

Belgium - Asturia

Good practice 1: Creative painting in vocational training – 21st century skills in a industrial painter course

21st Century Skill connected:

Learning and innovation skills: Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication

Digital Literacy skills: Media literacy

Career and life skills: Flexibility, initiative, productivity, social skills

Give an explanation of how this good practice works. Examples from websites, videos or other media are necessary.

General information

Location: prison of Wortel, Belgium

Duration: 5 mornings a week during 10 weeks – module of 40 hours

LOCAL CONTEST ANALYSIS

With a century-old tradition of expanding educational access to everyone, particularly historically underrepresented groups and non-traditional students, the CVO's (center for adult education) in Belgium are a natural partners for projects that are offering adult secondary vocational education. This is evident in the demographic makeup of today's community adult education population; most of the 100 students of the Asturia organization are older than eighteen, more likely to be racial and ethnic minorities, and often attend classes part time as they juggle other responsibilities.

The CVO's in Belgium also tend to cost less, with tuition rates of € 1,50/hour for regular inscription in 2023 and free for inmates, compared to other private institutions outside prison. This low cost makes CVO programs particularly attractive to prisons, since community and federal funding for correctional education has not kept pace with the growing prison population.

Further, CVO's have a reputation for greater course flexibility and more direct contact with local community populations, especially industry. Often businesses requiring additional training and professional development for their employees approach their local CVO's to provide such education. This tendency to seek out new client bases while responding to societal changes is important for prison secondary vocational education.

The structure supporting vocational adult education, whether centralized (coordinated at the community level), decentralized (coordinated on an institution-by-institution basis), or a combination of the two, can affect program content and the transferability of the credits, certificates, and degrees earned by inmates. In general, the more decentralized a system is, the more difficulty it has with ensuring that courses and programs articulate among formal institutes and are recognized by business and industry.

As the government has succeeded in getting employers to recognize their prison-based educational programs, they are stimulating the correctional facilities and the various CVO's to provide inmates the same modular courses as outside prison. Moreover, since most

correctional programs are offered on-site rather than through distance education, the absence of a standard modular system could create transfer issues for inmates since inmates are often transferred from one facility to another and therefore may be unable to continue the course or program in which they were previously enrolled. A similar transfer issue could occur when inmates are released from prison; their hometown is generally not the same town where they were incarcerated and enrolled in college courses.

The region "Kempen" in Belgium is an example of a centralized model with a standard modular system for correctional courses. Since 2007, the collaboration between the CVO's and the prisons has provided adult education to more than 1,000 inmates annually. This partnership was created by the Art of Adult education in 2007.

PURPOSE / GOALS

To improve the practical skills and knowledge of inmates and staff in places of deprivation of liberty, build social and job skills of sentenced persons, to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups in the development of life skills and improve their re-socialization.

<https://avs.be/artikels/cool-abdoul-leert-gedetineerden-omgaan-met-conflicten-en-agressie-a79979>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1688875347877227>



Explain how this good practice helps solve problems/stimulates social vocational skills in your country. If possible, provide data of how successful the good practice is.

OBJECTIVE/S

Right now there are 650.000 people in jail around the 28 EU countries (Eurostat 2015). Prison overcrowding affects 21 countries in Europe (Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics 2014). According to the Einaudi Institute for Economics Finance research (2012), just one out of five inmates carry out an activity in jail and only 3% of them work for external enterprises or bodies. And yet, it has been shown that inmates who took part in a path of training or job placement during imprisonment, the rates of repeated infringement decrease sensitively. One of the main problems of these training paths in prison is a lack of structured patterns for the acknowledgment, validation and certification of the artistic and vocational skills that can be acquired in the facility.

This project wants to focus on the well-established experiences in a vocational educational programs in the prison of Wortel (Belgium) – an industrial painter program – where inmates express their artistic skills while learning a profession. Hereby the researchers want to establish a framework and a certification system of the transversal and professional skills that can include artistic activities and that can be acquired through courses for inmates.

INNOVATION

The innovative results of previous ERASMUS+ and Grundtvig projects of Asturia on the subject of prison education is the foundation of this real-life job skills and skills validation project. That will be possible also with the assistance of our partners from in the prison and de department of education of Flanders. Therefore, we are going to propose to prisoners two modules of 40 hours in one semester with 10 students in one class – creative painting - which in fact will be established in a formal context of the department of education but with assignments on creativity and artistic skills. In this way the artistic activities have a legal status, the staff and the management process included. Asturia will be responsible for managing the artistic activities, the event management and the promotion of the products: decoration, productions and exhibitions. This will improve prisoners artistic skills during the vocational training and their motivation for work, as they will be an active part in the decision-making process on the crative subjects. An other benefit of this training is that it's equips the inmates with real-life business skills and job skills. The products, developed during the artistic modules will be used as decoration in the prison and – if possible - sold for real and the money will be used for materials in prison education.

The work will be divided in 2 semesters during the schoolyear 22-23 with 1 module in each semester:

As the modules are scheduled on the same moment between 08:00 and 12:00, the inmates have to choose in which module they want to participate during a semester.

RESULTS

This project will contribute to the implementation of the expected results of corrective work with persons deprived of their liberty, in particular vulnerable groups such as people from ethnic minorities, substance misusers and persons with mental health issues. The project motivates the participation of the selected convicted persons to participate in a new specialized program for rehabilitation by using artistic activities and training in life skills. At the end of the project allows for self-expression and participation in an artistic production and – if suited - exhibition of products, developed during the artistic activities. Individual approach to each participant in the program for rehabilitation and a long history of working with experts - psychologists, will inevitably achieve high and sustainable correction effect, and the other participants will gain valuable social and work skills to help their future re-

socialization. The project provides dissemination of the results of these activities in at least one research publication and local exchange of good experience.

PARTICIPANTS

Direct (prisoners, operators involved in the actions) and other parties that may benefit indirectly.

The association "Asturia" has extensive experience in the implementation of initiatives and projects in support of the re-socialization of convicted persons in partnership with the prisons in Flanders, focusing on people with low literacy skills and people with mental health difficulties. Our partners also work with vulnerable groups and have experience in direct work with individuals with deviant behavior, addicted persons, ex-prisoners, as well as developing new educational and rehabilitative methods for specialists.

THE DIRECT TARGET GROUP

Prisoners with a sentence, who are going to be released not earlier than august 2023

Our project is investing in a new approach aimed at target groups - convicted persons in Wortel prison, focusing on vulnerable groups. It will develop a specialized program for rehabilitation, which will be made with the participation of psychologists of the Wortel prison and will reflect European practices and needs of persons convicted for future re-socialization.

The program will bring together a wide range of experts for the introduction of innovative techniques for skills training, based on cognitive-behavioral theory, painting and bakery techniques, and other artistic activities, in accordance with individual needs of prisoners, assisting them in the process of change asocial attitudes, reducing the risk of relapse, prevention of aggressive behavior, violence and the use of substances in prison, sensitivity and tolerance of diversity and dealing with stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination. This will ensure complex influence using different corrective approaches and lay the foundations of multidisciplinary approach. The inclusion of social workers and probation officers in prison and outside of prison will ensure continuity and sustainability of the results.

IMPLEMENTATION

Describe your methodology and the detailed actions

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used is based on a formal educational programs for development of job skills, artistic skills, etc. Each of the activities is based on a different approached. It consist the elements for adult learning, with theoretical part and the large majority based on practical exercises, reflections and simulation games. The group work will be formatted as an interactive training and will build upon the prisoners own skills, as well as filling in the cognitive-behavioral deficits, marked during the initial interviews or during the follow up group and individual work.

In the progress of the programe delivery the following teaching methods will be used: Presentations, group discussions, individual work, case study and case solving.

Explain in one or two sentences how this good practice matches with the connected 21st Century Skill.

When the creative painting is finished, the prisoners have a class debate on a the piece of art. In the first round, prisoners can give comments on the good and poor things and the artist explains why he has made specific choises. In the second round, they have to switch roles. In this way, while preforming VET training, they are stimulated in their critical thinking.