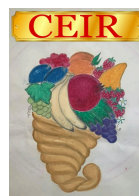




GOOD PRACTICES

Partner: CEIR

Practice's title: **Chess for Freedom Programme**



Including **Chess As a Re-education Up-Skilling** tool

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1- BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

1.1 Background

Where does the practice come from? What is the context in which the practice was created and experimented first?

The rights and opportunities of self-realization and development for people in imprisonment are essential prerequisites in order to consciously build their future after liberation. Access to training and learning, as well as to quality ways of socializing could give strong motivation to change for better.

To support and promote this line of work, the International Chess Federation (FIDE) and the Cook County Sheriff's Office (Chicago, USA) have signed a cooperation agreement and launched the "Chess for Freedom" programme.

International Chess Federation (FIDE) and Cook County (Chicago, USA) Department of Corrections under the Sheriff Thomas Dart are dedicated to use chess for education, integration and empowerment of people in Imprisonment.

In recent years, we have witnessed the successful introduction of chess in prisons through different educative programs in the USA, Armenia, Norway, Russia, England, Brazil, Italy and Spain, with very positive outcomes.

In prisons, just as in broader society, the impact of sport and games can be far-reaching. The experiences referred above demonstrate that chess improves behaviour, helping to reduce inmate violence and developing communication skills, while promoting positive use of leisure time. Chess also drastically improves the decision-making capabilities of a group of people that, very often due to the lack of opportunities and access to proper education, has ended up in jail after making a wrong choice in life. Besides, the game positively impacts the inmates' overall health, fighting depression, stress and anxiety, and motivating them to change for the better.

The FIDE Social Commission has also launched a Chess For Freedom Network, where representatives from ongoing or aspiring CFF projects participate, and get peer access, review best practice examples, case stories and lessons learned, get invitations to workshops and seminars, and get help to start or reinvigorate own projects.

1.2 Main subject

What is the main subject at the heart of the practice? What are the themes developed in the practice?

The 'Chess for Freedom' project helps people who have made mistakes in the past serve their sentences to be prepared for their new lives and to make sure they feel responsible for each move they make.

1.3 Target

What's the intended target group of the practice? Are there primary and secondary beneficiaries? (eg.: other teachers as primary beneficiaries and adult learners as secondary beneficiaries, or vice versa).

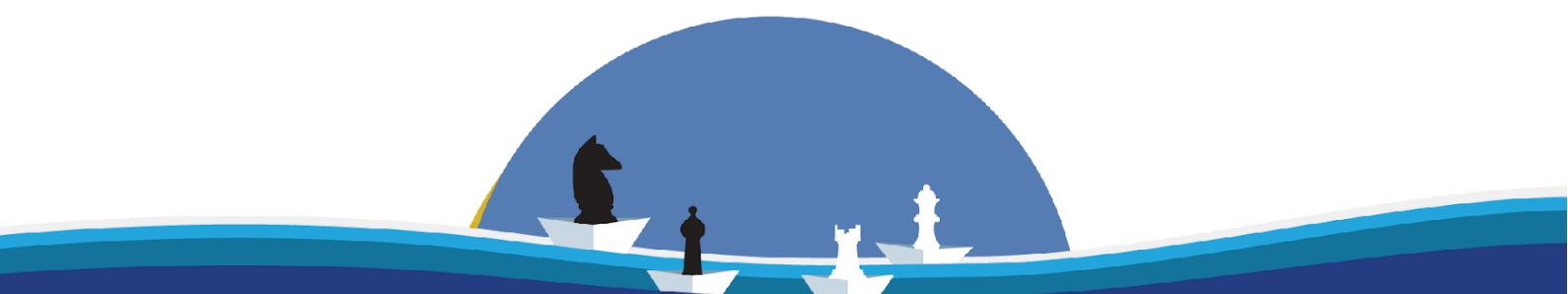
The target group of the practice is prison in-mates worldwide.

2- OUTLINE OF THE PRACTICE

2.1. Description

Please describe the activities contained in the practice. If possible, try to divide them in Learning Units. Also, define how long the training practice will last (1 to 4 hours).

The International Chess Federation together with the Cook County Sheriff's Office (Chicago, USA) held the first event of the Chess for Freedom program. The project, aimed at the introduction of chess as a tool for education and social inclusion in



prisons of different countries, is carried out under the 12th World Champion Anatoly Karpov's patronage.

Being a part of the Chess for Freedom program and a continuation of the international championships among prisoners first held in 2019, the event aims at introducing chess as a tool for education and social inclusion in prisons of different countries.

The Chess for Freedom programme kicked off in May 2021 with an online conference and an exhibition tournament with four participant countries. Later on, in October 2021, the first Intercontinental Online Chess Championship for Prisoners was held. It attracted 42 teams representing 31 countries.

In October 2022, the event attracted 85+ teams from 46 countries representing all continents.

The 3rd Intercontinental Online Chess Championship for Prisoners was held on October 11-13, 2023, on the International Day of Education in Prison. 118 teams from 50 countries participated in the tournament.

The championship, organized by FIDE and the Cook County (Chicago, IL, USA) Sheriff's Office and hosted by Chess.com, is open for teams made of 4 players in three categories – men's, women's and juvenile correctional facilities.

Each country can have up to three teams for the event:

- main team
- team representing a female correctional facility with all four female team players
- team representing juvenoid correctional facility (Under age of 20).

The participating countries can also submit more teams for the waiting list in a case that tournament organizers may look for additional teams to complete the 8-teams field for each group. Each correctional facility shall submit an application via an online registration form.

2.2. Aim/goal

Please describe the aim(s) and goal(s) of the practice: what are the objectives that the practice wants to reach?

Chess is a game that not only allows the inmates to spend a quality time and socialize in a smart and safe way, but also can serve for decreasing such common symptoms like depression, stress, and anxiety. Developing memory and logical thinking, improving concentration skills and imagination may foster their reintegration after liberation. Chess inspires self-motivation, develops the capacity to for-see consequences and demonstrates the success is a reward of hard work.

2.3. Training Approach

What kind of training/teaching methodology is implemented in this practice? Is there a literature/bibliography (not mandatory)?

Preparation for participation in annual International Online Chess Championship for Prisoners, scheduled for the International Day of Education in Prison. More info: chessforfreedom.fide.com/tournament/

3- TOOLS

Which tools and materials are necessary for this practice to be implemented/to be successful?

The important tools are

- Chess set
- Chess playing as well as
- A good book about chess play.

4- OBSERVATIONS

This space can be used for all comments and observations, including what you couldn't fit in the previous sections of the template.

The Chess for Freedom program started in May 2021 with an exhibition online tournament with four participating countries. Since then, the event has rapidly grown, as in October 2022, the Intercontinental Online Chess Championship for Prisoners boasted 85+ teams from 46 countries, becoming the largest event of its kind. And we will keep growing this year, providing an opportunity for a bigger number of inmates to play chess with their peers across the globe.

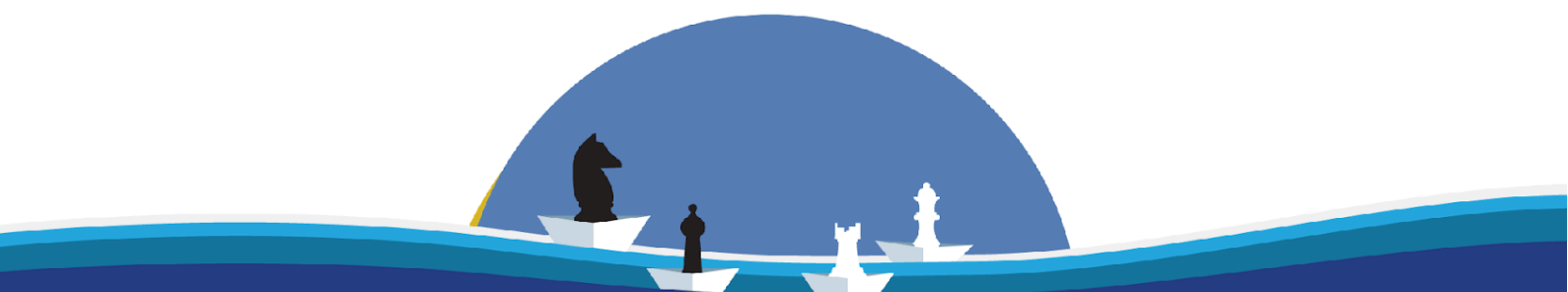
"The repeated infringements rate in Brasil is 72%," shared GM Darcy Lima who initiated the social project 'Chess that liberates'. "For those who stayed in a chess program for less than 1 year, this rate drops to 47%. 1-2 years - 22%. More than 2 years - 17%."

The Online Conference "Chess for Freedom" connected speakers from different parts of the globe. They share the same vocation - bringing chess to prisons and using the game as a tool helping convicts to improve their life.

Links:

https://x.com/FIDE_chess/status/1799369975087484940

<https://www.fide.com/docs/regulations/Social%20Commission%20Chess%20for%20Freedom.pdf>



Including **C**hess **A**s a **R**e-education **U**p-**S**killing tool