

# GREEN REHABILITATION BEHIND BARS: HOW POLISH PRISONS ARE EMBRACING ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

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# OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENTATION PLAN

- Introduction
- Polish Prison Service – Organisational Structure
- Sustainable Development and the SDGs
- Green Rehabilitation as Therapy
- Case Studies: Best Practices from Polish Prisons
  - Sustainable Infrastructure Initiatives
  - Educational and Social Reintegration Programs
  - Social Responsibility and Solidarity Programs
- Conclusion

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# POLISH PENITENTIARY UNITS

## PRISONS

(AND THEIR CATEGORISATION)

### INMATE

Prisons for:

- juveniles (Art. 84. Executive Penal Code);
- those serving their sentences for the first time (Art. 85. Executive Penal Code);
- recidivist prisoners (Art. 86. Executive Penal Code);
- prisoners serving a sentence of military detention (Art. 94. Executive Penal Code).

### LAYOUT

- Open type;
- Semi-open type;
- Closed type.

In prisons we have inmates serving sentences, i.e. people who have been **convicted**, those who have been **sentenced**.

## CUSTODIES

In **custodies**, there are inmates who are either **under investigation or trial**.























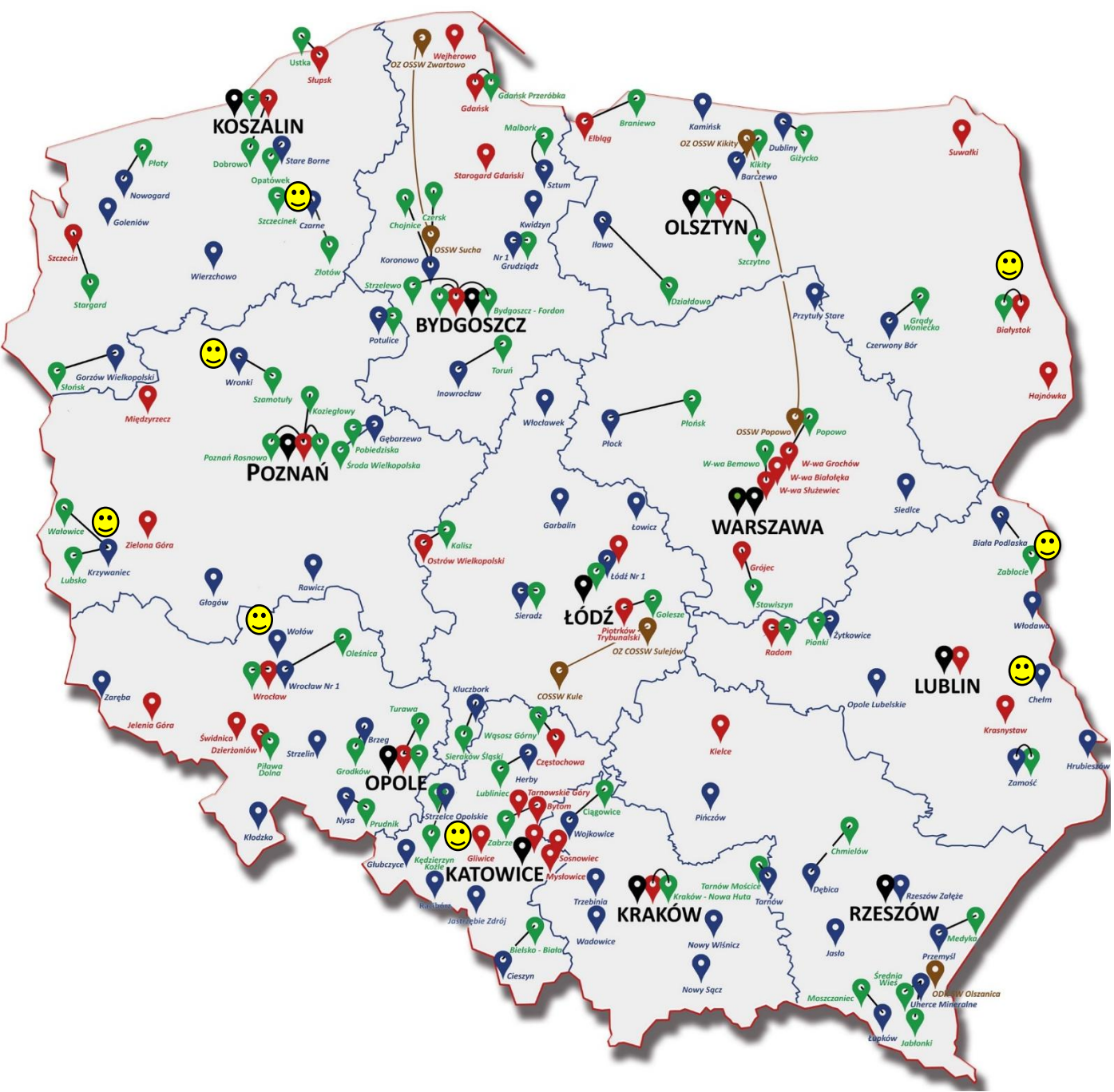
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# ORGANISATIONAL UNITS OF THE POLISH PRISON SERVICE

## THE MAP'S LEGEND

-  CENTRALNY ZARZĄD SŁUŻBY WIĘZIENNEJ
-  OKRĘGOWY INSPEKTORAT SŁUŻBY WIĘZIENNEJ
-  ARRESZ ŚLEDTCZY
-  ZAKŁAD KARNY
-  ODDZIAŁ ZEWNĘTRZNY
-  OŚRODEK SZKOLENIA
-  GRANICA PAŃSTWA
-  GRANICE OKRĘGOWYCH INSPEKTORATÓW
-  PODLEGŁOŚĆ ODDZIAŁÓW ZEWNĘTRZNYCH
-  PODLEGŁOŚĆ ODDZIAŁÓW ZAMIEJSCOWYCH OŚRODKÓW SZKOLENIA
-  CENTRAL DIRECTORY OF PRISON SERVICE
-  DISTRICT INSPECTORATE OF PRISON SERVICE
-  PRE-TRIAL DETENTION CENTRE
-  PRISON
-  OUTSIDE BRANCH
-  TRAINING CENTER
-  COUNTRY BORDER
-  BOUNDARIES OF DISTRICT INSPECTORATES
-  REPORTING TO EXTERNAL BRANCHES
-  SUBORDINATION OF DEPARTMENTS OF LOCAL TRAINING CENTERS



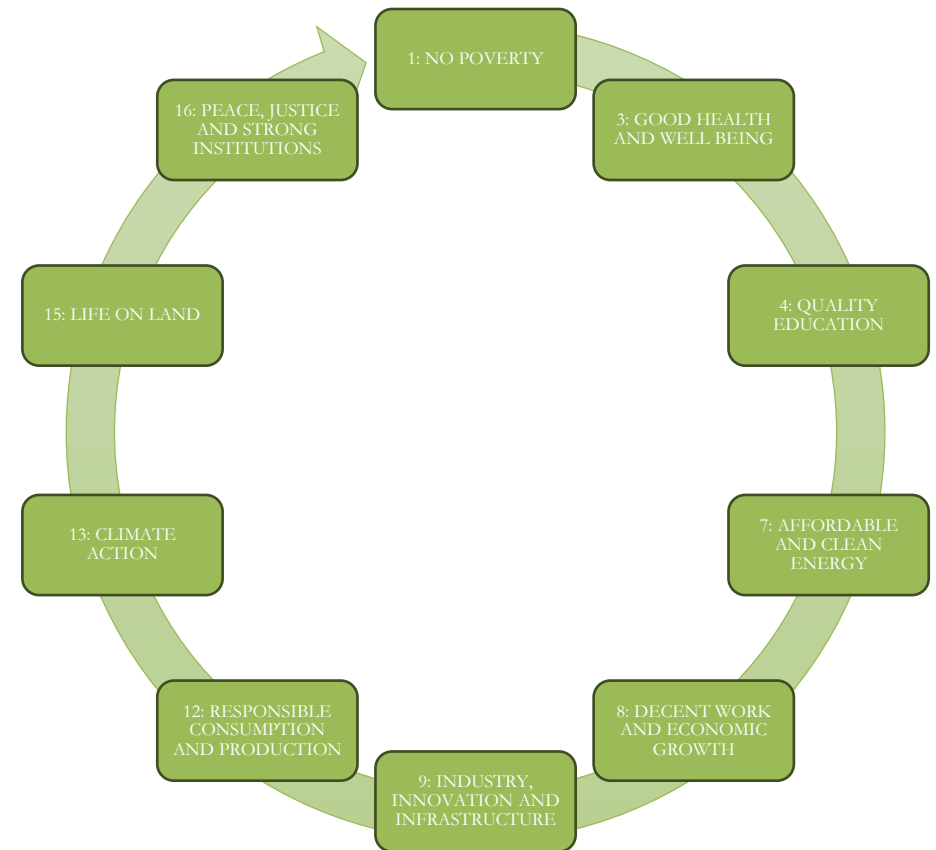
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# GREEN REHABILITATION MEETS THE SDGs

Selected UN Sustainable Development Goals relevant to green rehabilitation practices implemented in Polish correctional facilities.

- Support poverty reduction through social reintegration (SDG 1 – No Poverty),
- Support health and well-being (SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being),
- Provide access to education and skills (SDG 4 – Quality Education),
- Promote renewable energy use (SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 13 – Climate Action),
- Create green jobs and vocational paths (SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth),
- Foster innovation and sustainable infrastructure (SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure),
- Promote responsible consumption and production (SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production),
- Protect nature and biodiversity (SDG 15 – Life on Land),
- Strengthen institutions and reintegration (SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).



# NATURE AS THERAPY: GREEN PRESCRIPTIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH IN PRISONS

- Contact with nature reduces stress and supports brain regeneration
- Research confirms benefits even from virtual nature exposure
- “Green prescriptions” used in UK mental health therapy
- Activities include birdwatching, walking, simple outdoor tasks
- Can be applied in prisons with minimal cost or new infrastructure

*Did you know?*  
UK doctors prescribe nature instead of pills.  
“Green prescriptions” include birdwatching, outdoor walks, and mindful contact with nature - proven to improve mental health, and now being adapted for therapeutic use in prisons.

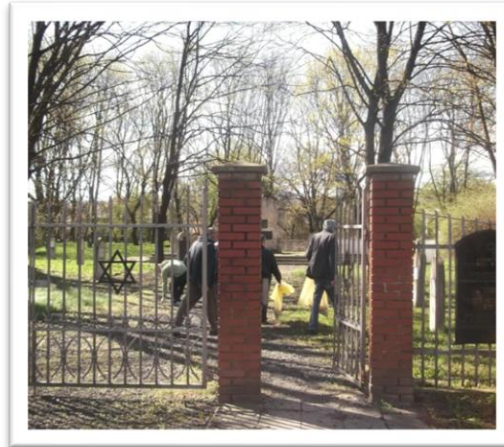
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# „ZACHOWAĆ PAMIĘĆ” (“PRESERVING THE MEMORY”) – ENVIRONMENTAL AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN CHEŁM PRISON



- Environmental rehabilitation through heritage and nature
  - Activities: waste sorting, battery collection, cemetery care
  - Involves city environmental officers and foresters
  - Promotes ecological awareness and civic responsibility
- 
- SDGs: 4 – Quality Education, 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, 15 – Life on Land, 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



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# „CZARNA OWCA” (“BLACK SHEEP”) – NATURE CONSERVATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN WOŁÓW PRISON



Such a banner advertised a tractor driver apprenticeship during an exhibition in Wrocław promoting the 'Black Sheep' project.

Convicts are also recruited from villages and small towns - such a profession also improves their chances on the labour market after serving their sentence.



Working in the forest as good as any other. Prisoners during chainsaw training as part of the 'Black Sheep' project.



Convicts serving sentences at the Wołów Penitentiary Institution during wool felting workshops.



The convicts seem to us to be very different people to us. Meanwhile, they miss, worry and love in the same way. 'Dogging the sheep is both a duty and a pleasure for our interviewees. This combination seems to be conducive to rehabilitation.'

- Conservation-focused rehabilitation through sheep grazing
- Hands-on training in mowing, sheep care, welding, carpentry
- Restoration of ecologically valuable meadows
- Skill certification for post-release reintegration
- In cooperation with Pro Natura and forest rangers
- Project recognized internationally as a model of creative rehabilitation
- SDGs: 4 – Quality Education, 8 – Decent Work, 12 – Responsible Consumption, 15 – Life on Land.

# “BARTNIK” – BEEKEEPING-BASED REHABILITATION IN ZABŁOCIE PRISON UNIT



- Inmates trained in beekeeping and apiary management
- Eco-consciousness, responsibility, and calmness through bee care
- Rural setting aligned with inmates' agricultural backgrounds
- Builds job-relevant skills for post-release employment
- Supports biodiversity and local ecosystems
- SDGs: 3 – Good Health and Well-Being, 4 – Quality Education, 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, 15 – Life on Land.



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# “RENEWABLE ENERGY BEHIND BARS” – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN WRONKI PRISON



- Energy efficiency program co-financed by the EU,
  - 9 historical buildings modernized (2019–2023),
  - Solar panels, LED lighting, modern heating systems,
  - Annual CO<sub>2</sub> reduction by 963.48 tons ( $\approx$  51%),
  - Environmental education for inmates: waste segregation and sustainability.
- 
- SDGs: 4 – Quality Education, 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, 13 – Climate Action.

# “RENEWABLE ENERGY BEHIND BARS” – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN KRZYWANIEC AND GLIWICE PENITENTIARY FACILITIES

## Krzywaniec Prison

- EU-funded energy efficiency project (9.84 million PLN, 8.34 million from EU).
- Thermal modernization of 15 buildings, including modern heating systems and solar panels.
- Replacement of outdated heating equipment with condensing boilers and heat pumps.
- Installation of photovoltaic panels and LED lighting.
- CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction of at least 25%.
- Project includes building insulation, modern ventilation, and heat recovery systems.

## Gliwice Remand Center

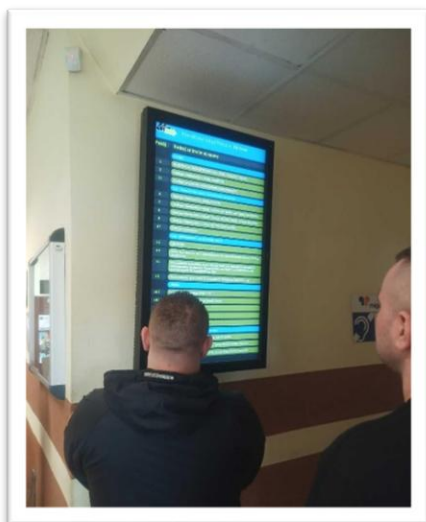
- Comprehensive modernization of the prison kitchen (completed 2020).
- Installation of a solar energy system and thermal insulation.
- Replacement of outdated kitchen equipment with energy-efficient appliances.
- The old equipment was donated to support local community initiatives.
- Inmates actively participate in meal preparation, gaining valuable work experience.



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# “PREPARING FOR A NEW START” – EDUCATIONAL VISITS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OFFICE



Inmates from Czarne Prison (Złotów Branch) visited the District Employment Office in Złotów.

Educational workshops focused on:

- Effective job search techniques
- CV creation and updating skills
- Developing interpersonal and communication skills
- Stress management in professional environments
- The initiative supports social reintegration through education and personal development.
- Goal: Increase employability and self-confidence after release.
- SDGs: 4 – Quality Education, 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.



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# “LEARNING FROM NATURE” – INMATES’ VISIT THE CENTER FOR ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND LAKE REVITALIZATION



The visit was part of the social reintegration program “Kulturotechnika”.

Educational lectures focused on:

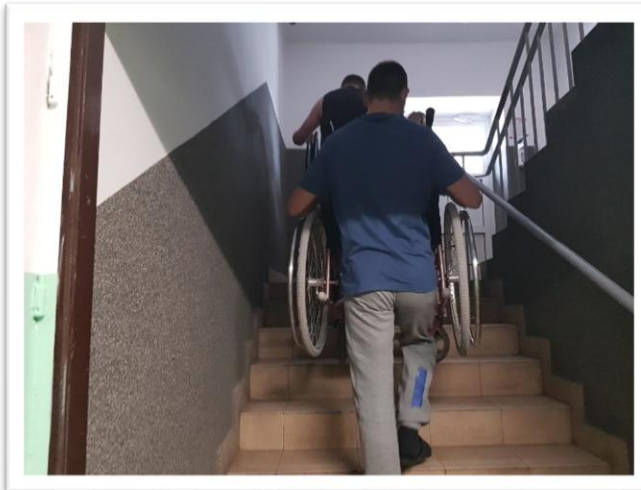
- Rational use of renewable energy and water resources.
- Practical models of solar, wind, water, biomass, and geothermal energy.
- Shaping responsible attitudes toward environmental protection.
- The initiative supports reducing isolation stress and promoting personal growth.
- SDGs: 4 – Quality Education, 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy, 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, 13 – Climate Action.



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# “THE SAME BEHIND BARS” – INMATES REFURBISH AND DONATE WHEELCHAIRS TO THOSE IN NEED



- Inmates from Bialystok Prison restored old, damaged wheelchairs.
- Initiative under the program “The Same Behind Bars”.
- Donated to Caritas and the municipality of Turośń Kościelna.
- Over time, the project expanded to include children’s bicycles for orphanages.
- Positive social impact: helping people in need and supporting rehabilitation through work.
- Ecological aspect: giving a second life to discarded equipment.
- SDGs: 1 – No Poverty, 3 – Good Health and Well-being, 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.



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# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Green Rehabilitation Creates Real Change.
- The Importance of Inter-Governmental Partnerships.
- Combines Environmental Responsibility with Social Reintegration.
- Supports Key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):
  - SDG 1 – No Poverty,
  - SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being,
  - SDG 4 – Quality Education,
  - SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy,
  - SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth,
  - SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure,
  - SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production,
  - SDG 13 – Climate Action,
  - SDG 15 – Life on Land,
  - SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

*„Even behind bars, change begins with responsibility” - small steps lead to lasting impact on our shared future.*



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# THANK YOU!

*“IT IS IN OUR HANDS TO CREATE A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL WHO LIVE IN IT.” — NELSON MANDELA*

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