



SAMUEL CENTRE
FOR SOCIAL
CONNECTEDNESS

Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness Fellowship Program

Partner Organization: Inside Out Prison Exchange

Project Title: **Discerning the Power and Sense of Belonging Inherent
in The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®
(and Its Further Applicability)**

SCSC Fellowship 2023:

Project Proposal

Partner Organization: The INSIDE-OUT CENTER at Temple University International HQ of The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program®

Founded in 1997, The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program® was based on the idea that incarcerated individuals and college students might mutually benefit from studying crime, justice, and related social issues together as peers, through a dialogue of equals.

Over the years, participants have said that Inside-Out actually transformed the way they viewed themselves and the world. Inside-Out deepens the conversation about and our approaches to understanding crime, freedom, inequality, and other issues of social justice.

Inside-Out has become a movement, driven by students on both sides of prison walls and educators who offer Inside-Out courses in their own subject areas. Those involved demonstrate Inside-Out as a unique model of prison-based, post-secondary education that is programmatically sustainable. Inside-Out creates a paradigm shift for participants, encouraging transformation, leadership, and change agency in individuals, serving as an engine for social change.

The core of the Inside-Out Program is a semester-long academic course, meeting weekly, through which 15-18 “outside” (i.e., campus-based) students and the same number of “inside” (i.e., incarcerated) students attend class together inside prison. Participants read a variety of texts, write several papers, discuss issues in small and large groups, and work together on a final class project.

Inside-Out brings people together to share learning experiences in which we are continually reminded of our own humanity as stereotypes dissolve, layer after layer. In

this process, we recognize both differences and similarities in experiences, perspectives, and beliefs.

By sustaining the practice of listening and seeing more deeply, Inside-Out creates a temporary but significant place for us to invite forth our own and others' best selves, inspiring us to create more of these places in the world.

Inside-Out ignites enthusiasm for learning — encouraging participants to find their unique voice and to consider how they can make change in the world.

Learn more at: www.insideoutcenter.org

Location of the Project: Remote

Though The Inside-Out Center is located at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, our team generally works virtually. Any events in which the Fellow might be involved would be via Zoom, as our constituents are throughout the U.S., Canada, and several other countries.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Section 1: Description of the Project

Over the last 25+ years, 1300 educators have taken part in an intensive, weeklong Training Institute, where they learn, through hands-on experience, about Inside-Out's unique methodology. It is a bottom-up approach to learning, rather than the traditional (and ubiquitous) top-down method. More than 60,000 inside and outside students have taken Inside-Out classes in the U.S. and several other countries. Countless alumni and educators have shared how transformative the program was for them.

Inside-Out has several dimensions at its core:

- Bringing the opportunity for college courses into prisons and jails.
- Taking outside people inside of prisons/jails to familiarize them with the realities of the criminal legal system.
- Providing a space for dialogue across many realms of difference.

The outside participants are not studying, helping, or advocating for the inside participants. They are literally studying issues together, in full collaboration as equals. Everyone in the space has an equal voice and an equal stake in the learning process.

Many involved in Inside-Out have developed further creative programming. For example, after the first class at a Pennsylvania state prison (five years after Inside-Out's inception), the class decided to stay together to continue working on social justice issues. That "Think Tank" met weekly for 18 years. This group provided the impetus to expand the program nationally (which became international later). Now, there are 24 think tanks in our global network, all facilitating their own locally informed projects. The passion, dedication, and history of connectedness in these completely voluntary groups has been remarkable.

Other iterations of Inside-Out include two-hour workshops involving currently/formerly incarcerated individuals and people from the community – students, retirees, police officers, district attorneys, business people, etc. These gatherings, though much shorter, have their own unique impact, due to the power of the dialogue at the heart of every Inside-Out experience.

This project will explore the impact of the program, the mechanisms through which it creates a sense of belonging for participants and facilitators, and to what extent the program model may be replicable to other settings. Inside-Out has a profound impact on participants (in a class, training, workshop, think tank, etc.). We want to understand why and how that happens.

Section 2: Goals of the Project

GOAL ONE: Over the years, we have noted the surprising and inexplicable power of this program, which exceeds the contours of a college class. It far surpasses anything that could have been planned. In many ways, Inside-Out is more than the sum of its parts.

We are interested in:

- More deeply understanding the elements of – and connection between – the skill and the art involved in facilitating this experience
- The reasons for its potency and success
- How this experience impacts people's lives and where it takes them

GOAL TWO: What happens in the Inside-Out space has everything to do with belonging. These gatherings all provide a place within which people feel that they can be their best selves (that, sometimes for the first time, they “belong” – they are appreciated for who they are and invited to be part of something bigger). We believe that we all LONG TO BELONG – and, because of that, these Inside-Out spaces become integral to the life and well-being of many people who become involved. In sharing these spaces together, we learn how crucial it is to create spaces of safety and belonging wherever we can in our lives.

We are interested in:

- Further investigating how and why that sense of belonging develops.
- How people have replicated these spaces of belonging in their own lives.

GOAL THREE: We also know, from various groups over the years, that this methodology can have further applications – in different settings with diverse groups of people.

We are interested in:

- Articulating what mechanisms make our program different from other justice or education-oriented programs in prison systems, in order to apply them elsewhere.
- Understanding what other groups may benefit from the Inside-Out model (e.g., seniors, veterans, people with disabilities).

Fellowship Tasks:

- Orientation with Inside-Out Staff
- Participation at an Inside-Out International Training in May or June
- Organize and help design focus groups and/or interviews with stakeholders (i.e., coaches, inside alumni, outside alumni, instructors, and prison and university administrators)
- Outreach to these individuals/groups with survey designed to raise the questions of the unique efficacy of Inside-Out
- Track responses to analyze and identify patterns and draft report of findings
- In advance of Inside Out’s 25+ year anniversary create a multimedia

presentation, video, or visual representation to communicate the finding of this research.

Section 3: Guiding Questions

1) What is the methodology of Inside-Out and how is belonging engendered by these mechanisms?

- a. What structural elements impact the dynamics of the experience (e.g., setting, seating arrangement, materials used)?
- b. What skills does the facilitator need to help create a safe / brave space?
- c. Is there an “art” involved in generating this experience? What are the characteristics of that “art?”
- d. How do the parameters and boundaries of the program impact those involved (individuals and groups)?
- e. How and why does group cohesion occur? What are some of the elements that makes that more likely to happen?
- f. Can this teaching/learning approach be used in other settings (e.g., with people who are homeless, veterans, people with mental health or physical challenges)? What features would need to be retained? Would there be difficulties in translating the experience?
- g. What constitutes belonging in a circumscribed, limited space – where people don’t fully know one another? What comprises a sense of belonging in an individual or group? How does the process of connection reinforce this sense of belonging?

2) What is the impact of the Inside-Out Program from a social-ecological framework perspective? (intrapersonal-interpersonal-community-policy)

- a. In what ways are trust and honest communication engendered?
- b. Does it seem that a deeper sense of emotional intelligence is developed through the process? If so, how is that achieved?
- c. If participants change their way of seeing themselves and/or the world (and their place in it), why does that happen? How have some changed their life trajectory based on this experience?

Section 4: Key Deliverables

- One or more blog posts (500 – 1,000 words), posted to SCSC’s website, as well as Inside-Out’s website and social media platforms.
- A Community Engagement Initiative (CEI) in support of the Final Output
 - This could include numerous interviews and focus groups with stakeholders, as mentioned above.
 - The Fellow could also produce either a podcast, a video, or a webinar that can be made available virtually to the Inside-Out network.
- A Final Output (2 parts)
 - A multimedia presentation answering our two key research questions. This will be shared at Inside-Out’s 25+ Anniversary Celebration in November 2023, which will include hundreds of participants, both in person and virtually, from throughout our global network.
 - A 10-15-page report would accompany this presentation.
- A Final Presentation with the Cohort

Applicant Information:

About the Fellowship/What the Fellowship Offers

The Fellowship empowers young people, recent graduates, and community leaders to engage in meaningful research and community action. At the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness our mission is to build connectedness within and between communities through partnerships, research, programming, learning initiatives, and advocacy. Belonging is central to our work, and the Fellowship offers the opportunity to apply the lens of ‘Belonging’ to intersectional issues, writing, and problem solving.

This is a paid full-time opportunity from May 8 – August 23, 2023 [16 weeks]. The Social Connectedness Fellowship is a research and community action summer program focused on understanding & integrating social connectedness.

SCSC Offers:

- Competitive wages
- Work with national & international community partners
- Capacity building, skills development, & mentorship

- Meaningful work where your research has impact

Equity Statement:

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness is an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage applicants to apply even if they do not meet all the criteria. We believe all candidates have something to bring to the organization and the role. If you have skills outside the job description that you think can benefit the project, let us know in your cover letter. We encourage all equity-seeking groups such as immigrants, Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, women, young people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, and people with disabilities to apply. Please let us know if you need any accommodation throughout the application and interview process and we will be happy to support you.

Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant:

- An AA or BA degree (or comparable experience)
- Background knowledge in the areas of education and criminal justice
- Ideally, prior experience with the Inside-Out program
- Excellent listening, speaking, research, facilitation, and writing skills
- Ability to be organized, pay attention to detail, and be self-driven
- Use of MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, as well as Google products
- **Justice-involved individuals are encouraged to apply & prioritized**