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Dramatic art in detention facilities in Greece A research on the **perceptions** of **facilitators** in the prisons of Tiryntha and Nafplio

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Dramatic art in detention facilities in Greece

A research on the perceptions of facilitators in the prisons of Tiryntha and Nafplio

Magda Vitsou, Alkistis Kondoyianni, Kostas Magos



Abstract

This research aims at recording and investigating the views of facilitators on the impact that Drama in Education programmes implemented at the detention facilities of Tiryntha and Nafplio had both on them and the inmates. The methodological tools that were used include Google form questionnaires and content analysis. The study concludes that the facilitators' participation in the programmes is a very important experience for their personal and professional development. Their stereotypical perceptions of inmates are differentiated and a sense of solidarity towards the prisoners and the problems they are facing during their confinement is greatly enhanced. As far as the effect of drama sessions on the inmates' psychology is concerned, an increase in self-confidence and improved cooperative and social skills can also be seen.

Keywords: *Drama in Education; facilitators; prison education*

Introduction

Education through performing arts and theatre appears to have transformative effects on lifelong learning and especially on the education of prisoners. They reflect on their lives and redesign them through mental and emotional processes (Brewster, 2014; Milliken, 2008). Given that transformational learning is closely linked to personal experience (Nicholson, 2005; Prentki & Preston, 2009; Hughes & Ruding, 2009), the experiential nature of drama gradually contributes to the development of the transformation of inmates' experiences

through exploration of new roles (Mezirow, 2003, 2009). Drama is used worldwide as an educational tool in prisons and positively affects both the lives of inmates, after release from prison, as well as their general personal, social, and professional adjustment (Kochetal, 2015). Through the process of transformation and change of perspective achieved through drama and the exploration of personal experiences, participating prisoners are led to empowerment, emancipation, and self-efficacy (Allred, Harrison, & O'Connell, 2013; Prifti, 2019; Rappaport 1998; Zimmerman, 2000).

1. The contribution of Dramatic Art to the lives of inmates

The implementation of drama/theatre programmes in marginalised groups is an ever-increasing field of research (Nicholson, 2005). The proliferation of art-based programmes and interventions in prisons has led to a gradual shift from "nothing works" to "something works" (Day, 2011, 2015; McGuire, 1995).

Although performing arts in prisons have only appeared in literature in recent decades, they have been used as a practice for many years, but there is no clear documented history. However, from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, they have begun to gain significant worldwide presence (Tocci, 2007) with prison programmes in Canada (Duguid & Pawson, 1998). Since then, many countries around the world have launched initiatives for action within prisons, focusing on the arts.

James Thompson (1998) emphasises that "*prison theatre can be a powerful place... to rediscover the present and imagine a new future*" (p. 18). In addition, he stresses that participants in theatre programmes in prisons acquire a voice and participate with confidence. However, apart from change in the individual, a question about the impact of the programmes on the prison itself arises. He wonders: "*Can theatre in prisons give a soul to the system or transform it?*" (Thompson, 1998, p. 16). What he emphasises is that theatre workshops in prisons can facilitate change at institutional as well as individual levels.

In *Theatre in Prison: Theory and Practice*, Michael Balfour (2004) states that drama may not only be a means of correcting behaviour, but also a means of social and institutional change. Massachusetts School of Communication Professor Jonathan Shailor, in his anthology of prison theatre, points out the positive impact of inmate programmes through Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Shailor, 2011). Bridget Keegan (2015) claims that performing arts can lead to a possible re-registration of the self and contribute to the creation of a new identity beyond that of prisoner.

University of San Francisco Professor Larry Brewster (1983) interviewed prisoners and conducted participatory observation. He highlighted the fact that inmates are interested in self-improvement. They pointed out that their participation in a dramatic arts programme led to an improvement in their self-discipline and self-confidence. In 2010, Brewster expanded his research and conducted a comprehensive qualitative study using in-depth interviews with 18 members of the Arts in Correction programme. The analysis of the results showed that through art and theatre participants were able to connect with themselves, cultivate their confidence and self-esteem. He states: "*They realised a greater and deeper sense of who they were and what they could become*" (Brewster, 2010, p. 15).

In Lorraine Moller's case study (2003), entries in prisoner diaries were analysed. The importance of the theatre programme was highlighted, in particular the development of confidence. "*Under the pretext of playing a character, [prisoners] take off the masks that protect them, express their sensitive sides, walk in other people's shoes and expand their perspectives*" (p. 65).

Tocci (2007) emphasises the importance of theatre in prisons through social interaction in terms of developing social skills in relation to individual activities such as creative

writing and painting. In his research, the participating inmates described dramatic art as a means of self-discovery and self-evaluation. Also, through acting, participants were able to explore different personalities and develop empathy. "*They were able to find themselves embodying different personalities and at the same time they managed to be themselves through repeated theatrical activities*" (Tocci, 2007, p. 166).

Research conducted in Scottish prisons (Tett, Anderson, McNeill, Overy, & Sparks, 2012) concluded that performing arts in prisons contributes to the improvement of social skills, in particular collaboration. Through interviews with participants, a qualitative analysis of the feedback forms and prison conduct records found that programmes based on performing arts help to activate cooperation between prisoners. They created opportunities for them to work collectively and build trusting relationships and as a result, their self-esteem improved. Through drama workshops, participating inmates were able to connect and support each other (Tett et al., 2012). Another aspect that emerges in these case studies is the development of a learning culture. The collaborative and supportive environment offered by the programmes encourages inmates to improve their literacy skills. "*Literacy skills were integrated into the spectrum of art and theatre activities and thus allowed participants to work on their strengths and enhance their creativity*" (Tett et al., 2012, p. 180).

A review of the literature shows that most programmes are based on the principles of Drama in Education and have been developed by professionals within prisons (McAvinchey, 2011; Moller, 2013; Pensalfini, 2016; Shailor, 2011; Thompson, 1998; Tocci, 2007). Notable also is the pioneering Greek director and theatre teacher, Michalis Traitsis, who prepares many programmes in prisons and works with the University of Urbino (Andrisano & Tammaro, 2019).

Many programmes have been implemented in prisons in the United States. Rehabilitation Through the Arts, one of the most important programmes, has been operating since 1996 and offers a variety of arts, such as theatre, music, dance and visual arts (Halperin, Kessler, & Braunschweiger, 2012). The aim of the programme is to use the transformative power of theatre and the arts so that inmates can develop the social and cognitive skills needed to successfully reintegrate into the community. The results of the programme have been recognised by many researchers, who emphasise that it provides immediate and long-term opportunities for inmates to uniquely express their creativity and to work together (Moller, 2003; Shailor, 2011; Tocci, 2007).

The Arts Resource Project (Gardner, Hager, & Hillman, 2014, 2019) presents a series of programmes, such as The Actors' Gang Prison Project; And Still We Rise; The Bridging Boundaries Intervention Program; Reflecting Shakespeare. Their common denominator is the use of theatre as a way to shift the oppressive culture of the prisons, create dialogue, transform the participants and improve their well-being.

Similar results are presented in an action research carried out at the Juvenile Special Detention Facility of Volos by Kostas Magos (2014, 2015). The research focused on a dramatised storytelling workshop of eight prisoner participants from Pakistan, aged 17 to 21. The research aimed at finding out how the participation of prisoners in a storytelling workshop would help cultivate reflection on the causes that led them to develop delinquent behaviour, as well as on issues related to

their social inclusion after release from prison. A key finding of the research was that narrative functioned as an effective means of developing prisoners' critical thinking as well as improving interpersonal relationships.

In addition, almost all relevant published researches highlight the transformative effect of drama on the inmates as well as the solidarity developed between the participants. The positive effect is also emphasised for the volunteers, who are empowered, experience development at a personal and professional level and at the same time, develop a more positive attitude towards the inmates (Kondoyianni, 2018; Moore, Warta, & Erichsen, 2014; O' Brien, Townsend, & Ebden, 2010).

A review of the Greek literature shows the great development of drama in the prisons of Greece. Many drama workshops have been held both by the Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet-Gr) and by non-governmental organisations, directors and actors in many prisons in the country, such as the juvenile detention facility of Avlonas, the women's prison of Eleonas, the prison of Korydallos, etc. (Kondoyianni, 2018).

2. Drama in Education Programmes in the prisons of Tiryntha and Nafplio in the framework of the postgraduate course of the Theatre Studies Department

In recent years, several arts programmes have been conducted in prisons as applied research. A typical example is the extensive educational programme, titled "Developing life skills in inmates at the Detention Facilities of Tiryntha and Nafplio". The Department of Theatre Studies of the University of the Peloponnese organises and implements this programme through its postgraduate course in collaboration with the detention facilities in Tiryntha and Nafplio. A broad educational programme is offered by volunteers, the majority of whom are teachers, theatre experts, and actors. Courses are available in literacy, drama, counselling and psychological empowerment, construction, literature, movement, music, reflexology, and foreign languages. Postgraduate students offer drama workshops that have a multiplicity of goals. These include learning the Greek language, analysis of literary texts, and creation of improvised scripts, introduction to entrepreneurship, professional orientation, and operation of machines. This gives participants the opportunity to engage in dialogue, theme processing, argumentation, critical thinking, reflection, creativity and to gain knowledge. The results of the above activities are presented in published master's theses (Grammatikopoulou, 2020; Theodoropoulou, 2020; Michael, 2017; Giannakouli, 2016). Many research papers have also been prepared about the prisons because the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of Peloponnese is based in Nafplio (Anastasiou, 2020; Asteri, 2018; Vlachogianni, 2018; Gousi, 2018; Kati, 2018; Bekiari & Tsiros, 2018; Stergianni, 2019; Theodoropoulou, 2019).

The present study will explore the views of facilitators who participated in the programmes conducted in May, June and July 2019. In total, twenty interventions were realised, seven in the Rural Detention Facility of Tiryntha and thirteen in the Detention Facility of Nafplio. The number of inmates participating in the programme ranged from sixteen to twenty-two in each prison. Irregular attendance was due to mandatory absences for court appearances, visiting hours, and prison

work. Drama in Education exercises and techniques were used, such as role-plays, improvisations, body-activating exercises, creative writing, confrontations, readings of literary works, etc. The objectives were cognitive, socio-emotional, ethical, and linguistic. At the same time, the development of pre-professional and life skills was also sought.

3. Methodology

Research objectives

This research aims at recording and investigating how the facilitators who participated in the Drama in Education programmes at the Tiryntha and Nafplio prisons believe their participation affected both them and the inmates. The research questions were as follows:

- 1) How does the experience of implementing Drama in Education programmes in prisons affect the perceptions and emotions of facilitators?
- 2) According to the facilitators, what are the effects of Drama in Education techniques on inmates?

Data collection tools

Of the 22 volunteers, there were 13 postgraduate students of the Department of Theatre Studies. There were also four teacher volunteers, primary and secondary school teachers of a variety of subjects and an actor, economist and musician. The data was collected through Google form questionnaires, which were completed by the postgraduate students (see Appendix). The participants did not come from the same region, but were residents of different regions of Greece (Papanis, 2011). The questionnaire consisted of 11 open-ended questions with some space for expansion.

4. Analysis

The content analysis method was used (Robson, 2010). Content analysis is a scientific method that describes different aspects of communication content and seeks an unbiased, systematic and quantitative description of the stated content of communication in order to interpret it effectively (Thomas, 2000). To find the thematic categories, open coding of the questionnaire data was performed (Robson, 2010). The collection of data in the context of the above tools was conducted using an archiving and coding system with the aim of constructing a detailed framework. Initially, general conceptual categories were formed so as to create the possibility of interconnection and explanation of data.

4.1. Thematic categories that emerged from the answers to the open-ended questionnaires

The answers were coded for the axes presented in Table 1:

Table 1

Motivation to participate
Initial perceptions of prison education
Emotions before implementation
Perceptions after the implementation of the programmes
Emotions after implementation
Facilitators' opinions on the impact of Drama in Education techniques on inmates
Difficulties that arose



Motivation to participate

Most facilitators were intrinsically motivated to participate in Drama in Education programmes in prisons. At this point, however, it should be clarified that their motivations were transformed before the intervention, as they had undergone relevant training as facilitators in a socially vulnerable group during the course. They were influenced by the example of similar programmes implemented in previous years and were encouraged by the leaders of the programme. Most of the participants expressed their willingness to freely offer their time to the vulnerable group of inmates:

"I do not know. I just trusted a person who organises the contact with the prisoners whom I respect and I believed that something important could come out of my contact with them."

"The trust and faith of Mrs Alkistis Kondoyianni in solidarity and contribution."

"My willingness to help socially vulnerable groups. To experience the tempo and pulse of the fragile micro-society of the prison. To contribute to the improvement of free time, with no intention of prettifying prison conditions."

"To share my time creatively with inmates."

10/17: 59% of the facilitators stated personal motivation and gain from their participation in these programmes. They refer to personal improvement, challenging their own stereotypes and fears. They characteristically emphasise that *"it was a new challenge and experience; I wanted to connect with something I was afraid of"*, while at the same time they associate it with a curiosity to get to know *"from within"* an unknown place with a specific demonised identity.

"I was curious to see what this place is like."

"I wanted to see if it corresponds to what I had in mind ..."

Of course, in some answers (6/17: 35.5%), participation in the programme is connected with their obligations as postgraduate students, which serve as external motivation, as it gives them the opportunity to apply in practice what they have been taught.

"My need to turn drama-based techniques –which I love and have so much confidence in– into a tool of healing and offering, going beyond the classroom."

"We also had to apply what we had learned..."

They also emphasise (15/17: 88%) that it is a resource for their professional development as facilitators in socially vulnerable groups.

"It is an experience that helps me develop as a facilitator... I am thinking of continuing to work with prisons and other socially vulnerable groups. I am thinking of forming a group in the area where I live to organise activities in prisons."

"I think the opportunity given to us through the postgraduate course to have access to activities in such places is tremendous ... It is also good for our CV as facilitators."

In conclusion, it seems that their motivation for participating in the specific Drama in Education programmes was internalised, as is evident in their willingness to volunteer and offer to a vulnerable social group. However, their motivation was also externalised, as their participation would help their training as facilitators.

Initial concepts of prison education

To the question *"What were your perceptions of the prison and the prisoners before the action?"*, most students (14/17: 82.6%) stated that they had a stereotypical image of prisons and prisoners, which was reinforced by the statements of those close to them upon learning about their participation in the programme.

The statements were:

"Waste of time..."

"Fear, concern for my safety."

"My son was afraid, those around me expressed hesitation and prejudice."

"They thought I was crazy, because I should just stay put, out of trouble."

"A few people thought I was a romantic, in the sense of the futility of it all. Yes, so what?... These people do not change."

Equally noteworthy is the gender dimension in the negative comments of relatives who warn about the danger of the project:

"What are you doing, woman, throwing yourself to the wolves?"

"Make sure you are not alone... You never know."

"Gender bias, given the programmes are implemented in men's prisons."

On their part, 9 out of 17 (53.1%) postgraduate students state that prisons are a place of deprivation of liberty, while their initial perceptions of a prisoner corresponded to that of a "criminal" and an "outlaw".

"Prisons have always made me feel fear, marginalisation, illegality, crime. I did not think visiting a prison was a pleasant experience."

"I did not have information about the living conditions of prisoners and I had some prejudice regarding their behaviour, i.e. they are problematic people with erratic, violent behaviour."

"I thought prisoners were different people and that prison was a grave. By saying different people I mean that these people were monsters with a human face. That is what most people believe and I can see that now in people's reactions when I say that I am volunteering in the prison."

In general, the answers of the participants reflect the stereotypical image of the prison space and the prejudices about the inmates.

Emotions prior to the implementation of the programmes

The majority of postgraduate students (13/17: 76.7%) experienced anxiety and stress about the implementation and successful outcome of the programmes they had designed.

"Of course there was some anxiety about what I would encounter inside. Or I felt a creative rush, I would say."

"I prepared myself by doing my own research, finding bibliography concerning socially vulnerable groups –prisons–, publications (newspaper articles). This, of course, is beyond the subject area (theatre). I gained knowledge from the training seminars."

"My feelings were mixed: fear and awe because I would be near criminals and the desire to live for a while in an unknown, suspicious place, as if I wanted to enter the minds of inmates. I wanted to see if I could teach them and what they would be interested in. Lastly, I did not know if I had chosen the right place to run my programme."

All (17/17: 100%) students expressed their desire to be able to relate to the inmates and design programmes that would be interesting and enjoyable.

"I prepared my materials; I designed my programme and asked for help from younger students I was friends with."

"I tried to imagine how a prisoner would feel with a stranger and then the subject I would develop."

"My main goal was to create an atmosphere of closeness and connection... Unblocking-Communication-Trust..."

The initial concern and insecurity of the facilitators about the progress of the programmes they would implement is obvious, but also evident is their effort to design programmes that will meet the needs of inmates.

Perceptions after the implementation of the programmes

In relation to the perceptions of the participants about the inmates after the implementation of the programmes, most of the answers (15/17: 88.5%) showed a shift in the initial views. The initial fear and stereotypes about inmates seem to have changed, as they reflect on the deeper causes that lead someone to prison, and there are even suggestions on what form this space should take:

"Or I would say, yes, there were ... that the prisoner is a man whose mind at some point made the wrong choice at the wrong time."

"My perception changed completely: I stopped being afraid, I felt grateful for sharing common experiences and I understood their need for contact with the outside world."

"My perception of prisoners has dramatically changed. After my experience, I believe that as a society we must contribute to the education of prisoners by giving them the necessary resources to re-integrate into society as equal citizens."

"Yes, I was more suspicious and less sensitive than the prisoners. I found out through our communication that we are all potentially prone to delinquent behaviour and prison is not the proof of good and bad. Outside... there is a greater delinquency in some cases."

"I take every opportunity to participate in social support groups. This reasoning was reinforced during my time in the prison. As for prison, I believe that it needs to disengage from the role of the punisher."

At the same time, 11 out of 17 (64.9%) respondents emphasise the change of stereotyped beliefs as a result of their own reflection process:

"No man is worth less, there are many truths to a story, listen to your neighbour... empathy. I became a better person."

Typically one participant states: *"This experience changed me as a person... I think I matured... I was able to see my own prisons and overcome my own barriers and stereotypes"*.



In conclusion, what is evident is the differentiation of the initial stereotypical views and perceptions about prison and prisoners through a process of reflection.

Emotions after the implementation

When asked what their feelings were after the action, 100% of facilitators answered with great emotional intensity. They describe their experience as a great moment that was moving and optimistic and had a great impact on them as well:

"Something like a bitter death. Satisfaction for their faces in the small square gap between the steel bars ... and they watched me leave... A reversed image... imprisonment and freedom...! 'See you again'... this is how I said goodbye to them...!"

"I went in as one person and came out as another; they moved me. They needed us so much and they were so grateful."

"An optimism for change in society emerged through the change in the way prisoners are educated!!!

The more prisoners are engaged in cultural activities, the nicer they will feel and the more essential and better they will become as active participants in society."

They are also satisfied with the positive outcome of the programmes and the achievement of their goals:

"Joy for the smooth running of the programme, relief that the predefined goals were achieved, and finally stress, as it was the first Drama in Education programme of my life, some excitement about everything I saw, lived and realised!"

"There was emotion and recognition that no matter what role we have in the group, we are not different in terms of emotions. At the end, they cried, they gave us letters of thanks and their fairy tales as a gift."

In addition, 8 of the 17 (47.2%) identified with the detainees and felt the difficulties of incarceration:

"Moral uplift and fulfillment for offering to fellow human beings, guilt because I left them locked up and I was breathing freedom."

"Understanding and love for the people I met. Anger about the so-called penal system."

"I learned not to judge... I met a world that everyone pretends it does not exist, but it is here and it needs us ..."

Therefore, facilitating Drama in Education programmes is described as an unprecedented experience, a life experience, which leads to empathy and altruism.

Facilitators' views about the impact of Drama in Education techniques on inmates

The majority of participants state (16/17: 94.4%) that a wide variety of intellectual, socio-emotional, and communication skills were developed through the techniques and exercises of

Drama in Education in combination with other arts. Prisoners got to know each other and exchanged views. They agreed about creating roles and improvisations; did problem solving, developed decision making and critical ability, broke stereotypes, accepted new standards, engaged in philosophy, developed their creativity and formed a positive attitude towards life. At the same time, relations improved with the outside society, which consists of the management, the prison staff and the facilitators, who write:

"As T. told us, it is amazing. I did not know that Th. believes such a thing. I mean, we live together and we do not know each other and now thanks to theatre we have opened up. The good thing is that we have a good time. We will remember that."

"They exercised their imagination and filled prison time with something different and useful for themselves..."

In addition, 12 out of 17 facilitators (70.8%) state that inmates overcame their initial embarrassment very easily, participating enthusiastically in the programmes:

"As if they were trying to suck a little life from beyond the walls..."

"An inmate called L. said it two or three times, 'well done guys, you've brought us some fresh air from outside and we're changing, because we are breathing.'"

They identified with heroes, the positive characteristics of each participant emerged, there was an expression of deeper desires and heroic patterns, they collaborated, they reflected, but above all they had fun and "escaped from the gloomy reality of prison".

The main goal of most of the programmes was the mental empowerment of the prisoners: their "well-being", the improvement of their mental state and their self-efficacy:

"Our goal is for our imprisoned students to gain self-confidence, self-esteem and trust in themselves and their potential for good, to reintegrate into society in a different way now."

"Art has no limits. On the contrary, it breaks down barriers and liberates souls. Through acting and creative play, which deepen cooperation, imagination emerges, self-confidence is strengthened... prisoners' creativity is activated. The mind escapes from the visit that did not happen or the phone call that did not take place, the court or from the new law of the Ministry that was passed or not passed, etc."

Of equal importance is the reference (6/17: 35.4%) to the beneficial effect of dramatic art on the positive thinking of the inmates about life inside prison, as well as outside after their release:

"They help them rediscover themselves, have unprecedented experiences, re-evaluate their lives and change their outlook, become happy people."

"Yes, of course, I believe it, because art helps one to let go of the mind and turn to the heart. It helps to escape



isolation, to connect in a different way with people inside and outside prison, and most importantly, to dream about what else they can do upon leaving prison."

"Yes, it helps to be someone else. A prisoner also said: 'Girls, with your lessons, surprisingly enough, I'm not myself; everything inside my mind is moving and changing'."

"They confided in us, they told us that they miss their family, they expressed some of their dreams, they told us that they want to become another person and I felt that something had shifted inside them, maybe the desire to live like us."

"It helps people to change something deep inside their minds and hearts, to think and feel differently."

It is important, therefore, to highlight, through the perspective of the facilitators, the positive effect of drama techniques on inmates. Those who actively participated developed their creativity, collaborated, identified with others and brought hidden emotions to the surface. Also, according to the facilitators, the positive change in the mood of the inmates was important, as it affected their daily lives in the prison.

Difficulties that arose

The difficulties encountered during the implementation of these programmes are focused on two axes: language-communication and the operational difficulties within the prison area.

As for the first axis, that of communication, most responses (14/17: 82.6%) mention the lack of a common language code which creates a "gap" in the actions, but the language of drama helps in communication:

"In the rural prison, we had difficulty with the different language spoken by the students... in closed prisons, we have no difficulties."

"A slight difficulty with understanding the language and writing was overcome with drama techniques."

"They described a visit to us in mime, we laughed a lot, and everything was understood."

In terms of the second axis, 9 out of 17 facilitators (53.1%) mention operational difficulties. These include lack of suitable space for the programmes in the rural prison of Tirynta and the transfers of the inmates. Additionally, rivalries between

different groups created difficulties and sometimes led to the non-participation of some inmates in the programmes.

"Many difficulties. The educational level of participants. Most of them had difficulty reading, many were foreigners and Roma. Rivalries between the small groups that nest in prisons. Insurmountable technical difficulty or lack of independent space to use as a stage."

Many (11/17: 64.9%) mentioned that the difficulties were quickly resolved:

"In the beginning, there was embarrassment because we were two women. There was a guard who supervised the meeting, we asked him to join the group, he refused but he gradually joined the team. There were people who did not know the language... These difficulties gave us the opportunity to find creative solutions as a team."

In addition, they state that they made very small changes for adaptation reasons that had more to do with the atmosphere, energy, age and mood of the inmates in order to "acquire communication... greater immediacy".

Therefore, the language of communication with the inmates, but also the daily difficulties in the space and mode of operation of the prison acted as obstacles during the implementation of the programmes.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate and record the views of facilitators regarding the effect of Drama in Education programmes on the facilitators themselves and the prisoners. This was achieved by examining the responses of the facilitators who participated in the programmes and by analysing the data on the basis of seven thematic categories. Correlating our results with the results published in international literature, we have arrived at a series of conclusions about theatre in prisons and the implementation of Drama in Education programmes in penal institutions.

Regarding the first research question, which concerned the perceptions and emotions of facilitators about the implementation of Drama in Education programmes in prison, it seems that their experience positively affects their perceptions. Their participation in the programmes is a very important experience for both their personal and professional development as facilitators. Their close contact with the prison space appears to change their stereotypical perceptions of the inmates, while the empathy and solidarity for the problems experienced by the inmates during their incarceration are enhanced. Although facilitating in such a socially vulnerable group is initially a stressful process, it becomes an incentive for further deepening and engaging with theatre in prisons. For the most part, facilitators describe their experience as constructive and a catalyst for changing their perspective. They express a variety of positive emotions such as joy, satisfaction with their offering and emotional empowerment, but they also exercise self-criticism. They express their realisation that socially unpleasant places and "limitations" such as the infrastructure and equipment in prisons make it difficult to implement such programmes and they empathise with the "void" in the lives of inmates. At the same time, they point out that the difficulties that arose in

communication were quickly resolved through the language of drama. They also state that a change in our attitude towards life is necessary and that the participation and mobilisation of citizens is necessary in order to improve the reintegration of inmates into society. This is a conclusion also drawn in other research (McAvinchey, 2011; Moller, 2013; Pensalfini, 2016; Shailor, 2011; Thompson, 1998; Tocci, 2007). In addition, they claim that through their role, they provide psychosocial support and mobilisation to inmates (Benelli, 2017; Manger, Eikeland & Asbjørnsen, 2018; Moore, Warta, & Erichsen, 2014; Kondoyianni, 2018).

Regarding the second question of how facilitators perceive the effect of Drama in Education programmes on inmates, the positive effect of drama on the psychology of inmates is recognised both at a behavioural and an emotional level. Through their participation in activities and reflection, they find a way out of prison. They are able to express themselves creatively, their confidence is boosted and they cultivate collaborative and social skills. The issue of developing collaborative skills and improving relationships within this particular group corroborates with the results of previous research (Kondoyianni, 2018; Lleixà & Rios 2015; Moore, Warta, & Erichsen, 2014; O'Brien, Townsend, & Ebdon, 2010; Prifti, 2019).

According to the facilitators, the participation of the inmates in the programmes and exercises of Drama in Education not only provides a way to creatively pass the time in prison, but also offers ways to develop thinking and reflection, personal empowerment and self-effectiveness. Prisoners gain more confidence and empathy and through theatrical action, they begin to see the future positively. Likewise, they recognise that the programmes helped them bring their creativity to light, to believe in their talents and in themselves and to make plans for their life outside prison. This is also underlined by many great researchers (Mezirow, 2003; Rappaport, 1998; Zimmerman, 2000) and in many related studies (Allred et al., 2013; Blacker, Watson, & Beech, 2011; Baim, Brookes, & Mountford, 2002). There is also the issue of redefining their lives through the experience of drama, rehabilitation and support. This is noted in the research of Tannenbaum (2015) and Bozick, Steele, Davis and Turner (2018).

After the analysis of the research data, some elements related to the limitations and the peculiarities of the specific research must be pointed out. These elements are located in two main axes. The first concerns the small scale of this research, which does not allow for the generalisation of conclusions as well as the small number of participants. Another limitation is the fact that online questionnaires were the only research tool and no other research tools, such as interview or participatory observation, were adopted to triangulate the results. The limitation of the online questionnaire is that it "captures events that took place in the past—so memory ability is always a factor—, non centrality of some positions—so they cannot be verified empirically and performance errors— (overestimation, underestimation of events)" (Papanis, 2011, p. 64). It is therefore proposed to extend this research to other prisons with more participants so that there is a correlation of the results.

In conclusion, through the review of the literature and in relation to the findings of the present research, it can be claimed that Drama in Education programmes may play an important role in contributing to the improvement of the daily lives of prisoners and the personal development of participating facilitators.

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Appendix

Online Questionnaire

1. What were your perceptions about "prison" and prisoners before the implementation of the programmes?
2. What motivated you to take part in the Drama in Education in Prison programmes?
3. Which were the main comments you heard from relatives/friends, etc. when you informed them about your participation in the programme?
4. Did you prepare for the programme prior to the implementation and if so, in what way?
5. Briefly describe the activity you implemented (objectives, content, stages, time, participants, etc.)
6. What were the most important difficulties you encountered (e.g. communicating with inmates)?
7. Did you make any changes to your initial plan and if so, why?
8. What were your feelings after the implementation?
9. Were there any changes in your perceptions about the prisoners/life in prison after the implementation and, if so, which ones?
10. Do you think that Drama in Education activities "help" prisoners and in what way?
11. Which was the most important experience as a facilitator in prison?

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