

EPEA-NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Number 1

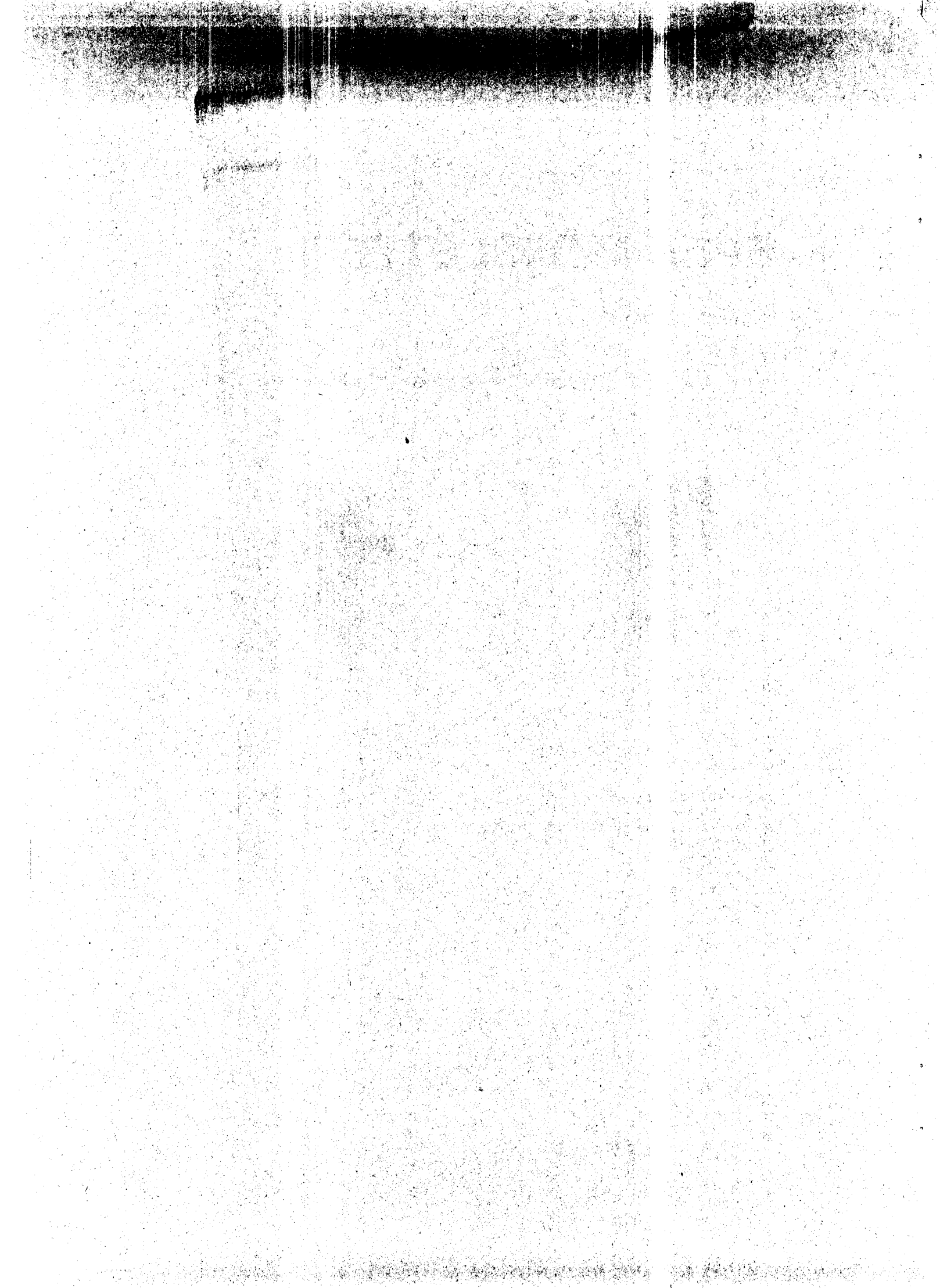
March 1991

Newsletter of the European Prison Education Association i.s.n.

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EUROPEAN PRISON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER ONE: MARCH 1991

An International Conference on Prison Education was held in Oxford, England, in September 1989, hosted by the British Home Office, the Open University, and the Correctional Education Association.

Issues of professional interest and concern were clearly international: those involved in prison education in different countries had much in common in their specialist, and often isolated, field and they welcomed the opportunity to share experience and develop ideas together. The similarities of the challenges (and problems) far outweighed the considerable differences of cultural, educational and political background.

It seemed important to maintain this international dimension, and to find a way of making it accessible to everyone interested and/or involved in prison education - after all, few of us are able to attend international conferences regularly, if at all!

It was also clear that there is a particular commonality within the European tradition, and that this is being strengthened by the political structures and recent developments. (A Czech participant at Oxford stated that he was "the first swallow from a changing Eastern Europe".) While appreciating the successful model and support of the Correctional Education Association (centred on North America), it was felt that a European organisation would best serve prison educators, and thus their students, on this continent.

So the European Prison Education Association was formed to promote prison education in accordance with the Council of Europe's Recommendation on "Education in Prison" 1989.

It is hoped that newsletters will serve as a focus of interest and debate, that a network for visits between prison educators in different countries will be developed, and that Articles of Association will be drafted.

Currently persons from sixteen European countries are involved in EPEA, including part-time and full-time teachers, librarians, education officers and administrators. Whatever your role in prison education, your contribution to the development of EPEA will be invaluable: EPEA is to serve all with a commitment to prison education, especially those of us in daily contact with students.

Your suggestions, comments, and articles for the newsletter are most warmly invited. The main focus of this first edition is international links; however, information about small, local projects can provide the opportunity for comparison, reflection and new perspectives. For practical reasons, it would be helpful if correspondence is in English, but do not let that deter you! Hopefully the next newsletter will include articles from more countries, so please send your contribution to the October newsletter by July 30th to Pam Bedford, Education Officer, HM Prison Standford Hill, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4AA, UK.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE REPORT ON PRISON EDUCATION

Six years ago the Council of Europe established a "Select Committee" to survey prison education throughout its twenty four member states, to make recommendations and generally to chart a way forward. Following consultation with all the tries concerned on a draft, the final report was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 1989 (see inset for information on distributors of the report).

The Committee were keen that this document should be read by prison educators "on the ground" and not just by administrators. The report makes the point that it is not in any sense "the last word" on prison education, but aspires to further thought and discussion on this special area of work.

Hopefully, the report will give muscle to those promoting the cause of prison education. In the key part of the report - the formal "recommendations" adopted by the Committee of Ministers on behalf of their governments - several standards are set that may not yet be reached in some countries. Cementing the strong role given to education within regimes in the European Prison Rules in 1987, the ministers now stipulate : "Education shall have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners shall not lose out financially or otherwise by taking part in education." In how many prisons or prison systems does education have such a firm position?

Another tangible standard is one related to libraries: "Prisoners should have direct access to a well-stocked library at least once a week."

One of the main ways the report may benefit education is in its advocacy of a wide curriculum, going well beyond the staple diet of literacy teaching, vocational training and correspondence courses. In what may be seen as a holistic approach, seeking to meet the needs of the "whole person", and recognising that different prisoners have different needs and interests, the report elaborates on different "segments" that should be part of all prison education provision in a series of different chapters. The chapter on creative activities argues strongly for a greater place for the arts (visual arts, music, drama, writing, etc.) The chapters on physical education and libraries suggest that in these segments of education "reasonable standards.... are very inadequately met in many places".

The Committee took a broad view of education, so that the report ranges over very varied areas. Yet two overall themes predominate: first that the education of prisoners must, in its philosophy, methods and content, be brought as closely as possible to the best ADULT EDUCATION in the society outside; secondly, that the education should be a

constant seeking of ways to LINK PRISONERS TO THE COMMUNITY OUTSIDE and to enable both groups to interact with each other as fully and constructively as possible. The concept of adult education features strongly in the chapters on aims and methods. Concrete suggestions on interaction with the community via education are given throughout the report.

In the introductory chapter the Committee remark that, despite considerable differences in culture, education systems and prison systems between countries, "those working in the special field of prison education have a great deal in common with each other across the national boundaries.....Such sharing can apply as much to the identification and addressing of common problems as to the sharing of more positive experiences. Because of this common ground, the Committee felt that vehicles for the exchange of ideas and information between prison educators from different countries...were very important." It is satisfying to think that, within months of the publication of "Education in Prison", the more visible emergence of EPEA gives real hope that these ideas will be carried forward.

Kevin Warner Chairperson, Council of Europe Select Committee

THIS IS IT!

This is it: The report which concerns everyone concerned with prison education.
 The report which challenges the current status, practice and theory of prison education through offering standards of excellence.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE, LEGAL AFFAIRS

EDUCATION IN PRISON

Recommendation No. R(89) 12
adopted by the Committee of Ministers
on 13 October 1989
and explanatory memorandum

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PRISON EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA - THE EMPHASIS IS ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In Austria the prison population has been reduced by 14% since the extension of parole brought about by the Criminal Code Amendment Act 1988. In October 1990 there were 6664 prisoners in 29 major prisons and 18 smaller institutions.

In adult establishments priority is given to vocational training, and to the essential adult basic and general education which prepares students for vocational courses. Certificated vocational training courses taking 36-42 months are available in five crafts, and intensive 18 month courses (some external) cover a further fifteen trades. In exceptional cases students may follow secondary and undergraduate study programmes. More than 80 prisoners successfully completed such courses in 1988, while 18 followed secondary and 5 university level course.

All young offender institutions offer basic and secondary level education. Some undergraduate and vocational courses are available and in 1988 250 young offenders participated in these programmes.

Education and training is provided by 41 teachers and instructors (11 full-time, 30 part-time) and by prison officers who are qualified craftspersons responsible for almost 200 training workshops.

Peter Ziebart Austria

HOW HIGH THE WALLS - PRISON EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN THE NETHERLANDS 13-16 MAY 1991

An international conference on prison education is being held in Bergen, the Netherlands, and will focus on the interaction between education "inside" and "outside".

The conference themes are:

1. The role of education in penal institutions
2. The position of prison education within adult community education
3. Developments and innovation in prison education

This will be the third in a series of European conferences on prison education. The first and the second were held in England (1984 and 1989) and it was at the 1989 Oxford conference that the Dutch participants agreed to host this event.

Bergen will be a working conference, which is one of the reasons for having a small group of 75 participants drawn from government and other organisations throughout Europe, There will also be 20 representatives from the Correctional Education Association - mainly North American - to continue the trans-Atlantic connection started in Oxford.

The conference has been well subscribed, but there might be one or two spaces for late applicants. Conference fee 695 Dutch guilders, including accommodation, meals, and a study visit or sightseeing excursion. Further information from: Mrs Rina Hienstra, office hours, morning only local time, 010 31 2208 94541

Robert Suvaal The Netherlands

DEVELOPMENTS IN PRISON EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Ireland has a prison population of 2000 held in thirteen prisons. Within regimes, education has equal status with work or work-training so that most education is day-time and many teachers (employed by external local education authorities) are full-time or nearly full-time. One aspect of our education service is hardly local, however: the U.K.'s Open University provide most of the third level opportunities for prisoners in Ireland, serving about 40 students in a most satisfactory manner from its Regional Office in Belfast.

Literacy difficulties among prisoners are the major priority of our educational efforts, however. Perhaps a quarter or more of all prisoners have serious problems with reading or writing. We adopt the same approach to teaching literacy, based on adult education principles, as is taken in the community outside. Much learning is built on the students' own words and writing, and "readers" based on prisoner-students' own texts are widely used in the community outside also. (These are available for sale through NALA, National Adult Literacy agency, 8 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1, Ireland.)

Although we regard our curriculum as a fairly wide one in most places, the Council of Europe report has triggered a critical examination of our programmes to see how we might make our provision fuller. Physical education, in particular, called for attention and a Working Group has been looking at this aspect of education throughout the prison system. A report is expected in 1991.

Another Working Group (of educators from our prisons) has been given the task of looking at education needs of Travellers in prisons and how we might serve them better - bearing in mind Council of Europe promptings to pay special attention to the needs of ethnic and cultural minorities. The number of Travellers in our prisons seems to have increased greatly in recent years. Also, a team of our prison educators has been brought together recently to support and promote health education, an area in which we feel we should be doing more.

In line with European Prison Education thinking, prison education units have in recent years tried to increase "interaction" between prisons and the community outside by involving outside speakers, performers, teams, theatre groups, etc., as much as possible. Many Education Units now hold a week of concentrated community involvement each year, for example an "Activities Week" based on a topic such as health, or an "Arts Week" with performances and events involving guests and prisoners.

Generally, the Arts have a strong presence in Irish prisons, with at least one visual arts teacher in each prison, and usually teachers are also involved in writing, music, drama or photography. For ten years now, the national Arts Council has joined with the Prison Education Service in operating a series of writers workshops in the prisons, whereby published writers interact with aspiring writers from the prisons. Recently, short, intensive artists workshops have been run on the same basis.

A programme to establish an adequate library space in each prison has been able to make only slow progress over the past decade, given the inadequate facilities in older institutions. However, a newly opened prison on the outskirts of Dublin has a superb library holding pride of place at the centre of the building. At Wheatfield the library holds exhibitions, lectures and discussions, runs a video recording service and publishes a weekly in-house magazine - as well as lending books and cassettes! Prisoners are very involved in the running of the library, under the direction of professional librarians and library officers. Books and resources for other prison libraries are processed at Wheatfield using new technology.

Finally, Ireland is happy to report that 68 of its prison educators have signed up for EPEA.

Kevin Warner Ireland

PROVISION FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

Many prisoner students have special needs, some of them Special Learning Difficulties. It would be interesting to know what specialist provision is included in prison education programmes.

Please send any information to Angela Stoddart, Education Officer, HM Prison Rochester, Borstal, Rochester, Kent, U.K. by July 30th, for collation for the next newsletter.

UNIVERSITIES OF CRIME OR ACCESS TO THE COMMUNITY? -
VALID EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES CAN TRANSFORM PRISONS

It is not my intention to vindicate the right to education; quite simply, the right to education - nationally or internationally - is a fundamental one and is therefore justified in any environment including prison. If on top of this we add the fact that individuals are only to be deprived of personal freedom, then education in prison is more than justified: it is necessary in order to attain the ultimate objective of imprisonment.

A quick assessment of education in prisons shows that there are more challenges than in any other types of establishment. It is not just that adult education is attempting to compensate for inadequate earlier educational experience and to enable students to develop skills in general; it is also clear that a significant number of prisoners have identified their previous experience of education with failure, that they have had limited educational experience owing to social deprivation, and that they do not perceive education as a means of social mobility. They are separated from a society that will make substantial demands on them, however, when they return to the community.

These and many other factors make it necessary that the teaching/learning process in prisons:

- * does not fall into a regimented system reminiscent of past learning failure
- * is carefully structured to allow the progressive development of higher level skills
- * uses relevant resource materials
- * offers flexible and dynamic programmes encouraging intellectual freedom
- * offers microprogrammes to take account of the needs, interests, and sentence of individuals
- * offers open learning courses which can be continued after release
- * is considered as a social programme counteracting the boredom and idleness which characterise prisons
- * involves practical, realistic activities as part of effective rehabilitation
- * encourages vocational training as preparation for an increasingly competitive employment situation
- * is respectful of the rights of the individual and of the group.

Educational opportunities should be extended in high security prisons (within security constraints) and steps taken to ensure continuity, despite the frequent transfers of prisoners.

These targets are not only educational goals; they are applicable to the whole institution and should involve the society of which the prisoners are still part. This is the only way in which prisons will cease to be considered as "universities of crime" and become truly rehabilitative centres.

Jose Maria Garcia Sombria
Segovia, Spain

GREETINGS FROM THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CEA)

TOOLS OF THE SOCIAL ARCHITECT

".....the most successful leader of all is one who sees another picture, not yet actualised. S/he sees things which belong in the present picture but are not yet there. Above all, s/he should make sure that it is not [a personal] purpose to be achieved - but a common purpose, born of the desires and activities of the group."

Mary Parker Follett

I was invited some months ago to draft a message for this important occasion - the public announcement in your newsletter of the formation of the European Prison Education Association.

Mary Parker Follett's words express my own personal philosophy, but also, more importantly, the philosophy I perceive emerging from a group of highly committed educators who met informally while attending the 1989 Oxford Conference on prison education. Each brought a personal vision, from which emerged a common vision that is now being actualised in a new association: not as an international division of the Correctional Education Association, but as an entity of its own.

As this new association takes form it will be born out of goals, issues and priorities common to the European tradition.

The Correctional Education Association, international as it is, and becoming more so, has a primary focus on the American continent - with a strong and broad bond to the European nations and a fast emerging linkage to Asia, Africa and Australasia. It may be that by the year 2000 we will have five or six professional organisations, separate and born out of local concerns, yet linked around the world by common bonds and common causes that will foster and shape the future of correctional education worldwide.

I personally salute the dedicated professionals through whose vision EPEA has been formed. their vision will serve as a catalyst both internally and externally - internally to those who are waiting for their leaders to draw them into their common purpose, externally as we spotlight their victories and successes to other visionaries waiting in the wings.

We of the Correctional education Association are your colleagues as we jointly move to that higher vision; we are your resources and support as you need us, and your advocates as we can serve you.

I salute your social architects: Ian Benson, Henning Jorgensen, Asbjorn Langas, Robert Suvaal, Kevin Warner and Peter Ziebart,

Mary Lou Browning President, Correctional education Association

THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

CEA is dedicated to serving the needs of educators who work within the criminal justice system. Founded in 1946, CEA is an international organisation whose members include teachers, counsellors, librarians, administrators and academicians concerned with the challenges of teaching and learning in correctional settings. Our more than 3000 members are employed in adult and juvenile correctional institutions, jails, detention centres, community based programmes and universities. CEA is a non-profit making membership association.

CEA publishes the annual Journal of Correctional Education, co-published "Learning behind Bars" (a survey of 30 model prison education programmes), and hosted two nationally televised PBS teleconferences. CEA has developed the first "Standards for Adult and Juvenile Correctional Education Programs". A CEA board of correctional education consultants has worked with U.S. federal and state authorities on evaluations and audits.

CEA advocates correctional education as one solution to the negative impact of crime and illiteracy on society.

CEA information and membership: CEA
8025 Laurel Lakes Court
Laurel, Maryland 20707 U.S.A.

CEA CONFERENCE 8-11 JULY 1991 WASHINGTON D.C.

"ACHIEVING PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IN THE 90'S"

Those Europeans who attended the CEA 1990 conference in Vancouver found it immensely stimulating, informative and enjoyable. CEA invites applications to participate in the Washington conference, which promises to be equally rewarding.

Information on the Washington conference from:
Dr Nell Eano Miller, Conference Program Chair
Maryland State Department of Education
Correctional Education Program
2000 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201 U.S.A.

Mary Lou Browning

EDUCATION IN PRISONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES- IMPLEMENTING THE MISSION STATEMENT

The management training undertaken by the staff college for prison education officers and their staff has highlighted many problems in the relationship between prison educators and the prison administrative staff. The Staff College Management courses have two purposes: to ensure that managers of the increasing education budgets have the necessary skills in terms of personnel and resource management, and to improve the inter-disciplinary nature of management within the prison service by making education managers more aware of their roles and responsibilities within both the local authority provision and the Home Office organisation.

There is a great need for much more integrated training and development bringing all disciplines in the prison service closer together. The present arrangements whereby there is little relationship between what educationalists do and what other disciplines do is obviously wasteful. Some initiatives have taken place but these are rather sporadic and are not part of any coherent policy. The Home Office should rise to the challenge of training and make training interdisciplinary rather than putting the majority of its resources into narrowly defined areas.

The Home Office, with its constant pre-occupation with operational factors, does not encourage strong ,proactive thinking in terms of integrating the services given to prisoners, in line with the Mission Statement:

"Our duty is to look after them with humanity and to help them lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody and after release."

There is a high level of frustration where educational management is working to the Mission Statement and increasingly trying to confront issues with their students, within a prison system which is largely unable to respond to the needs of the inmate students.

An example of this is that often a student starts a course in a local prison, has a repeat performance of this in a training prison, and then perhaps in a local prison, There is a constant mismatch of resources and until education plays an important and central role in sentence planning, it is unlikely that the good communications system already existing in education departments will be able to bear fruit.

Increasingly education staff are looking towards running programmes that not only have a direct academic value and develop students' marketable skills for their release, but also contain an important social element which encourages prisoners to confront and take ownership of their offences.

If the concept of dynamic security is to be well developed and prisons are to live up to the Mission Statement and have an important rehabilitative role, there needs to be far more emphasis upon interdisciplinary training and initiatives such as that of the Staff College should be given further opportunity to branch out and attract colleagues from fields other than education.

Paul Ripley The Staff College, England.

ICEPS

At the CEA Vancouver conference a working committee was set up, charged with drafting a formal proposal for ICEPS - THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION IN PENAL SYSTEMS.

The international committee, consisting of Steve Duguid (Canada), Gayle Gassner (U.S.A.), Vicente Garrido (Spain), Norman Jepson (U.K.), Dirk van Kooten (the Netherlands), Ken Neale (U.K.), and Tatuhiro Tatayama (Japan), have completed the draft.

A founding meeting will be held this spring, giving us an international network linking various regional centres and regional organisations.

Stephen Duguid - Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C.

FREEDOM TO READ - a report on the international conference on Literacy in Corrections, organised by the Canadian Correctional Service and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons, and held in Ottawa 14-17 October 1990.

This conference of 500 delegates marked International Literacy year. I was one of a number of speakers from abroad, invited to give presentations on their own country's experience in this area of work.

Literacy is currently high on the political agenda in North America and the conference was opened by Mrs George Bush and Mrs. Mila Mulrone, who have played a big role in promoting literacy in their respective countries.

With such a large gathering it was difficult to get a feel for how literacy programmes are organised in Canadian and American prisons, but one issue that received a lot of attention and was the subject of much debate was mandatory literacy: basic education programmes are compulsory in all U.S. federal prisons for those inmates who score below a certain grade when tested at entry, and many Canadian prisons are adopting this policy. The mandatory programmes' supporters claim that statistics prove their success. However, there was little or no debate as to whether a person whom the educational system had failed first time round can really benefit so easily from the such a short, sharp shock programme. Many participants to whom i talked were very interested in the whole area of student writing in literacy work, and this approach does not appear to have been very well developed in North America.

Other areas which I found of particular interest were work on Cognitive Thinking Skills developed by Elizabeth Fabiano (I can give more information on this on request) and the NACRO agency links between prison and the community in Great Britain.

Mary Kett Education Organiser, Wheatfield Prison, Dublin 22

EUROALPHA - the European Network for Research, Action and Training for Adult Literacy and Basic education, is organising its fourth European Conference on "Literacy in Prisons", in Dublin in April this year.

EUROALPHA is, in many respects, a similar organisation to EPEA in that it is essentially a network for practitioners to exchange information and experiences.

Information from Mary Kett (as above)

Pierre Freynet, CUFCO, University of Angers, 5 Boulevard Lavoisier, 49045 Angers CEDEX, France

U.K. STAFF TRAINING - AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Since 1989 the Staff College has been running specialist management training courses for local education authority staff attached to prison education departments.

Prison education has of late been given a higher profile in the concepts of dynamic security within the prison service, and it is anticipated that the Woolfe Report will further strengthen the role of education within prisons.

An important aspect of the courses has been to give local education authority staff seconded to the prison service an opportunity to work alongside colleagues from all sections of further and higher education and enhance the provision they make available to the students within the prisons.

There is an increasing awareness of the value of comparing prisons and prison education systems in other countries. This international aspect was well illustrated by a successful conference run at Coombe Lodge in December 1990, where colleagues from the U.S.A., Canada, the Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales took part in a three day event examining how international issues relate to the British education service.