



THE COUNTY GOVERNOR OF HORDALAND

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RESEARCH-BASED EVALUATION  
OF EDUCATION IN  
NORWEGIAN PRISONS

# RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM THE GROUP NOMINATED TO MONITOR THE EVALUATION  
OF EDUCATION IN NORWEGIAN PRISONS



# Foreword

Researchers completed their extensive, research-based evaluation of prison education in the autumn of 2003. The Norwegian Parliament had, in the autumn of 1998, unanimously requested such an evaluation. The purpose was to assess the role of education in prison and to propose measures for strengthening the area.

The monitoring Group nominated for the purpose has closely followed the work of the research bodies for three years, participating in annual meetings and providing advice and feedback on the research reports that have been produced. The monitoring Group here present a summary of the most important conclusions in the reports, and make their own proposals for measures to develop and improve education within the prison system.

The County Governor of Hordaland urges schools, the prison service, the different public bodies involved and other interested parties to consider the conclusions and proposed measures presented in this report.

The County Governor of Hordaland thanks the monitoring Group for their excellent cooperation and constructive contribution to the development of work in this important field, for the benefit of both prisoners and society.

Bergen, March 2004

Kjellbjørg Lunde  
Director of Education

# **Research-Based Evaluation of Education in Norwegian Prisons**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**from  
the Group nominated to monitor the  
evaluation of education in Norwegian  
prisons**

**County Governor of Hordaland, Department of Education**

**March 2004**

# Introduction

The Group monitoring the project “The Evaluation of Education in Norwegian Prisons” was nominated by the then National Education Office in Hordaland in the autumn of 1999. The Group’s tasks were essentially threefold. First, it was active in the initial phase and formulated the terms of the assignment to the research institutions. Secondly, it took part in discussions with the research institutions on specific tasks and the implementation of the evaluation. Thirdly, the Group commented on the draft reports from the evaluation teams and recommended measures to the responsible bodies, based on the conclusions in the research reports.

All the reports in the research project, seven in all, have been sent to school authorities, prison authorities, universities and university colleges, and other relevant organizations. In November 2003 a conference marking the conclusion of the research project was held, to which representatives from central government, education authorities, prison services, employment services and other organizations were invited, and where the main conclusions were presented and commented upon.

The recommended measures presented here by the monitoring Group are based on the research reports and the discussion of these reports at the final conference.

Bergen, March 2004

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# 1 Background to the research-based evaluation

During its consideration of the Budget in the autumn of 1997, the Committee for Education, Research and Church Affairs proposed that the Government should initiate a process of research-based evaluation of prison education:

*“ ... With reference to Official Norwegian Report 1992:19 ‘Education in Norwegian Prisons – competence and life skills’, the Committee calls for the Government to initiate a research-based assessment of the role of prison education and the measures that can be introduced to stimulate this area of the prison service.” (Budget Proposal S. No. 12 – 1997-98, p.33)*

Parliament passed the following motion, under its consideration of the Budget for 1998:

*“Parliament calls upon the Government to initiate a research-based assessment of education in prison.” (Motion X)*

The Education Committee in Parliament specified that this research-based assessment also should examine the role of prison education, and what measures might stimulate this area of the prison service. The assessment should cover three areas/levels: a) the systemic level; b) the pedagogical framework; and c) the individual level.

The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs and the National Education Office in Hordaland (from 1 January 2003 the County Governor of Hordaland) assigned funds to four research institutions for the task of implementing a research-based assessment of prison education. The work started in 2000 and was concluded in the autumn of 2003.

The County Governor of Hordaland has had administrative responsibility for the implementation of the assessment project. The monitoring Group for the assessment of prison education advised the County Governor and had close contact with the research institutions, partly by means of annual meetings.

The Ministry is responsible for regulating prison education. Since 1993 national responsibility for prison education in Norway has been delegated to the County Governor of Hordaland. The office of the County Governor administers the financial support process, and maintains supervision and control of the process. In addition, the office of the County Governor is responsible for monitoring research and development projects and for international work.

## 2 The Research Institutions

Four research institutions at three Norwegian universities conducted the assessments:

- The Department of Education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim (NTNU) has had professional and administrative responsibility for the project “*Assessment of prison education. Education and training of short-term employees.*” The project leader was Professor Einar M. Skaalvik, Department of Education, NTNU.
- The Department of Criminology at the University of Oslo has had professional and administrative responsibility for the projects “*Assessment of prison education for female prisoners*” and “*Assessment of prison education for immigrants*”. The project leader was Professor Hedda Giertsen, Department of Criminology and the Sociology of Law, University of Oslo.
- The Department of Education at the University of Bergen has had professional and administrative responsibility for the project “*Assessment of prison education – systemic considerations*”. The project leader was Associate Professor Svein Rognaldsen, Department of Education, University of Bergen.
- The Rokkan Centre (formerly SEFOS) at the University of Bergen has had professional and administrative responsibility for the project “*Education and training in the modern prison: development or discipline*”. The project leader was Research Fellow Bodil Ravneberg, Rokkan Centre, University of Bergen.

### 3 Monitoring Group

The following were members of the monitoring Group advising the County Governor of Hordaland (responsible for the assessment project):

Ragnhild Engeness, Director

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Odd Larsen, Senior Adviser

Ministry of Education and Research, Oslo (until May 2002), replaced by

Vibeke Thue, Assistant Director

Norwegian Board of Education, Oslo



## 4 The Reports

All the research reports have been published in Norwegian in the series “Assessment of Prison Education”. They can be ordered from the County Governor of Hordaland.

1. Viljugrein, Tone (2002): *Learning, language and prison. Teaching male minority-language prisoners in four Norwegian prisons*. Report no. 1/02. Department of Criminology and the Sociology of Law, University of Oslo. National Education Office in Hordaland.
2. Skaalvik, Einar M.; Finbak, Liv; Pettersen, Tone (2002): *Background and Aims of Prison Education*. Section of report. Report no. 2/02. NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) and VOX (National Adult Learning Institute). National Education Office in Hordaland.
3. Sandvik, Anne Berit (2003): *What's right for women? Education of female prisoners in four Norwegian prisons*. Report no. 1/03. Department of Criminology and the Sociology of Law, University of Oslo. The County Governor of Hordaland.
4. Rognaldsen, Svein (2003): *Assessment of prison education with the emphasis on the systemic level and the full range of educational activities in the prison service*. Report no 2/03. Department of Education, University of Bergen. The County Governor of Hordaland.
5. Skaalvik, Einar M.; Finbak, Liv; Pettersen, Tone (2003): *Education in prison – on an even keel?* Report no. 3/03. NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) and VOX (National Adult Learning Institute). The County Governor of Hordaland.
6. Pettersen, Tone; Skaalvik, Einar M.; Finbak, Liv (2003): *Release to what? Students' preparation for release and the period after the sentence has been served*. Report no. 4/03. NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) and VOX (National Adult Learning Institute). The County Governor of Hordaland.

7. Ravneberg, Bodil (2003): *Teaching and training in the modern prison. Educational or disciplinary? An investigation of prison teaching in Bergen and Oslo prisons*. Report no. 5/03. Rokkan Centre, University of Bergen. The County Governor of Hordaland.

## 5 Legal aspects

The rights of prisoners to education are regulated by international agreements and recommendations. Countries that are member of the UN and the Council of Europe have committed themselves to implementing the agreements and recommendations to which they have given their assent. The Nordic countries have, for example, incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into their legal systems.

### **The rights of prisoners to teaching and training**

A fundamental principle of the Norwegian prison system is that prisoners should have the same access to social services as other citizens. From this it follows that other public institutions than the prison service will supply these services. The import model, or administrative collaboration as it is sometimes called, is meant to lead to circumstances that are as normal and open as possible within a basically closed system. This is also a way of making other institutions aware of their responsibilities, by indicating that they too have an obligation to assist in the return of prisoners to the community.

The Education Act recognizes the right of all to basic schooling, and all who have completed compulsory school have a right to three years of upper secondary education. In addition, all adults born before 01.01.78 have a right to upper secondary education. As a consequence of changes in the Act with effect from 01.08.02, adults also have the right to supplementary basic schooling and special education. These legal changes are particularly important for education within the prison system. The majority of prisoners are between 21 and 40 years of age, and a much larger proportion of this group have failed to complete upper secondary education than in the population as a whole.

In the recent Act relating to the execution of sentences (in force from 01.03.02), the civil rights of prisoners are clarified (§2). This is made clear in the preamble to the Act, where it is stated that those who are sentenced or remanded in custody have the same right to services and assistance and the same duties and responsibilities as others in society. The prison service is therefore enjoined to ensure, as far as possible, that other participating bodies and institutions provide the services that they are legally obliged to offer to prisoners who are sentenced or remanded in custody (§4).

## **The relation between national and international legislation and recommendations**

The Norwegian body of law is influenced by international conventions and recommendations. All the Nordic countries have, for example, incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into their legislation. The UN has approved conventions to which member states have given their assent. The Council of Europe has approved a number of recommendations in a variety of areas which member states have committed themselves to.

*The European Convention on Human Rights* states in Article 2 that “No person shall be denied the right to education.”

*The UN Convention on Children’s Rights*. In keeping with the trend towards imprisoning more children and young people, the prison service must respect the rights of children in accordance with the UN Convention on Children’s Rights. Attention is particularly drawn to Article 28 on education and Article 37 on torture, the death penalty and imprisonment.

In *UNESCO’s Recommendations for adult education* from the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Adult Education (1985), the important “right to learn” was seen as a precondition for development as an individual and citizen.

*The Council of Europe* has approved a number of recommendations that are relevant for prison education. According to the European prison rules of 1987, a complete programme of education shall be arranged in each prison, to provide all prisoners with the opportunity to realize some, at least, of their individual needs and wishes. Prison administrations should pay particular attention to the education of young prisoners, in addition to foreign prisoners and prisoners with special cultural or ethnic needs. Special training programmes should be organized for prisoners with particular difficulties, for example with literacy or numeracy.

*The Council of Europe* has in addition approved 17 recommendations on Education in Prison (Recommendation no. R (89) 12, 1989) in which the perspective is placed, in part, on the goals of prison education, the place of education in the prison system, adult education methods, vocational training, creative and cultural activities and the relations between education outside and in prison. The first paragraph states: “All prisoners shall have access to

education, which is envisaged as consisting of classroom subjects, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sport, social education and library facilities.”

## 6 Research reports: findings and recommended measures

In this chapter we provide a digest of recommended measures from the different research reports. The selection has been made on the basis of discussions and reviews in the monitoring Group. A clearer picture of all the findings and recommended measures and their rationale can be had from the reports themselves.

### Teaching and training short-term prisoners

Skaalvik, Finbak and Pettersen (2002 and 2003): Reports “*Background and aims of prison education*”, “*Education in prison. On an even keel?*” and “*Release to what?*”

#### *General recommendations*

- The purpose of prison education must be clarified, together with the specific aims that should be given special emphasis.
- The education programme must be expanded and more subjects added, for example in the vocational area.
- More flexibility in the educational courses offered is needed.
- Teachers must to a greater extent be recruited in accordance with students’ needs.
- The different elements in education, such as subject teaching, the national programmes and sentence planning, must be better coordinated.
- Information about the educational courses offered must be better systematized, so that individual prisoners, from the start of a sentence, are informed of their rights and educational opportunities.
- Clearer criteria for admission to education must be drawn up.
- The work unit must be better exploited in educational activities.
- The content of education must be incorporated in future plans.
- The use of periods of liberty, combined with education outside the prison after an individual assessment of the students, must increase.

### *Follow-up after completion of sentence*

- More systematic work must be done in preparation for release. Prison education must be recognized as an important link in this work.
- Arrangements must be made for participation in a follow-up group (responsible group) giving assistance with school attendance, living conditions, and escape from drink and drug abuse. The supervision must reflect the degree of criminal involvement and substance abuse.
- More commitment and cooperation between the different public bodies and the measures they implement must be encouraged. Responsibility must clearly rest with one of them.

### *Organizational changes in prison education*

- The central management of prison education in the office of the County Governor of Hordaland should be strengthened.
- Regional education offices for prison education should be established. They should be under the authority of the central management, and have professional, economic and administrative responsibility for prison education in the individual region.
- The education unit in each prison should have a leader who has executive responsibility for all education in the prison and can maintain close contact with the prison administration, the teachers and the head of the regional education office.
- The arrangement whereby the education unit in each prison is organized as a division of the local upper secondary school must be terminated. Instead, agreements with schools at compulsory and upper secondary levels should cover examination procedures and the issue of certificates.

### *Organizational changes within the new structure*

- There must be a combination of permanently appointed teachers and teachers hired to perform limited tasks.
- More use of periods of liberty and training outside prison should be made, after individual assessment.
- Responsibility for national programmes must be transferred to the regional education divisions.
- Binding cooperation must be established between the prison and the education unit on plans both for the period of imprisonment and for the future.

- Binding cooperation must be built up between the work unit and the education unit in prison, with a view to making more systematic use of the work unit in education.\*

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\* See also “General recommendations” above



## The systemic level

Rognaldsen (2003): Report “*Assessment of prison education with the emphasis on the systemic level and the full range of educational activities in the prison service.*”

### *General recommendations*

- The tasks, aims, fundamental concepts and theoretical basis of prison education must be made clear and familiar to all who are employed in education and the prison service.
- It is necessary to clarify the meaning of a number of central concepts connected with prison education, including the following terms: prison education, rehabilitation, becoming qualified, treatment, adapted education and differentiation.
- A central, professionally competent body, e.g. a university, should assist in developing a new curriculum for prison education and provide a foundation for professional development within prison education.
- A basis must be established for activities contributing to prisoners taking responsibility, managing living tasks and developing personally.
- The different opportunities open to prisoners, particularly educational activities, work unit practice and national programmes must be better coordinated than now.
- Cooperation between public bodies in relation to prisoners must be improved, particularly in follow-up work after release. The prisoners’ needs must be the main focus of this work.
- The new prison regions should have responsibility for educational activities. Consideration should be given to cutting the formal links to the counties and schools outside the prison. Teachers’ professional links with the school system should nevertheless be maintained.
- The education department in the Office of the County Governor of Hordaland should be expanded and given a coordinating professional and economic function in relation to educational activities and the pedagogical development of teachers. This should be done in collaboration with a central professional organ, probably linked to a university, with responsibility for coordinating all the work on the constituent parts of the prison service.
- The competence of those responsible for leading the work on content and change in this area at the regional and local levels should be strengthened.
- Professional development and work for systematic change are necessary, with a basis in the existing prison and school culture, and a theoretical foundation close to the practical sphere.

## Training and teaching in the modern prison: educational or disciplinary?

Ravneberg (2003): Report “*Teaching and training in the modern prison. Educational or disciplinary?*”

### *General recommendations with a view to improving prisoners’ self-reliance*

- A more differentiated teaching programme and a wider range of subjects, with more emphasis on short courses leading to qualifications, and practical and aesthetic subjects.
- More cooperation is needed among the bodies involved in the prison service, e.g. between the education unit and the work unit. The education unit must participate in the development of future plans and cooperate systematically with the prison service before and after release.
- Courses on offer must meet the students’ needs better. This can be achieved through a greater degree of teacher rotation.
- Prisoners’ future must be safeguarded through educational and vocational advice and monitoring during imprisonment and after release.
- Private study must be made possible, through improved access to distance learning and better technical aids.
- The education unit and the work unit must cooperate in making available both vocational subjects and “new” subjects demanded by the labour market. The education unit must motivate and support students who wish to take examinations.
- The education unit must offer subjects which stimulate interest in further education, e.g. computing and a variety of practical and aesthetic subjects.

### *Improving self-reliance*

Ravneberg places the students in four categories of relevance for educational purposes:

- The bread-winner. Self-reliance here means safeguarding the future for oneself and one’s family. The aim is to be able to earn a living and support a family. Self-reliance for this group of students involves ensuring good contact with the family, securing an education leading to employment and not unemployment, and having confidence in and support and good advice from the teaching staff in the prison.

- The self-assured person. In this respect, self-reliance is about self-determined character development. Self-reliance for this group of students involves giving flexibility and choice. It involves the freedom to make untraditional decisions, and it also involves integrity and respect.
- The hopeful person. Here it is important not to be in despair when one's situation in life changes. Self-reliance therefore also involves self-motivation, where the individual manages to get up in the morning and go to school. The teachers must motivate the students to be persistent and not lose hope.
- The searching person. This aspect of self-reliance means activation here and now. To find ways of passing the time and build up a better self-image are also aspects of self-reliance. To get out of the passivity in prison, to give priority to treatment rather than school and to seek security are also actions that can increase the individual's capacity for self-reliance. And for these students too, the support and trust of teachers is decisive in building self-confidence and determination.

## **Minority-language prisoners**

Viljugrein (2002): Report "*Learning, language and prison. Teaching male minority-language prisoners in four Norwegian prisons*".

*Recommendations related to language teaching and the teaching of minority-language prisoners generally*

- Norwegian language teaching must be strengthened and adapted to the needs of the different groups. This can be achieved through better elementary courses in Norwegian, and by giving more weight to Norwegian as a second language in compulsory and upper secondary school.
- English classes for foreign prisoners must be boosted. English is useful both during imprisonment and after possible deportation or voluntary departure from Norway.
- The right to education must include all prisoners, so that foreign prisoners get the same opportunities as ethnic Norwegian and minority-language Norwegian prisoners.
- Better language teaching must be given to prisoners in isolation and remanded in custody.

### *General recommendation based on the study of minority-language prisoners*

- Prison reprimands must not disrupt study and training.
- Teaching interruptions must be reduced through increased cooperation between prison and the education unit.
- Raids and other forms of intrusive control should be carried out as seldom as possible in the education unit area, and during classes.
- Conditions must allow for the use of computers and the internet. “Walls” must be established to prevent prisoners from downloading files and using e-mail to establish and maintain contact with criminal networks.
- National programmes must be coordinated with the education unit’s courses. Minority-language students must be given the opportunity to take part in this range of programmes, even though their Norwegian is less fluent than that of ethnic Norwegian prisoners.
- The contact officer must work together with the education unit on planning the future.

## **Female Prisoners**

Sandvik (2003): Report *“What’s right for women? Education of female prisoners in four Norwegian prisons.”*

### *General recommendations for women*

- School subjects leading to qualifications must be strengthened.
- More opportunity to take vocational subjects must be given.
- Education unit, kitchen and workshop must cooperate in finding more practice places.
- Courses in computing and ICT must be improved.
- There must be more courses in music, drama, and arts and crafts.
- Plant nurseries and animal husbandry should be included in courses on offer.
- Life skills courses to meet the needs of different groups of women must be strengthened.
- Security routines must be improved, so that women can work in workshops in line with men.
- All should be given the chance of full day employment.
- Women must not be deprived of educational opportunities when they serve their sentences with men.

- Considerable emphasis should be placed on organizing classes and other types of training in the education unit, also during school holidays outside the prison. A change of teachers' holiday routines and/or hiring substitute teachers would make this possible.
- Better monitoring of educational opportunities for prisoners in isolation or remanded in custody should be ensured.
- Clear procedures and directions concerning the monitoring of prisoners after release should be drawn up.
- More use should be made of open prison and of serving the sentence outside prison. This can help women's situation in prison and make it easier to continue education after release.
- Outside services, such as employment services, must be better exploited.

## 7 Measures recommended by the monitoring Group

The starting-point for the research project was Parliament's call for a research-based assessment of the role of prison education and of the measures that could make prison education more effective. Based on the findings and concrete suggestions given in the research reports, the monitoring Group recommends measures that should be adopted to realize the key intentions of Parliament.

### General measures

In this area the monitoring Group recommends a greater number of more varied educational courses, and better information about the courses available. Cooperation between the education unit and the work unit must be given the highest priority, with a view to making more courses available. Cooperation among the different public bodies must be developed and made more efficient. The recommendations are given in more detail below:

#### *Development of educational courses*

- The educational content must be broadened and made more diverse (with e.g. more vocational courses, more emphasis on craft subjects, more practical and aesthetic subjects, short courses leading to approved qualifications, ICT courses, short courses for dyslectics, courses preparing for driving licenses etc.).
- It must be made possible to follow self-study courses through an emphasis on distance education and better technical aids.
- ICT must be a natural part of all education and satisfactory security routines must be established. The learning platform must be utilized, both as an administrative and a pedagogical tool and as a network linking schools.
- Advice on educational and vocational possibilities must be strengthened. Information about the educational alternatives must be more systematic. Advisory consultations should be held with all prisoners. The education unit must interview the prisoner at the time of admission, whenever changes take place in the conditions of imprisonment, and regularly, every third month, during the educational process.
- Better collaboration between the education and work units can lead to a greater number of more varied courses. The work unit can in this way lead more often to the award of

qualifications. The education and work units must work together in offering vocational subjects and “new” subjects demanded by the labour market.

- Clearer criteria must be devised for the admission of students to education unit courses.

#### *The role of the teacher*

- Professional development and processes of systematic change are needed.
- Teachers must have a better opportunity to attend in-service and further training courses.
- The education offered in the prison service must to a greater extent employ the methods of adult education, taking account of the background and needs of the prisoners.

### **Organizational measures**

The monitoring Group draws attention to the lack of clarity in the statement of aims in prison education. Schools with administrative responsibility have unacceptably poor contact with education units in prison, and the central administration of prison education needs to be strengthened. Against this background, the Group recommends the following measures:

- The purpose of prison education must be made clear to all parties at the different levels of education and the prison service. Aims, tasks, fundamental concepts and the theoretical basis must be clarified and made known to all.
- The central administration of prison education in the Office of the County Governor of Hordaland must be strengthened and given a coordinating professional and economic function for educational operations and pedagogical development work aimed at teachers. This will increase the capacity to provide assistance at the regional level.
- Education within the prison service should adopt a pattern where permanent teachers are employed, with financial resources to hire other teachers as the need arises. The funding of education unit management should be improved. Education units should develop more contact with schools. In addition, work on educational questions at the regional level should be strengthened. The regional authority must consolidate work in this area.
- An alternative model should be piloted in some regions, with responsibility for education delegated to regional divisions where the staff are employed by the regional education office.
- Education units must arrange their teachers’ working hours and holiday entitlement in ways that meet the needs of the students and the institution. This means that education units cannot follow the normal academic year.

## **Cooperation on study programmes and among different professions**

The research reports indicate that cooperation in the provision of the different courses and cooperation among the distinct professional groups is poorly maintained. The monitoring Group urges a clearer specification of responsibility and better cooperative practices.

- The different educational activities, such as teaching, national programmes and work experience must be better coordinated.
- Binding cooperation between the prison and the education unit must be established, particularly by making the work unit part of the path to approved qualifications.
- The education unit should have a leader with day-to-day responsibility for all education in the prison. The leader should have close contact with the prison service administration, the teachers and regional office.
- Binding cooperation should be established between the prison service, the education unit and the employment service in work on future plans, individual study plans and rehabilitation plans.

## **Measures directed towards female prisoners**

The education of women prisoners has been criticized for several years for paying inadequate attention to the educational needs of this group. The monitoring Group therefore propose measures to strengthen this area.

- More subjects leading to qualifications, particularly vocational, must be offered.
- The educational range on offer to female prisoners must be expanded, with more courses in music, dance and drama, and arts and crafts. The existing course on managing living tasks "*Foodstuffs – Environment – Community*" should also be adapted for female prisoners.
- ICT-instruction must be expanded, and more courses offered, including access to the internet. ICT skills must be a tool which students take back to the community when their sentence has been served.
- Cooperation between the education unit and the work unit, particularly the kitchen, must be developed and practice places established.



## **Measures directed towards minority-language prisoners**

Although the right to education for all is recognized both in international conventions and recommendations and in Norwegian law, education courses for minority-language prisoners have for many years been characterized by mixed practice and a lack of central guidance. The monitoring Group makes the following recommendations in this area:

- The right to education must be made clear. The Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Justice must come to agreement about who should do what in this area.
- Norwegian language teaching must be given more emphasis and adapted to the needs of different groups. This means better elementary courses in Norwegian, and improving Norwegian as a second language at the compulsory and upper secondary level.
- English teaching for foreign prisoners must be strengthened; English is useful during the term of imprisonment and after possible deportation.
- Minority language prisoners must be given the opportunity to take part in the national education programmes, even although their Norwegian is less proficient than that of ethnic Norwegian prisoners.

## **Preparation for release and monitoring after sentence completion**

For many years, the planning of preparation for release and monitoring after release has been too poor. The research reports uncover again considerable weaknesses in this area, and emphasize the importance of improvements in the field. The monitoring Group recommend the following measures:

- More systematic work must be done with a view to preparing for life after release.
- More binding cooperation and coordination is needed between the different public bodies and relevant measures. The allocation of responsibility must be clear to all parties.
- Participation in a monitoring group / responsible group must be arranged, with help towards education, work, accommodation, free time, social net and escape from drug abuse. The so-called Steinkjer model has established responsible groups where the students themselves take charge of their own lives, by summoning the relevant interacting partners to meetings. In this system it is made much clearer who does what in different situations, and the students themselves are given authority.
- There must be more use of open sections in prisons and free access to education centres and work. More use can in this way be made of the local community and its facilities.

This will also lead to a more varied course structure, and it will be cheaper for the community.

## **Prison service issues**

It is the prison service which is responsible for carrying out the sentence of loss of freedom. The education unit is an important service organ which shall organize the education to which the prisoner has a legal right. It is therefore unavoidable that situations can arise in the meeting between prison and education unit that are detrimental to the prisoner's education. The research reports give many examples of this. In order to prevent, as far as possible, such situations from arising, the monitoring Group recommends the following measures:

- Disciplinary measures that disrupt a course of education must be reduced to a minimum.
- Better cooperation between the prison and the education unit can reduce, to a large extent, interruptions in the educational process, for example in the case of transfers.
- The prison's control practices should avoid disturbing the work of the education unit.
- Security measures must be organized in such a way that women can participate in workshop activities on an equal basis with men.

## 8 Summary and conclusion

The main purpose of research-based assessment was to examine the role of prison education and determine what measures could strengthen this area of the prison service. The assessment is unique. No other European country has implemented such an assessment. There is already, therefore, interest outside Norway in the results.

In the 200-300-year tradition of penitentiaries and prisons, education has been available alongside work. The teaching activities have largely been compensatory, i.e. an attempt to repair prisoners' deficiencies. In future, prison education should much more be based on the *mastery perspective*, by finding out what needs and what positive experiences prisoners have, in order to build on these areas through educational activities designed to increase mastery.

The complete assessment covers a wide area, including the education of women, the education of minority-language prisoners, the education of short-term prisoners, and how the public service works in this field at the central, regional and local level. Different aspects of the "modern" prison are also assessed. One central finding is that the prisoners have a very positive view of education in prison. This is a good starting-point for encouraging the feeling of mastery among students and helping them develop the ability to take charge of themselves. Education must be adapted to the individual, while at the same time the individual must acquire the skills needed to function in the community on release.

The complete research-based assessment proposes a number of measures for the improvement and further development of prison education, including:

- a larger number of more varied courses should be offered, including the expansion of vocational training and more emphasis on practical/aesthetic subjects.
- ICT with internet access must be a natural part of all learning.
- There must be better collaboration between the different professional groups in the education unit and the prison service.
- The planning and monitoring of services after release must be more systematic and structured.
- Features of the prison system that interfere with education must be reduced to a minimum.

- It emerges from several reports that the academic year, with its long holidays, is in conflict with the educational needs of prisoners. The monitoring Group regard it as particularly important that the teaching year in prison should be reorganized.

A number of the recommendations call for increased financing. The monitoring Group has made many suggestions for improvement on the basis of the assessment. The Group regards it as especially important that a larger number of more varied courses should be offered, and that the purpose of prison education should be made clear to all parties at all levels. The central administration should be augmented, and cooperation between the different professional groups must be strengthened and become more binding. The education offered to female and minority-language prisoners must be broadened and strengthened. Procedures for cooperation among the relevant bodies in connection with planning and preparation for release and monitoring after release must be improved. The placing of responsibility here must be clear. Decisions based on features of the prison system must be reduced to a minimum, to avoid interference with education.

In a historical perspective, research has played a comparatively small role in the development of educational courses for prisoners. The recently-completed project has brought us a little further. The project supports the view that we need more explicit information about the different elements of prison education and the results of the teaching the prisoners get. The monitoring Group believe there is a particular need for further research in areas that can shed light on teacher and student roles, the development of methods in adult education, and prisoners' difficulties in literacy and numeracy.

To build up and develop education within the prison system, a more powerful and more sustained effort must be made. The monitoring Group believe therefore that more research is absolutely necessary, in addition to priority being given by the authorities to implementing the existing research results. Increased contact between research institutes and those involved in practical work will also mean that practitioners point out the areas which should be researched. The area of practice must be involved both as consumer and as premise maker for research.

All prisoners today have, like all other citizens, a right and duty to receive basic schooling and a right to upper secondary education. Adults have, in addition, a right to upper secondary

education, a right to renewed basic education, and a right to special education. For these rights to be exercised, it is important that education in the prison system is constantly renewed and improved, so that the different groups of prisoners have their needs met as well as possible. This will ensure that a prison sentence can to a much greater extent be a meaningful preparation for life outside the walls.