

PRISON OF PEACE – GREECE



Teaching Communication & Conflict Resolution
To Inmates & Prison Personnel

**1.5-YEAR REPORT
(JUNE 2019 – DECEMBER 2020)**

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 June 2019 – December 2020

In the past 18 months, Prison of Peace:

has delivered:

- **9** Circle Keeper trainings
- **6** Peacemaker trainings
- **2** Mediation trainings
- **3** Train-the-Trainers trainings

In over **580** hours of training and follow-up sessions

has certified:

- Over **110** Circle Keepers
- Over **60** Peacemakers
- Over **50** Mediators,
- While another **18** participants are in the process of certification as PoP trainers

Through the Prison of Peace workshops, participants have held:

- Over **870** value-based group discussions (Peace Circles), engaging over **4,350** participants (in prison and beyond)
- Over **360** results-based listening sessions for problem solving and conflict management, engaging hundreds of individuals (in prison and beyond)
- Over **140** mediations between inmates and / or prison personnel

Between June 2019 and December 2020, Prison of Peace Greece multiplied its activity, having already increased the number of prisons it serves from nine to twelve 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 (CK - 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 (PM - 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 (M - 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 (T)

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 continuing program expansion. During the last 18 months, thanks to a grant provided by the AAA-ICDR Foundation and to private donations, Prison of Peace increased the number of cohorts and 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
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, T
Domokos	Men	October 2018	Prison Personnel	CK
Ioannina	Men	October 2018	Inmates, Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M, T
Trikala	Men	November 2018	Inmates, Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M, T
Volos	Men	February 2019	Inmates, Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M
Farm Prison of Kassaveteia	Men	February 2019	Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M
Juvenile Institution of Volos	Boys	February 2019	Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M
Larissa	Men	February 2019	Inmates, Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M, T
Grevena	Men	July 2019	Prison Personnel	CK, PM, M

In addition, in February 2020, Prison of Peace began offering its training program to re-entry NGOs, starting with Arsis NGO (Thessaloniki). To this day, Arsis NGO has received Circle-Keeper, Peacemaker and Mediation trainings for its members.

Number of Participants Reached

Between June 2019 and December 2020, Prison of Peace has continued to teach men and women who live or work in prison to reduce violence in their environment and share these skills with their peers and others.

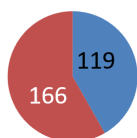
In Greece, where a life sentence equals to 15 years of imprisonment and two life sentences equal to 22 years of imprisonment, all inmates are eventually released. As more inmate participants leave prison, they are taking to their communities what they've learned; at the same time, prison personnel participants 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.

Attendance

Participants in Workshops

■ Inmates ■ Prison Personnel



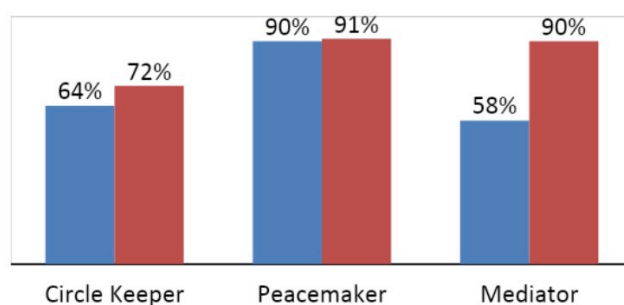
In the past 18 months of implementation, Prison of Peace has engaged **over 150 participants**, many of whom have participated in *more than one trainings*, as mentors to their peers and / or as they progressed to the next Prison of Peace Training level. In overall, new students, mentors and trainee trainers combined, over **285 individuals** participated in the PoP training cohorts (including inmates, security officers, prison social workers, prison psychologists, prison administrators and prison school teachers).

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 Mediator) and receive certification.

Certification Percentage

■ Inmates ■ Prison Personnel

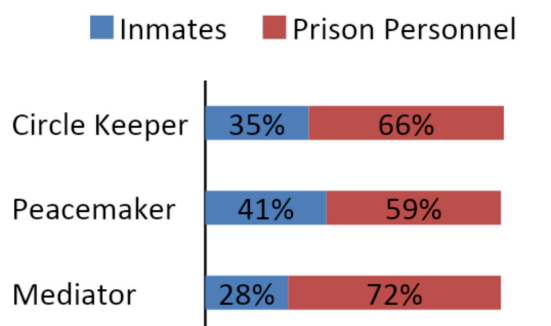


Monitoring & Evaluation

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 **230 evaluations** have been completed in prisons across Greece during the reporting period. Highlights from the evaluations are below.

Source of Evaluations



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. At least **80%** 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.

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.

All respondents (100%) noted that the workshop is successful in helping maintain or improve personal and community growth. It also helps participants see themselves and members of their respective community differently. Most participants note a change in their attitude, behavior and ability to effectively interact with others, including their families.

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.

All respondents (100%) noted that the workshop is helping them more deeply understand how their communication skills impact their lives. As they reported, this practical training provided them the tools to peacefully address conflict in prison and beyond.

To further substantiate the above, in March 2020, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe published a grim report on Greek prisons and police detention facilities for 2019. The Greek government replied to this report, among others, by mentioning the Prison of Peace - Greece program as the only program intended for inmates that helps them to address violence in prisons (you may find the report here: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cpt/-/council-of-europe-anti-torture-committee-publishes-report-on-gree-3> - mentioned in page 5):

- In the past three years, the General Secretariat of Counter-Crime Policy has been supporting the "Prison of Peace" programme, organised by the Institute of Communication and Conflict Management, which is already being implemented in nine (9) detention facilities. A series of contacts was recently held with such Institute in order to expand the implementation of the programme to other detention facilities of the country. The programme is intended both to detainees and detention facility staff. The total length of the basic training is forty (40) hours. Those who successfully complete the basic training may be trained further to be certified as mentors and trainers in conflict resolution and intermediation, in the context of achieving multiplier effects and viability of the programme outcomes. This programme aims to addressing violence among detainees, because it pursues training in the role of "peace-maker" by acquiring skills and techniques such as: a) developing emotional intelligence, b) active hearing, c) intense feelings management, d) de-escalation and resolution of conflicts using negotiation techniques.

Impact

While our participants continuously gift us with testimonials highlighting how the trainings have positively contributed in their lives, the following testimony captures the essence of the Prison of Peace trainings and both their individual and collective impact:

"My name is Eugene and I am 40 years old, an inmate at the prison of Larissa for 4 years now.

In November 2019 I was given the opportunity to participate in a Prison of Peace training and after completing my homework within the prison, I received the Peacemaker and Mediator certificates. Today, 1 year later, with the help of my trainer and mentor Dimitra, I strive to set an example for the non violent behavior that I now teach.

The reason for my imprisonment was a conflict that ended in an extreme way. But also in prison I have witnessed many disputes escalating into conflicts and ending badly, in violence resulting to injuries, death and the creation of groups - gangs.

This experience was my incentive for participating in the Prison of Peace program, where I acquired non violent conflict resolution skills and I am now training others on how to solve their differences and maintain peace, without resulting to extremities. Unfortunately, not everyone is looking for peace, there are many people who are fed by violence, tension, conflict.

In the course of my training, I noticed that my peers were showing me respect. In prison, there are 800 inmates forcefully living with each other, in horrible conditions, people with different values, cultures, religions, perceptions and beliefs. It is not possible for all of these people to live in harmony without respect, tolerance and inclusion. Unfortunately, tolerance and inclusion are absent for most behind bars, maybe they have not experienced respect and they don't know how to show it.

When I first began practicing listening skills, people around me started looking at me differently, trying to reach me throughout the day only to talk to me, they began trusting me with their personal issues and their emotions. In the

process, I realized how much people need to be heard without interruption, without being given advice and opinions, just to be heard and receive our undivided attention.

It sounds easy, yet it is not, listening is not just the physical response to sounds - if it were so, even a cuckoo bird would be an excellent listener; listening is perhaps the most difficult and the most important part of my training. Our ability to listen includes our active dedication towards the "Other"; it requires our full attention, without falling back to ourselves. My ability to listen made my requests more effective and contributed to the quality of my relationships.

Through Prison of Peace I found a new meaning in life. I no longer wish to suffer from the dominance of others, the lack of opportunity and skill, from ignorance. I no longer wish pain, sickness, unhappiness, failure, contempt, sadness and depression, feelings that many inmates - and also free people - experience. Now, everything around me has really changed, my need for peace in prison, objectivity, self-reflection and personal accountability, to listen to and discover the people around me. During the first lockdown, when the situation was suffocating, having jumped into many fights and helped to resolve several conflicts, I was given nicknames like "the firefighter" or "the peacemaker". I now have inner peace, I became more tolerant, more patient, I learned how to manage my emotions, I grew up mentally and emotionally. But the greatest gift of all was the respect I felt from others and - believe me - in prison where people worship those with financial, physical or criminal power, where respect comes from fear and coercion, being respected for one's character, personality, industriousness and what one stands for (as a peacemaker), that is the hardest thing, also seeing respect from the prison staff, having found the common ground that unites these two opposite worlds.

When there is peace, people live in harmony and resolve their disputes peacefully, with dialogue and agreements. But for peace to exist, it takes will, it takes more peacemakers, people who nurture peace, people like us and people who will walk in our steps. Everybody needs to communicate and to express their emotions, but only a few can truly listen to them and stand by them.

I once read that "Hell is easier to paint than Heaven". It is indeed easier because Heaven, represented by Peace, takes hard work, patience and dedication.

Eugene M., November 8, 2020"

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.

Inmates Transferred to other prisons or Released

Inmates in Greece are frequently transferred between prisons. 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.

Because of the above, *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.

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. Since January 2020, trainings are already being offered.

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

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