

# NEWSLETTER

## HIGHLIGHT

The 3rd Newsletter is dedicated to the Focus Group Discussions and the Interviews organized to extract quality conclusions for the Field Research conducted during the project, as well as the training programme developed during the project, based on the FROG lyk-z methodology. The training programme is addressed to people who are working with, or are interested in working with, prisoners and ex-prisoners. The aim is to provide expert tools and methods in empowering and supporting (ex)prisoners during their social re-integration and inclusion, as well as their active participation in the community, after their release.

The Norwegian partner organization shared best practices from the lyk-z methodology FROG leadership and life mastery training, during the LTTA in Iceland, based on the curriculum they developed. All partner organizations organized pilot training programmes in their respective countries addressed to (ex)prisoners, utilizing the training tools, methods and curriculum developed. Upon conclusion all partners provided comments and suggestions on the methodology. The Road to Freedom program was finalized and transformed into an open-source program available for everyone working with or interested in working with the target group.



## Pilot Training in Iceland

A total of 12 participants completed the educational program, which took place at the 12-Steps house in Reykjavík in Feb. 2024. The training had a profound impact on the inmates, fostering a sense of hope and purpose. They were able to openly discuss their feelings and aspirations, dare to dream, and define how to pursue and realize them step by step in the future.

One participant is actively aiming towards becoming a FROG trainer in the future, and most of them are engaged in peer work within the prison community, as well as providing support upon their release. The overwhelmingly positive feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining and repeating the program in the future, especially within prisons and as part of follow-up upon release.

The Road to Freedom program is based on the award winning lyk-z methodology FROG Leadership & Life Mastery program, from Norway, experiences made from the implementing partners during their pilots, and situation analysis in each partner country, except for Norway, defining key policies, available support, and training for the target group, identify gaps in existing institutional framework and support and how project results can contribute and add value to existing resources and support.



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ROAD TO  
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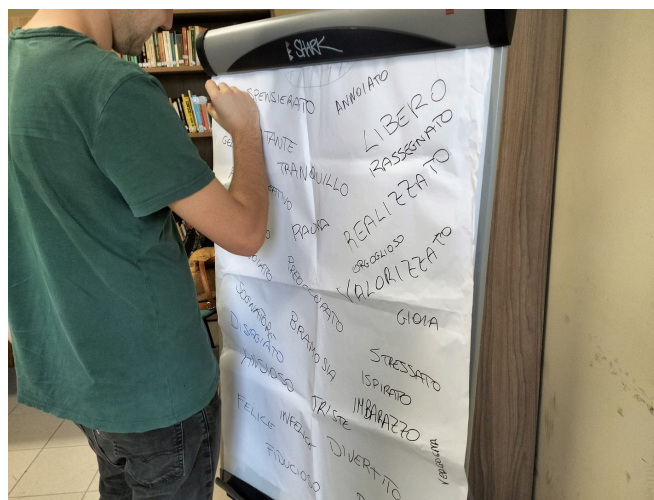
**Pilot Training Workshops were organized in Iceland, Italy, Austria, Cyprus and Greece**

## Pilot Training in Greece

The pilot training of the “Leadership and Life Mastery” program in Greece, achieved remarkable results. A total of twelve (12) participants completed the educational program, taking place in Malandrinos Detention Establishment, from the 2nd until the 6th of April 2024. The seminar had a profound impact on the inmates, fostering a sense of hope and purpose. They felt motivated to pursue their dreams and aspirations upon release. During the seminar, invaluable data was collected, with all participants showing great excitement about the program. The overwhelmingly positive feedback highlighted a strong desire for the program to be repeated!

## Pilot Training in Cyprus

The pilot training of the “Leadership and Life Mastery” program in Cyprus was organized with a group of 11 ex prisoners on 23rd, 24th, 25th April, 8th and 10th May 2024 with very good results. During the training programme, participants experienced the impact from methods utilized for empowerment and motivation in taking the leadership of their lives and mastering their desires and dreams, setting positive goals for the future. fostering a sense of hope and purpose. They had the opportunity to share views, ideas and opinions, as well as exchanging stories, fostering team building and positive group dynamics. It was an amazing and really productive experience for all trainers and participants.



## Pilot Training in Austria

On 4 different training days in April 2024, Südwind conducted the FROG leadership and life mastery training programme with a group of 10 people in Vienna. The target group consisted of people with mental illnesses, who are currently serving their suspended prison sentence in supervised residential centres. In view of the specific needs of the target group, a lot of work was done with relationships - in order to better support the participants in their dreams and possibilities. The trainers and participants experienced many magical moments during the training sessions, including the many intensive, personal reflections of the participants on themselves and their possibilities. There were numerous moments in which participants realised their own confidence in themselves!



## Pilot Training in Italy

training course based on the FROG methodology was conducted in the area of Palermo (Sicily) with three different groups: one group of young adults in a detention center, one group of young adults on probation, and one group of young and older adults in a rehabilitation community also hosting people with a past in the justice system. During the sessions they were guided in a path of greater self-awareness and confidence in their own potential. These activities on leadership and life mastery seemed like a different opportunity from the ones that the settings usually offer and were welcomed with great commitment by the participants.

## Focus Group and Interviews in Iceland

In Iceland, the focus group was a hybrid event involving 8 stakeholders, including 3 former inmates, 3 professionals, and 2 stakeholders from the correctional system. Everyone agreed that the prison system and culture needed to shift its focus from penalty to rehabilitation to effectively work towards reducing recidivism rates.

A total of 6 in-depth interviews were conducted with inmates, ex-inmates, and one counsellor from a post-sentence support centre focusing on education and support needs and settings. The results revealed that while prisons offered limited access to secondary education, there was a lack of hands-on vocational training as well as support for integration into employment and the community upon release and as follow-up. Interviewees emphasized the importance of healthcare, emotional support, family and social support from both peers and professionals, as well as practical assistance related to finances and resettlement upon release. Working through trauma and enhancing self-efficacy were identified as key factors to engage inmates in education and rehabilitation.

## Focus Group and Interviews in Greece

In Greece, a highly productive focus group discussion was convened, bringing together six (6) stakeholders from the correctional system. These participants included the director of a correctional facility, two adult educators, a lawyer, a representative from a non-profit organization, and the principal of a second-chance school within a correctional facility. A key suggestion that emerged was the need for programs aimed at reducing recidivism rates. Moreover, in-depth interviews with three former inmates provided a fresh perspective on the needs within the Greek correctional system and its potential improvements. These interviews highlighted the significant importance of offering inmates opportunities to participate in workshops, activities, and educational or vocational training programs. Additionally, providing psychological support throughout their incarceration and upon release was unreeled as an essential component of any reintegration effort. Ultimately, the focus should be on motivating these individuals and equipping them with the tools they need for personal development.

**Focus Group Discussions and Interviews with key stakeholders as well as (ex)prisoners were organized in Iceland, Italy, Austria, Cyprus and Greece**



## Focus Group and Interviews in Austria

Südwind conducted focus group interviews with stakeholders (two different groups) and a total of 10 experts in October 2023. Südwind also conducted individual interviews with 3 ex-offenders.

The experts who work in prisons emphasised the importance of aftercare following release from prison and support with job coaching as well as guidance for (re-)entering the world of work (preparing application documents, practising job interviews).

Motivational work and opportunities to continue (apprenticeship) training during and after imprisonment, as well as a structured daily routine with regular times for training and work were also considered very relevant by both target groups.



## Focus Group and Interviews in Cyprus

The Social Policy and Action Organization conducted the focus group discussion with 6 key experts, representing governmental, private and civil society stakeholders, 2 individual interviews with experts and 1 interview with an (ex)prisoner. The suggestions recommended included among others the following:

- 1) A professional organized social integration programme is required, which will be starting within the prison facilities, by providing guidance and support before, continue during their release and after during the integration process. Within the prison facilities, prisoners are more open to suggested educational and other services, they are more receptive. Most of them respond to educational programmes.
- 2) Productive and close collaboration between Prison Authorities, Social Welfare Department, experts and professionals is required. A Social integration policy, protocol and procedures should be developed to provide more effective and long-term support to (ex)prisoners.
- 3) More Treatment centers and shelters should be built and operated which will also include support services and help provided to cover educational and other social integration needs.
- 4) It would be great if Prison Authorities were open and flexible to more educational, learning and training programmes offered for prisoners during their imprisonment.

## Focus Group and Interviews in Italy

TA Focus Groups was conducted on the 23rd of June 2023 with 6 social workers working in the justice system. Interviews with people in conflict with the law were conducted individually later on. Both groups highlighted the need for more training programs including actions that focus on emotional and social needs including group activities and interventions that involve families. There is also a need to accompany people in conflict with the law in the post-release phase, engaging families and activating individual mentoring activities in the attempt to break the cycle. A great emphasis was put on job orientation and financial support.