

Results from pilots in the FORINER project

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“I’ve been responsible for one group of Lithuanian students and I noticed a great enthusiasm to start with the courses at the beginning. They (these prisoners) were very grateful that someone out there in Lithuania was thinking of them. They were actually waiting for the learning materials and asking me for more.”

These are the words of an Education Coordinator in Antwerp, Belgium, being part of the FORINER project that is now coming to an end. This project aims to provide foreign national prisoners access to education that is provided by their home country, while they are imprisoned in a foreign European country. 15 pilot studies have been evaluated and results will be presented on the final conference in November. Get a preview of the results [here](#).

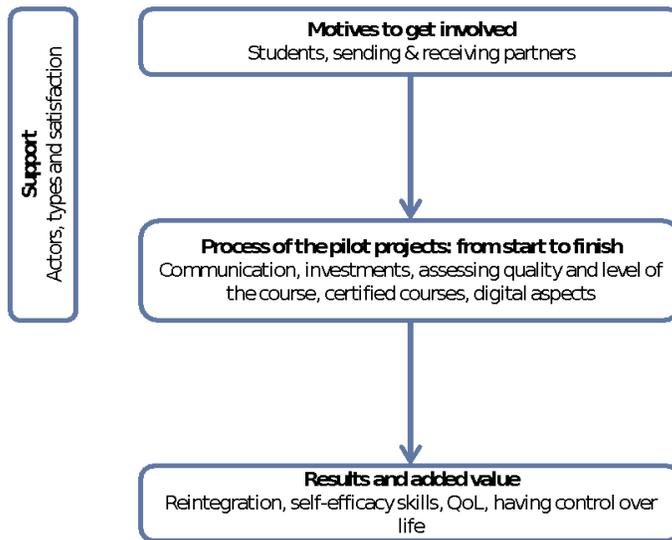
The FORINER project is a 2-year funded project (2016-2017) funded by the European Commission under the KA3-programme (Erasmus+). This project aims to provide foreign national prisoners access to education that is provided by their home country, while they are imprisoned in a foreign European country.

Evaluation of the pilot projects

15 pilot projects across Europe have been developed and implemented. The purpose of these pilot projects was to test how educational courses for foreign national prisoners can be organized, given that it is provided by their home country, but received in the country in which they are detained. A mixed-method research has been set up to evaluate four different aspects (see overview in figure 1):

- Motives of students, sending and receiving partners to get involved in a pilot project;
- The process of the pilot projects – from start till the end;
- Different types of support provided/ received and satisfaction with the support;
- Results and added value of the pilot projects.

Figure 1. Overview of the results of the mixed-method evaluation of the pilot projects



Mixed Methods Research:

- 1) Students were monitored using pre- and post-surveys. When a student started an educational course, he/she was invited to fill in a starting questionnaire, with another one at the end of the course (N=36).
- 2) 5 pilot projects have been selected to be researched in-depth: the sending partners, receiving partners and students involved were interviewed about their experiences with the project (N=16 interviews). Being selected for this in-depth evaluation does not mean that these were 'the best' pilot projects. Following selection criteria were used: digital/non-digital, different models to provide distance education, coaching of the student, accused or convicted prisoners, and European region. 9 European countries were effectively involved in the development and realization of the pilot projects. 6 European countries have sent education to their nationals detained abroad during the piloting phase of the Foriner project: Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, the Netherlands, and The United Kingdom. 3 countries received educational courses for foreign people detained within their correctional institutions: Belgium, Malta, and Norway.

The research report including all results will be available by the end of November, but we already would like to share the experiences of two receiving partners with you.

1. Experiences of two receiving partners from Belgium

Here is a short interview that reflects the experience of two receiving partners who were responsible of running pilots in Belgian prisons.

Q: How did foreign national students perceive the opportunity to study a course from their home country during their period in prison?

R1: I've been responsible for one group of Lithuanian students and I noticed a great enthusiasm to start with the courses at the beginning. They were very grateful that someone out there in Lithuania was thinking of them. They were actually waiting for the learning materials and asking me for more. *(Education Coordinator, prison Antwerp)*

R2: When I presented the specific educational offer from their home country to them, I saw surprised faces. It seemed a special experience for them that education from their home country would be available for them in a prison abroad. One prisoner was only a short period in prison and wasn't even able to have contact with his family. He could hardly believe that he had the opportunity to study at a school in his home country. Overall, I received very positive reactions and you could feel that in one way or another they enjoyed this kind of attention. *(Education Coordinator, prison Bruges)*

Q: You provided (or tried to provide) motivational support to the students during their learning process. How did they react on the support you provided?

R1: I really think they appreciated me. While doing my job, I have to walk around prison quite often. When Foriner students saw me, we always had a small talk. I never asked for direct feedback, but I do think they were happy I was supportive of them. *(Education Coordinator, prison Antwerp)*

Q: How did you assess the level of the students before they started with following the course of their home country?

R1: There were no forms of pre-assessment, but I think it would very useful to have them. Some students took a test on the history course and they found it very difficult. I didn't have any information about the level of the students or the course and test. Some form of pre-assessment before enrolling in a course should be necessary. *(Education Coordinator, prison Antwerp)*

Q: From your experience, how was the communication with the students during the pilot phase?

R1: This aspect was very good. Because I had a group of students, they could help each other out by translating what I've told them. That was also one of the main reasons that most of my contact moments were in a group. *(Education Coordinator, prison Antwerp)*

R2: In my two pilots, I could communicate in English and my own language (Dutch). The offer from one educational provider was in German, a language I can't speak. I was lucky that my student could speak Dutch as well, otherwise we should have been creative to understand each other. *(Education Coordinator, prison Bruges)*

Q: What is your impression about introducing ICT solutions to facilitate education in prison?

R1: It is really important. I acknowledge the growing ICT and digital facilitations for education in our society. It is very difficult to ignore all the new technologies that can be used in prison, like online learning platforms. As I think, it is extremely important to make sure our prisoners don't lose the connection with the world outside, we must bring this outside world into prison (...). What else can we do then trying our very best to foresee the same digital facilities inside of prison, like the ones you and me have to support our learning!?! *(Education Coordinator, prison Antwerp)*

R2: I see in the future a lot of opportunities to make the Virtual Campus (i.e. a secured digital learning platform of the UK) used in the pilots projects available for more prisoners in Bruges and other prisons in Flanders and Brussels. On the other hand, we should investigate if we could upgrade the possibilities

of using the Virtual Campus. This needs to be done in strong collaboration with the department of Justice. *(Education Coordinator, prison Bruges)*