



FREEDOM GATE GREECE



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe



PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Freedom Gate Greece is a non-profit non-governmental (NGO) organization which was founded 2012 in Athens Greece. The purpose of the organization according to its statutes is to combat any kind of social exclusion of vulnerable social groups, as well as the psycho-social support thereof.

OUR VISION

We envision a more humane, fair and safer society with less violence and injustice a society which respect human rights and diversity and gives everyone equal opportunities without prejudice and discrimination. Therefore, we can't just be spectators and wait for a change! It is our obligation and responsibility to act and to put into practice our vision of a better and different society which not only meet the needs of its current members but also supports the ability of future generations to maintain a healthy society.

OUR GOALS

Our goal is actively and effectively to provide:

- essential services,
- support,
- rehabilitation,
- counseling,
- information,
- education and training

Through our services we therefore strive to cover the needs of our target group and of those who work with or for them.

STRATEGY - MEANS OF ACHIEVING GOALS

In order to succeed and achieve the goals, it is necessary to elaborate an effective strategy which should include the following components:

- clear and realistic target setting and programming of activities,
- effective decision-making, sustainable solutions,
- solid long-term partnerships, sharing of good practices,
- cultivation of the human capital through capacity building of staff and administration
- evidence-based interventions which are supported by findings of scientific research,
- well-organized innovative programs and actions.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

For us to work according to the principles of transparency and accountability is self-evident. This is about being responsible to someone for actions taken; about being able to explain, clarify and justify actions as well as being easy to understand, and being open, frank and honest in all

communications, transactions and operations. Accountability and transparency go hand-in-hand, they need each other and they can be mutually reinforcing.

HOW WE WORK

We have supplied our organization with professional volunteers in order to bring our programs into life. Our volunteers are young degree holders mainly from the sciences of psychology, sociology, criminology, law and social work and our principle is to give opportunities to new scientists to start their careers and to practice their skills even as volunteers (for the time being) and to encourage them in any ways possible as it is of common interest of the both parts. Furthermore, a large number of academicians and university professors have shown interest in our organization and become our scientific counselors and supporters.

WHAT WE DO

Freedom Gate Greece is particularly sensitized on issues concerning prisoners' children, juveniles, youth at risk and incarcerated mothers and therefore we give emphasis and focus our activities on their support, promoting their welfare and on defending their rights. Through our programs we therefore strive to reduce the negative effects of incarceration, to fight recidivism (especially) of juveniles and to take precautionary measures concerning youth at risk (of offending). Above all our endeavor is to (be able to) offer alternative (to prison) programs to delinquent youth and juvenile offenders as well as to provide proper training for people working with/for our target group.

- Psychosocial support of prisoners' families and especially their children
- Psychosocial support of juvenile offenders
- Psychosocial support of incarcerated parents
- Psychosocial support of ex-offenders
- Psychosocial support of individuals with disabilities
- Psychosocial preventive interventions in shelters for minor asylum seekers and support centers for families and children
- Psychosocial preventive interventions in schools
- Educational programs and training of correctional staff
- Training for professionals and volunteers who work with or for our target groups
- Conducting research and studies on issues related to our purpose
- Awareness raising, interventions and proposals in public debates on issues related to our target group
- Legal counseling
- Informative publications
- Dissemination and promotion of Social economy and entrepreneurship

INTERVENTIONS – PROGRAMS – ACTIVITIES

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS – MORAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

This particular group intervention is based on the Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program (R&R) (Ross, Fabiano & Ross, 1986) and was developed for youth and adult offenders, substance users and people with antisocial behavior. The program aims to enhance problem solving, social and negotiation skills, emotional development, creative thinking, values, critical thinking and empathy and it has been implemented and assessed effective in USA, Canada, Spain and the United Kingdom with low and high risk offenders (Tong & Farrington, 2006).

SUPPORT OF INCARCERATED MOTHERS

Our purpose is to contribute to the improvement of the mother-child relationship, the adoption of a positive attitude towards the many identities an incarcerated mother is called to manage and generally a preparation in case of a conviction.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR EX-PRISONERS

During the crucial phase of reintegration, experienced psychologists, social workers, sociologists and others will provide the appropriate support in order for the released offender to have a smooth transition back into family life and the society.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT OF THE PRISONERS' FAMILIES

Realizing how significant the relationships between prisoners and their familiar environment (husbands and wives, companions, children, parents) during the incarceration is, we have set up a program of self-help for prisoners' families.

Taking into consideration the psychological disruption brought about by the incarceration of a family member to rest of the family, we aspire to provide them with a new perspective in life through our programs of psychological and social support – a perspective that involves a connected family rather than shame, isolation and stigmatization.

Having developed professional affiliations with similar well-experienced organizations in other countries, we have constructed our programs from evidence-based practice, adapted to Greek society, given the fact that marginalization and stigmatization are formed differently in Greece.

Child supporting program: “The Invisible victims of Incarceration”

The programs concerning children's support have been designed with the purpose to offer psychosocial support to children of incarcerated parents, and to minimize the negative consequences brought about by incarceration. The ultimate goal of the program is the partial or complete emotional and social support and prevention.

Parents' Support Groups

The children programs are being accompanied with programs for the parents on the grounds of the belief that parents and children should be equally and concurrently supported. The benefits of these

structured psychoeducational programs are multiple and can be combined with those of the children. Every person, parent or relative, who is close to the inmate, can participate voluntarily.

Peer Support Groups for adults

A peer support group consists of a number of adults with the common experience of the confinement of a relative. All members have equal rights and have the opportunity to be involved and active during group interaction in an organized and supportive environment. This intervention is based on the philosophy of self-help, but a professional is nevertheless present. In some group meetings professionals, such as lawyers, criminologists and correctional officers are invited to offer their helpful knowledge about the demands and needs of the concerned groups.

PSYCHOSOCIAL PREVENTIVE INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOLS “Moral Discussion Group”

Based on the model of Reasoning and Rehabilitation Program (R&R) (Ross, Fabiano & Ross, 1986) and adapted to be a suitable preventive intervention for schools. During the intervention different issues concerning violence such as violence in the nature, violence against animals, cyber bullying, bullying in school and domestic violence were discussed.

SUMMER SCHOOLS IN PRISONS

Students of the Second Chance Schools, mainly young prisoners, especially during the summer months remain without any creative activity as during this period both educational and voluntary actions and activities are inoperative. This leads to deterioration of the imprisonment conditions and reduces the benefits gained during the school year. The “Summer school” interventions were giving the opportunity to the prisoners to escape from the “dead time” of the prison during the summer when the schools are closed. The program received a very warm reception and the evaluation was positive and encouraging both regarding the results and the joy among all participants, teachers and students, who again are convinced that through education and culture in prisons meaningful changes to something better can be brought. The ultimate aim of this action is to consolidate and expand the operation of summer schools in prisons across the country.

TRAINING OF CORRECTIONAL STAFF CONCERNING OUR TARGET GROUPS

We consider the role of the correctional staff to be important and catalytic in order for prisoners' families to maintain their bonds and here the correctional staff is asked to act as a "bridge", as a link between the familial environment of the prisoner and the prisoner himself/herself. Freedom Gate Greece is willing to help constructing this bridge through educational seminars for prison staff, as time to time, the correctional staff has shown an interest to learn and understand ways on how to approach prisoners' families.

TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERS WHO WORK WITH OFFENDERS

The participation of prisoners in education and training programs can benefit to the restoration of appreciation and confidence of themselves, to the acceptance of the reality and the prevention of recidivism. In order for educational and voluntary interventions to be effective it is important for educators and volunteers to have the knowledge of the legal framework, in which prison activities are implemented, the particularly harsh living conditions of the prisoners as well as of the difficulties they will have to face and to have the necessary education and training to maximize the benefits of

the training process for the prisoners. The main objective of the training is therefore to provide educators and volunteers with the necessary knowledge and skills in order for them to be able to implement programs and actions in prisons.

RESEARCH CONDUCTION AND STUDIES ON ISSUES RELATED TO OUR PURPOSES.

The collection of data on which stored personal data of each participant will be recorded by trained staff. They will be processed for statistical purposes and will be available to those who will be interested in conducting research or to develop studies.

INTERVENTIONS AND PROPOSALS IN OPEN AND PUBLIC DEBATES.

Group of distinguished lawyers and forensic scientists intervene with suggestions on wrongs and abuses of prisoners' rights. We aspire to create a core role rather than suing but mainly to promote proposals that would help the fairer perhaps functioning of the state apparatus in general of Justice.

COOPERATION – NETWORKING - MEMBERSHIP

Since we founded Freedom Gate Greece we have established successful cooperation with several organizations mainly from the Scandinavian countries, Italy and the UK which are active in similar areas and we have a good working relation with all of them. We are member of the European organizations “COPE Children of Prisoners Europe” and “Eurochild”. The guidance and support which we have got from these organizations we believe is the factor in the successful implementation of the programs. We have developed our projects and programs using “proven tactics” and evidence based intervention which we have adapted to the Greek reality.

Freedom Gate Greece feels proud and privileged to have some of Greece's top academicians experts and university professors mainly in the field of criminology and social research as our scientific advisors and supporters.

Freedom Gate Greece is also an active member of the newly founded “Network for Culture and Education in prisons Georgios Zouganelis”.

SOCIAL ECONOMY

Freedom Gate Greece had a key role in organizing the 1st Pan-Hellenic “Open conference of the civil society for social economy” which was held in June 2016 in Athens. The 3- day conference was carried out and in cooperation with the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences and under the auspices of the municipality of Athens. 500 delegates - 80 speakers in 16 thematic unity highlighted problems and presented positions, policies and proposals for the Third Sector of the Economy in Greece. Maria Papastergiou-Logara, Managing Director of FGG was involved as a coordinator in the thematic of “Health and social care” as well as in the compilation of the final paper.

PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN PROGRAMS

2014 – 2016

IRISES (International Roma Integration through Stakeholders Exchange

of Successful practices JUST/2013/FRAC/AG/6204)

(Completed)

ERASMUS+ “Alternative measures to prison for young people”

(Completed)

ERASMUS+ “Creative Entrepreneurship”

(Completed)

ERSAMUS+ “Agriculture for social and labor integration of migrants”

(Applied)