

## LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME



### Learning Partnership GRUNDTVIG

#### FREE – IT – Foster Re-integration and Enhance Employability through Inmates Training



PROJECT MEETING n. 4 - Bergen, Norway, 16-19 June 2014

Report: meeting n.4

Place: Bergen - Norway

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

People involved:

PARTNER	NATIONALITY	NAME
Penitenciarul Ploiești	RO	Stan Constantin Celestin Branzan
Education Unit, Cork Prison	IE	Frances Russell
Åsane videregående skole, avd. Fossane	NO	Geir Arne Hundvebakke Kåre Øvregård Dag Bjornberg Ida Yor
Vollzugsdirektion	AT	Marit Carolin Weißen Andrea Moser
Centre d'Iniciatives per a la Reinserció (CIRE)	ES	Gerard Estalella Miquel Resclosa
Center za izobraževanje in kulturo Trebnje	SL	Barbara Jerovsek
Knowl - Social Enterprise for Risk Groups Education and Lifelong Learning	EL	Charalambos Lakkas Myrsini Pikni
Rideout (Creative Arts for Rehabilitation)	UK	Saul Hewish
Cooperativa Sociale "Il Cerchio ONLUS"	IT	Gianni Trevisan Federica Vianello
Consulmarc Sviluppo srl	IT	Laura Franceschi

## Meeting Development

1<sup>st</sup> DAY 17 JUNE 2014

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of our FREE-IT project was held in Norway's second largest (or second least small) city, *Bergen*, which is situated on the west coast. Norway is roughly divided into five regions: the Eastern, Southern, Western, Central and Northern parts. On the map it looks a little like a guitar and the body is made up of East, South and West, whereas the Central and Northern parts constitute the neck and head (without corresponding to the two. The three northernmost counties, for instance, will be more than half the neck and the head.)

Bergen was founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and was Norway's capital in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Hanseatic merchants had extensive trade with Bergen from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and till the 16<sup>th</sup> century Bergen remained one of Scandinavia's largest cities. Today it has just under 300,000 inhabitants.

Tourists who want to see a little of typical Norwegian nature and scenery could do worse than using Bergen as a base – it is touristically labelled as “the Gateway to the Fjords”.

We had 15 guests from 8 of the 9 non-Scandinavian partner countries, with Malta unfortunately not able to join us. Participants arrived on the 16<sup>th</sup> (or earlier) and the official programme was on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of June.

### Tuesday morning – presentation of our school at the Department of *Fossane*

*Åsane* is the name of the northern part of Bergen, where the Department of *Fossane* is located. This department is where our school's prison education has its administration, including the important functions of guidance counselling. It is also a transitional department for students, inmates and ex-inmates, which coordinates and offers a range of courses and educational and vocational training adapted as much as possible to the students' needs. Altogether, about 30 persons are professionally involved with school, employment and follow-up work at this department.

We had a presentation of our school's various departments within prison education in the Bergen area. Education is available to all inmates who are interested/motivated:

*Bergen prison*, with about 220 inmates, is the biggest department. It has various degrees of security, from very high in section A to low in section D, which is situated outside the prison walls. Twenty-four inmates in section D either go to school, undergo training, study or work, all of them outside the prison – i.e. not in our school, which is inside the prison – during day time, and they return to their living quarters in the afternoon or evening.

*The Juvenile Unit* has 4 places. A lot of resources are available for inmates here, with education playing a central role.

*Bjergvin prison* is a low security prison with about 90 inmates, mostly on relatively short sentences. Consequently, the students attend courses of short duration.

*Ulvsnesøy open prison* (the island) is a department of Bergen prison. It has 31 inmates, 9 of whom are women. Most inmates are involved with education, either as full-time or part-time students.

*Lyderhorn halfway-house* has 16 places. Some inmates are employed at a work place, others get their education e.g. via the Dept. of *Fossane*.

\* NOTE: In Norway having a formal education with a diploma to show for it is very important in order to get a job/regular employment. We give our students formal education and qualification. However, our school works hard to cater for our students with regard to their needs, experiences and backgrounds in order to facilitate their education and qualification for work.

For instance, some students have work experience but not the required formal education. In such cases we try to map and certify their competence while filling in with subjects and parts of curricula they lack and need to get their qualification in place.

### **Meeting with three of our students**

Three of our students were present at the meeting to share their experiences with us. Two of them were students at our school some time ago and one is currently completing his vocational education. They presented their own “educational stories” and showed different ways of going through our training and education system on their way to a career and employment.

**Student A** had long sentences and started on an education that was broken off in connection with recidivism. He also changed plans and decided on a different career after some time. He did not follow a straight (ordinary) apprenticeship, but had enough work experience and practice for it to be accepted as the equivalence of the apprenticeship that was needed. He passed his exams and got his diploma as a student at our school.

He has done exceedingly well and is now employed in a leading position within catering on an oil platform in the North Sea.

**Student B** told us a little about his background with a difficult childhood and problematic family situation, which contributed to complications and failure at school. In spite of little education he had work experience as a technician going on tour with and working for famous artists. Unfortunately, there were also drugs-related problems that led to prison sentences.

Embarking on his education at school he decided on engineering as his career choice. This meant that he would have to study a lot of mathematics, which turned out to be a “remarkable story” in this student’s case.

Unfortunately, he had serious problems getting to grips with the subject and was unable to make progress for a long time. Our maths teacher told him that it was not realistic for him to become an engineer without a better grasp of mathematics. The message of “you cannot do it” was not an expression of negativity but rather a well-meant piece of honest and realistic advice. Spending months on a single chapter in the maths book made the necessary progress seem unrealistic. Our student refused to accept failure, though, and kept working extremely hard in the face of adversity. Miraculously, his stubbornness paid off in the end. Eventually he managed to “break the code” and then raced through the rest of the curriculum with success.

He started on his higher education while serving his sentence and continued when it ended. This term he has completed his education and he is ready to start working with subsea engineering.

**Student C** has finished two years of vocational school and he is now doing his apprenticeship to become a restaurant chef. After already having received his diploma as an institutional chef he decided to make this change in his career plan. He talked a little about the problems of prison concerning family relations, shame and alienation. Like the two other students he also had a long sentence at the end of which his career plans now are clear and will follow one of the routes our school has to offer, from formal education to a diploma as a chef after completing his apprenticeship.

### **Should you inform your employer about your criminal record?**

One topic that arose during the presentation and our three students’ participation at the meeting, was that of how much you as a job seeker should tell potential employers (e.g. at a job interview) with regard to your “past” and having a criminal record. On the one hand, it would appear that *not* hiding any information, to have honesty and trust etc., is essential in order to build a good relationship

with your employer. On the other hand, being open about a criminal record may reduce your chances to get a job since some employers may be prejudiced or sceptical.

Among our three students both points of view were represented. One of them found it would be too stressful to try to hide this part of his past. "Playing with open cards" also means that there will be no backlash at a later stage due to lack of communication. Another student had not informed his employer about his past criminal record, arguing that he wasn't hiding anything, i.e. had not been asked about it, and he also was of the opinion that when you have finished your sentence you have paid your due and you should be allowed to look forward, without your past being used against you.

Whatever way one looks at this, students in Norwegian prisons appreciate very much the fact that education is not a part of the prison system itself and this positive attitude is something that we as educators in prison benefit from. It also contributes to a good learning environment in our different departments.

### **Professor Terje Manger from the University of Bergen: Presentation of research on motivation for education among inmates**

We cannot go through all the figures and findings of the survey professor Manger presented to us, but some of them it is natural to comment on in relation to school, education, training and future employment for our students and inmates.

Almost all inmates see studying in itself as sensible and useful, and three in four have improved opportunities to find work in the future as one of their most important motivational factors. The fact that motivation is strong among students in our school departments in prison education means that we have a good starting point and something that it is important to build on. Fortunately, the previous Government in Norway decided to invest a lot of money in education in prisons in order to reduce recidivism. The change of Government is unlikely to change this policy.

In recent years the percentage of students that take a vocational education in prison has increased in accordance with the students' preferences. Education in prison aims at preparing inmates for work life – as well as facilitating studies for those who wish to go on to higher education.

Among factors mentioned in the research that are of great importance to inmates are the teachers' attitudes towards the students and that education should be adapted as much as possible to the individual student's needs. These are points we should always keep in mind. They are essential stepping stones for inmates on their way to future employment.

### **A guided tour in the main prison in Bergen**

After lunch, with fish soup prepared by some of our students, we paid a visit to Bergen prison.

The *Deputy Governor Mie Eek-Larsen* gave us an introduction to and presentation of this prison, which is relatively new. It was "opened" in 1990. She informed us about the departments with various degrees of security, how inmates are placed in different sections according to the different types of criminal offenses they have committed, how much time they have served, their future plans etc.

She also emphasised the importance of meaningful activities, such as sometimes going for hikes in the area around the prison, and the significance of teaching inmates that such activities are useful to improve the quality of their sentences. These activities do not necessarily have to be expensive.

The education of prison officers is very important in order to ensure a high level of professionalism. To be a certified prison officer in Norway you will have to study for two years and complete a year of practice after the two theoretical years. – In many countries this education is much shorter than in

Norway. The Deputy Governor shared with us some of the ideas that are meant to pervade the prison system in order to enable inmates to function better in society and to reduce recidivism.

We were able to see different parts of the prison and the different regimes, e.g. with units where a group of inmates share a living room and a kitchen area during daytime.

Education at our school normally plays a very important role in prison. This was, however, the last week of school, with the final exams over and the school holiday just around the corner. – We did meet the arts teacher, though. *Thor Norheim* talked enthusiastically to us about how activities in his workshop have a positive effect on inmates, and we also met some of his students there. Another “popular” part of the prison is the library, where inmates can borrow books, DVDs etc.

### **A presentation of the Juvenile Unit in Bergen prison**

In Norway youths under the age of 18 are normally not put in prison. If they have committed criminal offences they are under the care of the social services as long as they are below that age.

However, there have been some cases in recent years of young persons with extreme, anti-social behaviour and as part of a project two juvenile units in prisons in Norway have been established, in Oslo and Bergen, respectively.

This project is run by the correctional services in cooperation with the social welfare services, educational authorities and health authorities. There are 4 such places at the unit in Bergen with substantial economic funding and resources for this project. All in all 18 employees are meant to work with 4 inmates, of whom 9 are prison officers and 9 are social workers and teachers specially trained to work with minors. A psychologist, social counsellor and guidance counsellor are also part of the team working with these youths.

Over the period of a year some 10-14 young persons may spend some time at this unit. Prison is seen as a last resort.

What the youths who are in the Juvenile Unit tend to have in common is that they already have a criminal record and may have committed crimes several or many times before. Many of them have been in contact with the social services for a long time. What tends to differ is especially their experience with regard to health and education.

The aims of the Juvenile Unit are to protect society and uphold the necessary levels of safety, employees should be positive role models, make useful observations for psychologists and identify genuine motivational factors that can create and develop change in the youths' behaviour. The persons who are employed at the unit work in teams, they establish what the present situation is for the inmates and develop plans with regard to e.g. drugs, health, economy, family, social network, education, where to live after release etc. It is extremely important to create positive relations, give constructive feedback on good behaviour and motivate the youths for lasting change.

Moreover, the people employed at the unit continuously try to consider alternative ways for the youths to serve their sentences, to work for transfer to other institutions or release from the unit and prepare the young persons in question for their future life on their own. Supervision and guidance from staff members, consultations with the psychologist, caring for and seeing the needs of the youngsters etc. are important elements to help them and reduce the risk of recidivism.

### **Evening: dinner at Øvre-Eide farm**

Arild Nydegger Øvre-Eide is the owner of this farm. He is also a chef and teaches restaurant and food processing subjects at two of our departments in prison education.

The farm dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the main building is used for many different types of events, such as birthday parties, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, dinners for firms and tourists etc. It has also become a tradition for students and teachers at the school on Ulvsnesøy open prison (the island) to mark the end of the school year in this building. We all take the funicular in Bergen to Mount Fløyen and walk from there to the farm, which is a nice 90 minutes' hike. The high point of this day is a very good meal, speeches and the students receiving their diplomas in this building.

At many of the above-mentioned events our students get useful practice as part of their education to become chefs. This was also the case on this occasion with several of our students preparing and presenting to us the meal we as *Free-It* participants were served.

Dessert and cakes were served in the barn building after a lovely concert held by a choir called "Bekkalokket." This Norwegian word means "manhole cover" in English, but the term is a local expression from Bergen. The choir itself is organised and led by people working at *Kalfarhuset* ("the house at Kalfaret", the part of Bergen where it is situated), which is an NGO connected to the Church of Norway. It is an organisation that does very important social work for inmates, ex-convicts and their families, relatives, friends, relations etc. – as this choir is an example of. Anybody with a natural connection to *Kalfarhuset* and their work can be a member of the choir.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> DAY 18 JUNE 2014

### Wednesday morning – visit to Ulvsnesøy open prison

Our group travelled by bus and boat to the island. There was a guided tour around the island which gave the *Free-It* participants an impression of the inmates' living quarters, school facilities, the farm, the main building etc.

Below is a presentation of the island made some time ago when we had a student-run confectionery business. It describes the island and illustrates possibilities we have at our school, e.g. for a student-run business, when certain criteria are met.

### Ulvsnesøy – an open prison near Bergen, western Norway

**Here is some information about the prison on the island of Ulvsnesøy and the school activities there.**

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#### Geography



Ulvsnesøy is a small island situated approximately twenty-five minutes by train from Bergen. Teachers, prison officers, other employees, inmates etc. are transported by boat between the island and the mainland. This transportation only takes five minutes.

Ulvsnesøy is a department of Bergen prison. The main prison is situated near Bergen, 38 kilometres away.

### **History/background:**

There has been a prison on Ulvsnesøy since 1982, and the school, which is a department of **Åsane upper secondary school** in Bergen, has been an integral part of its activities from the start. Previously, from late nineteenth century there was a school for maladjusted boys.

From its beginning in 1982 the prison has been run as an open prison. This means that the inmates are free to move about all around the island.

### **General information:**

The prison consists of different buildings. The key functions, with the administration etc., are in the main building and the female inmates live there. In addition there are five houses situated on the island. In each of these buildings four or five inmates live together with their individual room and a common kitchen and living room. It is their shared responsibility to keep house and deal with everyday tasks, problems and situations. The idea is that through these small communities the inmates will get training in social interaction similar to what is common in society as such.

Apart from these dwellings there is a farm on the island comprising a barn with sheep, pigs and hens, and a greenhouse. There are also some sheep of an old Scandinavian breed (wild sheep). They are outdoors all year round. Furthermore, you will find a building for carpentry activities and the music project and another one for mechanics.

On the island there is also a football pitch for the inmates.

### **Inmates**

At the open prison of Ulvsnesøy there can be at the most 31 inmates between 18 and approximately 60 years of age. Nine of the inmates are women. They are convicted of all types of criminal acts, but drugs offences are predominant.

### **School**

The school has its activities on the top floor of the main building. Most of the theoretical studies take place there. We teach the inmates subjects at upper secondary school level. Computer lessons are also very popular, and in addition we have classes for practical studies, i.e. vocational school, with one mechanics class and one restaurant and food processing class. Our students can be full-time students or part-time. Part-time students combine school with practical work. Both the school day and the workday start at 8.15 a.m. and end at 2.45 p.m.

### **Sweet and Delicious, our student-run confectionery business:**



This project is connected to our catering students and their activities. In 2003 we started producing cakes. Inmates and the staff found them very tasty. We realised there was a profitable market for commercial production. The money generated from production and sale allows us to take our students to activities off the island, e.g. to visit a museum, enjoy a meal at a restaurant, or to visit factories and production companies of interest for our students. We also generate money into renewing production equipment.



The philosophy behind the project is to link theoretical subjects to common everyday life situations, to make theoretical subjects more practically related. The students will more easily be able to understand and appreciate the value of theory when they see it applied to practical tasks.



Another aspect of the project is the integration of general theoretical subjects like mathematics, Norwegian, English and science. We hope that the experience of running a business will enable the

students to see the necessity of having some knowledge in these subjects and thereby make them more motivated. For example, you cannot run a business like this properly without being able to weigh and measure and make calculations of expenses, profit – that is, to make a budget etc.

Our general aim is to create a widening of the learning perspective.

### **Examples of non-formal activities on Ulvsnesøy (partly) in connection with school:**

- Yearly mountain trip to the Hardanger mountain plateau (with fishing, hiking, preparation of food by catering students)
- Excursions; visits to firms, expositions, cinema, theatre, fairs, museums etc.
- Music projects, drama projects, creative writing courses
- Seminars, courses linked to various school subjects
- Mountain walk on the last day of school
- Social gatherings at the end of school terms
- Student-run business; (producing cakes and cookies, e.g. almond-sticks dipped in chocolate,) the profit of which is partly spent on various activities for the students. A by-product of this is that foreign students get introduced to aspects of Norwegian culture related to food, traditions etc.

### **Examples of other non-formal activities**

- Autumn mountain walk
- Skiing trip
- Gathering of sheep from mountain pastures
- Sports activities such as football, table tennis, swimming, cycling
- Fishing
- Dog training
- Rafting
- Concerts
- Social visits to churches/institutions
- Christmas celebration
- Work outside the island

### **Free-lt meeting on the island**

With regard to the theme of our meeting, *How to promote prisoners' employment in cooperation with local entrepreneurs*, it is clear that the guidance counsellors and their and vocational teachers' connections and networks with employers and the labour market, as well as good cooperation with the prison, are factors of ultimate importance.

During our meeting we also had a discussion with regard to the aims of the project and reports, such as the one we all were to submit to our National Agencies after the first year of the project.

Even though the aims of our project are defined in the application and the content of the halfway report to our National Agencies is described in the points in the report form, it appears that we still sometimes see or interpret our project and report forms quite differently. This is almost unavoidable in a project with 10 different partner countries and 11 different partner organisations, which, in spite of our common project, may have rather different approaches and dissimilar tasks to deal with in our professional contexts.

For example, to one or more organisations this project is in itself part of its work base (with tasks and funding included), while it to other organisations is something that comes in addition to the regular work we do. It goes without saying that to the latter group *the idea of keeping things simple when possible is very important*, or else the workload might become unreasonable.

As for the report to our National Agencies, it is to some of the partners in the *Free-It project* natural to interpret a word such as “*briefly*” completely literally. When it says **briefly** in the form, that is what it means, and a very long submission in such a context seems strange. In other partner countries it appears that “the more the better” is a type of unwritten rule, and consequently we do have differences in our approaches that may lead to complications.

Without drawing any hasty conclusions, there seems to be a “north/south” divide among the project partner countries in this matter, something that may well have to do with cultural differences. Such differences can be both challenging and rewarding.

Below, we include the list of future action to be performed after the meeting with future tasks etc. summed up by Laura (Consulmarc Sviluppo):

WHAT	WHO	BY
Send the <b>questionnaire</b> for meeting evaluation to all partners, asking them to fill it in	Consulmarc Sviluppo	23/06/2014
<b>Return the evaluation questionnaire</b> to Consulmarc sviluppo, duly filled in	All Partners	03/07/2014
Prepare a <b>short report</b> of the meeting held in Bergen and send it to all partners, so that they can complete the project intermediate report	Åsane school of secondary education	23/06/2014
Send the project intermediate report to each national agency ( <b>EACH PARTNER HAS TO CHECK SENDING PROCEDURES AND RELATED FORMAL REQUIREMENTS DIRECTLY WITH ITS OWN NATIONAL AGENCY</b> )	All Partners	30/06/2014
Write the <b>detailed report</b> of the project meeting and send it to all project partners	Åsane school of secondary education	31/08/2014
Write the <b>3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the project newsletter</b> and send it to all partners	Åsane school of secondary education	31/08/2014
Prepare a <b>short report of the discussion held during the last part of the meeting</b> , on the activities of Åsane school of secondary education to contribute to the promotion of inmates employment after release. The report will identify which skills, knowledge and attitude prison trainers would need to develop in this area, and these information will be used to progress with the definition of the “Framework of Competencies” table	Consulmarc Sviluppo	31/08/2014
<b>Select one good practice</b> implemented by Åsane school of secondary education to contribute to the promotion of inmates employment after release and describe it using the <b>standard table describing best practices</b> (the same which was used in past meetings). The description will identify which skills, knowledge and attitude prison trainers would need to develop to contribute to the promotion of inmates employment, and the information will be used to progress with the definition of the “Framework of Competencies”	Åsane school of secondary education	31/08/2014

### **After lunch – concert in town at Café Magdalena**

When we returned to Bergen we visited *Café Magdalena*, another cooperating partner of our school, where there was a concert with *the Container Blues Band*, organised by our school and *the Music Project*. This café is run by the Norwegian Church's city mission branch. It serves good food and non-alcoholic drinks at inexpensive prices, and is a place for everybody, not least people with various problems that may lead to marginalisation, e.g. related to drugs, unemployment, health, social welfare etc. Magdalena is a co-operating partner of ours where 4 or 5 such concerts are staged annually.

Our *Music Project's* activities, with practice, rehearsals and concerts etc., involve both present and previous inmates. Some of these activities take place in the afternoons and evenings outside the prison in a cultural centre in Bergen. We find that such (informal and non-formal) activities are of extremely high importance concerning social skills and networks for people with previous records in order to prevent recidivism. Social inclusion outside work is essential (though sometimes ignored) also where employment is provided. Some people are unable to stay in a job because of a lack of social network and meaningful activities in their spare time.

Music is, as many are aware of, extremely important to a lot of people, not least when going through difficult periods in life. Many of the individuals we work with find that it can contribute positively in order to deal with troublesome issues in life. We see that the music project and playing in a band is something participants benefit from not only from a strictly musical point of view with regard to playing an instrument, singing and so on. It also gives them useful practice concerning teamwork, learning to cooperate with others, to work towards common goals etc., which are personal and social skills that are extremely useful in life in general. Acquiring such skills is an important part in the jigsaw that contributes to reintegration and reduced recidivism.

### **Evening: dinner at Hanne på Høyden**

In the evening we had dinner at the restaurant *Hanne på Høyden*. *Hanne Frosta* is a wonderful example of an employer who really cares and our school and the prison have excellent cooperation with her.

The restaurant *Hanne på Høyden* – literally meaning “Hanne on the height/top of the hill” – is run on the principle that food should be made from local and organic products.

Hanne Frosta has won several prizes as a chef and she has presented food on TV in the series *Smaken av Norge*, i.e. “The taste of Norway”.

As a chef she is strongly involved with work promoting employment for inmates and ex-convicts after the end of their sentence. She is a mentor in connection with student-run businesses and often she has/had some of our students as apprentices and, later, employed at her restaurant. – She is, in short, a great example of the sort of cooperating partner we at our school would always be happy to work with.