

NEWSLETTER



STEPS: Supporting Ties in the Education of Prisoners

EU programme: Erasmus+ KA2 Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education

Project duration: 01/11/2018 - 31/08/2021 (34 months)

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Project Overview

The main objective of the STEPS project is to create a dynamic Virtual Reality (VR) system consisting of spaces which - following the tradition of Rimini Protokoll's "Situation Rooms", one of the project's inspiration- we call "rooms". It also consists of various videos, photos and newspaper articles or other references and items. The users create their own narratives through their actions and choices when using the system, either by reusing already registered items or by removing them.

This particular intellectual product, is used by trained educators or trainers and intends to support the reintegration of prisoners into society, while the immediate purpose and means of emotional intelligence and emotional literacy of prisoners (expressing emotions such as emotions and release anger, aggression, rejection, frustration) is to cultivate the ability to make good decisions.

Based on material from the "Small Volume with Prisoners / Ex-Prisoners Stories", virtual worlds are created in which an inmate, has an immersive experience that uses all the senses that virtual reality offers. The "Small Volume of Prisoners / Prisoners' Stories" will be a guide for any actor who supports prisoners and former prisoners to understand their personality traits which

require attention and concern, even if they will never be used as scenarios for creating VR "rooms".

Collecting narratives, guiding the externalization and manifestation of the emotional states the narrators and potential users are or were in, the description of specific scenes and objects for the creation of virtual reality "rooms" are very important parameters for the creation and project completion.

The users have the impression of being in the virtual world while having the ability to navigate and manipulate their own elements, putting themselves and their senses at the center, to become witnesses and at the same time protagonists in stories perhaps similar to their own. The goal is to emotionally identify with another inmate's mental state of mind, to understand his/her behavior and motivations and through this to understand their own behavior, motivations and ultimately their self-esteem.

Research has shown that the free exchange of stories of different individuals supports their psychological state, help them to reassess their actions, to redefine their priorities and values, to gain self-respect and can lead them to taking sound decisions which will ultimately lead to their reintegration into society.

The above is accompanied by a methodology manual that will emerge as intellectual product of the project. It consists of three parts: a) introductory concepts/terminology, b) "teacher's book" and c) a more specific user guide showing the reader how STEPs are structured and operated. Concepts, materials and equipment and various other processes are described in it as well.

The "Guidance Network" which is being created contributes to the quality evaluation of the project with the aim of shaping a common perspective on prisoners' education professionals. It also aims in certifying STEPs tools to meet the needs of incarcerated and former prisoners and play a greater role in their reintegration.

STEPs project concludes with the creation of the 'Innovation Box', which includes the results of a 'Comparative Research' on European stereotypes and human rights policies for the targeted groups of the project, but also for identifying innovative initiatives, tools and methods. The guide also describes and explains the implementation process of STEPs. It also presents results both from the pilot phase and from the final implementation, with interviews of the participants, the stakeholder groups and committees and by also including parts of the project.

The Innovation Box will essentially be the exploitation tool of STEPs during dissemination actions and will be designed in the spirit of its overall dissemination and exploitation plan.

The partners of the "STEPS" consortium - EPEPEK, CPIA1, KERIGMA, CIP and 2nd SSE of Larissa- are working together to create an innovative training material. This material will be delivered through prison schools or support centres for the reintegration of prisoners or other related structures. Through the effective assistance of trained educators or trainers, is expected to support the effective reintegration of prisoners into society, with the primary aim of detaining prisoners with negative emotions, such as anger, aggression, disappointment etc.

Partners' Profile

E.E.P.E.K.

The Scientific Association for the Promotion of Educational Innovation (EEPEK) was founded in the summer of 2014 as a non-profit organization representing educational staff, executives, and education professionals, active in the sectors of non-formal education, such as adult education and vocational training, as well as all levels of formal education (from pre-school education to higher education and second chance schools).

The central role of EEPEK is to support teachers in their work, focusing on the creation, evaluation, use and dissemination of innovative teaching practices and methods. The above is achieved through actions such as training seminars, workshops, and conferences, as well as through participation and cooperation in the frameworks of national and European programs. EEPEK operates an e-portal (www.eepek.gr) where the proceedings of its first three annual conferences, including more than one thousand educational works (original articles, teaching practices and scenarios, laboratory exercises, etc.) are publicly available. Additionally, the e-learning platform of EEPEK (elearning.eepek.gr) offers on-line courses involving hundreds of trainers, electronic discussion groups and the exchange of ideas and experiences among teachers.



EEPEK



Partners' Profile

2nd Second Chance School of Larissa

The second (2nd) "Second Chance" School of Larissa is the school of the Prison of Larissa. It is situated within the area of the prison, but has its own modern premises. The school has been uninterruptedly in operation since 2004 and is the first prison school that was founded in Greece (now being one of about 13 similar schools existing in various Greek prisons).

As it is apparent from its name, the school is addressed to incarcerated adults (while there exist a couple of schools for incarcerated children and youngsters in other special correctional institutions).

As it is apparent from its name, the school is addressed to incarcerated adults (while there exist a couple of schools for incarcerated children and youngsters in other special correctional institutions). A great number of students from many countries have finished the school so far in all these years and were awarded the degree of the 9-year obligatory education. Accordingly, a big number of staff (of various subjects, volunteers etc.) have offered their services for providing learning opportunities to their students. Learning and teaching in this school are implemented according to modern views of adult education. In this framework special emphasis is given to projects, events and extra-curricular activities. Moreover, the school has also participated in one Erasmus+ project "FREE THE-school FROM BARRIERS" (2016-8).



Partners' Profile

KERIGMA INSTITUTO DE INOVACAO E DESENVOLVIMENTO SOCIAL DE BARCELOS

Kerigma – Innovation and Social Development Institute of Barcelos, is a non-profit organization, founded in 1996, and its aim is to promote the integrated development of people, of organizations and the community, creating services, solutions and products of excellence that contribute to an active citizenship, solidarity and social cohesion. Oriented by the values of equality and social responsibility, innovation and empowerment of people and organizations, it develops its action on the domain of Promotion of Lifelong Learning, Recognition of Prior Learning, Psychosocial Support and Support to Employment and Entrepreneurship.



KERIGMA

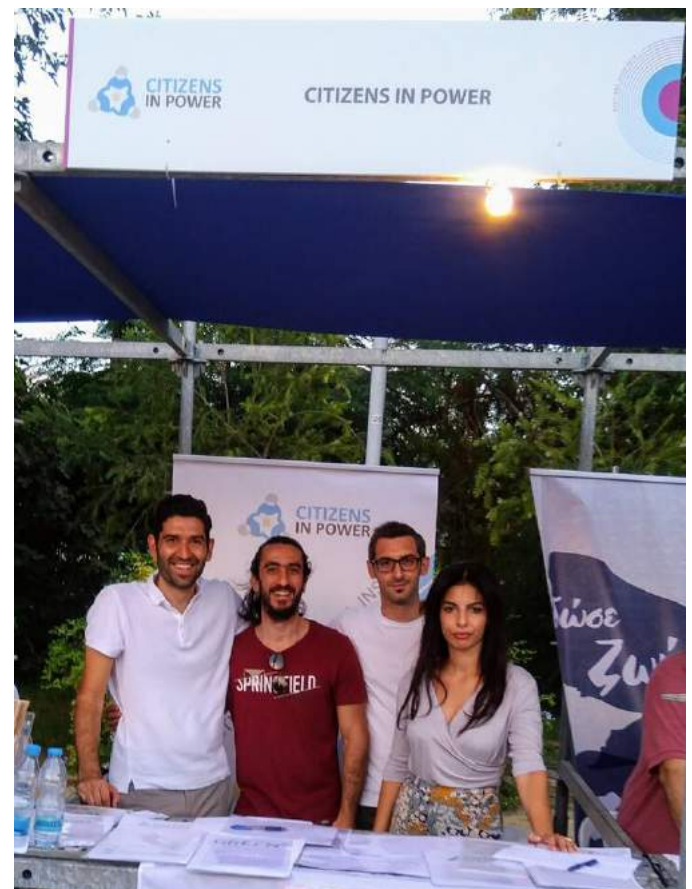


Partners' Profile

CITIZENS IN POWER

C.I.P.

Citizens In Power (CIP) is an independent non-profit, non-governmental organization that addresses the needs and demands of people through their involvement in social and civic life, by simultaneously providing them innovative material and free trainings related with a variety of fields, such as education (including on-line education), inclusion, entrepreneurship and business, culture, labour market and lifelong learning. CIP mainly aims at the development of education, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning in Cyprus and abroad. To achieve these targets CIP has an ongoing collaboration with the leading universities, schools, NGOs and research organizations in Cyprus for the development of projects, trainings and educational material. CIP retains a valuable network of professional trainers and educational experts experienced in both formal and non-formal education. This particular network is considered competent to contribute to the implementation of activities related to the initiatives of CIP and its partners.



Partners' Profile

CPIA1 ROMA

Centro per l' Istruzione degli Adulti

CPIA 1 Lazio (Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli Adulti), is a new kind of Italian adult education institution. It is a local service network settled in the Northeastern area of Rome that provides education opportunities for both Italians and migrants from age 16 onwards. The main goal of CPIA is to encourage the return to education/training of adults and to foster their entrance into the formal education and training systems. CPIA 1 is a secondary school that deals with assessment, offers education programs and issues competency certificates (i.e. compulsory education and A1/A2/B1 CEFR level certificates), and thus prepares learners for adult vocational training programs.

CPIA 1 Lazio is made up of 4 schools in the city and 4 schools inside the Rebibbia Correctional Facility (both in female and male branches) located in the Northeastern area of Rome; this territory stretches from the center (a university neighborhood, rich of cultural initiatives but also partly gentrified and degraded) to the suburbs of Casal Bruciato and Torpignattara where many migrants and new poor live and where a difficult and troublesome process of integration is in place.



Creation of STEPs Logo

The logo is represented by four distinct steps, the shape of which resembles books of black color on an irregular orange base. Each volume in white indicates one of the letters of the program acronym, in uppercase. In the first letter S, in the second letter T, in the third letter E and in the fourth letter P with the ending s. (photo)

Three different proposals were presented at the first meeting of the partners. (photo) CIP explained the rationale behind each and then the partners voted for the final choice.



Kick off Meeting

The first three-day transnational meeting of the partners of the Erasmus+ Program entitled "Supporting Ties in the Education of Prisoners (STEPS)" was successfully completed. The consortium consists of the Greek NGO EEPEK as the coordinator, and the partners, the Greek '2nd Second Chance School of Larissa', the Cypriot NGO 'C.I.P. Citizens in Power', the Portuguese NGO 'Kerigma', and the Italian school CPIA 1. The five organizations share a common vision which is to strengthen the links in prison education with the help of virtual rooms. Specifically the "STEPS" project aims to give opportunities to prisoners, to free them from ignorance, social awkwardness and "disability" and to offer them support and restorative experience to escape from the vicious circle of marginalization, crime and unemployment. The way to break this cycle is to foster confidence, to live by using legal means and to avoid the recurrence, so as to choose education and training before their release and through this facilitate job

finding and avoid marginalization, unemployment and eventual criminality.



The most innovative output of the project will be the creation of a dynamic Virtual Reality system (VR), consisting of rooms, narrative stories, videos, photographs and newspaper articles. In these virtual rooms, the prisoner will see a number of items that are (somehow) related to his/her profile and story.

Then with the support of the educators, the prisoners are expected to be freed from negative emotions, such as anger, aggression, rejection, disappointment. This will support their smooth reintegration into the society after their release.

During the first Transnational Meeting, we got to know each other better, and we have divided the tasks of the project with the partners. Additionally, we had the chance to try different VR environments and visit the 2nd Second Chance School of Larissa' which is located inside the prison of Larissa. Lastly, we have agreed on our visual identity (logo).

Research has shown that the free exchange of stories of different individuals supports their psychological state, evaluates their actions, redefines priorities and values, gains self-respect, and in our case leads to sound decisions that can potentially lead to repercussions. in society.



O2 LEAFLET WITH PRISONERS/EX-PRISONERS STORIES AND STORYTELLING MATERIAL (STEPs NARRATIONS' BOOKLET)

The narrative leaflet is the first source of which the "VR Rooms" of STEP's 01 Intellectual Output give life.

Collecting narratives, guiding the externalization and manifestation of the emotional states the narrators and potential users are or were in, the description of specific scenes and objects for the creation of virtual reality "rooms" is a very important parameter for creation and the completion of the project.

By adapting the psychotherapeutic method of free circular narration, which allows narrators in particular free spaces to become part of third-party stories but also to share their own story, we advocate incarcerated or released persons with the certainty of anonymity and in the free narration and writing of their biographical stories.

With the necessary interventions to ensure the above security and anonymity parameters, self-narratives are transferred into a virtual reality environment, and both storytellers and users get the most out of the benefits of the intervention without being exposed to others and without the possibility of facing some possible consequences.

By utilizing both the benefits of free circular narration and the immersive experience of using all the senses that virtual reality offers, we create virtual worlds.

The users have the impression of being in the virtual worlds and in addition they have the ability to navigate and manipulate their objects, placing themselves and their senses at the center, to become witnesses and at the same time a protagonists of biographical stories analogous to their personal experiences.

The goal is to liberate the users, to emotionally identify with the mental state of other persons, and to understand their behavior and motivations, and through this to understand their own behaviors, motivations and ultimately their self-esteem.



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