

LAUNCHING 100,000 RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS IN PRISON

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Centre for Justice & Reconciliation

Prison Fellowship International

Prison Fellowship International

- 120 national affiliates
- Centre for Justice & Reconciliation
- Vision: restorative justice as the normal way of responding to crime
- www.restorativejustice.org
- Sycamore Tree Project®

Sycamore Tree Project®

- 30-35 countries; 3500 prisoners and victims
- Story: corrupt tax collector agreed to repay victims when they confronted him under a Sycamore tree

Restorative Conversation

- Victim and offender meeting
- Appropriate length
- Exchange stories
- Discuss needs and responsibilities arising from crime

Sycamore Tree Project®

Original program

- In-prison
- 8 meetings of groups of unrelated victims and offenders
- Interactive, facilitator-led
- Justice, Crime, Responsibility, Telling My Story, Forgiveness, Making Amends, Building Peace, Celebration
- Modifications introduced

Research

- Crime Pics II
- World Health Organization Well-being Index
- Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale

Western Australia

1. Prisoners realize the impact of their crimes
2. Better understanding of thoughts and emotions leading to crime
3. Meaningful internal commitment to change
4. Initial step toward rehabilitation
5. Lessening of anger and more positive behavior
6. Victims feels stronger and aided in healing
7. Prisoners, victims & facilitators call participation life changing
8. Helped families of prisoners

Key Components

1. A safe, respectful meeting environment, created by a trained facilitator
2. An opportunity for storytelling to the "other" with the goal of fostering understanding
3. A commitment to reflection and action as a way of responding to the conversation

How Many Restorative Conversations?

- Conservative estimate: 7000 per year
- Over five years would expect 35,000 conversations
- Could we triple that to 100,000?

Challenges

1. How to recruit and involve victims
2. Training, quality assurance and organizational oversight
3. Funding

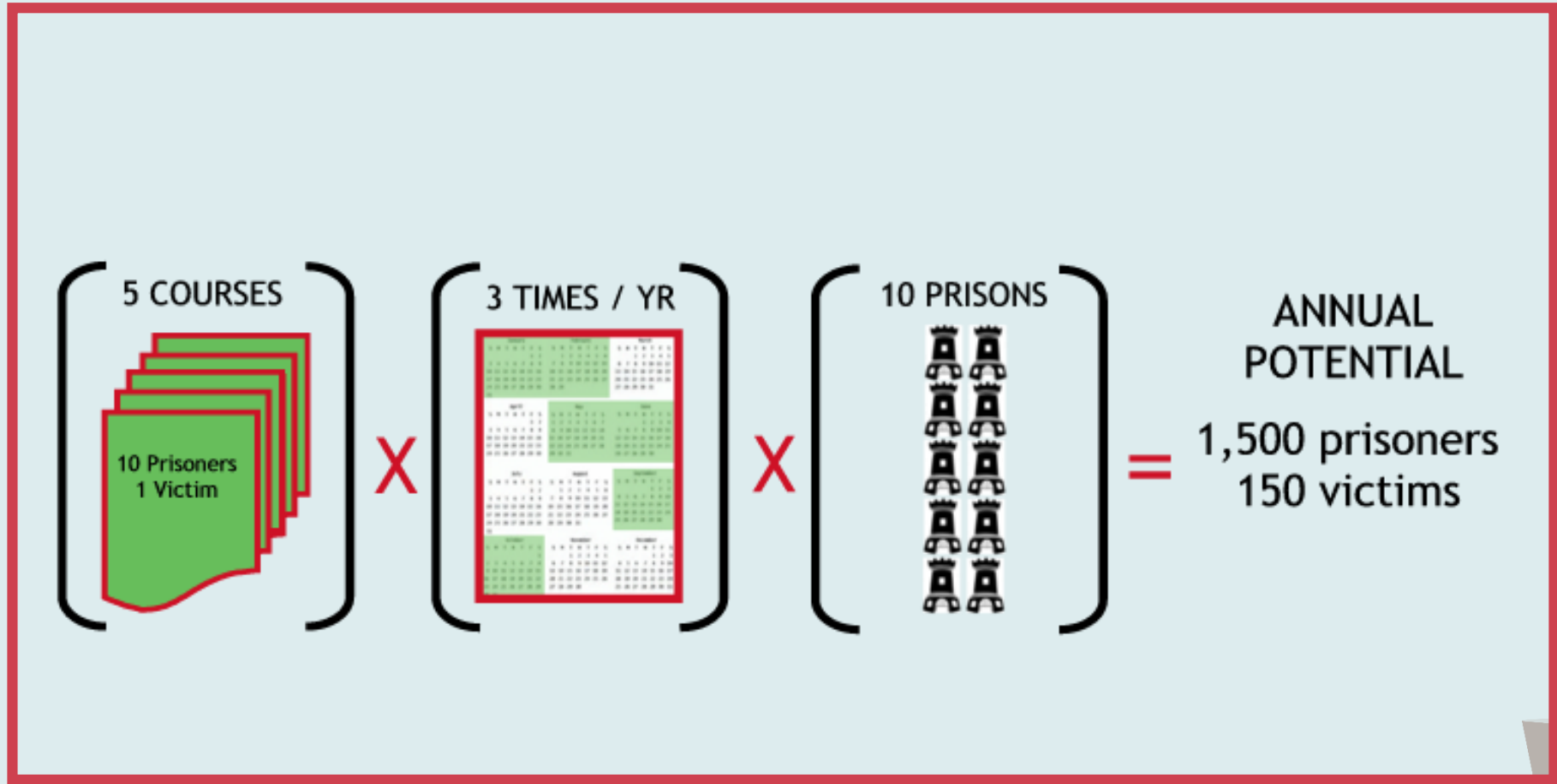
Modifications

- Victims commit to attending two sessions; videos present victim perspective for the other sessions
- New curriculum and QA measures
- Multi-level fundraising

The Course



Scaling the Program in a Country



Concepts of restorative justice

1. Encounter
2. Repair
3. Transformation

Question

- Is this intervention as restorative as it can be?

REALISING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: HUMAN RIGHTS AND PERSONAL REALITIES



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