



European Prison Education Association

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## September Newsletter



**Student's Work | Portlaoise Prison Education Centre  
Portlaoise, Ireland**

### **EPEA newsletter:**

In England the leaves are turning red, orange and brown. Autumn is here and that means two important events are round the corner: International Day of Education in Prison (13 October) and the EPEA conference in Vienna (16-19 November). Please read some details on these two items below.

## **EPEA Conference in Vienna**

We look forward to seeing many of you at the EPEA conference being held in Vienna. You can register and find out more [here](#). If you have any questions about the conference please contact Sandra Pillis [here](#).

## **VACANT POSITION - EPEA Secretary:**

Would you like a role in the EPEA and to attend the conference for free?

THE EPEA Steering Committee is currently looking for someone who can replace the current secretary who has asked to leave office before the next elections (Spring 2018). If you are interested, this is a good chance to get an insight into the EPEA and get the possibility to travel internationally to attend the EPEA conference and EPEA steering committee meetings. If you are interested, please [contact us](#) as soon as possible. Please read about the tasks of the Secretary [here](#).



**Nina Champion**

**EPEA WesternRegional Representative**  
[west@epea.org](mailto:west@epea.org)

Conference 2017





## Vienna Conference Update

While the conference planning is still ongoing, we are pleased to share with you the latest version of the conference [programme](#). The final programme will be confirmed soon.

Registration is progressing well but if you haven't yet registered, please make sure to do so. It promises to be an interesting event. Please keep an eye on our conference website for more details!

### **For the moment, please note the following:**

- We have arranged a Hotel deal at Flemings for conference delegates
- Alternative accommodation is also provided [here](#) and on our conference website (see below)
- Spouses are welcome. There is no specific programme provided, but list of events and recommendations
- If delegates wish to present their activities in the form of a poster presentation in the conference lobby, please let us know!
- We have options to visit 1 of 4 different prisons or visit a workshop for ex-prisoners - but there are limited numbers (25 per prison, 20 for the workshop) - so please do register your interest soon.
- A recurring theme throughout this conference is the role of universities and their partnership with prisons: at the end of the conference, we will be forming an EPEA Special Interest Group on University-Prison Partnerships, to establish a work programme to explore, promote and develop this aspect of prison education. Please keep an eye on our conference website and future newsletters for updates on this SIG.

[Conference Website →](#)

## International Day of Education in Prison

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION IN PRISON  
OCTOBER 13th**



### **IDEP 2017 Application Form**

**Deadline nominations: 1st Nov. 2017**

**EPEA calls for applications IDEP publicity-award 2017**

As from 2016 EPEA will acknowledge an award to the person/ organisation/ institution that has done a remarkable effort to promote IDEP (**the International day of Education in Prison**) which is celebrated as you will know on the 13th October. The winner will this year be announced during our Vienna Training Conference.

The award consists of free participation of our biennial International Conference for one person representing the winning organisation and of course publicity on our EPEA website. Winners will be invited for the first EPEA-Conference after the year they participated in the IDEP Award.

*In this year's contest (2017) the winner will win free participation to our 2019 Training Conference.*

#### **Criteria for participation:**

- the initiative, event or project has clear reference to IDEP
- the initiative, event or project has clear reference to Prison Education
- The descriptions makes clear how this event contributed to more awareness of IDEP in relative targetgroup.
- The application comprises proof of publication
- The application comprises proof of realisation of event.

#### **Procedure:**

- Application need to be received before 1 November 2017
- Notification of acceptance will be send within the week of reception by EPEA
- Announcement of winner will be announced by 13th November 2017 on IDEP webpage & EPEA website.
- Winner will receive invitation for next EPEA Conference
- Material send by winner will be used for publication purposes on EPEA website/ newsletter

For questions about procedure, please send your email to our secretary [here](#).

**Please download the application form by clicking below.**

[Application Form →](#)

**Western Region Updates**



#### **UK:**

#### **Prisoner Learning Alliance Conference and Awards presented by former prison officer X-Factor winner!**

In England we have just had our Prisoner Learning Alliance Conference and awards. We received over 400 nominations from prisoners for outstanding teachers, officers and peer mentors. We had a former prison officer who won popular TV singing contest X-factor to present the awards; Sam Bailey. For more details of the awards see [here](#).

The conference also heard from two prison Governors, as Governors will take control of prison education budgets in England and Wales next summer to commission education in their prisons. There is also a new definition of prison education adopted by the Ministry of Justice based on outcomes including employability, wellbeing and social capital. Click [here](#) for more details.

#### **Informal Learning Resources now available**

For the past two years New College Lanarkshire in Scotland has worked in collaboration with European colleagues from six partner countries to undertake research into the impact of validation of informal and non-formal learning within European prisons. Partners come from a range of 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations, VET providers, prison associations and private sector providers.

The Validation and Motivation for Informal and Non-formal Learning in Prisons (VALMOPRIS) was funded under the Erasmus+ programme for Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education. This research involved the delivery of thirty wide-ranging and innovative learning pilots in a range of prisons and criminal justice settings across Europe.

In line with our project results, research findings and policy recommendations have now been published along with a range of

resources specifically designed to support the development of informal and non-formal learning validation in prison learning contexts.

Our hope is that prison learners and all stakeholders can benefit from our experiences and learning; and that outputs will contribute towards rehabilitation and desistance, by supporting lifelong learning. For more information please visit the VALMOPRIS project [website](#).

**Belgium:**

In Belgium the end of the Foriner project was marked by an event at Universitie Libre Brussels and has been successful in securing further Erasmus funding to lead an event together with England, Italy, Croatia and the Netherlands looking at prisoner participation.

Another successful project involving Belgium and the UK is the SkillHUBS project Project partners with EPEA as an associated partner. Project participants include CIK Trebnje (coordinator) (Slovenia), Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Slovenia), European Association for the Education of Adults (Belgium), Stichting Foundation ICPA Office in Europe (the Netherlands), National Learning and Work Institute (UK), University of Malta (Malta) and The Baia Mare Penitentiary (Romania).

**Looking for partners: European Training Network about education and learning in prisons throughout Europe**

During the EPEA training conference in Vienna, there is a timeslot during which interested people can discuss ‘strategic alliances in research and projects’ (Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of November, between 12 and 15h45). We invite you to participate in this roundtable discussion.

Prof. Liesbeth De Donder en Dr. Dorien Brosens of the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (Belgium) already have an idea that can be discussed during this roundtable. They want to set up a European Training Network (ETN) about education and learning in prisons throughout Europe. ETN is a funding scheme in the Marie-Curie actions under Horizon 2020, and aims to set up a joint research and training programme at doctoral level. Not only universities can become part of this network, also non-governmental organisations/organisations outside academia. Each participatory country can get funding for 2 PhD students. The call for ETN’s will be published in one of the upcoming weeks. The deadline for submission is 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2018.

In Ireland the IPEA are busy planning for the annual conference. This will take place in early 2018 - keep an eye on our IPEA [website](#) for updates & further details. Some of the Irish members have been busy with activities - which you can read about below.

## Netherlands

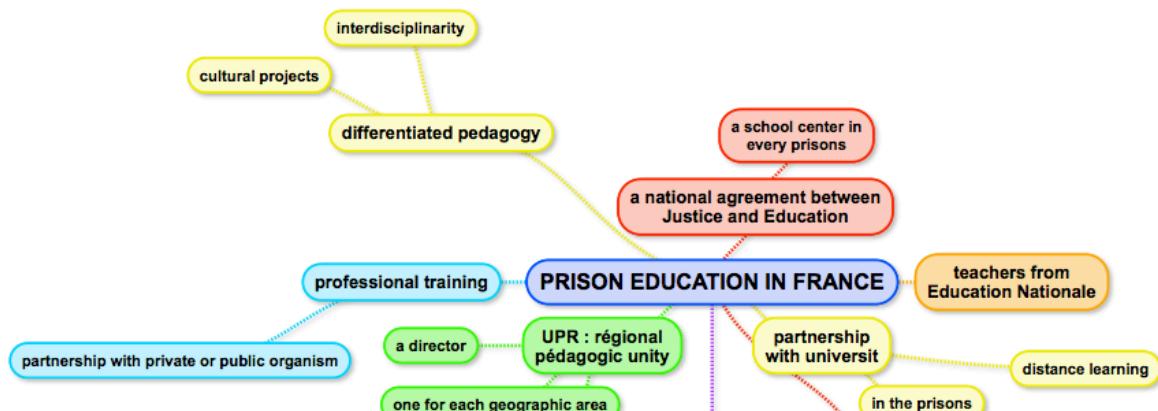
### Changing landscapes

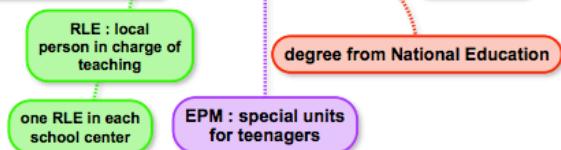
Exciting times for the Dutch branch of EPEA-NL as we have received funding for our Changing Landscapes plan from the Erasmus + program of the European Union, focusing on adult education. Changing landscapes aims at forming an alliance with other Dutch organizations working on education for (ex-) prisoners in some way to write a plan together about what prison education should look like in the (near) future. With a consortium of eight organizations we will start this plan in 2017 and finish in 2019. In the coming years the aim of the consortium is that all Dutch organizations working in the field of prison education will join and support this plan Changing landscapes. With this plan written by many organizations we have a stronger basis to talk to Dutch politicians about the necessity of prison education and hopefully create a sustainable impact on the future of prison education.

For more information [contact](#) Veronique Aicha Achoui, Chair EPEA-NL.

## France

The French branch have been busy organising themselves - see an outline of their prison education structure. They look forward to more activities in 2018!





# PUT THE **PLUS** INTO ERASMUS+

## INCLUDE ADULT EDUCATION!

Erasmus+ is an outstanding and crucial programme for adult learners. It is not only a programme for students, but also apprentices, teachers, trainers and organisations. It is not only for universities, but also VET, schools and adult education.

One in five adults in the EU has low literacy and numeracy skills (OECD 2013). Many more cannot use digital tools confidently in everyday life. Without these skills, individuals are at greater risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Good adult education strategies will contribute to the competitiveness of the European market, but also social cohesion and inclusion as well as active citizenship and democracy for their citizens and residents, in addition to many other benefits such as health, well-being and personal development.

For full details on how you can support adult education, click

[here](#) to download the full leaflet from the EAEA.





## Irish Cancer Society Fundraiser

The staff and inmates of Cloverhill Prison combined to raise €600 for the Irish Cancer Society on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2017. Cancer is something that affects everyone, and this message promoted togetherness for this project.

A 5km run was undertaken by 70 prisoners on the day. The inmates ran their distance in the yards, with one group having to complete 76 laps of their recreation space. The run was supervised by the PE teacher and gym staff. The staff also took part in a 5km route at lunch time. Approx 30 staff got involved, all wearing the bright yellow t-shirts displaying the Irish Cancer Society logo.

Sponsorship was collected on the prison landings by dedicated inmates, encouraging fellow inmates to donate €1 or €2. The staff collection was made just before the 5km run. One inmate encouraged his family to get involved on the outside, raising €150 for the charity.

In July, Emma Hayden from the Irish Cancer Society was invited into the prison school to meet with several of the participants and staff who had taken part. She explained to us where the money goes, and the services the charity provide. Governor McCormack presented her with a cheque for €600.

[Learn More →](#)





## A Teachers Perspective

### **Education and Rehabilitation through Horticulture**

The inmates get daily temporary release every morning – Monday to Friday at eight O’Clock and make their own way to our horticultural site some forty minutes’ walk away. They chat while putting on their work-boots as they get ready to begin their day’s work on site. There’s always work to be done; work of all sort, some manual, some delicate but tedious, sometimes working in a poly-tunnel, sometimes working outdoors or in a potting shed – the variety is endless. Horticulture has the great advantage that it offers a great variety of chores to suite all workers.

We work as a team. Before we commence work, we discuss what has to be done, then we prioritise what’s most urgent, divide ourselves into groups and off we go. We take designated breaks and stick fairly rigidly to them and everyone is happy – most of the time.

In inclement weather, we do classroom work. This is mainly the theory of our practical work to date. It all makes sense. We finish every day with a little more knowledge than we had when we started, often with tired bodies and most importantly with a sense of achievement.

These are trusted inmates who are given great freedom – a freedom they always respect as they make their way back to prison at the end of their day. They learn so much; caring for plants, physical work, school work, social skills, fairness, been part of a team. Rehabilitation!

Surely, this is what the end result should be, we have made better citizens of these bunch of guys. Now, let me correct myself as it would be more correct to say that “These guys have made better citizens of themselves” and this I believe is most likely to be the case when inmates are exposed to similar positive experiences.

Mr. Brendan O'Hara,  
Teacher of Horticulture

[Learn More →](#)



## skillHUBS Project

**ERASMUS+ KA3 Support for Policy Reform: Forward looking  
cooperation projects**

**Transnational prison up-skilling guidance and training model -  
»skillHUBS«**

**Project duration:** 01/01/2018 – 30/06/2020

### **Project description:**

Amongst the prison population, levels of education tend to be low, with many prisoners lacking basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. Some countries report as high as 50% of prisoners having literacy levels of level 1 in the National Qualifications Framework (which is the lowest literacy level) or below. At the same time, many prisoners have negative previous experiences of education and are likely to have dropped out of school early.

Poor level of basic and transversal skills puts offenders into unfavorable position after end of their sentence. Being ex-offenders

and being low-skilled makes them doubly marginalized and thus they face unemployment and exclusion from society on a daily basis.

To overcome this issue we are going to develop up-skilling training and counselling model "skillHUBS" for skills assessment, recognition and development. "skillHUBS" methodologies, tools and methods are going to be adapted to specific needs of prison population.

Moreover we will enhance prison counsellors'/mentors' capacity to for skills assessment, recognition, validation and development of inmates with innovative tools and methods, and up-skill and re-skill inmates with selected basic (literacy, numeracy and ICT skills) and transversal skills (Complex problem solving, Critical thinking and Creativity) needed for contemporary and future.

"skillHUBS" model will base on a counselling centres model and will be intended for assessment and acquisition of basic and transversal skills with the method of individualized and tailor-made, problem-oriented learning cases with an aim to improve inmates' integration into education system, labour market and society after end of their sentence.

The impact will be achieved by elaboration of recommendations that will provide guidelines for introduction of the "skillHUBS" model into national prison education systems and with self-sustainable online mentor network.

#### **Project partners:**

- CIK Trebnje (coordinator) (Slovenia)
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Slovenia)
- European Association for the Education of Adults (Belgium)
- Stichting Foundation ICPA Office in Europe (the Netherlands)
  - National Learning and Work Institute (UK)
  - University of Malta (Malta)
- The Baia Mare Penitentiary (Romania)

#### **Associated partners:**

- European Prison Education Association
- Creative Corrections Europe
- Department of Penitentiary Institutions of the Republic of Moldova

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