

CIMI Medina Azahara - Spain

Introduction



CIMI Medina Azahara is a juvenile detention facility (in Spanish: Centro Para Menores Infractores) in Córdoba, Spain. The facility was founded in 1991 and is part of the Diagrama Foundation. The Diagrama Foundation has more than 35 secure educational centers throughout Europe. They aim to support vulnerable people at risk of social exclusion. To achieve this with young people, they believe that family involvement and support is the key to the rehabilitation of young offenders. CIMI Medina Azahara is described as a re-education center that focuses mainly on promoting autonomy. Therefore, they use different zones, each with its own level of autonomy.

Scale

CIMI Medina Azahara can not be described as a small-scale facility because it accommodates 87 people. The residents are divided into different zones. Depending on the security level, they are given more autonomy and reside in zones 1, 2 or 3. In addition, each zone is divided into different units.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small-scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:

The target group in CIMI Medina Azahara consists of male juveniles from 14 to 18 years old. Admission can be extended up to 22 years in certain cases. This regional placement facility is specifically designed for young individuals who have become involved with the youth justice system. The facility serves both remanded and sentenced young people. Approximately 83% of the residents are sentenced, indicating that they have been given a formal judgment, while the remaining 17% are in remand, awaiting trial or legal proceedings.

The profiles of the young people admitted to Medina Azahara are often characterized by various challenges. These include a history of non-attendance at school, a tendency towards violent behaviour, attention deficit

hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), frequent cannabis use, occasional cocaine and designer drug use, chaotic family structures, involvement in gangs, experiences of sexual exploitation, self-harming behaviour, and mental health issues. Although CIMI Medina Azahara attends to the needs of young individuals facing various challenges, they do not offer intensive therapeutic interventions.

Forms of security:

The security framework in CIMI Medina Azahara is mainly based on relational security, which is characterized by trust, autonomy and responsibility. The staff acts from the principle of trust rather than distrust and interacts in a friendly and warm way with the residents. Relational security is supplemented by static and procedural security measures. In general, the static security is not very visible throughout the facility.



However, the amount of security measures depends on the area in the facility where the resident resides. In Zone 1, the juveniles have the least autonomy and the least privacy. Each unit in this zone is required by the state government to have a security guard present, dressed in uniform.

There are also other house rules depending on the zone where the resident lives. By example, in Zone 1 young people are unable to venture outside into the community. However, in Zone 2, there are development units where residents enjoy more freedom both inside and outside the facility. Moreover, in the autonomy unit, residents have even greater flexibility to move around both inside and outside the premises.

Activities:



At CIMI Medina Azahara, residents are empowered to schedule their own appointments, taking on a sense of responsibility and autonomy. The focus in the facility is on providing meaningful activities both inside the facility and in the community, depending on the zone in which the young person resides. The residents engage in various activities such as attending school or participating in employment opportunities. They may

also be involved in the maintenance of the facility itself. It is the norm for everyone to participate in the

daily program without exceptions. If the resident does not go to school, it is mandatory to work. The facility emphasizes the importance of reintegration into the job market and thus invests primarily in teaching practical job skills to the residents. Residents receive wages for their work, although this depends on whether they are employed outside the facility. CIMI Medina Arahara also offers the opportunity to engage in voluntary work, sports activities and group cooking activities, while in some cases, they can also prepare their own meals.



CIMI Medina Azahara emphasizes family involvement, which is why residents are allowed to receive visits from their network, including family and friends, whenever possible. With this opportunity, they contribute to maintaining social connections and support.

Community-integration

Location and architecture:

First impression of a visitor: "It looks like a Spanish holiday home (with a fence). A lot of green and light colours. Nice vibe. Everyone interacted very informal and friendly".

CIMI Medina Azahara is located on the western outskirts of the municipality of Córdoba, in Andalusia, in the South of Spain. Córdoba has an average of 322 327 inhabitants (2021).¹ The facility is located approximately 8 kilometers

west of the historic center. The name of the facility refers to the archaeological site, Medina Azahara, which is an archaeological site that showcases the ruins of the palace city built during the 10th century by the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba. Though not geographically a part of a community, the idea is to integrate with the community as much as possible. CIMI Medina Azahara is not accessible by public transportation.

The residents in CIMI Medina Azahara are divided into different zones. Each resident has their own sleeping room and bathroom. There is a shared living room and kitchen in each zone. In addition, the property has plenty of space for leisure activities. The center of the facility consists of a big garden and they have an outdoor swimming pool. They also have a visitor's room.

¹Córdoba (Córdoba, Andalucía, Spain) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map, Location, Weather and Web Information. (2021). *City Population*. Retrieved June 20th, 2023, from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/spain/andalucia/c%C3%B3rdoba/14021__c%C3%B3rdoba/

Interaction with the community:

There is interaction between the facility and the community. The residents can participate in activities outside the facility, such as education or work. CIMI Medina Azahara also has several partnerships with local organizations.

CIMI Medina Azahara

Founded: 1991

Capacity: 87

Security level: High – Medium -

Low

Nearest city/town: Córdoba
(Spain)

Nature of interaction: Visit by
RJN (29/08/2022)

Publicity/ read more

- About Diagrama Foundation at the official website of Fundación Diagrama:

Inicio. (n.d.). *Fundación Diagrama*. Retrieved June 19th, 2023, from <https://www.fundaciondiagrama.es/>