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GOOD PRACTICES	
Title of the project, programme	Personal Development Workshop for Inmates (ΕΠΑΚ)
Duration	The ΕΠΑΚ programme is integrated in the curriculum of multiple Detentions Centers' educational units, in Greece, and is conducted, since 2010, every academic year, on a weekly basis.
Name of the organisation/service responsible for the intervention, with reference to country and location (specific)	The National Theatre of Greece in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Anti-Criminal Policy of the Ministry of Citizen Protection and various Detention Centers, such as: Avlona Special Youth Detention Center (Ε.Κ.Ν.Ν - Αυλώνα), Korydallos Prison Psychiatric Clinic (Ψ.Κ.Κ), Drug Addiction Center Inmates of Eleonas - Thebes (ΚΑΤΚΕΘ) and Corinth's Detention Center
Scope (local/regional/national/international)	The workshop is held in Detention Centers across the country, at the initiative of the National Theatre of Greece, and aim to the rehabilitation of the offenders by theatrical means.
Area	Participatory Theatre
History of the project how it was conceived, development and context strategies;	<p>Since 2010, actor and director Stathis Grapsas, in collaboration with the National Theatre of Greece, has led the Personal Development Workshop for Inmates (ΕΠΑΚ). Drawing on his training in community-based theater in England, Grapsas was inspired by an article on prison education to launch a volunteer theater program at Avlona Prison.</p> <p>The workshop uses theater as a tool for personal growth and expression, based on the real experiences of inmates. Since its start, ΕΠΑΚ has produced 14 performances across 9 correctional institutions, initially presented to prison staff, inmates, and their families, and later touring other prisons. Remarkably, the program continued even during the COVID-19 pandemic, operating in four detention centers despite restrictions.</p>



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<p>General description of project/programme</p> <p><i>Objectives, actions, main actors and challenges, organisations involved, beneficiaries and n° of beneficiaries involved, partners and stakeholders, budget available, implementation period and other relevant information useful to understand its nature and results);</i></p>	<p>The Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (ΕΠΑΚ) runs weekly and is integrated into the school curriculum of several detention centers, including Avlona, Korydallos, Eleonas-Thebes, and Corinth. Its main goal is rehabilitation by building inmates' resilience, confidence, and social skills, preparing them for reintegration into society.</p> <p>The program also fosters discipline, teamwork, and creativity, encouraging young offenders to envision a positive future. Developed by Stathis Grapsas, the method combines personal experience, research, and art's therapeutic power. Workshops begin with in-depth discussions, identifying themes that are expressed through symbolic body images and enhanced by music.</p> <p>Each year ends with performances for prison audiences and, later, the broader public. At the close of each show, participants share personal reflections, highlighting their individual and collective journeys and deepening audience connection.</p>
<p>Outcomes of the practices, relevant results, impact</p>	<p>In February 2021, the Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (ΕΠΑΚ) administration, together with organisations from Italy, Cyprus, and the Netherlands, participated in the Convicts Upskilling Pathways (CUP) programme, where the method was included in a methodological guide with "good practices" for inmates training.¹</p> <p>Sometime later, the Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (ΕΠΑΚ) method was presented at a conference organised by KEAN-CELL OF ALTERNATIVE YOUTH ACTIVITIES², with partners from Malta, Slovenia, Portugal and Italy who participated in the "COMM.ON HERITAGE project."³</p> <p>Stathis Grapsas participated at this project, and spoke about his experience with the juvenile inmates of Avlon and Corinth, in the I-RESTORE training seminar of TDH EUROPE, on restorative justice, where friendly methods to offenders or high-risk juveniles are presented.⁴</p> <p>In addition, the Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (ΕΠΑΚ) is today widely recognized for its methodology and</p>

¹ <https://www.cup-project.eu/>

² [Home — KEAN](#)

³ [Common Heritage – Community Manager for Inclusive Development of Vulnerable Areas based On Heritage](#)

⁴ <https://tdh-europe.org/our-work/i-restore-protecting-child-victims-through-restorative-justice/7143>.



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	<p>its contribution to the education and rehabilitation of these socially vulnerable groups</p> <p>In October 2024 Stathis Grapsas - Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (ΕΠΑΚ) received a Commendation from the Hellenic Union of Theater and Performing Arts Critics at the Theater and Performing Arts Awards Ceremony, in Athens.</p>
<p>Transferability</p>	<p>The method can be adapted to other vulnerable social groups in adult schools, such as (long-time) unemployed students, immigrants, people with special needs etc.</p> <p>The activity is suitable for seniors with some adaptations.</p> <p>Personal Storytelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seniors share memories, dreams, regrets, or hopes, which are transformed into theatrical scenes. - Use guided discussions to explore themes like resilience, love, loss, identity, or change. <p>Symbolic Movement & Imagery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use gentle physical expression (e.g., hand gestures, posture, movement) to create living images representing emotions or life moments. - Accessible to all mobility levels. <p>Music & Atmosphere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate meaningful music from participants' lives to enhance emotional engagement. - Use soundscapes to reflect different life phases.
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The programme continues successfully to be implemented every academic year and is financed by the National Theatre of Greece</p> <p>In addition, the Theater department of the School of Fine Arts of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has held an Open Workshop on the theme of Theater and Dance in Prison in collaboration with the Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (2022)</p> <p>In the summer of 2021, the Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (ΕΠΑΚ) method was part of the educational programme organised by the Center for Lifelong Learning of the University of the Aegean on the topic: "Social Exclusion & Education: Approaches to the experience of education and vocational training in Greek Detention Centers", aiming at educators and professionals who wished to be active in the prison sector.</p>



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	<p>In November 2022, the Inmates' Personal Development Workshop (ΕΠΑΚ) was presented at the International Conference on prison theater Destini Incrociati (Crossed Fates), which was hosted in Venice in collaboration with the University of Venice and the International Network for Theater in Prisons.</p>
<p>Links and Sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Θέατρο σε Κέντρα Κράτησης - Εθνικό Θέατρο - Εθνικό Θέατρο• ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΕΣ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟΥ 3ο Σχολείο Δεύτερης Ευκαιρίας Θεσσαλονίκης• Detainees in Greece Convicts Upskilling Pathways• Mr Grapsa's Interview (1) ΣΤΑΘΗΣ ΓΡΑΨΑΣ : Συνέντευξη στον Suspect - YouTube• National Theatre at the Korydallos Prison - CLOE• Theatre Behind Bars: from Italy to Greece/Θέατρο πίσω από τα κάγκελα: από την Ιταλία στην Ελλάδα. Beatrice Montorfano - Academia.edu• THEATRE: as a powerful tool for the empowerment, education and inclusion - T-hap• https://youtu.be/Kz1qWg2NHAU?si=zW4LMXG2-sG7K_a6&t=1787• PDWP.mp4 on Vimeo• chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.iti-worldwide.org/pdfs/THEATRE_IN_PRISON_INTERNATIONAL_FESTIVAL.pdf