

Patras: Good Practice Case Studies

Patras C4i Prison Workshop

Summary Description:

The *Cultural Organisation of the Municipality of Patras* (ADEP) organised a Prison Workshop for C4i project, held on the 28th January 2015 at a venue within Patras Prison. It is hoped to incorporate the content into the ongoing prison educational service

Background, Goal and Target

Patras prison is large and accommodates prisoners serving long sentences for serious crimes, many of them for life. Many of them are drug-related crimes and homicides. It is not, relatively speaking, an open and relaxed prison. The immigrant population in this prison is about 50%, mostly Albanians but also for many other different ethnicities.

A prison is a small, close, society that must deal with the same problems as the rest of the society. In prison people are obliged to live together 24 hours a day, very closely, without opportunities to avoid each other or to enjoy privacy. It is therefore difficult for them to hide their beliefs or to avoid rumours and prejudice.

In prison, sub-groups often form of people from the same origins and ethnicity, sharing mutual interests in some respects. But this can also give rise to confrontation and antagonism between groups of different ethnic origin. Rumours about each other can play a role in this.

The result is often a heightening of tensions and clashes between different ethnic groups.

For these reasons, it was decided to run a workshop in Patras Prison, with the full support of management and staff. This involved the incorporation of the C4i anti-rumour model and material as a topic to be addressed by the prison educational service, operating within the prison premises. The target groups were both prisoners and staff.

Actions, Timescales and Resources

The *Cultural Organisation of the Municipality of Patras* (ADEP) organised the Prison Workshop on the 28th January 2015 at a venue within Patras Prison. It was attended by the Director of the Prison, Prison Staff and prisoners from different nationalities.

From our first visit to the prison governor's office he was very willing to help. He introduced us to the prison staff, with whom we discussed the project and exchanged ideas. The case was made to prison staff that the Workshop would bring benefits to prison life in general, by addressing the issues of rumours in this close environment.

The Workshop comprised a round table discussion and prisoners from different ethnic backgrounds, and staff. It had a duration of about two hours, and was attended by about 20 people. Both staff and prisoners expressed their opinions about the existing situation and then we presented and debated the anti-rumours idea, mostly using the training methodology from the Council of Europe Consultant.

Challenges Encountered and Learning along the way

In the beginning the prison governor failed to answer our request for this action. So we contacted the ex General Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, who contacted the prison which resulted in a response from the prison governor.

Outputs & Outcomes

A prison is in many respects a miniature society unto itself that involves the co-existence of people from very different ethnic backgrounds. The exchange that took place revealed fruitful concerns and questions and proved that there is a real need for applying the anti-rumour model.

Overall prisoners, not surprisingly, care most about gaining their freedom. But their response concerning rumours was similar to those of people outside prison: they like the idea of the project and, through the process, they discovered that they hold prejudices and stereotypes that do not contribute positively to their life. Several noted that they had not thought about this beforehand.



Figure 1 Project and staff (including Governor, sociologist, psychologist, social workers) outside Patras prison

The goal now is to incorporate some of the C4I material in the prison school educational topics.

A meeting has been arranged to develop this idea further.