



Report

European Prison Regime Forum Workshop

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**PROMOTING
PROFESSIONAL
PRISON
PRACTICE**

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**EPRF Workshop Day 1:
28 November 2018**

Session 1: Opening

Custody of Foreign Nationals, DJI, the Netherlands

Presentation by Eric Nijman, Deputy Director Division of Prison Administration

Nijman opens the session by explaining the challenges The Dutch Prison Service faces, such as the redundancies and transfers of more than 3000 staff members as a result of prisons closing. In the meantime the economic situation in The Netherlands improved considerably over the last few years. At the moment, one of their most important objectives is the recruitment of skilled new staff members.

The Minister for Legal Protection recently presented the Dutch Parliament with a proposal for a law that will change the implementation of the prison sentences. Prisons will focus even more on the re-integration of their prisoners and will increase the cooperation with the regional network of towns and municipalities, social services, health services, education, housing and employment.

In the last 5 years The Dutch Prison Service took massive steps to become a professional production company within the prison services in The Netherlands. Apart from their production company, In-Made, they also created Ex-Made. This is their approach of preparing prisoners for real jobs in the real labour market after their detention. All of the above contributes to their mission to reduce recidivism in order to obtain a safer society.

Implementation of Technical Guidance, Support of the Development of National Brands of Prison Products, and Assisting in Prison Based Rehabilitation Programs: Proven Results!

Presentation by Muriel Jourdan-Ethvignot, UNODC, United Nations Office

The UNODC is currently working on guidance material and technical assistance for the reintegration of prisoners. Muriel Jourdan-Ethvignot states that the reintegration of prisoners is absolutely necessary. Prison itself would not change a person for the better, no matter how long somebody is imprisoned. In order to prevent the inmates from offending again, there has to be a focus on some key factors:

- Family support
- Education
- Employment/ housing
- Special needs

A very recent publication of the UNODC is their „Handbook“. It focuses on the reintegration of prisoners and post-release services and programs. Following the handbook, the UNODC had also developed a „Roadmap“, which is a more practical tool for prison-based rehabilitation programmes. It combines many different practices from all over the world.

Vocational training can be combined with a prison work program. There has to be a link with the current labour market outside of the prison. This can be achieved by bringing in professionals from the work field outside of prison to educate the prisoners, or by letting the prisoners work with these professionals and companies outside of prison.

Academic Approach: The Influence of the Impoverished Prison Environment on the Brain Function

Presentation by Jesse Meijers, Neuropsychologist in Prison Zaanstad, Netherlands

“Do not restrain the prisoner’s brain.”

In a prisoners brain (anti-social brain), the prefrontal areas of the brain are often less developed. They have less grey brain matter and there are problems with self-regulation and they show a lack of empathy. If there is no cognitive challenge, a study done on mice shows that they will have a much less developed brain than mice in open environments. This can be compared to prisons.

People with low self-regulation whom show aggressive behaviour get isolation. If their bottom up self-regulation is impaired, they won’t be able to see the punishment for their behaviour and ultimately will be more inclined to risk taking behaviour.

The prefrontal and executive functions are declining in prisoners, while we want them to improve. This is needed to successfully reintegrate into society. We need to improve and enrich the prisoners’ environment, because it will have effect on the brain and cognition.

The labour that prisoners do has to be cognitively challenging so the environment of the prisoners can be enriched: “Use it or lose it”. If you don’t use some of your brain cells, your brain will automatically lose these cells.

Q&A

Q: Does your childhood background and the place you grow up in have any influence on your brain functions?

A: Study shows that people who have been raised the first few years of their lives in poverty environments have lesser developed brain tracks than people who grew up in other environments. There is also a genetic factor, which can influence the environment that you are in, which will result in a bigger influence on the brain.

Q: In the USA, they screen prisoners to see if they have any antisocial behaviours before they enter prison, do you think it is ethical to do that?

A: Depends on the reason why they have antisocial behaviour, but I don't see a problem with that. Treatment does not have to be a cure, but you can put someone in a healthy environment that takes into account the problems that a person has.

Q: I was wondering if the impaired environment also influences the staff in the prisons other than the prisoners themselves.

A: I think a lot of prison staff experience stress, because they deal with a difficult population and they might not feel safe. If you deal with a lot of chronic stress, there is also an impact on the prefrontal regulation which results into them acting on their emotions.

Session 2: Vocational Training, Employment Skills, Reintegration

How to Introduce Knowledge and Necessary Skills to Inmates to be Able to Find a Job?

Presentation by Gerard Estalella & Silvia Gaset, Catalonia

CIRE (Centre for Reintegration Initiatives) is a public company that belongs to the Department of Justice of the Government of Catalonia. CIRE aims to give (ex-) offenders a second chance in the work field. This can be achieved through vocational training and workshops in prisons. The main goal and the end of the workshop is to empower the inmates and give them confidence. There are three examples of best practices introducing skills and transversal competences:

- Speed Dating

This is a simulation of a real work interview.

- Tribunal Interview

Different types of role- play involving communication skills and adaptability.

- Service Learning

This is an educational initiative which combines learning with community service in a single well-articulated project.

Q&A

Q: What do you do to interest the employers to come to these labour market sessions within the prisons?

A: We have a lot of contact with the employers and have a close relationship with them, which makes them more willing to come and do these sessions. We ask them if they are interested in doing the interview sessions. The employers themselves, like many other people, also have this stereotype of a prisoner, but during these interviews they will see that they are normal workers and their views will change. The employers will then go and talk to other potential employers and spread the word. This will eventually break the stereotype.

Q: Do you see that the employers who do these sessions actually employ the prisoners?

A: Some of them only come to do the session and others actually employ them, because we have a collaboration with them.

A System Which Combines Education, Vocational Training and Job Rehabilitation in Cooperation with the HRM Department Authority of Cyprus

Presentation by Iakovos Stylianou, Cyprus

The SVQ project is based on three basic factors: working experience, skills and talent of the inmates. The purpose of the system is upgrade and develop the human resources through the assessment of the knowledge and competences of a person that has to carry out a specific job in real or/and simulated working conditions.

SVQ is co-funded by the European social fund (ESF) of the EU and the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA). The standards of vocational qualifications define the framework for the training and development of a person, providing him/her, with the opportunity to reach the appropriate competence level.

The system operates towards achieving quality assurance of vocational training, systematisation of the training provided and the development of human resources.

Candidate for the system have to go through a six step procedure:

- Step 1: Candidate's Initial assessment
- Step 2: Preparation and internal assessment
- Step 3: Preparation and internal assessment
- Step 4: External assessment
- Step 5: Final Assessment
- Step 6: Certification

Maximizing Employment for Inmates: How It Works in Slovakia

Presentation by Jozef Lancaric, Slovakia

Employment of people in pre-trial sentences and in sentence execution is an important process in rehabilitation. The Slovakian prison service focuses mainly on seeking opportunities for employment of inmates and looks at the demands from the labour market. The prison fulfils the obligation as employer of the inmates. All inmates in Slovakia are obliged to work (except for juveniles, pre-trial inmates, and people who cannot work due to health problems or other valid reasons).

There are two ways prisoners can work: internal operations and correctional industries. Internal operations for inmates is work within the prisons, like cooking, cleaning and gardening for the prison. Correctional industries provide activities meeting the needs of the prison service. It entails work such as the production and fabrication of clothes.

Inmates are entitled to get work remuneration for their work, it can be either hourly or daily. The work remuneration a prisoner gets is deducted by a number of factors, such as alimony, tax, claims and sentence execution costs.

Practice has shown that inmates who worked during their prison sentence have a higher chance at getting employed after their sentence by the companies they performed prison labour for.

Q&A

Q: Do the benefits from each year go back to the prison service or does it go to the State Budget?

A: It goes back to the State Budget.

Q: You mentioned that there are prisoners that are includable to work. How do you assess that?

A: There is a company that decides that, it takes in consideration someone's health condition, mental state experience or background for instance.

Q: If I understood correctly there are a lot of deductions from the work remuneration a prisoner receives, and you also mentioned that the sentence execution cost are extracted from that as well ?

A: Yes, you understood that correctly.

Q: But is that only for the prisoners that work? Because you stated that there are prisoners excluded from work for a variety of reasons?

A: Yes, because they do not contribute.

Q: And you also said something about pocket money. So you take away a certain amount which they will later get back as pocket money and the additional amount goes into a savings account?

A: After all the reductions are done from the remuneration, the rest of the money that remains is pocket money for them.

Q: My question relates to the sustainability of the production work in prisons and ethics behind it. The production costs and your revenue is more or less what makes your project sustainable. In context where there is higher employment in the community, selling prison manufactured goods on the open market so that projects become sustainable can be unethical if there is higher employment and what is the backlash of the community?

A: In Slovakia the general unemployment rate is very low at the moment. Concerning the demand for prison work is something we find very hard. At the moment we are not able to satisfy all the request we have from the private sector.

Q: You stated that the prison provides the prisoners with a job while they are executing their sentence, but what happens after their release?

A: Some prisoners continue to work for their job provider in the private sector that they had while they were imprisoned. However, there is no special staff in the prison that devotes their time to see if the ex- prisoners find their place in the labour market.

Session 3: Business Oriented Models, Best Practices in the Field of Regimes, Quality of Staff, Continuity for Prison Work

Cooperation between the Prisoners' Health Care Unit and the Criminal Sanctions Agency to Promote the Employment and Social Inclusion of People with a Criminal Background

Presentation by Satu Rahkila and Johanna Lähdeaho, Finland

The project of the Criminal Sanctions Agency was set up to improve the cooperation between the various stakeholders, in order to provide the (ex) offender with opportunities in rehabilitation and employment. In addition to that, the project ensures efficient communication between various stakeholders and creates a strong network.

The aim is to support reintegration of the prisoners into society and to distance them from crime by promoting the prospects of a crime-free life.

In the prisons, these three organizations have drafted electronic services for the prisoners. 3-6 Months before release, a release plan is set up as a tool for conveying information and arranging services. The sentence plan is supplemented with an assessment of the prisoner's working and functioning capacity drawn up by the prison health care services, TYP network, TE, services, municipality, KELA and health services.

Staff: Qualifications and Training

Presentation by Tricia Kelly, Ireland

The Irish Prison Service is responsible for the delivery of all prison services. Their services consist of health care, education and work training within the prisons.

Among the 2000 working staff, there are about 380 specialized work training officers. These officers can be skilled in several disciplines, from carpentry to metalwork.

In the last few years, the Irish Prison Service has changed their staffing model to support reintegration and rehabilitation of the prisoners. Within the prisons, there are special training - employment officers and resettlement officers. They also have reintegrated sentence management officers, who oversee the sentence management model. The structure as a whole is called the "Employment and Correction Model". The theory behind the model is that people who have structure and employment after prison are much less likely to offend again.

It is not just the hard skills that are important for somebody's reintegration, it is the soft skills as well, such as interview skills.

Agricultural Labour as Reintegration

Presentation by Claudio Forgione, Italy

One of the characteristics of the agricultural work for inmates is developing skills which can be implemented in the prison farms. Italy focuses on a current approach, enterprise development, profit-making and re-investment in agricultural activities and contributions by private/public enterprises in the management of farms.

There are three ways of project management; direct management, shared management and management by third parties.

Confagricoltura is a professional agricultural organization for the protection and representation of agricultural workers, producers and entrepreneurs. They contribute to social progress, by creating, monitoring and supporting farms in their activities. There are two regional projects in Lazio and Sardinia focussing on the production of wine and craft beer.

Cell Made: from Inside to Outside, Together with Private Sector

Presentation by Kathleen van de Vijver and Tine Verhenne, Belgium

Prison labour has an important social added value. Labour during detention will help the re-integration of prisoners. It gives them the opportunity to acquire discipline, professional experience and responsibilities.

Cellmade is an autonomous service within the Federal Justice Department of Belgium. They have been responsible for the employment and training of prisoners in the Belgian prisons since 1993. Cellmade believes in the involvement of the private sector. Cellmade has to focus on the increased number of prisoners being employed and the return on investment of their work places. In Belgium there are 35 prisons and Cellmade can give 20% of the prisoners a job.

Purchasing with Impact

Presentation by Wolter van der Vlist, Netherlands

The Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency started on a new mission in 2017. The mission is about procurement with impact and focusing on their organizational goals. They want their suppliers to work with them in reaching their goals.

The Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency wrote a policy plan on procurement with three main focuses: using new opportunities, taking the lead in complex situations and involving their current suppliers. The organization hopes that by using their opportunities, they will activate their suppliers and they can spread the word within the government. They want to be an example of an organization which works for our society with all of our suppliers.

Session 4: World Café Session

The World Café Session is a way for people from different countries to discuss with each other about the subjects from the presentation in session 3.

Roundtable Discussion – Belgium

The subject of this discussion was business influence and economic impact on prison labour. Different countries had a discussion about working on an economic model in prison labour. Cellmade is an example of an economic model which they use in all of the Belgium prisons. Every country that was seated around the table has their own kind of economic model in prison. The idea behind the economic system is generally the same, but the way the model works is different in every county.

The subject „money“ was a largely talked about subject during the three World Cafe Sessions. All the countries had their own point of view about, for example, the amount of salary the prisoners should get.

The countries discussed the various dilemmas they encounter in their work field and many dilemmas are similar to each other. The three most discussed dilemmas are explained below:

- Unmotivated prisoners
- Lack of resources.
- Difficulties caused by legislation

Roundtable Discussion – The Netherlands

The Netherlands has a special law for public procurement requiring an objective, transparent and non-discriminatory process. Procurement for prisons is done from a central location in the head office for all prisons.

In these discussions the focus was on a social return of the investment and on the fact that prisoners are the responsibility of the whole society and not just of the Prison Service. In future procurement contracts a clause on the social return will be included. Making use of the wide network of the suppliers is also important. Through this network other companies that could employ ex-prisoners can be found.

Prisoners are stimulated to work through a reward system, there is no obligation to work. Normal working time is 4 hours. The type of work offered can differentiate: from low qualified to high qualified.

Roundtable Discussion – Ireland

This session focused on the Irish staffing model for reintegration. The group discussed the difference between case workers and the different backgrounds/training the case workers have.

In Portugal there is no special qualified staff who focus on the employment of inmates, just normal case workers. The training of the inmates is mostly done by a professional organization from outside the prison that has experience with working with inmates.

In Holland there has been a shift from traditional training to competence training. The training is often outsourced, like in Portugal. The group also discussed the importance of soft skills training in the prison, other than the hard skills. Lastly there was a discussion about drugs in prison and creating “drug free prisons”. The group agreed that the focus in prisons should not just be on the protocols and directions, but the prison culture as well. The culture should be more focused on reintegration, instead of punishment.

Roundtable Discussion – Italy

The focus of the discussion was on the use of agricultural labour as a way for reintegration. In general, the private sector is not very eager to work with inmates because of certain beliefs and superstitions, however, it was also noted by the experts that countries have lack of low-skilled workers in their markets, the lack that prisoners could fulfil. One of the biggest challenges for many countries in implementing this method for reintegration is the lack of land where the work could be carried out by the prisoners. In addition, as was mentioned by representative from Britain, the agricultural work is not always seen by the prisoners as worthy or there is in general no agricultural traditions in the country.

As was agreed during the sessions, the way to make this method more attractive for the countries is to convince people about the benefits of hiring inmates, such as: companies could possibly enjoy (financial) benefits from hiring certain number of inmates in their companies; it could also be made mandatory for countries to hire certain number of inmates just to make companies socially responsible.

Roundtable Discussion – Finland

The participants discussed how the Criminal Sanctions Agency (RISE) is solving the problem of sharing information among institutions, since the implementation of new privacy laws. The main question was: how can we help inmates and prepare them for labour, when certain information is not shared with the prison service? In Finland, RISE created a document, a consent form that can be signed by the inmate. Once it is signed, information can be shared between health care and the prison service. RISE made this possible, because without details from health care, it is difficult to determine what the needs are of an inmate.

There were questions directed towards planning of homes and how much involvement families have in the release process. In Finnish prisons, family relation is a large part of the evaluation. The prison tries to involve family and establish a network for the inmate. During a supervised conditional release, they make sure there is housing and everything is functioning. There should be some activity on a daily basis and income. These are the last steps to freedom.

**EPRF Workshop Day 2:
29 November 2018**

Opening and plenary feedback from the World Café sessions

All five presenters from day 1 gave a summary of what was discussed at their table.

Session 5: Education, Work, Sports, Reintegration

LIO project: Learning Inside Out “Winner of ESF Ambassador 2018”

Presentation by Marjolein Rammelaere, Belgium

How to find your way as a prisoner to lifelong learning as a part of your reintegration process? The project LIO is a partnership between the 3 organisations: VOCVO, Learning shop West-Flanders and the Federal Justice department. The main focus of the project is guidance and orientation service on adult education in prison. The project works through two types of levels; on an individual and on a group level.

LIO has multiple goals in the project:

- to make adult education accessible for prisoners;
- to break through the Matthew effect;
- to support prisoners during their learning path, even after prison release.

Work through Sport

Presentation by Gerko Brink, Netherlands

The project „Work Through Sport“ is organized by the Prison System in the Netherlands (Ex-made) and they make connections between prisons and sports clubs, mainly football clubs. In the Netherlands, prisoners can participate in a project by 3 different pillars:

- to work as a volunteer at an amateur club;
- to work in a stadium of a professional football organization;
- through reintegration projects at professional football clubs.

The project „Work Through Sport“ has multiple success factors. The first important factor is that prisoners start working during detention at a club. The clubs get to know the prisoners before they leave the prison and it is easier to keep in touch and keep them involved at the club after the prisoner’s release. The most important success factor is the new social network for a prisoner.

Session 6: Statements

Moderator: Kirsten Hawlitschek

Panel:

Peter Larsen, Denmark

Eric Bouwsma, Holland

Tricia Kelly, Ireland

Statement 1: ***“The platform for successful reintegration can be created when Prison Services keep focus on the individual and society’s present need, but we must also keep the focus on future needs”.***

The relevance of the work is important, the prisoners need to be trained to fit the labour market after their release. It’s not only about the needs of the labour market, but also the capability of the prisoner. The basic needs are very important to the (ex) prisoner to become sustainable after detention.

Statement 2: ***“A coordinated collaboration between Prison Services and the labour market means breaking down attitude barriers which promote the social responsibility and gives opportunities for job for ex-offenders”.***

Private companies give us a clear vision of the actual labour market and the needs that the companies have. We shouldn’t see the private sector as the enemy, but as a cooperation partner. Lower the barriers for employers to employ prisoners.

Statement 3: ***“Successful reintegration is the responsibility of the local community and the probation service; prison service is responsible to prepare the prisoners for successful re-integration and can’t be responsible for the outcome (recidivism)”.***

You have to look at recidivism in an integrated manner. The goals of the probation service, social workers and the prison need to be the same. The prison protects the public from the prisoners and takes care of the reintegration of the prisoners. Successful reintegration is not just prison service, or probation, but also health, housing and welfare. We all have that responsibility. Think in cooperation, not in separates.

Statement 4: ***“Realizing continuity in the approach for reintegration can only be reached if prisoners have learned to take responsibility for their own future”.***

Eric Bouwsma, Holland: “A prison climate can be poisons for prisoners. A prison environment should be focused on the power of the prisoners themselves. The prisoners should learn how to take responsibility for themselves, which is only possible in an environment where this is stimulated.

Statement 5: ***“The reintegration needs of women prisoners are often complex, and regime models focused on employability need to be adapted”.***

Prisons often focus on the traditional ‘female skills’, like hairdressing and sewing, that don’t necessarily have a big chance on the labour market. Integrate more fitting and less traditional work into the women prisons.

Statement 6: ***“Reintegration of minority groups can be progressed by a continuity of support from prison to community”.***

There is an ethnic minority in Ireland, the traveller group (Roma) and Ireland struggles with the reintegration they have. This ethnic group doesn’t access the prison and probation service as much as the other prisoners, so what Ireland sees is: when they come out of prison, they will come straight back in. It might be important that the Roma get help in their reintegration from not just any caseworker, but someone who belongs to their group so that they can learn from someone who has experienced the same things and understands their point of view, social reintegration peer groups.

Evaluation EPRF 2018

Discussion about the EPRF for the Future. Many participants spoke about the importance of the current labour market and the needs that they have. In addition to that, the strong involvement of the private sector became apparent during the presentations. The importance of hard skills and soft skills were discussed. In conclusion, as representatives for the prison service in Europe, everyone has to be understanding and open minded about the difference in opinions. Learning from each other is what makes our society safe.

Closing of EPRF 2018

EuroPris is thankful for everyone who made the forum possible and everyone who attended it.

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