



EUROPEAN ORGANISATION OF
PRISON AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

EuroPris
PO Box 13635
2501 EP The Hague
Netherlands

Education in Prison
Nicosia, Cyprus
08-09 June 2017

Thursday 08 June

Participants

Stylianou Iakovos (Cyprus), James King (Scotland), Tanja Klee (Germany Mecklenburg Western Pomerania), Peter Kriska (Slovakia), Tamar Lisaki (Georgia), Kieran Moylan (Ireland), Ioana Morar (Romania), Petra Prijatelj (Slovenia), Kathleen van de Vijver (Belgium), Martin Zschel (Germany Rhineland Palatinate), Per Thrane (EPEA, Denmark), Kirsten Hawlitschek (EuroPris, Netherlands), Julia Ilyina (EuroPris, Netherlands), Tasos Trattonikolas (Cyprus), Anna Aristotulous (Cyprus).

Introduction

As an introduction to the meeting, Anna Aristotelous, the Director of the Department of Prisons Cyprus described the education in the Cyprus Prison system.

Objectives for the first Education in Prison Expert Meeting

The initiative to establish this expert group was from EPEA, to discuss education in prison on a policy level. The objective of this meeting is to present what each jurisdiction is dealing with in education in prison.

Introductory presentations by all participants

Kathleen van de Vijver (Belgium)

- In the Belgian Prison System, they try to conform to European standards to reduce recidivism as their goal. Their global vision is to take care of the interests of detainees, and education is a large part of it.
- The Belgian Prison system has several challenges: the Ministry of Justice is not responsible for education, and Belgium has a divided community between the French, - and the Flemish-speaking part.
- Juveniles: communities are responsible for juveniles and not the Ministry of Justice.
- Female inmates are offered penitentiary school for education and formation, as well as different projects.
- Foreign national inmates: FORINER project helps detainees have education in their own native language and reach the same quality standard as at home.
- Communities provide education – it is a very complex system because there are six governments in one country, three regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and three language communities (Flemish, - French, - and German-speaking communities). In the Flemish community, the Flemish support the center for education for adults (Vocvo). In French communities lessons are subsidied from non-profit organisations, but they do not offer certificates to the detainees.



- French have less education because they lack budget, and the Flemish part has more education.
- The Belgian Prison Service cannot control the budget for education of the French and Flemish.
- Education coordinators are employed by the Ministry of Education, every prison has a school coordinator that will look at schools that are outside of prison and they make contracts with these schools.
- There is no requirement to provide an equal level in education. There is no specific follow-up of the detainee: prison staff does not know what education a prisoner has had.
- No use of internet allowed in prison. E-learning is allowed – there is communication with the teacher but they do not get feedback.
- Detainees that take classes receive money and support, 1 euro an hour to work and 85 cents to go to class.

Petra Prijatelj (Slovenia)

- Slovenian Prison Service tries to provide education according to Council of Europe recommendations.
- Education and work has the same status – however detainees are not paid for taking classes.
- Enforcement of penal sanctions act:
 - o Prisons must ensure education for prisoners
 - o There are no teachers inside the prisons
 - o Prisons select education programs
 - o Certificate for education is provided, but it does not state it was obtained in prison.
- Teachers come from outside of prison and prisons are responsible for quality control; exams are the same as outside prison and are taken outside of prison in schools.
- The role of NGOs is to provide non-formal education such as workshops.
- Official verified programs are on EU level “National Vocational Qualifications”.
- The Prison Service offers educational programmes and a correctional home.
- Juveniles: Education for juveniles are compulsory as part of legislation.
- Foreign inmates: there are about 14 % foreigners in total –there are no large language barriers.
- Formal education: development of working competencies for prisoners – a project for 2016-2022
 - o Funded by European Social fund
 - o Implemented in Correctional Home
 - o In the central prison where they have 18 month to 30 years sentences, they offer national vocational program with most education programmes. In other prisons where sentences are shorter, they do not offer all educational programmes.
- Non-formal education: it makes possible for prisoners to gain specific knowledge: individual and group forms of work – socio – therapeutic methods, specific programmes, computer courses, languages, voluntary counseling.
 - o Creative and cultural activities: Active involvement – e.g. theater; Passive activities – e.g. writing journals
 - o Informal education – sports and recreational activities
- Project “Activated and Included” (2016 -)



- Read books and discuss them – managed by Slovenian Book Agency
- Vocational training is focused mostly on gastronomy and tourism.
- There is feedback between teachers and staff and good communication.
- Percentage would be higher of detainees in education if it was paid – financing it is limited.

Stylianou Iakovos (Cyprus)

- The Cyprian Ministry of Justice cooperates with Ministry of Education and Culture.
- Education structure factors:
 - The prisoners inform educational needs by filling in a questionnaire at the beginning of each school year
 - It is possible to combine employment and other activities
 - More than half of the prison population attends at least one course
 - If detainees join school they get paid, this motivates them to join the school and it is their priority to get into open prison.
- Education is priority – the Cyprian prison tries to comply with the European standards.
- Formal education is managed by Ministry of Education and Culture – all courses are recognised by everyone outside the prison.
- Informal education contains 30 thematic areas – all inmates have access to it and they receive certificates for education.
- National training center provides vocational training courses.
- Employment service is measured by the Ministry of Labour.
- Juveniles: opportunity to attend all educational courses provided by the Prison School
- Education programmes: Pebble; Psycho educational teams; Wide Winfs Programme; “From Youth to Youth” programme; VISC.
- Females: have equal opportunity to receive the same education as male inmates. There are special projects – “Finding Female Education” for female inmates; as well as fitness programmes and parental skills for mothers.
- Foreign inmates are foremost encouraged to learn English or Cyprian to be able to communicate with other prisoners or staff. Once they go through this course they can have any educational courses as the other inmates.
- Students evaluation – feedback between teacher and student via special questionnaires.

Martin Zschel (Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany)

- Prisoner education in Rheinland-Pfalz (Germany) provides European standards, but due to changing prison population, changing staff, etc. European standards remains challenging to maintain.
- Example of putting European standards into action is allowing inmates to have weekly access to a library and reading material on current issues.
- Prison service on education:
 - Vision: common understanding of the purpose of incarceration
 - Vocational training for prison staff for 24 months



- There are prisons for juveniles and by law the juvenile prisons and its staff have to be educative.
- Female inmates either go to female prisons or they are kept in special departments.
- Special attention is given to foreign prisoners – 60% have a foreign background.
- Ministry of Justice is responsible for providing education to prisoners.
- Prisons have their own teachers, doctors, psychologists – it is difficult to get additional resources since they have their own staff.
- Contracts are established through Ministry of Justice
- Quantity and quality issues – a course should have 8-12 persons which is controlled by Ministry of Justice
- Institutions:
 - o Ministry of Education (MoE) – every prisoner has the right to have 12 years of education
 - o The task of the prison service is to reduce recidivism – not to repair prisoners, education is not the only crime reducing method.
 - o MoE is in charge of examinations – school classes take place in prisons
 - o Every German prison has an NGO, supporting financing courses and donations
 - o Bigger NGOs are part of pillar of education
- Ministry of Justice is responsible for measuring quality of education.
- Use of internet for education
 - o In Germany there is an E-learning community called “Elis”; Elis is a server located in Berlin and are under command and responsible for transfer of data; Safe access to the software and to internet; The system offers language courses, vocational training, and software.

Tanja Klee (Mecklenburg Vorpommern, Germany)

- In Mecklenburg Vorpommern there are five prisons in the region.
- Vision on education – prison should not be used as a repair facility – but they try to follow a holistic approach for a successful transition management.
- Quality of education is in constant development.
- Juveniles have special programmes, school courses, vocational training and work programmes.
- There are no problems with foreign nationals because there are almost no foreigners imprisoned.
- The governors sign the contract and inform the Ministry about how many prisoners need education.
- The quality is measured by prisons, they submit a Balanced Scorecard to the Ministry of Justice which is funded by European Social Fund (ESF).
- The Ministry of Education cooperates with Ministry of Justice.
- Chamber of industry and commerce organise vocational training courses for hotel and restaurant sector, building constructions, wood mechanics.
- The use of Internet and ICT: 23 e-learning places; Prisoners are not allowed to use the internet without surveillance; There is not much demand for distance learning.

Tamar Lisaki (Georgia)

- In Georgia there are specialised facilities for juvenile and women:



- Juvenile rehabilitation facility
- Women's special institution
- Education standard – risk assessments in different institutions – cannot pay for education
- Georgia is moving towards the European standard
- Education is seen as priority that can reduce crime
- General education is offered to juveniles
 - Education service – carried out by Ministry of Education
 - Material service organised by Ministry of Corrections
 - Quality monitoring is carried out by Multi Council of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Corrections, NGOs and Ombudsman
 - Vocational education: hotel and business, foreign languages, ICT, Georgian language
- Higher education: Teaching methods
 - Corresponding teaching
 - Distance learning at low risk facilities (facilitated by university)
- Challenges: Intranet is forbidden

Ioana Morar (Romania)

- Legislative progress:
 - Borrowed ideas from European recommendations since Romania became part of EU.
 - Social reintegration begins since the beginning of penal execution phase.
 - National strategy for social reintegration of persons deprived of liberty - as a result, recidivism has decreased from 45% to 40%.
 - Social reintegration includes educational actions, psychological assistance, social support, etc.
 - School training is organised by Ministry of Education
 - Professional & vocational training
 - Courses are organised in special spaces
 - Staff are also from psycho-pedagogical support that are contracted by the correctional service
 - Staff is not enough to fulfill the mission – they have involved 80 cooperation agreements with public institutions & NGOs to increase the activities
 - Museums – national folklore festival for inmates
 - Traditional activities – appreciated by the public awareness – necessary to inform the society about activities organised for detainees
 - Created cards to make awareness in communities about reintegration
- Inmates from open regime can participate in activities outside of prison, but most activities are inside prison.
- Use of internet is forbidden for inmates – no distant learning is offered.

Peter Kriska (Slovakia)

- Legislation in education



- Everyone has the right to education according to Slovak constitution and European Convention on Human Rights.
- Education in prison is to ensure relevant type of education – for example to ensure that illiterate inmates receive illiterate courses, and to ensure reskilling courses according to prisoners interest.
- University education is possible only in open unit at minimum security.
- Teachers need to come to the prison to give exams.
- Start of a new era to have more access to technology for education.
- Special attention in education is given to juveniles.
- Only 2% of foreigners in Slovakia but there are no language barriers.
- Contracting with MoE: they want to evaluate but they do not take action, they do not have an active role in the process.
- No possibility to use internet – there is only one internet kiosk in pilot regime; no internet access is a big problem for obtaining long distance learning – there would be better communication with university
- Quality of education: try to make contract with schools and organization that are at a high level.

Kieran Moylan (Ireland)

- Challenges in education: prisoners with mental health, from other nations, on restrictive regimes, failed by education services, limited literacy/numeracy, need of distinctive groups (e.g. Roma, women).
- Education centers are in all 13 prisons that are staffed by teachers funded by the MoE, there are about 220 teaching posts.
- Prison education centers have teachers that are employed by Education and Training Boards.
- Education and training board created a joint strategy for prison education with the prison service – it is a 3 year strategy – they go through each strategic pillar with the Head Teachers – they meet annually to discuss the strategy.
- Program offers:
 - Literacy/numeracy examinations to further education accreditation
 - Non-formal – arts, drama, P.E. yoga, etc.
 - An alert system so no one misses exams
- They are developing a Central Prisons Education Database (PEMS), it is a program that records timetables, enrolment, assessments, qualifications
- Directory of Education programme in each prison is being produced every two years to share with staff.
- Quality assurance – prison education centers are accountable to the education and training boards and to the MoE.
- Challenges: Limited access to IT resources and digital illiteracy – it is critical to keep up with the technology; Shorter school year; Staff shortages - schools may close temporarily if prison staff are not available to supervise them.
- Inmates receive a standard daily gratuities but are not paid to participate in education
- Many complementary NGOs – e.g. Red Cross is in every prison:
 - They facilitate workshops
 - Mental health organisation



- Counselling – group/individual work

James King (Scotland)

- Mission and vision is rehabilitation oriented – everyone has the opportunity to engage in education.
- Offender Learning Vision: “That everyone in our care has the opportunity to engage in creative and flexible learning that unlocks potential, inspires change and builds individual strength.”
- Focusing on what we can do to improve the confidence and esteem – not all detainees want to engage in education – there is a need to turn it around.
 - The whole prison is a learning environment – education center in every prison, there are prisoners’ programs in psychology, vocational training
 - Recent research - researchers have been challenging education as a medical model, that something needs to be fixed instead of bringing something the best out of someone.
- Creative Learning Plan of Scotland:
 - challenge juveniles by allowing them to perform at the Scottish National Choir.
 - NGO that invite dogs in prison for detainees to take care of them – very therapeutic.
 - Creative writing to explore key themes of justice and power – being challenged
 - Award Winning Prison Magazine – promoting and highlighting arts in prison
 - Mirrors project
 - Teaching them the social conditions during the wars – moving for detainees
 - Engaging and challenging them on societal subjects
- They have partnership with open university – 200 learners undertaking distance learning modules – it is not on university level but it has a richer curriculum than in school.
- One prisoner is making PhD at University of Glasgow.

Friday 09 June

Per Thrane (EPEA)

- Per has been a member since 1996 EPEA, regional representative at Council of Europe.
- EPEA has 25 years of constitution, it has 600 members.
- Council of Europe has 17 recommendations for Prison Education
 - Every year they pick a recommendation to discuss – in 2017 it is Article 4: “*All those involved in the administration of the prison system and the management of prisons should facilitate and support education as much as possible*”
- Activities of EPEA:
 - Conferences
 - Umbrella organisation – EAEA European Association for education for the adults
- Magazine, Newsletter, Facebook.com/epeaorg, and Website www.epea.org
- Initiative – IDEP – International Day of Education in Prison – Conference 13 October 2017 in Vienna
- EPEA conference – beyond frontiers: Challenges. Opportunities. Aspirations
- EPEA concerns:



- Council of Europe recommendations
- The distance between society and prison will grow larger because of internet.
- Setting up digital education in prison
 - Education tools are poorly developed
 - Lack of programs
- Collaborative learning
- How to ensure quality – some observations
- Contract management

Discussions

- Contribute to European recommendations
- Use each other's best practices
- Organise a conference to share ideas for the future
- Create boundaries and understanding of the education in prison group
- Make links with other expert groups, e.g. foreign nationals
- Make it clear who is the target group – the national administration
- Make clear definitions for education in prison

Chairperson

James King from the Scottish Prison Service was selected as the chair for the expert group. He will be responsible for coordinating and stimulating the work of the group on the agreed objectives and will report to the AGM about the work of the expert group.

Working Group

A working group was established for developing the working paper: James King, Martin Zschel and Per Thrane.

Next Steps

Create a working paper on what is considered education in prison and its definitions, including a review of the Council of Europe recommendations Rec. R (89) 12, an advise on any updates or changes that need to be made. The group will also collect examples of best practices in relation to the updated version of the articles of the recommendation.

- Working groups sends 1st draft of updated recommendations to the group 1st November
- Experts respond until 31st December
- Working group shares the updated version with the group end January
- Experts add to this draft best practices until end February
- Final draft will be ready mid-May 2018
- Presenting the work of the expert group to the Council for Penological Cooperation.

