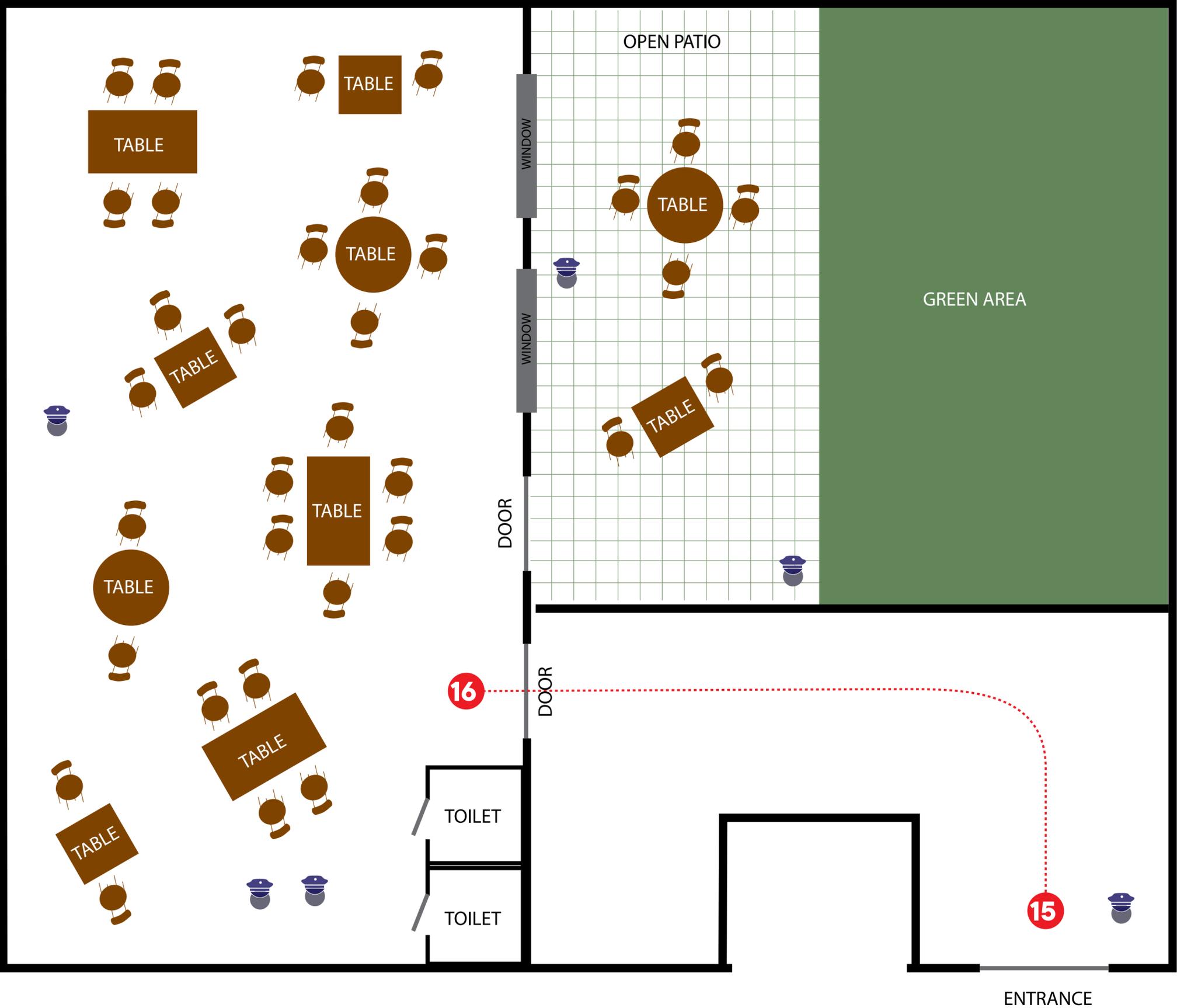
- 1** 1st Entrance:
  - Taking the ticket number from the reception
- 2** Going to the waiting room
- 3** Registering the visit on the 1st administration desk
- 4** Leaving personal items in the wardrobe
- 5** 2nd Entrance:
  - Making the queue to the manual items control
- 6** Leaving the food and products bags on the boxes to be checked
- 7** Manual control of each food/goods
- 8** Scanner control of the goods
- 9** Body scanner
- 10** Taking back the bags with goods
- 11** 3rd Entrance:
  - Queueing for the fingerprint on the 2nd administrative desk
- 12** If the digitized fingerprint doesn't work, the tint one will be used: a sink to wash the hands with water
- 13** Waiting area for the bus
- 14** Leaving the waiting area to take the bus to the different sectors

## Appendix No 4: Preparing for the prison visit during the week

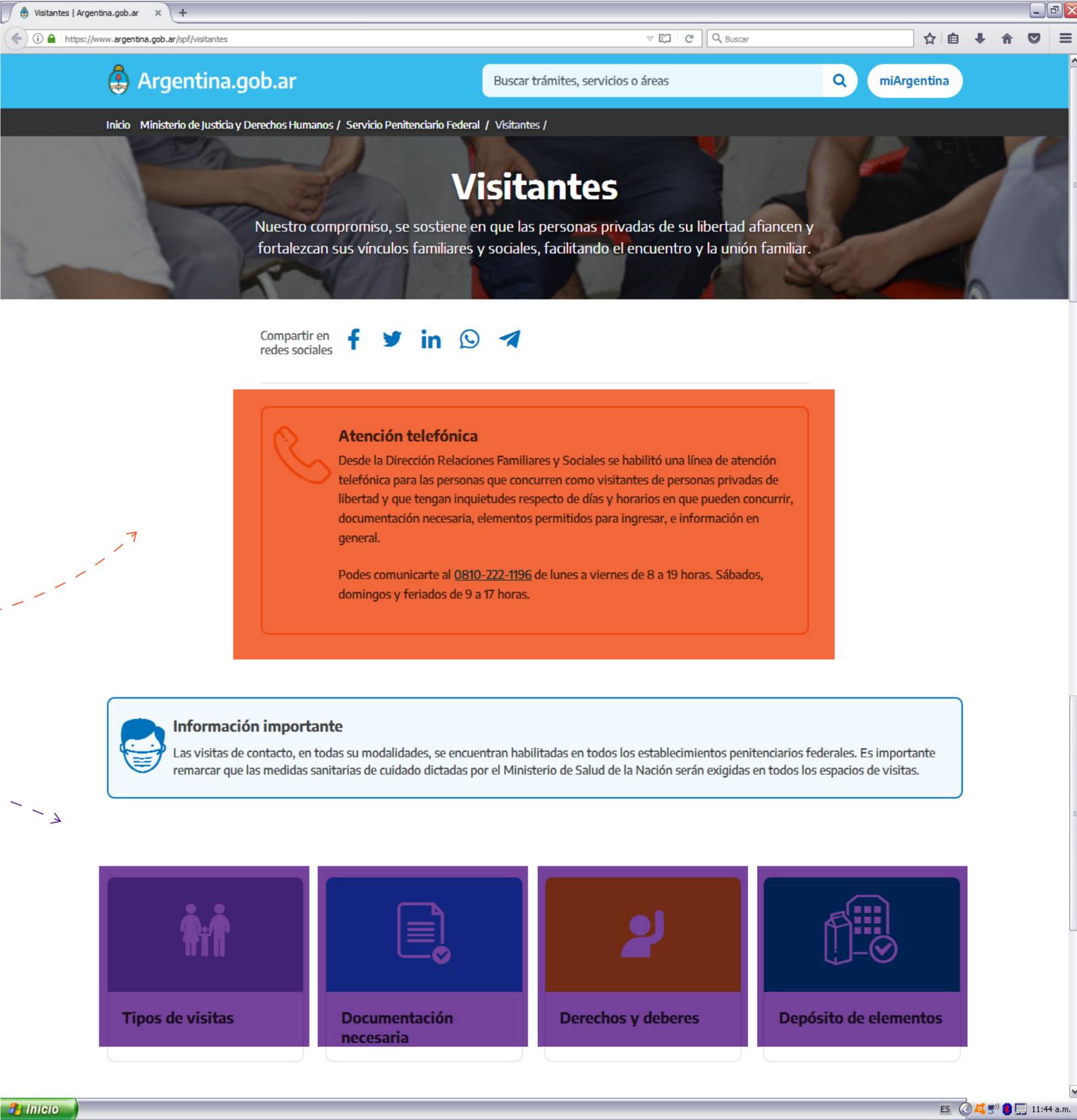


# Appendix No 5: The current visiting area inside the prison

- 15** Police receive the ticket and visitor' ID
- 16** Visitor gets to the visit area and set the table to wait for the detained

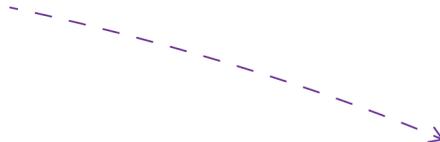
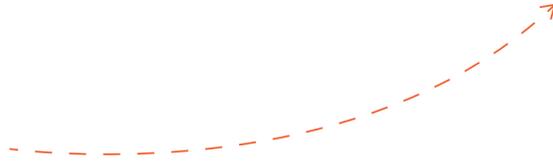


# Appendix No 6: The current Web



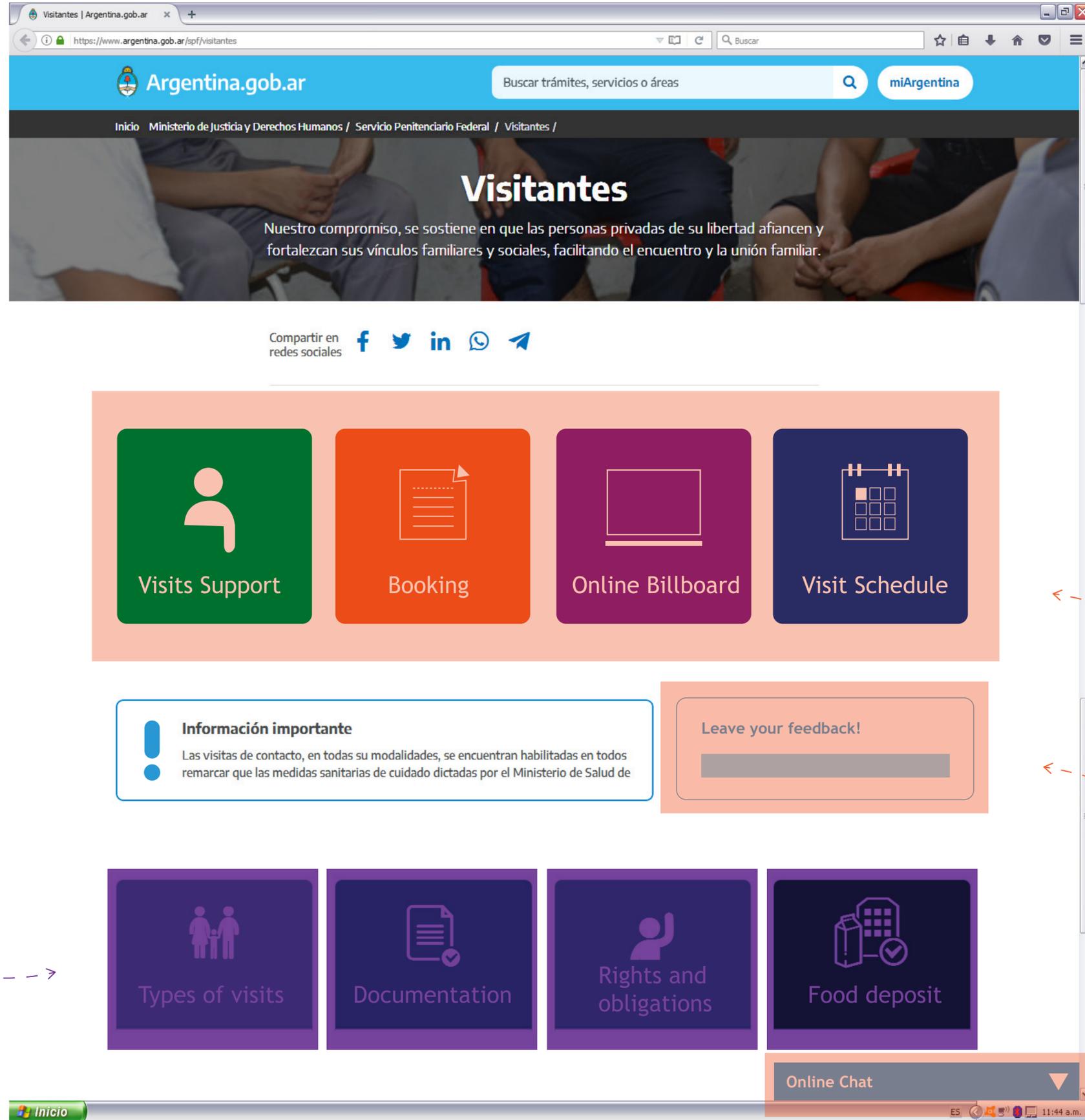
ACTIVE

PASIVE

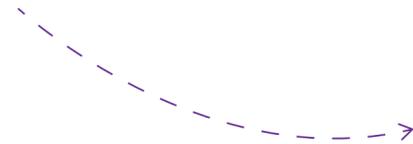


- Tipos de visitas
- Documentación necesaria
- Derechos y deberes
- Depósito de elementos

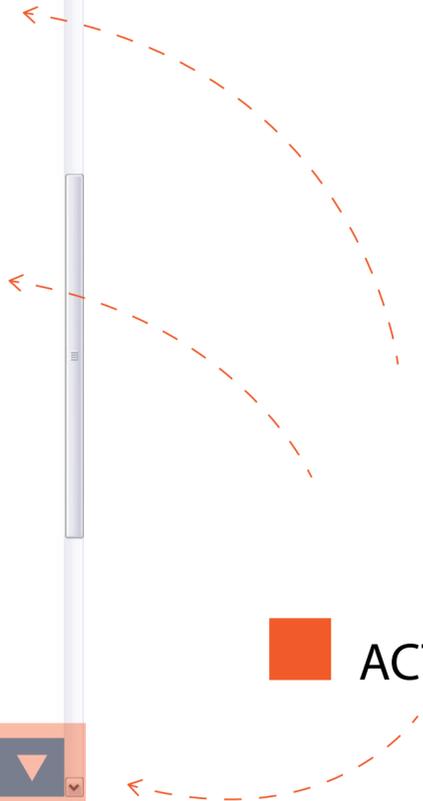
# Appendix No 7: Proposal for a New Web



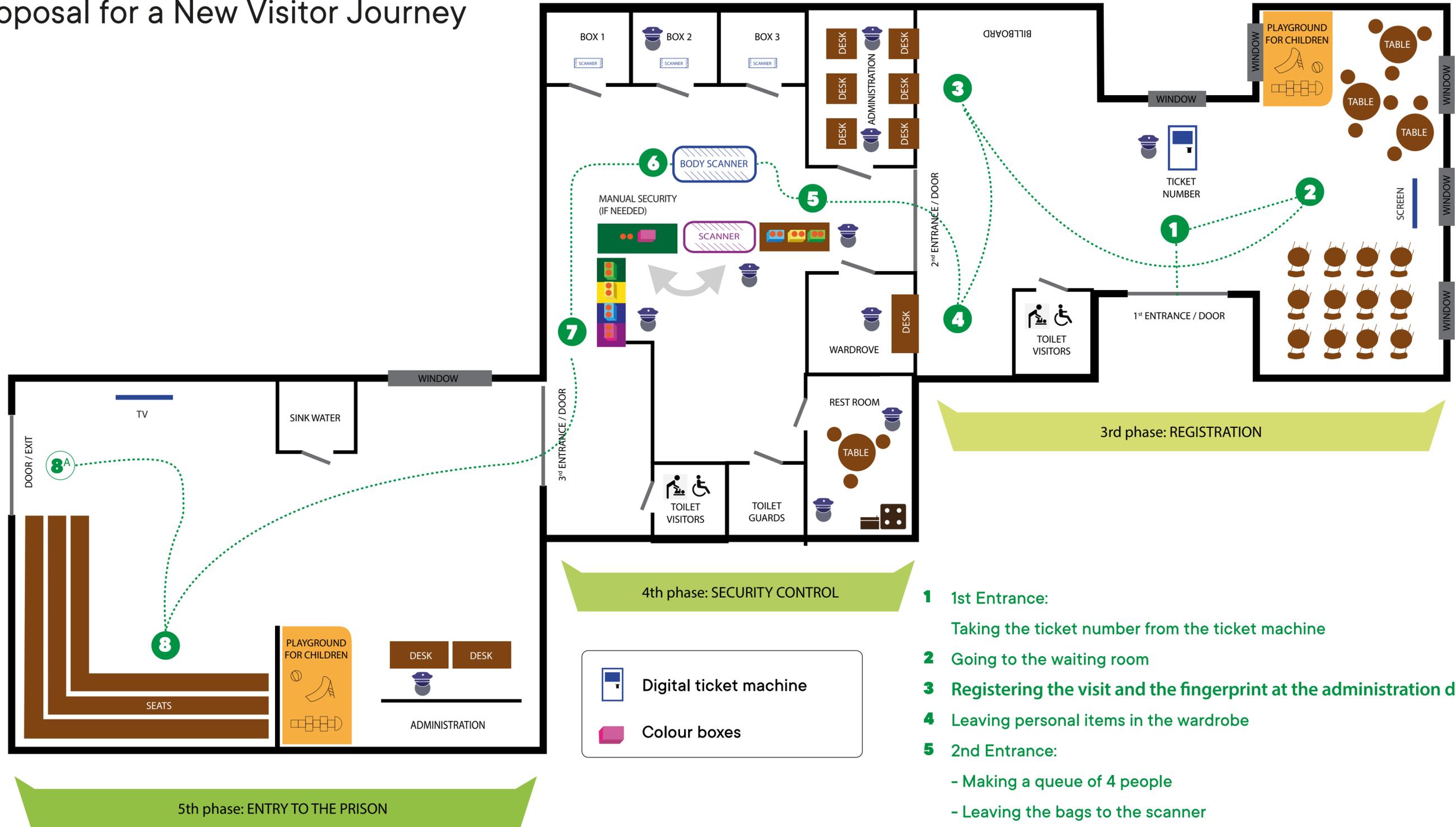
PASIVE



ACTIVE



# Appendix No 8: Proposal for a New Visitor Journey



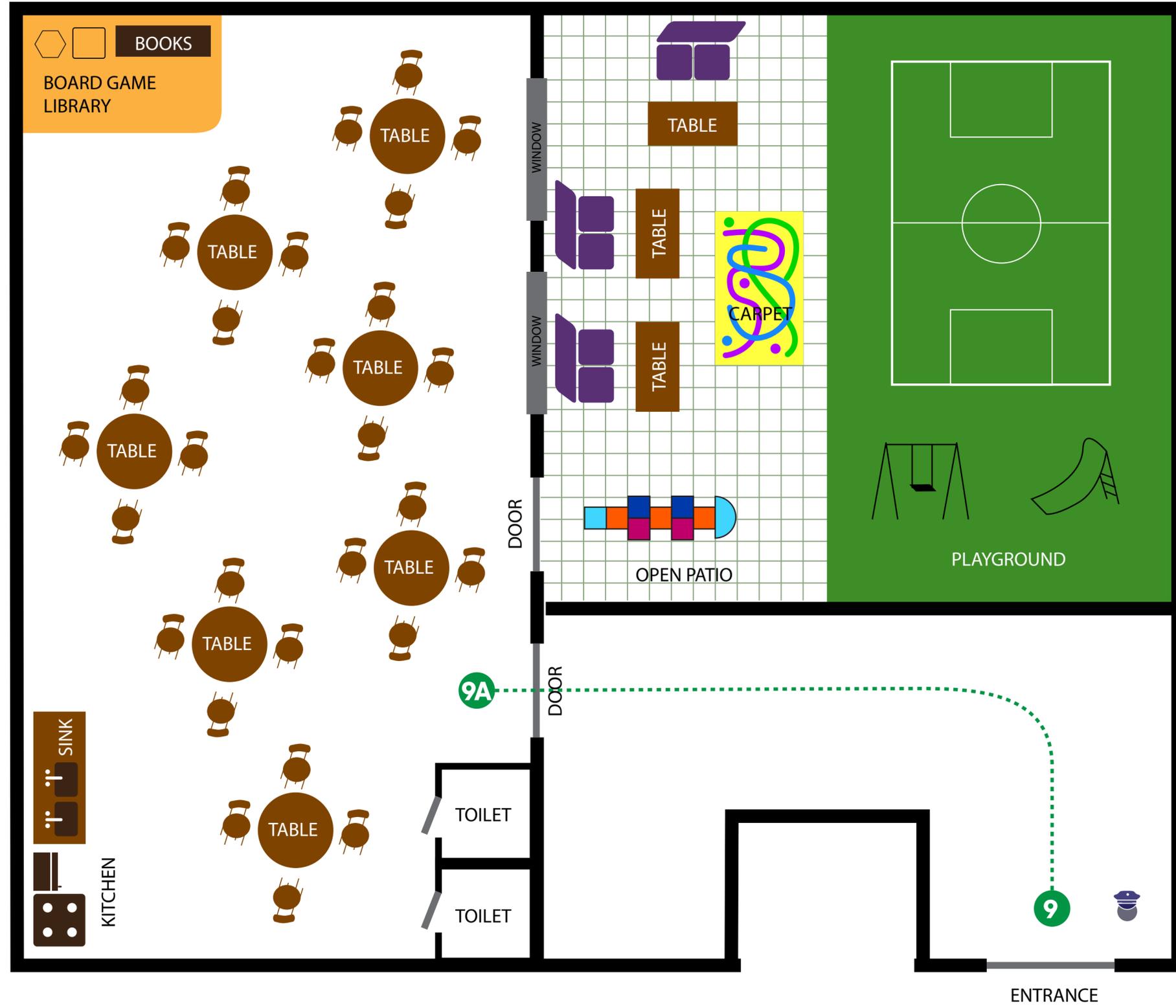
 Digital ticket machine

 Colour boxes

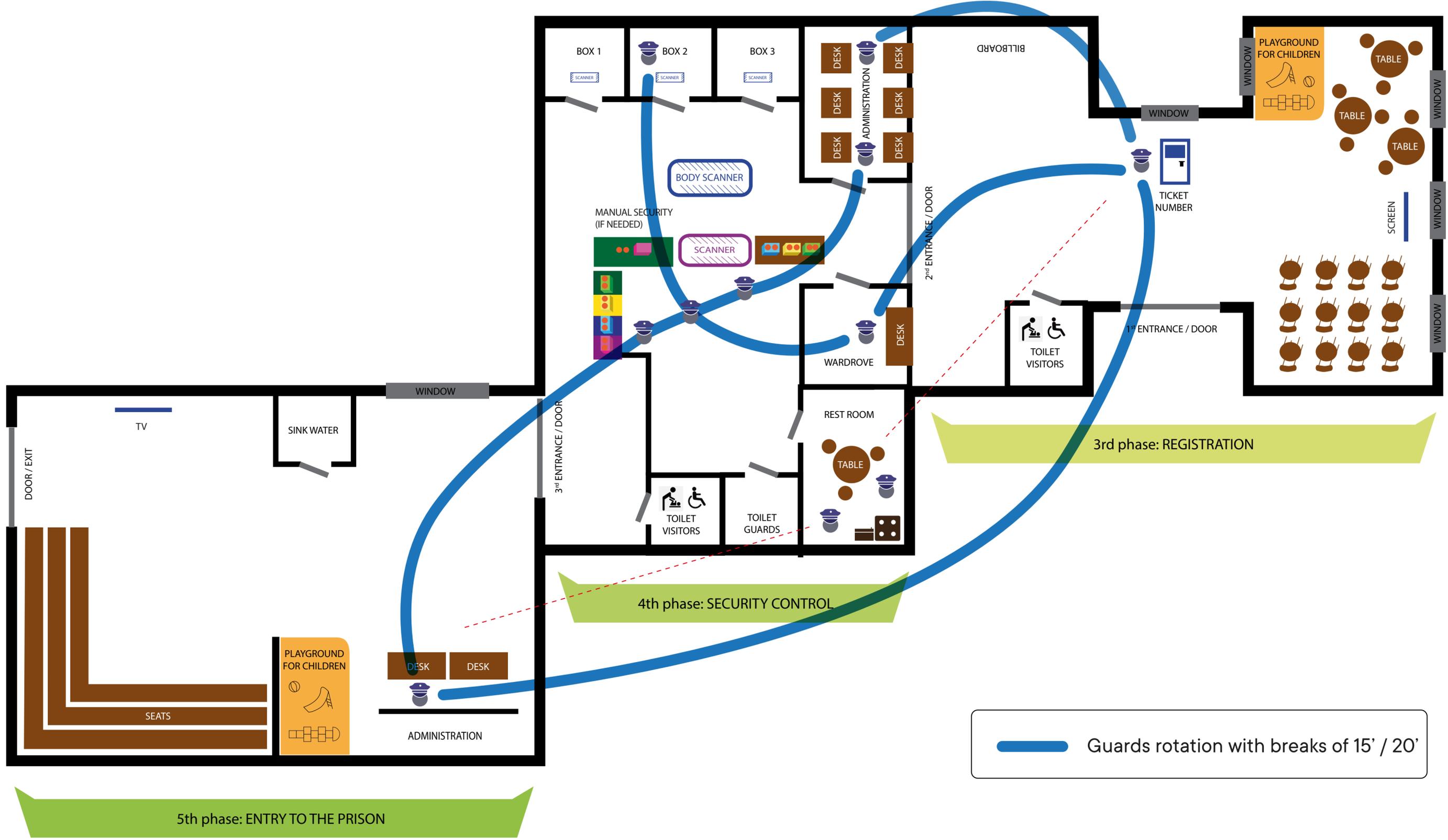
- 1** 1st Entrance:  
Taking the ticket number from the ticket machine
- 2** Going to the waiting room
- 3** Registering the visit and the fingerprint at the administration desk
- 4** Leaving personal items in the wardrobe
- 5** 2nd Entrance:  
- Making a queue of 4 people  
- Leaving the bags to the scanner  
- Manual control of each food/item (if it needed)
- 6** Body scanner
- 7** Taking back the bags with goods
- 8** Leaving the waiting area to take the bus to the visit sector  
8A - Taking the bus

# Appendix No 9: Proposal for a new visiting area inside the prison

9 Police receive the ticket and visitor' ID  
9A Visitor gets to the visit area and set the table to wait for the detained



# Appendix No 10: Proposal for a New Guards Journey



# Appendix No 11: Colmena

1

## Weekly meetings with ACIFaD

Maintain weekly interspersed meetings, either face-to-face or online with ACIFaD.

Set up a psychological support programme for women and their families.

## Psychological support

2



**ACIFaD**

**Líneas de acompañam  
apoyo y orientación ei  
mental**

Ciudad de Buenos Aires y Provincia de Buenos Aires c  
temia COVID-19.

Compartir en  
redes sociales     

3

## Activities

Activities that serve as a way of distraction from their daily routine. These already exist for the detainees but not for their families.

It will be administered by ACIFaD who will be responsible for screening volunteers through an admission form to carry out their workshop.

## Volunteer programme

4

