

PRISON OF PEACE – GREECE

*Teaching Communication & Conflict Resolution
To Inmates & Prison Personnel*

**2.5-YEAR REPORT
(NOVEMBER 2016 – MAY 2019)**

Executive Summary

Violence often occurs when people do not have the skills to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and productive manner. Many of us, especially within the prison community, often lack or underuse these vital skills, leaving coercion and violence as the only choice for problem solving. As a result, prisons often breed greater criminality among inmates, all of whom will eventually be released.

Through its workshops, Prison of Peace (PoP) teaches participants communication skills and peaceful, non-violent ways to resolve conflicts. By teaching these skills to inmates, the program also prepares them to reintegrate into their families and communities upon their release, preventing recidivism; by teaching the skills to prison personnel, the program helps them to better cope with their daily duties, saving them the time and valuable resources spent in reoccurring violent conflict. Prison of Peace is the only known program in the world that trains and certifies inmates and prison personnel to be mediators in the prison environment.

Prison of Peace participants engage in an intentional process of acting in service to others through workshops that total over 80 hours of in-class instruction.

In addition to participating in Prison of Peace workshops, participants learn to support new students as mentors and licensed trainers. Prison of Peace is working to ensure full sustainability in all of the prisons in which it operates by providing its participants with the necessary skills to run the program with limited involvement of the Prison of Peace staff.

Progress in Greece since 2016

Since its first implementation in late 2016, Prison of Peace:

has delivered:

- **17** Circle Keeper trainings
- **9** Peacemaker trainings
- **4** Mediation trainings

In over **750** hours of training and follow-up sessions

has certified:

- Over **110** Circle Keepers
- Over **80** Peacemakers

While another:

- **42** Circle Keepers and
- **33** Mediators

are currently in certification process.

Through the Prison of Peace workshops, participants have held:

- Over **900** value-based group discussions (Peace Circles), engaging over **5,400** participants (in prison and beyond)
- Over **300** results-based listening sessions for problem solving and conflict management, engaging hundreds of individuals (in prison and beyond).

Between April 2018 and June 2019, Prison of Peace Greece more than doubled its activity, increasing the number of prisons it serves from four to nine, and adding over 150 new participants to its program.

The Program

The Workshops

Prison of Peace workshops train **inmates and prison personnel** to understand the roots of conflict as they guide others in problem solving and conflict resolution.



Circle Keeper (16 hours)

The Circle Keeper workshop provides participants with the foundational principles and skills of the entire Prison of Peace program: Restorative Justice, with a focus on the victim's needs and personal accountability; reflective listening; and Peace Circles. They foster understanding and collaboration, where respect, equality and dignity are honored.

Peacemaker (24 hours)

Building on the Circle Keeper workshop, the Peacemaker workshop includes creating durable agreements, resolving individual conflicts and de-escalating strong emotions (theirs and others'). The workshop also introduces participants to the principles of moral disengagement to help them deal with others who are morally disconnected and examine how moral disengagement has affected their decision making.



Mediation (40 hours)

Mediation training introduces tools for de-escalating the conflicts of others. Participants are required to satisfactorily complete a role-play mediation in class (observed by instructors), an additional five Peace circles and a minimum of three mediations in prison with individuals not enrolled in the program.

Both inmates and prison personnel are often aware of emerging conflicts among their peers. Mediation training allows them to prevent and de-escalate potential violence within the prison environment, while also providing them with a platform for positive contributions to their community, saving resources and creating opportunities for peace.

Supporting Others

Mentor

The Prison of Peace program is also designed to foster and enhance leadership skills, beginning with mentoring other PoP students. Once participants complete a workshop, they are automatically included in all future workshops as Mentors to new students. Through mentorship, participants review their skills and begin to learn how to help others in acquiring or enhancing this skill set.

Trainer

At each workshop level, participants who successfully complete the workshop can be trained as trainers, earning a license to teach the curriculum. The progression away for Prison of Peace staff trainers to reliance on participant trainers ensures a sustainable program.

In order to become a licensed trainer, participants receive advanced training including theory and techniques for workshop leadership, intensive review of all curriculum modules and observed presentation of each module. Trainers, working in teams, must then teach a minimum of three full workshops under the observation of Prison of Peace staff before receiving their licenses. Licenses must be renewed every three years and trainers must teach at least two cohorts every year to ensure that their license remains valid.



Reach & Progress

Program in Greece

Prison of Peace was created in California, in 2010, at the request of a woman serving a sentence of “life without parole” at Valley State Prison for Women. The program started in Greece in November 2016 at Eleonas Thivon Prison for Women.

The table below highlights the facilities in which Prison of Peace operates in Greece, illustrating the large program expansion that began in April 2018. During this time, thanks to grants provided by the AAA-ICDR Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Prison of Peace quintupled the number of cohorts and more than doubled the number of prisons in which it operates.

Greek Facilities in which Prison of Peace operates (or from which members of the staff participate in Prison of Peace trainings):

Facility	Type	Program Start Date	Participants	Workshop Level ¹
Eleonas Thivon	Women	November 2016	Inmates	CK, PM, T
Farm Prison of Tiryntha	Men	March 2017	Inmates	CK, PM
Malandrino	Men	October 2017	Inmates, Prison Personnel	CK, PM, T
Diavata Thessalonikis	Men	January 2018	Inmates, Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M
Domokos	Men	October 2018	Prison Personnel	CK
Ioannina	Men	October 2018	Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M
Trikala	Men	November 2018	Inmates, Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M
Volos	Men	February 2019	Prison Personnel	CK
Larissa	Men	February 2019	Prison Personnel	CK

Number of Participants Reached

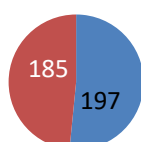
Since its first implementation in Greece in 2016, Prison of Peace has focused on teaching men and women who live or work in prison to reduce violence in their environment and share these skills with their peers and others.

In Greece, where a life sentence equals to 15 years of imprisonment and two life sentences equal to 22 years of imprisonment, all inmates are eventually released. As more inmate participants leave prison, they are taking to their communities what they've learned; at the same time, prison personnel participants share their skills not only with their co-workers, but also with their families and their communities. Thus, the Prison of Peace curriculum extends well beyond Greece's correctional institutions.

The size of cohorts and the speed at which Prison of Peace workshops are completed depend on administrative, scheduling and classroom constraints, as well as inmate and prison personnel interest. As a result, the program has been rolled out at different rates with differing classroom sizes across the country.

Participants in Workshops

■ Inmates ■ Prison Personnel



Attendance

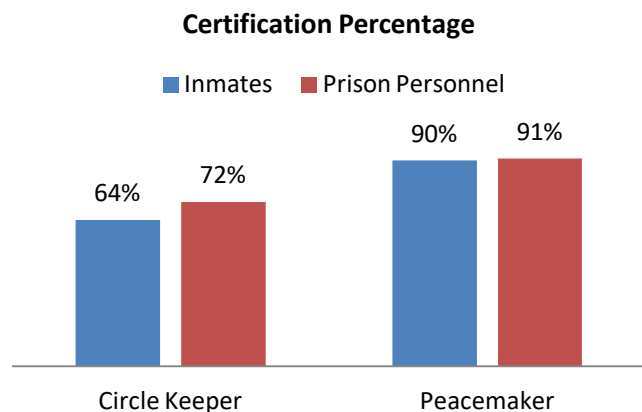
In its 2.5 years of implementation, Prison of Peace has engaged **over 200 participants**, many of whom have participated in *more than one trainings*, as mentors to their peers and / or as they progressed to the next Prison of Peace Training level. In overall, new students, mentors and trainee trainers combined, over **380 individuals** participated in the PoP training

cohorts (including inmates, security officers, prison social workers, prison psychologists, prison administrators and prison school teachers).

¹ CK Circle Keeper, PM Peacemaker, M Mediation, T Trainer

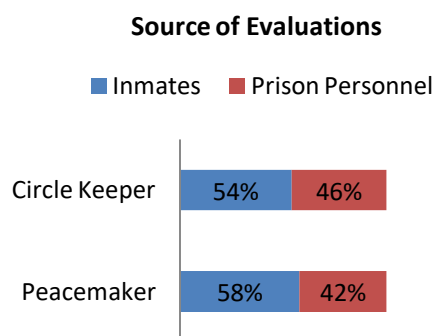
Certification

Upon successful completion of all training requirements and homework, participants are certified as Prison of Peace Circle Keepers, Peacemakers and Mediators, depending on the training. As shown in the chart on the right, once engaged in the program during the first level of training (Circle Keeper), participants tend to take part in subsequent trainings (Peacemaker) and receive certification. Mediator certificates are pending, as participants are completing their mediations.



Monitoring & Evaluation

The Prison of Peace team has seen some of the greatest transformations in communication and problem solving skills among the participants, a testament to how the Prison of Peace curriculum can be used to complement re-entry and rehabilitation processes.



In order to receive feedback, evaluate the success of the program and learn more about participants' experience with the curriculum, Prison of Peace participants complete an evaluation at the end of each workshop. Over **200 evaluations** have been completed in prisons across Greece during the reporting period. Highlights from the evaluations are below.

Circle Keeper

By introducing participants to Peace Circles and instructing them to conduct these circles outside of the classroom environment, the Circle Keeper workshop is designed to foster community and relationship building. As the Circle Keeper evaluation responses below illustrate, the workshop meets this objective, particularly as **75%** of respondents noted that more people are engaged in a positive course of action or behavior as a result of their participation in Prison of Peace.

Prison of Peace acknowledges that its influence on relationships between inmates and prison staff and administration is limited, however, **100%** of respondents noted changes in their relationships following the completion of the circle keeper workshop:

Circle Keeper Workshop Evaluation	Inmates	Prison Personnel	All Participants
After the training, I have a better understanding of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restorative Justice and Victim Needs Communication Skills in General Active Listening 	100%	100%	100%
The training has much usefulness in my personal life and community	100%	100%	100%
The training has high educational value	100%	100%	100%
The training helped me understand how communication skills impact my life	85%	100%	93%
I see some issues or ideas differently as a result of my participation in PoP	87%	78%	83%
I do things differently as a result of my participation in PoP	79%	83%	81%
More people are engaged in a positive course of action or behavior as a result of my participation in PoP	79%	70%	75%
Policies or practices are changing in my community, either among or between staff, administration and inmates, as a result of my participation in PoP	81%	54%	68%
I maintained or improved upon my personal and/or community growth throughout my participation in PoP	95%	96%	96%
Others see me differently as a result of my participation in PoP	68%	47%	58%
I see others differently as a result of my participation in PoP	84%	83%	84%

Peacemaker

The Peacemaker workshop requires personal reflection, as it teaches participants to address how their emotions may have been devalued in the past and how they may be devaluing the emotions of others. Through the Peacemaker workshop, participants also learn results-based listening. This skill allows them to apply the reflective listening skills developed in the Circle Keeper workshop to help their fellow human in prison and beyond to feel heard and understood, while guiding them to solve their own problems without offering advice or solutions.

As evaluation responses illustrate, the workshop is successful in helping maintain or improve personal and community growth. It also helps participants see themselves and members of their prison community differently. Most participants note a change in their attitude, behavior and ability to effectively interact with others, including their families.

Peacemaker Workshop Evaluation	Inmates	Prison Personnel	All Participants
After the training, I have a better understanding of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Skills in General • Active Listening • Results-based Listening • Agreement • Managing Strong Emotions 	100%	100%	100%
The training has much usefulness in my personal life and community	100%	100%	100%
The training has high educational value	100%	100%	100%
After the training I believe I have the skills necessary to be an effective problem solver	100%	100%	100%
I see some issues or ideas differently as a result of my participation in PoP	93%	74%	84%
I do things differently as a result of my participation in PoP	81%	83%	82%
More people are engaged in a positive course of action or behavior as a result of my participation in PoP	84%	74%	79%
Policies or practices are changing in my community, either among or between staff, administration and inmates, as a result of my participation in PoP	69%	63%	66%
I maintained or improved upon my personal and/or community growth throughout my participation in PoP	100%	93%	97%
Others see me differently as a result of my participation in PoP	78%	45%	62%
I see others differently as a result of my participation in PoP	90%	90%	90%

Mediation

Once they have learned, through results-based listening, to guide others in solving their own problems, the Mediation workshop teaches participants how to use this skill to de-escalate conflict. Through role-plays and scenarios written by inmates, participants learn the tools to resolve conflict between multiple parties without violence.

Although the first Prison of Peace Mediation workshops in Greece are **still in progress**, almost every participant states that the workshop is helping them more deeply understand how their communication skills impact their lives. As they report, this practical training provides them the tools to peacefully address conflict in prison.

Impact (Testimonials from inmates and prison personnel)

Since the first training, I can feel the change in the way I deal with conflicts in the prison where I work and also in my wider circle. I am really looking forward to participating in the next training.

It is one of the most important trainings for our workplace. The way we communicate and manage strong emotions improves the prison climate among inmates and prison staff.

I found it to be extremely useful in my daily life (in my workplace and my family). Every member of the prison staff should undergo this training; not only does it offer more insight but it improves our communication skills.

It is a legacy that always stays with you. Even in prison, one can learn valuable things for their life and benefit from them

I noticed a big change in myself and my way of thinking. My friends are curious to know more about this program

During this training I learned new things; I was able to improve my way of thinking and my behavior towards other people. I learned to respect and to carefully listen to the other. I can now be of service to others that might need my help.

With this training, I learned to better contain and control myself, to manage my anger more easily, to listen to the other and to find solutions with them, without engaging in conflict. Also, I learned to remain calm and to help others in finding a proper solution to their dispute.

Prison of Peace is a one-way street for resolving conflict in prison. It would be wonderful if all inmates were taught these skills that would be of help to them and to all of us.

In my eyes, this program helps participants acquire practical skills in order to deal with explosive situations in prison – my workplace.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the good you are doing to us through this program.

Overcoming Challenges

Prison of Peace workshops take place within prisons (for inmate participants) and outside of them (for prison personnel). Therefore, they require strong administrative support, both internally and from the institutions.

Administration

Part of the administrative support of each institution is making it possible for inmates and prison personnel to get to PoP trainings and stay there. This is more complicated than just showing up and is a significant challenge to the success of this program.

Working inmates: In Greece, individuals are allowed to work while incarcerated (for example, kitchen, prison maintenance, prison library etc.). Each day of work means one day off of their sentence. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to them that they don't miss a single day of work. So far, the prisons' administrations have been willing to regard the inmates' participation in PoP trainings as a work day for them. However, this is just an informal practice with no written assurances that it will continue in the future.

Educational leaves for prison personnel: In Greece, prison personnel may request educational leaves in order to attend trainings relevant to their respective prison duties, at the discretion of the prison's administration. So far, most prisons have been more than willing to insure participation of their staff in the trainings. Nevertheless, as with working inmates, there are no written assurances that this will continue in the future.

Inmates Transferred to other prisons or Released

Inmates in Greece are frequently transferred between prisons. Transfers occur regardless of program availability, leaving inmates unable to finish the programs they had actively participated in while at their prior institution.

At the same time, given the relatively short amount of time that inmates spend being incarcerated in Greece (most inmates are usually incarcerated for a few months and up to a few years), a quite large number of PoP participants are released before being able to complete the PoP programs they are participating in.

Transfer and / or release are also two of the main reasons why a number of participants in the PoP workshops are not able to complete them and receive certification. More times than not, transferred inmates request for the program to be implemented in their new prison and many released inmates are inquiring about finishing the program outside of prison.

Because of the above, the focus on sustainability has shifted for Prison of Peace – Greece. On one hand, due to the high inmate turnover, *it is mostly prison personnel participants that can provide for the program's sustainability within the prisons*. On the other hand, equipping inmates with enhanced communication, problem solving and conflict resolution skills can be a significant factor to non-recidivism and sustainable rehabilitation.

Multiple Languages

Out of all inmates in Greek prisons, only approximately 50% can effectively speak and understand Greek, while there are those who can speak but cannot read nor write in Greek (Roma community, migrant community etc.).

As Prison of Peace is predominantly a program involving communication skills, the minimum requirement for participation in PoP workshops is the ability to satisfactorily speak and understand Greek. However, it is not necessary to know how to read or write Greek.

With the trainers' continuous help and support, illiterate participants are able to follow through the PoP trainings. At the same time, many PoP participants are enrolled in prison school language classes – as they are better learning the language, they are also progressing through the various levels of PoP curricula. Those who do not attend language classes reach out to friends and / or cellmates in prison to help them either translate the material in their own language or complete their written assignments. It is as moving as it is rewarding to watch Prison of Peace – Greece participants “dive” into dictionaries, discuss their learning experience with and engage other inmates in the program. It is proof of their commitment to PoP, having found usefulness in it.

Through this process, relationships are built between inmates, fostering a sense of community (one of the program's main objectives), while more people of the outer PoP circle in prison are acquainted with the program. As a result, communication and conflict resolution skills ripple through prison and beyond, bringing about change.

Program Continuation and Expansion Plans

Continuing with Current and Expanding to Additional Prisons

Greece is currently experiencing a peak in violence within its prison communities. Incidents of violent altercations between inmates are not uncommon, while there are reports of inmate self-harm, often resulting in grave injury or death. Acknowledging the Prison of Peace merits in communication skills and conflict resolution, the prisons where the program is already being implemented are requesting for it to continue so as to include even more inmates and members of the prison staff. At the same time, having heard about the Prison of Peace program and its benefits to inmates and prison personnel, there are several inquiries regarding implementation of the program in other institutions. Prison of Peace – Greece aims to continue with current prisons and expand to new ones, making the program available to even more participants.

Expanding to re-entry and rehabilitation Organizations

Major re-entry and rehabilitation organizations have shown vivid interest in co-operating with Prison of Peace - Greece to teach the program to both staff and (released) inmates of their therapeutic community. This expansion of Prison of Peace outside the prison community will also make it possible for released inmate participants to complete the trainings they participated in while still incarcerated. With initial funding from AAA-ICDR Foundation, trainings are scheduled to begin in January 2020.

Creating a Prison of Peace Hub in Greece

As Prison of Peace – Greece gradually engages people outside of the prison walls, it is looking for a home, a welcoming space for trainings, group meetings and life-long learning for all its members and the more to come.

Additional funding will be required for these purposes.

Prison of Peace operates under the auspices of the Institute for Communication and Management of Conflict – D.U.C.K.S, a non-profit Athens, Greece, based Organization.



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Donors

Funding for Prison of Peace – Greece has been generously provided by:

AAA – ICDR Foundation
Stavros Niarchos Foundation
Nomiki Bibliothiki

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