



# IMPACT REPORT

Making peace since 2006



# TIME WELL SPENT

## 2004 - 2006

- Not Another Drop Crime Prevention Mediation Project. Brent, London.
- South Kilburn Estate Community Safety Mediation Project. Brent, London.

## 2006

- Centre for Peaceful Solutions charity founded.
- Dialogue Road Map introduced.

## 2007 - 2010

- UK Treasury 'Invest To Save' Violent Crime Prevention Mediation project. Brent, London.
- Harlesden Police/Community Dialogue. Brent, London
- Secondary Schools and Youth Offending Training. Brent, London.
- 250+ Community Mediation Cases. Brent, Hounslow & Ealing, London.
- Training over 1000 community members in the Dialogue Road Map. Brent, Ealing, Hounslow, Wandsworth and Westminster.

## 2007 - 2019

### Education

#### **Peer Mediation and Student Voice projects:**

- 6 Primary Schools - Stonebridge, Kilburn, Salisbury, St Mary's RC, Sudbury, Christchurch, Ark Franklin.
- 9 Secondary Schools - Copland, John Kelly Boys, Haggerston, Mossbourne Academy, Preston Manor, Stratford, Westminster Academy, Wellington College, Wellington Academy.
- Training over 1000 community members, Brent and Wandsworth.

### Criminal Justice

- 6 Prisons - DRM Training in HMP Wandsworth, HMP Brixton, HMP Altcourse, HMP Liverpool, HMP Oakwood and HMP Huntercombe.



## 2008

- CPS becomes an Open College Network Training Centre

## 2011

- Civil, Commercial, Family and Workplace Mediation accreditations gained

## 2012

- Peaceful Solutions' first Charity Shop opens

## 2013

- Peaceful Solutions' Family Mediation Service established

## 2016 - 2023

- DRM Flagship Project - Dartmoor Prison, Devon
- Community Casework - Variety of one to one mediations and community dialogue cases for marginalised, hard to reach, disadvantaged and discriminated people. Across the UK

## 2019 - 2023

- One Year DRM Practitioner Training established with annual intake
- Life After Prison - Supporting ex-prisoners after release
- DRM Community Hub established for Practitioners



# WHAT WE DO

The Centre for Peaceful Solutions (CPS) is a registered charity with a track record in using The Dialogue Road Map (DRM) to reduce violence.

CPS establishes projects that change attitudes to conflict and help to resolve disputes peacefully within families, communities and organisations.

All the work we undertake is based on the DRM. The DRM is a tool for getting past resistance, hostility, anger and aggression by transforming violence into cooperation. It is the result of extensive research and practice by Maria Arpa MBE at the CPS, and based on Dr. Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Carl Roger's Person-Centered Approach and needs-based theory.

We focus on introducing the DRM to people living and working in marginalised, 'hard to reach' deprived communities. That translates into working with gang members (ex) offenders and their families, vulnerable individuals, children, and families, as well as people from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds, ensuring we develop strong partnerships with local groups.

The DRM training breaks down the components of a dialogue and teaches the theory and skills behind each component. The intention is for all parties to the dialogue to be heard and understood in order to find change through choice. It can be used in many situations, from violent crime retaliations to family disagreements, workplace challenges, and neighbour disputes.

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**"The Centre for Peaceful Solutions' works to encourage people to dialogue out of conflict rather than stab or shoot each other."**

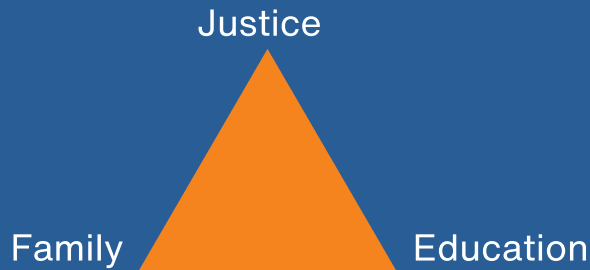
**Bethan West, United Nations Representative &  
Community Safety Consultant**



**"A world where we can live in harmony with our values without the use of violence"**

**Maria Arpa MBE, Founder**

# OUR AREAS OF WORK



“By working and influencing these areas CPS and the DRM impacts quality of life, health and well-being and social capital as we currently experience it in the UK. When adopted across these areas it will be the most impactful crime reduction we have seen in the last 20 years.”

**Bethan West, United Nations Representative &  
Community Safety Consultant**

When responding to aggression directed at them, course participants surveyed said:



# THE COST OF VIOLENCE

Violent crime costs the UK economy more than £100 billion a year, equivalent to £3,600 for every household.

This figure which equates to 3.7 per cent of the UK's GDP, includes the cost of police investigations, courts and prison expenditure as well as a vast amount in lost productivity.

It costs around £48,400 per year to keep someone in prison in England and Wales. Since 1993 the prison population has risen by 92% to 82,890.

31.1% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months, this increases to 53.9%.

We know the use of the DRM reduces public spending and re-offending, and prevents violent crime as people learn to dialogue out of conflict. The impact of our work can be seen in the cases highlighted in this impact report.



**“If I’d known this six months ago, I wouldn’t have murdered my wife.”**

**Keith, 6 months into his life sentence**

UK Peace Index Report 2013, Institute for Economics and Peace

HM Prison and Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21, Ministry of Justice

Proven reoffending statistics: January to March 2021, Ministry of Justice

# PARWAIZ

## MY STORY

I am male, aged 22, and I live in London. I met Maria and the team as part of a school program in Brent. I attended a local comprehensive school which had all the issues that you would expect from an inner city school, such as bullying and violence. After the program, I kept in touch with CPS as I enjoyed the project and often attended their office and trainings. Now I have become a trustee for CPS to ensure the voice of young people is heard and has an influence on the implementation of the work of CPS.

## MY JOURNEY

I was involved in a lot of personal confrontations and did not know how to deal with it. This usually led to disagreements and arguments and sometimes even resulted in violence. The CPS training let me see that there were other ways of resolving the problem, and it only took the right words to get the right answers and to resolve an issue without getting angry or confrontational.

## MY REFLECTIONS

The Dialogue Road Map has helped me avoid violent confrontations, as well as helping me solve problems in my relationship with my girlfriend. I am more open-minded about the problem and see that there are many outcomes. We are able to sit and talk about small problems; in fact, it helped our relationship blossom when we were more open about our feelings and didn't feel the need to avoid talking about it.





# SALAMAT

## MY STORY

I am from Iraq, a country with lots of history of conflict. I was imprisoned there for my beliefs.

## MY JOURNEY

In my experience two things make people violent; they can't express themselves or understand the other.

## MY REFLECTIONS

The training helped me learn how to let other people express what they want and request what they need and how to listen to and understand others. I now believe I have the keys to unlock conflict and become a mediator in a professional way. The training mixes well with my other experiences and religious principles. I have tested it with families and young people in my community and they have told me their lives have been completely transformed.



# GREG

## MY STORY

From being a young boy, I always wanted to be a police officer. My Dad was a police officer and so were his mates. They would meet at our house, I listened to them talk about their work, they were friends and the camaraderie between them was fun to be around. To me as a young boy, it sounded exciting and they seemed brave helping people who needed them when they were in trouble. My Dad was my hero and I wanted to be just like him. My Dad was an officer in Wiltshire but I wanted to join the Met – “the premier police force in the world”.

## MY JOURNEY

In 2001 I joined the Met. I was elated. I attended Hendon Police training school for my National Police Training: seventeen weeks with other recruits learning about all aspects of policing. After ten weeks, I was posted to Brent, where I worked out of Harlesden Police Station. I had never worked in a multicultural area before and had never really thought what it would be like. Police reports stated that in 1999, Harlesden and the nearby Stonebridge estate witnessed a high number of murders and became a crime hotspot. By 2005 the area had the highest murder rate in Britain. There were 26 shooting incidents that year alone.

In Harlesden, the area felt hostile and most engagement with the community was challenging. Our borough identifier, QK, started to be known as the identifier “Quick Kill” because of the number of murders happening.

I met Maria through a project called Not Another Drop (NAD). I was one of the first police officers to attend a course to learn about Nonviolent Communication. Many of my colleagues were cynical, and so was I to start with. How was teaching me to talk in a different way going to help me when I was out dealing with the community? I attended Maria’s course – the course content was interesting and I listened and applied what I was being taught. Still, I wasn’t completely convinced. I took my new skills to the street and very quickly, I realised their value. By just using my different language and shifting my perspective slightly, I was able to engage in a more effective way. I was amazed. My colleagues were very positive. It led to all probationers from Hendon being trained in Nonviolent Communication before they came to the Borough. Through ongoing prevention work and police investigation, crime rates in Harlesden were significantly reduced in the late 2000s.

## MY REFLECTIONS

I use the skills I learnt on a daily basis in my work and personal life. The course changed my life. At times when I went out in Harlesden I was fearful for my life. The training gave me the confidence and skills to engage with people on a human level which made my work easier and more rewarding. Every police officer in the country should be taught these skills.



# BETHAN

## MY STORY

I completed my education and became an HM Customs and Excise officer investigating international drugs trafficking, money laundering and human trafficking. In 1998 I was the first woman to be posted overseas as a Drugs Liaison Officer to Cyprus, working in the Near Middle East, a longstanding area of violent conflict. I also worked with The United Nations on crime prevention projects and mutual development programmes to reduce violence and drug trafficking, and abuse. On my return from overseas, I sought a new direction believing prevention is better than enforcement.

## MY JOURNEY

From 2002 I led a Government funded initiative, Not Another Drop (NAD), based in Brent in response to a number of shootings in this London Borough. NAD was born out of a unique collaboration between the Council, The Metropolitan Police Service and the local community. Over the years, the partnership has grown to include more partners, however, the cornerstone of NAD is the community. Since 2002 NAD has worked across all sectors of the community to reduce the incidence of violent crime, particularly gun, knife and gang-related violence and saw a steady decrease in the number of gun and knife enabled crime whilst the programme was ongoing. In the programmes, I have worked on for the United Nations, communication and mediation are core elements. I have replicated the use of these in all of the programmes I have created. I have worked with Mediation Northern Ireland and several other national and international mediation services. NAD in Brent was no exception; Maria and I worked together on a mediation model working with families and individuals affected by violence.

The vision was to train a critical mass of people in the community and in statutory agencies to approach violent crime in a different way. We worked to encourage people to dialogue out of conflict rather than stab or shoot each other. The Centre for Peaceful Solutions' and Maria worked successfully to train this critical mass of people, which I saw as the first steps of our journey together. I fully support her vision.

## MY REFLECTIONS

I have witnessed the impact of the DRM on people from all different backgrounds. I often ponder what if the DRM became part of education so young people are taught how to dialogue out of violence.

The Health and Social Care professions, allowing better understanding and care for the most vulnerable in our communities;

Prison services, to aid the rehabilitation of prisoners and to reduce offending;

Police forces, so officers are able to engage better with the diverse communities across the UK and beyond – reducing retaliation whenever possible and saving lives;

Communities, bridging divides, particularly relevant with some of the racist and homophobic behaviours we are currently experiencing in the UK;

In abuse cases, to give the survivor a true voice and to break the cycle of violence for themselves and their families.



# ANDY

## MY STORY

I am currently a senior director at an inner London borough council. I have responsibility for Community Safety and our borough is affected by every type of crime you can imagine. Daily, I receive reports of extremism and terrorism, domestic violence, gangs, child sexual exploitation, bullying and homophobic violence. Before this I worked for the Metropolitan Police Service for many years. My final post was as a Chief Superintendent in the London Borough of Brent.

## MY JOURNEY

A cop for more than 30 years, I worked as a uniformed officer, a detective on teams such as vice, murder and the infamous flying squad. I was the police sponsor of Not Another Drop. We were in a borough with gangs and violent crime being perpetrated on almost a daily basis. Gang retaliation was common place – my greatest fear was that innocent members of the public or my staff would be caught up in the tit-for-tat style crime. Unfortunately, this happened with the death of an innocent seven year old child – Toni-Ann Byfield, murdered in her father's flat as she was of an age where she would be able to identify her father's killer. At this point, I knew we had to adapt our approach and I was willing to try innovative, evidence-based ideas. CPS provided the training that could be used by police and the community alike. We trained a cohort of officers and they recommended the pilot was extended.

## MY REFLECTIONS

This training was new and not the traditional type or style of police training the Metropolitan Police is used to, but I was convinced to “give it a go”. I was impressed. It had the greatest impact on my front line officers in Harlesden – engagement with the community went from strength to strength and complaints from the public went down.

It was particularly good when dealing with young people, which was inherently difficult due to stop & search, the community tensions, the ongoing violence and the always tough relationship between the police and parts of the community. I ensured the training was compulsory for all probationary officers coming into the borough. It should be compulsory training for all police officers and PCSOs before they work with the public.



# SARAH

## MY STORY

Working for over a decade in community regeneration and Social Housing, I saw first hand how conflict destroys families and communities. I started to suspect that most of the antisocial behaviour complaints and neighbour disputes were caused by nothing more than a lack of communication. I believe people are often afraid to have uncomfortable or awkward conversations because they are afraid they won't be able to deal with other people's reactions - so they simply don't attempt it. Unaddressed issues don't magically go away. I have seen how they fester and breed resentment until, eventually, someone moves or a complaint is made to a third party such as the landlord, council or police - or they just explode and statutory services intervene.

## MY JOURNEY

In 2013, I attended training with Maria and David. I was particularly impressed by the DRM technique and the way it guides the mediation through various stages and levels of understanding feelings.

## MY REFLECTIONS

I have used the DRM in both private and professional arenas with profound results, and it has given me confidence to have difficult conversations.



# Jean

# COMMUNITIES

## MY STORY

I am a 38 year old Haitian American male and in my early years at school I was diagnosed with dyslexia. I also suffered with a speech impediment and because of these challenges in my early life I was put in special education.

## MY JOURNEY

In this training, not only did I learn how to communicate in a more effective way, I also learned to listen better and understand the feelings and needs of other people. The training should be taught in schools as early as nursery school.

## MY REFLECTIONS

It's helped my marriage become stronger listening to the needs of my wife. It's helped build a relationship between me and my sister. It's also helped both my little boys on how they communicate with each other and others in school. My younger boy was very frustrated in nursery school because he was having challenges expressing himself. In the training, I was given a child's needs and feelings sheets. I posted the sheet in their room to practice how to express their needs and feelings. After some weeks of practice, my son brought home his progress report. It was incredible to see the progress in verbal behaviour. One day I went to his room and noticed the feelings and needs sheet was missing from the wall. When the boys came in, I asked them where their sheets were. One of them explained to me that he needed to help his friend with how he was feeling. This is why I feel that the work that Maria and David are doing is so important. It helped my boys communicate their emotions intelligently.



# Marcellus

## MY STORY

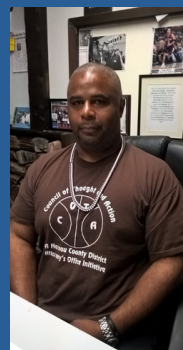
I had a pretty rough life starting from a young boy. I'm 55 years old. I spent a lot of my life incarcerated. My last time in jail was for gun possession. Since then, I've been working hard at putting my life back together.

## MY JOURNEY

I learnt there are choices in life and it's up to you to make the right or wrong ones. David and Maria have shown me there is a way to deal with life on life's terms and how to go about it with free will.

## MY REFLECTIONS

This training has given me a new outlook on life. It has helped me with my relationship. It has let me look at who I am, who I want to be and what I want to accomplish in life. It's given me the strength to stay on the right track.



# Diana

## MY STORY

I'm a mother of five children. I came to COTA after my 26 year old son was murdered with a knife. I was left hopeless and my other four children were left victims of the homicide too as I was struggling to function as their mother.

## MY JOURNEY

Maria Arpa helped me to overcome my son's death. I learnt how to communicate in a nonviolent, better way and how to navigate the judicial system without being bitter.

## MY REFLECTIONS

I used the DRM to connect with other broken families and my children. My four children are slowly getting better in their depression and we are talking more about the death and how we can move forward in our lives.



# Demar

## MY STORY

I am a 40 year old male and have been incarcerated three times totalling sixteen years in prison. At some point in my incarceration, I realised that I wanted to use my experiences to help others going down a similar road. I joined COTA, which gave me the opportunity to do just that.

## MY JOURNEY

I found the training interesting and highly educational in terms of information and perspective, changing my view of conflicts and getting past the feelings to the needs underneath. I learned a lot about techniques for overcoming barriers and listening.

## MY REFLECTIONS

DRM has affected my life in a positive way. It also has helped with the work I do with COTA, especially as it pertains to conflict resolution.



# PRISONS

## Danny

### MY STORY

My name is Danny. I am doing a full life sentence and have been in the Prison system for over 15 years. I committed a violent crime but I should be able to apply for parole by now and start to rebuild my life. I am scared and keep myself to myself and you cannot trust anyone inside.

### MY JOURNEY

I have witnessed the most extreme cases of violence. Luckily since I have been here, I don't get involved in all the dealings and try to stay away from officers as much as I can. However, because I don't really engage much, that is taken as if I don't want to cooperate with anyone and therefore change "my ways". This has had a big impact on my sentence plan and has prevented me from getting parole or moving on with my sentence. I started going to 1-2-1 sessions with other DRM trained prisoners recently and it has enabled me to gain safety and trust in the system a bit more.



### MY REFLECTIONS

For the first time ever, I am engaging with officers, who have seen me open up more as a result of the sessions with DRM facilitators. I feel like it's a new lease of life, and for the first time in 15 years, I am positive about my upcoming parole hearing; I can't thank this programme enough.

## Tim

### MY STORY

I'm Tim, and I have been a DRM Facilitator in prison now for 3 years. I used to have no prison job as I didn't enjoy any of them and was lacking the skills to grasp anything and use my time well. I have another 3 years left on my sentence.

### MY JOURNEY

I am now one of the highest paid prisoners in the jail and I have discovered I am really good at listening to others and being empathic to people's stories around me. It has enabled me to make better decisions at the same time as helping others decide what is best for them during their time here. I have now helped many other people as a result and have gained many more friends than I ever believed I would.

### MY REFLECTIONS

I see a light at the end of the tunnel, my parents feel proud of me for the job that I am doing and it's improving my relationships inside and at home; I am so thankful for the Dialogue Road Map.



# John

## MY STORY

My name is John. I have spent 20 years in prison and I am a lifer. I grew up in the troubles in Northern Ireland. My father died when I was 8 and my mother took to alcohol so I had little support and guidance growing up in a troubled community. I was what would be described now as 'at risk'. At 15 I was sexually assaulted by a man. I immediately made my way to the police station covered in blood but they turned me away because I was a Catholic. When they slammed the gate in my face shouting racial abuse at me, it was a significant turning point that shaped my world view.

## MY JOURNEY

During my time in prison, I have witnessed great human suffering, every kind of mental health problem and lots of violence. I continued to have a negative view of the world. As part of my sentence plan, I have been on many courses and none of them reached me. Then, 3 years ago, Maria and David came to the prison to deliver their mediation training to 12 prisoners. It was obvious that this wasn't just a job to them and that they saw us as human beings without labels. Those 6 days changed my life. Suddenly, I had an easy to follow, logical process that I could use to help others. I came to understand the choices in front of me and how to access them within myself. Just when I thought I had buried any feelings, this course touched me.

## MY REFLECTIONS

In the last 3 years, I have changed my attitude and discovered how my worldview shapes my outcomes. I have found a direction for when I leave prison and am studying towards it. I have the possibility of parole within 2 years and I intend to work with men and help them get rid of what I call their 'demons'. With support from the Centre for Peaceful Solutions I can achieve this goal.



**"I have seen something amazing happen today, in a place where it's normally all about violence and 'do as you are told'"**

**Tim, DRM Facilitator in Prison**





# centre for peaceful solutions

"The work that Maria is doing challenges us to face squarely the responsibilities that are ours and equally to say "no, absolutely not", to guilt trips.  
"It is of vital importance to our mental health and must be promoted and supported."

**DR Althea Jones-Lecointe**  
**British Black Panther Movement and one of the Mangrove Nine**



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