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**EUROPEAN PRISON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

NEWSLETTER 3 WINTER 1991/2
European Prison Education Association

Newsletter 3: Winter 1991/92

EPEA CONSTITUTION

The 19 Liaison Persons from the 13 countries present at the May 1991 Bergen conference decided to delegate responsibility for moving EPEA forward to a steering group.

Thanks to the generous hospitality of the Staff College, the Steering Group will meet April 3 - 5 at the college, near Bristol, England. The most pressing task is to draft a constitution (or Articles of Association) so that EPEA can be formally constituted.

This will mean that EPEA members will be able to elect officers to continue the work of this professional organisation in promoting and supporting prison education.

The Steering Group consists of two Liaison Persons from 7 countries:

- Daniel Armengaud & Celestin Diabangouaya - France
- Kevin Warner & Pam Lorenz - Ireland
- Jay Clark & Dominic Henry - Northern Ireland
- Robert Suvaal & Jan Maarten Terwel - Netherlands
- Anne Cameron & Jim Scott - Scotland
- Agneta Bergendahl & Anita Johansson - Sweden
- Pam Bedford & David Marston - England & Wales

We hope that both Liaison Persons will be able to attend as it is important to have input from practitioners and administrators.

You are warmly invited to make suggestions for this April meeting - please contact any of the Steering Group or Pam Bedford (address below) and you will be heard!

FUNDING

Kevin Warner is actively exploring the possibility of funding to "prime the pump" until subscriptions are brought in. Such resources are important to enable persons with different roles and from all countries in Europe, despite the various economic climates, to participate fully in EPEA. Meanwhile, the Steering Group will be travelling to the Staff College at their own expense!

The Aims of EPEA

- TO PROMOTE EDUCATION IN PRISON
- TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONS INVOLVED IN EDUCATION, THROUGH EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION
- TO WORK WITH RELATED PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS
- TO SUPPORT RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION IN PRISON

If you have any ideas on where to seek funding, please let Kevin know;
International 'phone 3531 789 711
- telefax 3531 761 799

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

The Liaison Persons receive boss copies of the newsletter from Robert Suvaal and they copy and distribute it to EPEA members. Many Liaison Persons translate the newsletter first - a time consuming task. I hope that in their translations they will not omit this acknowledgement of their dedication and hard work!

NEWSLETTER 4

Many articles refer to the varying perceptions of education and training within prisons. The next newsletter will focus on projects and activities where education staff are working with prison officers and other professionals.

Please send your contribution on such multi-disciplinary activities and on other subjects by April 30 (for June publication). It is very helpful to have articles in English AND YOUR OWN LANGUAGE. Newsletter readers seem to have enjoyed reading the article printed in French and English; to reflect our multi-lingual association, Newsletter 4 could include other tongues!

Pam Bedford
HMP Standford Hill
Church Road
Eastchurch,
Isle of Sheppey,
Kent ME12 4AA

ONE
If Vocational Training (VT) is viewed only in its narrowest sense - of providing prisoners with job skills which can be used to gain employment on release - then we should be seriously considering abandoning 90% of our current VT courses in Northern Ireland prisons.

Why? Northern Ireland is an unemployment black-spot; there is high unemployment anyway and therefore prisoners are at the bottom of the pile when it comes to getting a job. In addition, after twenty years of terrorism, where businesses have often been the focus of para-military attention, potential employers are not at all favourably disposed towards ex-offenders. It could be argued then that to encourage prisoners to acquire job skills, and thus raise expectations which are unlikely to be fulfilled, is to create false hopes which could be counter-productive.

So what can be our justification for continuing to run courses where employment prospects are so low? We know that some ex-offenders do manage to get work despite the difficulties, but the real answer must be that we are trying to prepare individuals for life on release - which may or may not include a job.

This sits very comfortably with Recommendation 9 of the European Committee of Ministers 1989, which states:

- "Vocational Education should aim at the wider development of the individual, as well as being sensitive to trends in the labour market."

Acquiring manual skills is a further means of improving self esteem and boosting self confidence and there are numerous examples of truly excellent work which are a pleasure to look at and give a great sense of pride to the individuals concerned, many of whom have severe literacy and/or numeracy difficulties.

Almost all practical skills, particularly those related to the construction industry, have application in the home or community. If there is no real job out there, these skills can be put to good use for the family or neighbourhood. In fact I find that if I ask prisoners why they have enrolled in a particular course, they are more likely to answer that they want to carry out more work on their homes, than to say because they can get a job. But they know the reality of the situation!

Then, of course, there is the "Hidden Agenda" - all those often important life and social skills which help develop the individual. Trainees learn to work in a routine disciplined way; they learn to take a pride in their work place and in a job well done. For those with literacy or numeracy difficulties the practical approach makes learning to read, write or count highly relevant and often more interesting than in a purely educational setting. I would actually like to see a much more integrated approach between Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) and Vocational Training.

Finally there is the underlying influence of the well-motivated instructor who has the opportunity, over a period of months, of building valuable working relationships with their trainees. These links can serve to set them on a path which will help them to make their terms of imprisonment more productive and useful than they ever imagined. The hallmark of a good workshop is where instructors and prisoners alike share a common purpose and where mutual pride and self-respect are evident.

Clearly we cannot ignore market trends and it is obvious that, where possible, what we offer in prison education should have a relevance to the world of employment. But, jobs or no jobs, I believe that the workshop is an excellent environment for helping to develop a multitude of skills. Skills which will have a much wider application than a specific trade, because they help individuals to grow and begin to realise their true potential, and be better able to cope with life in prison or outside.

Joy Clark
Chief Education & Training Officer
Prison Education & Training Branch
Northern Ireland Office
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast.
Vocational Education in Estonian Prisons

In Estonian prisons, prisoners have access to education at a general school or a vocational school. The education system in the schools is organised to ensure that special classrooms and/or workshops are available for different subjects, academic or practical.

Remarkable results have been gained by using an individual study programme for each student, with teachers considering age difference, previous practical experience in the subject, knowledge of the language used for instruction and the level of basic (general) education. (In Estonia, 76% of inmates/students at vocational schools have secondary education.) Independent study is very important.

66% of classes are dedicated to industrial training. Study programmes take a year, with the students having four lessons per day, five days a week. The instruction may be in either Estonian or Russian. Students are not released from work in prison workshops, so in order to give every prisoner the chance to have education, vocational schools work in two shifts. The structure of each subject and skills area depends mainly on a profile of industrial activities in the prison, and on the specific needs of the course.

Owing to the current difficulties in the economy we are not able to allocate resources to build new, modern workshops and centres which could meet the needs and wishes of inmates. Despite these limits, the courses offered by vocational schools in prisons are quite popular.

Courses include training as arc welders, electrical and gas welders, industrial electricians, fitters, locksmiths, drivers and crane drivers; through such training prisoners have the opportunity to work during their sentence and after release.

The aim of the teaching staff is not only to teach prisoners, but to encourage them to use their time purposefully. An inmate who works 8 hours and studies 4 hours per day is actually engaged for 12 hours.

A process of learning and acquiring skills enhances work habits and encourages a sense of responsibility; it helps a prisoner to understand that he is needed and that work is important for both himself and his family.

Jaak Hiiemae.
Rummu Prison,
Estonia.
When we talk about 'the Arts' in prison, we must remember that it covers many areas. In Ireland there are two interesting schemes in operation. One is called Writers-in-Prison, the other is called Artists-in-Prison. Artists and writers come into the prisons to do workshops over a limited period of time. They complement the work already being done by teachers.

The Artists-in-Prison schemes receive a lot of attention. The results are dramatic and tangible. Yet the Writers-in-Prison scheme continues quietly and consistently. It is an important but often underestimated project.

Writing is the most mobile and intimate of the arts. A writer requires only a pencil and paper - not the resources of a studio. In many ways the writer carries his studio around in his head. Therefore, a prisoner who writes discovers that his 'studio' has been imprisoned along with him.

An essential component of writing is memory. Imprisonment may change the conditions under which we write but it doesn't deprive us of the colours, textures, movements, pains or consolations of memory.

Memory is part of the material through which we find ourselves. The way we organise this material largely determines our sense of ourselves. A good facilitator in a creative workshop can turn a prisoner's eye selfwards.

The fact is that everybody has their own personal store of words, their own speech patterns, their own way of talking, of expressing themselves. In writing, these are our resources. When a prisoner commits himself to paper in writing, even the most basic writing, he is creating a mirror image of himself. This is one of the most immediate results of a writing workshop.

For obvious reasons, this emphasis on the individual is both welcome and necessary in the confining and apathetic world of prison.

Many prisons already have creative writing groups which are organised by teachers. But visiting writers are important for many reasons. The writer creates a centre for the group, becomes a focus. The activity becomes more intense. More work is produced and with greater direction. The prisoner can gauge his work against the authority of the writer, rather than that of the teacher. A writer who has had books published becomes a kind of witness. In the workshop, the presence of his or her accumulated work and relationship to it gives direct courage to the prisoner who has just begun to accumulate work.

The professional writer is concerned with craft and technique, with the 'tricks of the trade' that can make writing better and memories more structured and fluent. Through creative writing a prisoner can develop some sense of structure out of what may often be difficult and painful memories. This is the great promise that writing in prisons holds for those involved - the promise that a structure of individualism, its real evidence in poems and stories, can be created for the prisoner, despite the other forces in prison which work against this.

Catherine Coakley
Prison Arts Co-ordinator
Cork Prison
Ireland
VISUAL ARTS PROJECTS IN DANISH PRISONS

It was said at the Dublin Seminar in May 1991 that we strongly need adult basic education in prisons. Why then start art education at a time when we have to save money? Bjorn Peterson and Kaj Raamrup write on their Danish experiences.

The answer could be given by one of our long-term prisoners who said, "You can be released by art, because you get to know yourself in a different way. Artistic activities must be promoted in prisons. Many prisoners can develop abilities they didn't know they had. By painting a picture you develop your self-confidence and your self-criticism. At the same time I am happy to produce something I can pass on to other people."

If we look at the Recommendations of the Select Committee of Council of Europe (1989) we can find statements about the attractiveness of the arts activities in prisons:

- "Because of the informal nature and the element of choice these activities offer participants, they can be acceptable and attractive to many prisoners who would otherwise be alienated from education."

About freedom of expression, it is further said that real independence of choice is facilitated by artists or educators from outside the prison system.

What have we done in Denmark to develop an interest in producing visual art among prisoners?

Some years ago a closed prison (Nyborg) started weekend workshops and at the beginning it wasn't easy to make the prisoners turn up - they were simply too shy - but after a few had stared, a group was founded and it became a success. The paintings they produced were amazing.

Today the visual art projects are established as summer schools which are held for several weeks at most Danish prisons.

Let us have a look at some specific projects:

The first one was run at an open prison in Jutland. The aim was to decorate a classroom and make a sculptural pillar (Sdr. Omme). The project leader was an experienced painter who had experience of working with different groups. He started with a group of seven prisoners. The summer school started with an excursion to look at paintings on house ends and wall paintings. After that they were introduced generally to that kind of art which started in the USA in the sixties and seventies. They were to decide the procedure themselves and they ended up by saying that the sculptural pillar was the main task.

Within a few days one of the participants sketched a plan. The pillar should contain flames (hell), birds (freedom), heaven with the sun (hope, tomorrow) and an unfinished part about rehabilitation.

Now the practical part of the work could take place. The main problem was to place ten drainpipes on top of each other, each of them weighing 200 Kg. Four prisoners who wanted to solve the practical problems were successfully involved in the project. The whole project lasted for four weeks and all the participants were paid as if they worked. The last weekend, everybody went without payment to make it possible to finish the project.

The age of the participants was between 18 and 45 years, the average 25. Therefore the sculptural pillar became a product with roots in the sixties and the psychedelic art of the early seventies, influenced by the eighties graffiti pictures with connections with the last 25 years of rock music - that means the language of the prisoners!

All prisoners were invited to celebrate the result of the project and they praised it as an important symbol.

Also in closed prisons there are many visual arts activities. In three closed prisons there have been artistic workshops for the last four years. Cooperation between a local artistic group, the inmates and employees (normally from the education staff) have created/painted the walls in the sections. The weekend workshops have changed many 'dead' surroundings into areas with a lot of imagination and artistic expression. Those workshops have channelled aggression into colour-sequences.

Also outdoor surroundings have been created in the workshops. We want to mention the wall-frieze with inspirations from the ancient cave paintings in the State Prison of Nyborg. In the State Prison of Ringe, where each section (with about 16 inmates) has its own patio, inmates and artists have built a grid, and a long frieze with figures from mythology has been painted on the patio.

In the State Prison of Vridsløselille an artist who normally teaches university students has painted the ceiling in the centre of the prison. The prison is a Philadelphia-style building with a big central hall. Of course she co-operated with a group of inmates and one member of staff. You can imagine how difficult it is to paint 20 metres above the floor!

Of course we have many problems running activities which promote artistic expression. We have financial problems first of all and also problems related to the fact that many people, including some staff, can't understand that the inmates benefit from this opportunity. (to Page SIX)
We normally answer criticism by saying that the prisons are going to be painted from time to time and it isn’t more expensive to paint with imagination than without. Also, we know that well painted walls and doors, colourful ornaments and sculptures increase the feeling of well being.

Our experience is that when you start up activities which challenge people’s creativity the result is undreamt of resources.

Bjorn Petersen and Kaj Raundrup.
Direktoratet for Kriminalforsorgen
Denmark.

...the result is undreamt of resources.

Drama is a multifaceted medium operating at many levels. At its most artistic level it is the medium of Theatre. At its experiential level it is an instrument for teaching. Both levels are interchangeable. Drama can then be seen as an art form on the one hand and a teaching method on the other. In Irish prisons drama operates at both levels. The immediacy of using drama is inherent in its nature: its raw material is the human individual, its canvas is the human condition and its composition is evolved from the human dilemma.

Throughout the many Irish prisons a variety of plays have been staged ranging from work by established playwrights to devised plays by the students. A very positive feature arising from the staged play is that it allows for a cooperative approach between different subject areas such as art, music, woodwork and home economics.

Writing competitions are entered with success in Ireland. An annual radio play writing competition has been won by drama students on many occasions.

Drama as a teaching tool is much used in a classroom context to explore many issues, including creating situations which examine social situations, language, attitude and personality.

The use of drama can provide immediate benefits, with students gaining in confidence and self-esteem.

Phyl Herbert
Mountjoy Training Unit
N.C.R.
DUBLIN 7, Ireland

SIX
The Arts in Prisons: Towards a Sense of Achievement - England & Wales

At the outset of the research, in 1989, it was evident that the issue of access to the arts was gaining prominence in the Arts Council policy making and that in Britain and other countries some prisons were undertaking interesting work in the sphere of the arts. What limited evidence there was suggested that the Home Office wished to develop out of cell activities, but there were few supports for arts activities in prison and provision was fragile because it rested on the enthusiasm of relatively isolated individuals.

The research was funded jointly by the Arts Council and the Home Office, with some additional funding from the J. Paul Getty Jr. Charitable Trust. It had five main objectives.

- To undertake a survey of the literature.

This task proved to be more difficult than had been expected, because very little evaluative work had been published.

- To survey the arts activities which had taken place between March 1987 and March 1989, in all the prison in England and Wales.

This was done by questionnaire and the findings used to create a Directory of Arts Activities in Prisons. The purpose of the Directory was to enable interested people to exchange information and to support each other.

- To categorize the different forms of arts activities and to offer insights on how they are designed and implemented.

The survey showed that visual arts and crafts, literature, music, film, drama and dance activities are all carried out in prisons. They are undertaken by individuals in their cells and in groups in the education department or arranged by education staff or, in a few cases, by the Chaplaincy, psychology department or the Governor. Arts activities are mostly provided in day and evening classes, with performances and exhibitions, short courses and residencies which involve professional artists and companies, available in only some prisons. Few prisons use outside sources of advice or funding. In general, prisons are inward turning with little outside contact, but there are some notable exceptions.

- To evaluate the operations and out comes of a selected number of arts programmes.

Interviews were carried out with management, uniformed and education staff, prisoners and artists on the assumption that each group would tend to evaluate arts activities according to their particular position in the prison organisation, their professional status, their tasks and interests.

There is, however, a wide agreement between groups that
a) the arts are beneficial for educational, personal, therapeutic, social, recreational and commercial reasons and
b) that they have to take place within the constraints set by the needs of security, discipline and good order. Where conflicts arise they are around the organisational problems relating to space, equipment, materials, staffing and outsiders coming into the prison or because of cultural differences and contrasting views on the purpose of imprisonment.

It was felt that the organisational difficulties could largely be overcome by taking into the planning process, at its inception, all those who might be affected by a project. However, where staff still see the purpose of imprisonment to be that of punishment rather than rehabilitation, then creativity is stifled and activities which simply keep prisoners busy are considered to be of greater benefit than those which encourage prisoners to explore their own and others behaviour, the workings of the prison system and the nature of their environment. For a few members of staff, activities seem to be less acceptable if they are obviously enjoyable. Nevertheless, holders of key posts like the Governor and Head of Inmate Activities can develop systems for the coordination and development of the arts on a basis of widely shared values, attitudes and beliefs.

- To assist the development of training resources for those working in the field.

There appears to be a need for training on a number of different levels: prison staff need to develop their understanding of what art activities can offer and to widen their knowledge of the kinds of art forms available and the way they may be provided, and of the artists, companies and arts organisations who can be approached; artists and companies need guidance on the special demands of prison work (a code of practice should be prepared to take up the issues of confidentiality, ownership of products, security of people, materials and equipment and the contractual relationships of the prisons with artists and companies and a codified process for monitoring and evaluating arts activities, which takes account of views of different groups of participants, should be developed). Training should be available in the form of courses, seminars, packs and through newsletters.

The report recommends that each prison should be required to develop a varied programme of arts activities for the benefit of the whole prison community, not just those "on education". To this end a Head of Arts post should be created with the person appointed to work in conjunction with the Head of Inmate Activities and the Education Officer. A budget should be set aside in each prison for the
development of the arts, to be supplemented by grants from outside arts funding bodies. Advice, information and support should be made available to all those working in the field by national organisation and training, coordination of resources and arts activities being carried out on a regional basis by three regional arts coordinators.

The report "Arts in Prisons: Towards a Sense of Achievement" by Anne Peaker and Dr Jill Vincent was published by the Home Office in December 1990 is now available from:
The Publications Sales Office,
Home Office,
Queen Anne’s Gate,
SW1H 9AT.
Tel (UK) 071 273 3327
Tel (Int) 44 71 273 3327
Cost £4 plus £2.25 p&p.

The Directory of Arts Activities is available free from;
The Access Officer at the Arts Council,
14 Great Peter St,
SW1P 3NQ.
Tel (UK) 071 333 0100
Tel (Int) 44 71 333 0100

The Unit for the Arts and Offenders has been set up at Loughborough University to offer support to all those seeking to develop arts programmes for offenders who are on probation, in prisons, special hospitals and secure units and for ex-offenders living in the community.
The Unit carries out research; advises on the development,
monitoring and evaluation of projects; runs courses, seminars and conferences; produces publications and training materials; maintains an archive, provides information and acts as a pressure group.

Contacts:
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Leicestershire LE11 3TU.
Tel (UK) 0509 223372.
Tel (Int) 44 509 223372

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PRISON EDUCATION

- Convict Past;
- Present Conflict....
- A Confident Future?

12th/15th April 1992 Brisbane Australia

Details from:
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Fax +617 369 3731
The Arts As A Tool.
As A Strategy.
Art And Wellbeing.

"...What I am talking about, is a landscape. Two very small travellers seem to climb there searching for the unknown..."

Peter Gaugin. Letter To Van Gogh.

A Project For Talking About Human Landscape.

Geometric Constraints.

In many games the counters are enclosed in a specific frame of four lines. Although only two dimensional, this framework effectively imprisons the counters, constraining their movement.

Reflecting on such games, we realise the importance of decisions, on which moves to make within the framework.

The current project in the Experimental Art Studio in Segovia prison is an intense experience enabling prisoners to express themselves within equally clear constraints.

The Constraints of a Mountain Range.

In March 1991, twelve prisoners and three others asked to carry out a project on human expression which would enable them to make progress towards a sense of freedom. The first step was to look at the possibility of communicating what the Arts can offer. Using triangles with a square framework, the group created a symbolic landscape of natural freedom, which effectively stretches beyond the constraints.

The Place.

Within a week we found the place to work: a wing of the prison. We cleaned and gathered up all the unwanted materials including fallen pieces of plaster and ashes where there used to be a chimney. All the dust, plaster and materials were put in labelled bags and sacks, so they could be used later on.

The Volume.

Rolled papers formed into small tubes, were made into triangles and squares. Leaning the tubes against each other and arranging them we produced cubes and pyramids. With all the volumes made we constructed a large structure. Previously, each student occupied a small place in the Workshop and his work checked individually. The effect of joining the pieces together and the concentration of the individual forces was impressive. With the material obtained from the floor and the pigments of the dust, water and glue, we learned how to prepare colours and experimented with textures.

The Techniques.

Making use of the different techniques, we began introducing exercises in collage, trying out different methods and ideas.

Reflection.

During the days of practical work we discussed the possibilities of art as a way to see reality and as a strategy to resolve problems and to organise thought. The work symbolising the landscape in the mountains around Segovia, was completed in two months. We planned and defined a visual arts project which occupied us until the end of June.

The Organisation of the Project.

We began by showing the possibility of representing reality in a complex way using a simple sliding point to produce a line, circles, squares and triangles. We used the mountains to stimulate those ideas and make them concrete.

The mountains themselves are very effective symbols with varied tectonic movements and visual structures.

In its visual conception and construction we could see the results of steady effort in a sense of freedom even for those who could not yet leave the prison.

A Workshop For Personal Development.

Jesus Hernandez.

A Contemporary Art Workshop is evolving in the Penitentiary Institution of Segovia, it consists of a group of twelve inmates, two art monitors and an educator from the prison. It all started at the beginning of March 1991. The first proposal we planned is now complete, it involved a very important joint effort with the trust as much from the prisoners of the Workshop as from the Penitentiary institution.

Working on the capacity for dialogue and the ability to express oneself in prison is not easy. Art serves to break the barrier that separates and to restore cracked channels of communication and expression.

With the responsibility that I feel as an educator of a group deprived of freedom and with exhausting difficulties, I insisted on the importance of this project which is done inside the walls and reaches through to society - a society that has been ignored and regarded with mistrust and suspicion. The argument for such projects is irrefutable as they help prisoners in their rehabilitation.

The group in the Workshop is conscious of the difficulties and the period of their rehabilitation. They also know that the journey can seem shorter when it is shared. We appeal to all the people and institutions of this city, to have and support an honest dialogue that promotes such projects from within the isolation and the dark side of freedom.
Technical Information: Work Scheme.

The project involved:

- The participation by 'Art De Vanguardia' in the Penitentiary Institution of Segovia.
- The presence of the visual Artist among the multi-professional team working with the sociologist, teachers, educator, social worker, and a doctor without renouncing the intensity and quality of the artwork.
- Common action to see the capacity of Art, to explore vigorously human limits within situations, such as the power to make quick progress from chaos towards an organised situation.
- Helping the prisoner talk about his problems, and making him responsible for their possible resolution. Seeing that there are different solutions and enhancing the skills involved in choosing the best ones.
- Insisting on the significance of creative process over the value of repetitive work.
- Affirming the capacity of all persons to produce art in any time and situation.
- Demonstrating the success of an intense, continuous project, from deep inside a Penitentiary Institution. The experience of a man who has suffered a lack of freedom must be brought forward, for everyone to see and review.

Context.

The Penitentiary establishment of Segovia consists of about 120 inmates, most of whom are sentenced. The Workshop is planned for 50 participants per year, which is about 40% of the total population.

Methodology.

The work is developed in three phases, with a provision of four months for each phase.

- art as a tool (visual proposal of a painting planned in the interior of the prison.)
- art as a strategy (visual proposal of a sculpture planned in the exterior of the prison.)
- art and health (proposal of visual art for improving the health and body of the participant.)

Organising Three Groups.

A - 20 members who began last March, and are just about finishing the second phase of the programme, having achieved an exhibition at the Juan Bravos exposition centre in Segovia.)

B - 15 members who began the first phase of the workshop in October, which enabled inmates to advance in their personal developments within their current sentence.

C - The 15 members who began the first phase of the workshop in October, many inmates having major difficulties in their sentences.

Groups A and B are supposed to have an exposition out of the Penitentiary Centre during each stage. Group C, because of the sentences of its members, are planned to have one exposition only. It is planned for July and coincides with the important cultural activity in the city. A selective exhibition summing up the complete work with examples of the three groups will be shown together.

We plan to utilize some of the examples to combine Art and Social Work activity.

The abundance of work in the exhibi-
BRIDGEBUILDERS
The National Association for the Education and Guidance of Ex-offenders - England & Wales

Bridgebuilders is an association of educators working with ex-offenders and offenders serving a sentence in the community.

We are employed variously and sometimes jointly by the Home Office, education, probation, and voluntary services and we are located somewhat randomly around England. To break down isolation and promote and develop our work, a few of us formed Bridgebuilders in 1988 and we have welcomed a steady increase in membership each year.

What do we do?

Some Bridgebuilders work is concentrated on community education for probationers, with a relatively small prison education referral caseload. Others, notably my own organisation in Kent, are specifically employed to work within prisons to assist prisoners wishing to continue their studies or training post-release (though we also offer tuition to probationers throughout the county).

In all cases our aims are to enable ex-offenders in the community to follow a course of study, if at all possible within mainstream provision. The Council of Europe Report on Education in Prison (1989) emphasises that 'structured support to help ex-prisoners to integrate into education in the community can be very effective. There is much to suggest that, without structured support, continuity in education upon final release will not be very likely'.

Bridgebuilders members can and do provide this structured support, but there are big gaps around the country where no such provision exists. Furthermore existing posts are fragile, often based on shared or temporary funding so that, for instance, a project based in South Wales was forced to close in 1989, and the future of a South London project is also still uncertain.

What does Bridgebuilders do for us?

We are now a national association with a constitution expressing our aims which are to:

- provide professional support.
- promote good practice.
- promote educational and guidance work with offenders and ex-offenders.
- ensure equal opportunities.
- act as a forum for the exchange of ideas and to act as an information/resource bank.
- provide in-service training.

In our first three and a half years we have established and maintained contact with each other, held eleven conferences/training events, published and circulated a Directory of Members, produced papers on relevant topics, lobbied Ministers on ex-offender/education issues, and promoted education for ex-offenders, particularly with the Home Office.

The Bridgebuilders steering committee acts as a managing body and organises training events, but the potential work load is enormous, particularly with the perceived need to protect and develop existing posts and to develop new provision. We therefore approached the Home Office C6 (Probation Service) division with a proposal for an initial three year project to employ development and research and administration officers for Bridgebuilders. The plan was approved and we hope to advertise in February 1992, and to have staff in post by May 1st. Their aim will be to develop a national policy for education and training for ex-offenders, liaise at national and local level, support existing practitioners and develop new posts, undertake research and (of course) pursue funding.

So we hope that Bridgebuilders work will continue and even flourish in Britain. But what about the rest of Europe?

We would welcome contact from individuals or organisations doing similar work in any other country, and look forward to hearing from you. Perhaps we can bridge Europe in 1992?

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The founding meeting for IFEPS (International Forum for the Study of Education in Penal Systems) was held at the Staff College, Coombe Lodge in England on December 13-15, 1991. About forty people from North America and Western Europe attended the meeting, the majority being from England but with a strong representation from the United States, Canada and The Netherlands. Working from the draft document first prepared by Ken Neale in September 1990 and revised after meetings in London, Bergen and Washington, D.C., several important changes were made at Coombe Lodge.

The primary change in focus that emerged from the founding meeting was the decision to opt for a decentralized model, making the forum a 'collection of centres' rather than a membership-based organization. The abandonment of the idea for an 'IFEPS Headquarters' took up a considerable amount of the discussion, the majority feeling that the real power of the Forum should rest with the individual local Centres. There was recognition, however, of the possibility of a headquarters operation emerging in the future if the Centres grow in number so as to require more coordination. Representatives from seven prospective centres signed on at the meeting - Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada; California State University at San Bernardino, the University of Minnesota and Lenoir Rhyne College in North Carolina, USA; The Staff College at Blagdon, The University of Leeds and Leicester University, UK; and the Folk High School Bergen in Holland. In addition to these Centres, the University of Barcelona, Spain; Melbourne University, Australia; and the Open University in Northern Ireland are set to establish Centres within the Forum.

Participation in the Forum will be via a local or regional Centre and these Centres will in turn form a steering group or council which will oversee the activities of the Forum as a whole. Individuals, therefore, who wish to become involved with IFEPS will do so through affiliation with one of the existing Centres. Work has already begun at some Centres, with projects related to database creation, post-release follow-up, curriculum development, teacher training, research studies on motivation, and a comparative research project on sentence planning and another on 'Rethinking Evaluation: A Comparative Analysis of the Function, Methods and the Standards of Evaluation Research' in the Context of Penal Education'. Some of these projects are based within individual Centres while others spring from collaborative activities between Centres. In all these various field of action and endeavour, the objective of the members of the Forum will be to facilitate, undertake and coordinate research and to communicate the results of that research.

The other primary attribute of the Forum that was given special emphasis at the Coombe Lodge meeting was its determination to forge a link between researchers and practitioners that is grounded in true reciprocity. While the Centres will be based largely at institutions of higher education or similar bodies, each Centre will be charged with constructing active links with teachers, administrators and community people active in the field. It is this insistence on research that is formed and informed by the practitioner as well as the academic that we hope will set IFEPS Centres apart from other research units found at Universities.

Steve Duguid.

Simon Fraser University

British Columbia, Canada
Education : Development in Scottish Prisons

The prison written about in this article could be judged to be typical of any of the main prisons within the Scottish system, although of course they all differ in various ways, through a range of locations, different staff, a variance in facilities and the amount of allocated finances. Its name is Glenochil.

I started working here in 1970, joining the discipline staff at the then Detention Centre. Not involved in education at that stage, I could nevertheless see the provision as it was at that time. There were very few properly qualified educationalists around in prisons in those days and the work in the detention centre was entrusted to a few officers who were 'interested in education'. With scant facilities, these staff worked with a handful of selected inmates who would only attend classes for a limited period during their eight week sentence. Most of the education work was repetitive and learnt by rote or completion of set tasks which were prescribed on pre-printed cards. However, this untrained staff managed in some cases to assist in raising the prisoner reading ages.

Then around 1975 a breakthrough occurred. The first civilian teacher arrived, replacing the discipline staff. At first she used the teaching materials that had been there since the unit's inception and selected her students in the same manner also. Out of each week's induction group, five were chosen to attend the classes. They were generally the five who had the lowest reading ages that week. Every inmate who served a detention sentence was tested in reading and arithmetic skills shortly after admission. A roll-on roll-off system was used so that each week, five usually new faces appeared in the class. The teacher worked with a maximum of twenty students; on reflection, a very high number indeed for the type of work she was attempting. This highly experienced teacher had to leave due to family commitments and the job reverted to uniformed staff for another period, based on the earlier criterion of being 'interested' in taking classes.

In the meantime I was allowed leave of absence to attend university for a degree and teacher training. The new prison at Glenochil was under construction at this time, opening in 1976. It was a designated unit for young offenders, capable of housing around five hundred (500) young men. In it was a purpose built education unit consisting of four large classrooms and an even larger, airy, art room. It was to this new unit that I came to work on completion of my training.

There were two of us, working under the guidance of an experienced educationalist from England, where he had been teaching in a remand unit for several years. The English service was streets ahead of Scotland in those days; their prison education units were being linked to local colleges, and their vocational training workshops came under the general banner of education, as well. Soon, a range of subjects was being taught, catering from teaching the very poor learner to those at the other end of the scale, wishing to sit National examinations. At one point the unit had the pleasure of having a student accepted for Open University level while still aged eighteen. He went on to successfully complete his studies at another prison.

Although a specialist in English and history, I found myself teaching in other areas such as statistics and arithmetic. The other member of staff did the same, learning and passing on new skills where possible. One year later we were joined by two further staff, the first a specialist in learning support and remedial work, as it was then known. The second person was an art specialist. The then governor, with the education officer, had recognised the importance of art input and so our unit developed a new dimension. The young offenders who attended education were, for the first time, offered a balanced diet of classwork. I believe Glenochil led the way in this respect for several years.

The unit's workload gradually broadened, including the addition of another member of staff to assist with the substantial number of inmates suffering from basic learning difficulties. Unfortunately this member came to us from another penal unit which was undergoing 'rationalisation', something which we ourselves were to discover firsthand. One member of staff was offered early retirement. The knock-on effects from this setback meant a further increase in everyone else's workload, along with the ever present spectre of wondering what would happen next. Along with most other penal institutions in Scotland, we have had to suffer the cost-cutting and financial stringency of that period.

From the mid-eighties, however, conditions improved once more and the unit managed to offer more subject areas than before, including a very comprehensive evening class programme. The morale and efficiency of the unit approached a high level and our reputation was justifiably good. By close liaison with each other, the staff at Glenochil were able to build a system of caring, balanced and relevant education, offering hope to some who regard the 'education system' as a total failure as far as they were concerned. There are some young men who can be thankful to that system, as indeed, we can be to them for proving to us that there is worth within everyone.

It was as well that we had a period of stability in the mid-eighties where lessons could be learnt by us because we were to redesignated as a prison for adults. (Cont'd PAGE 14)
immediately different, never dull (if Life was immediately different, never dull (if indeed it had ever been before), sometimes almost too much of a challenge for the writer at least. We had our riots, along with most other Scottish prisons at that time but apart from a few days lost, the unit managed to restore education to most of our full-time students as well as renewing contact with the prisoners in the halls by offering our own version of distance-learning classes, along with much needed library facilities.

New areas for consideration arose within the curriculum. A counselling programme was initiated by the education officer, along with one other member of staff who was offered the chance to receive specialist training in this area of growing importance. Most of our new population had come from other prisons and had vastly differing experience as far as penal education was concerned. One area to grow immediately was that involving Open University students. Other areas suffered. The demand for the traditional young offender style of formally taught ‘lessons’ reduced, to be replaced by a variety of topics which at first threatened to overwhelm some of us. I must admit that for a while, I felt less like a teacher than a diplomat, even at times, a juggler!

With the advent of the SCOTVEC system of modularised learning, some of the traditional methods have returned but we do not push this choice of work too hard as some adults do not see attaining certificates as important at their time of life. In one area there appears to be an exception, and that is in the use of computers. Some prisoners admit that they want to learn computing skills either to ‘set themselves up in business’, or simply, ‘to keep up with their kids’.

Recently Glenochil has been linked to the local further education college, something that has been advocated and desired for years. It looks as if it could be a profitable union. In parallel, several ‘in house’ committees have been busy working towards standardising subject choice so that prisoners can continue doing the same type of academic work regardless of where they serve their sentences. The two main subjects at the moment are those of English Communication Skills and Mathematics. I look forward to the addition of other vital topics such as Life Skills.

And so we are in the nineties, not too far from the new millennium. New challenges await, I am sure. Will we be able to cope with the changes looming in April, 1993? Will we be able to retain the special ethos that has existed in the unit? Of one thing I am positive, this has been one of the most rewarding jobs I have done.

Mike Mitchell
Scotland.

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FOURTEEN
Library Facilities and Education in Dutch Prisons.

In accordance with the prison regulations every prison in the Netherlands has library facilities. Thus prisoners are entitled to have reading material provided, just as it is laid down that they are entitled to take part in sports or to attend some sort of education.

This rule was laid down in prison regulations in 1841. So it was on 8 November 1991 that prison library services in the Netherlands had existed for 150 years.

In the context of this article we are going to ask ourselves the question: is there co-operation between the educational and the library services? What form does it take? What opportunities are available? And on what terms could the two work together?


In 1982 a policy document on prison libraries was issued by the Dutch Centre for Libraries and Literature (NBLC): the public libraries umbrella organisation of the Netherlands. This document reviewed the position of libraries in prison. One of the conclusion was that developments in prison libraries had fallen a long way behind those in public libraries in the outside world. This document was intended to summarise the present state of affairs and to look into the future.

One of the underlying principles was that efforts should be made to integrate the prison library system with the public library system as a whole.

The determination to improve libraries for prisoners is demonstrated by the fact that in 1987 a renewed policy document on prison libraries was published. This document was agreed by several officials of the NBLC. Agreements were reached about necessary improvements in the library services for prisoners and guidelines were developed. These recommendations were adopted by the Prison Service and circulated throughout the country.

In 1990 the Ministry of Justice took over the full responsibility for the development of the prison library service from the NBLC. The National library adviser for the development of the prison library service, until then employed by the NBLC, is now working full-time for the Ministry of Justice.

International Developments.

United Nations.

Rule 40 of the 'United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners':

- 'Every institution shall have a library for the use of all categories of prisoners. It should be adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books, and prisoners should be encouraged to make full use of it'.

and Council of Europe, Recommendation number R(89)12 adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 October 1989 and explanatory memorandum: Education in Prison (page 41-45). Page 41/42 about the library:

- 'libraries in the community are a source of education, information and recreation, as well as centres for cultural development. Library services for prisoners must have the same wide range of functions as progressive libraries for the public, and the same professional standards must apply. Wherever possible, prisoners should have direct access to an outside public library, which they should be able to visit from the prison on a regular basis. Otherwise, effort must be made to provide a full service within the prison.' In this publication it is also emphasised that it is important for each country to develop guidelines of this kind for the library service.

In 1992 the International Federation of Library Associates and Institutions (IFLA) will publish international guidelines for the library service for prisoners. The final draft of these guidelines were presented at the IFLA's general conference 1991 in Moscow.

The Place of the Library in the Prisons of the Nineties.

A striking feature revealed by the policy document was the isolated position occupied by the library in most prisons, as a quite separate service having very little connection with what was going on in the rest of the institution. The library generally served as 'a bookshop behind bars'. Prison libraries also proved to be isolated with regard to the outside world. Social trends which had led to changes in attitudes to the role of libraries appeared to have passed the prisons by.

The first step towards changing attitudes to prison library work and its implementations was the formulation of a number of basic principles:

- Prisoners are as entitled as other citizens to full information provision and therefore to proper library facilities. These must be situated within the institution, as it is usually impossible for the prisoners to visit public libraries themselves;
- The libraries' resources, operating methods and organisation (PAGE 16)
should be - as far as possible - in accordance with inmates' wishes and needs;

- Library services - as part of social and cultural activities - should be given a full place in the programme of prison activities. Sufficient time should therefore be provided for prisoners to use the library;

- The library should support other educational activities in the institution and its collection should be tailored to that end.

The prison library can contribute to the inmates' welfare. Reading matter, audio-visual aids and music can all have a significant place in education. Of course, reading is also an important recreational activity, enabling prisoners to remain in touch with the outside world. It is essential, therefore, that prison libraries have materials on topics of current interest. They also have a clear responsibility to support and strengthen every aspect of the institution's rehabilitation programme and should contain uncensored material expressing various viewpoints, so that prisoners may make free choices when it comes to forming opinions and developing interests themselves. The library should provide them with opportunities for study and recreation and to obtain information within the prison.

Objectives

The original objectives have become outdated and have been amended as follows.

- To encourage the free exchange of information. If the library has an adequate supply of material, it can contribute to the inmates' wellbeing and enable them to form opinions and develop interests;

- To support all the prison's activities in a way closely related to the institution's own objectives;

- To support all educational activities in the prison.

The current library collections in most prisons are more or less suitable to achieve this objective. In most prisons the library is a part of the social cultural work team.

For the development of an adequate library collection it is important that these structures exist. It is vital that there are other structures for consultation between librarians and the supervisors of other activities in the institution, so that the former may be informed about such activities and contribute to their preparation and organisation. It cannot be stressed too often that a lack of information makes cooperation difficult if not impossible.

Resources

Recent efforts have resulted in most prison library collections being nearly up to the standard. In the juvenile detention centres, however, this process is still far from completion because of funds. Some improvements in these institutions can be seen, nevertheless.

Prisons' collections must have:
books: 50% fiction; 50% non-fiction, comics, magazines, audiovisual materials, reference, dictionaries, sheet music, educational material, games: educational and recreational, easy to read materials.

Prison libraries' support for educational activities.

As mentioned above, prison libraries should serve as a support for education in their institutions. The first precondition for this is that the librarian must be aware of every development in the field of education in the prison, whether it be individual or group tuition provided by the prison teaching staff, correspondence courses or groups supervised by others.

In many institutions librarians and teaching staff meet in weekly staff meetings. This is only a development of the last few years and can help communication. It is essential that librarians and teachers are available to assist prisoners, who may then be referred to the library immediately for materials to assist (PAGE 17)

ALKMAAR, SCHUTTERSWEI

Prisoners in The Netherlands

Avant de dire n'importe quoi, sur la bibliothèque il faut d'abord donner une définition très simple de la culture, puisque celle-ci rentre dans la domaine de la culture, afin de connaitre qu'est ce que la culture, et de qui qu'elle existe...?

Alors, de mon point de vue; Avant tout, je voi que la culture est une richesse historique, et aussi comme une indicatrice des générations passé, dans les domaines, social, intellectuelles et économiques. Et de cette rôle comme indicatrice de passé, je peu dire que la culture existe depuis l'existence de l'être humain. C'est à dire qu'elle a une lineas symétrique avec l'homme.

D'où je constate, d'après cette symétrie de liaison, que l'être humain ne peut pas se détourner, de la culture, surtout de sa culture n'importe circonstance d'une autre manière même s'il est dans le prison, comme nous par exemple.

Alors là, nous remercions beaucoup monsieur le directeur et d'autre responsables de cette maison d'arrêt qui nous a ouvert cette bibliothèque et nous estime qu'il se continuera plus tard.

Afin que d'autre prisonniers qui viendront aussi eux aussi de la profit. Et aussi sans oublier les personelles qui travaillent dans cette bibliothèque qui sont vraiment gentilles et humanitaires.

Et aussi nous santons de cette bibliothèque deux choses principales:

- La première : C'est la démocratie, c'est à dire, la liberté, de choisir, la culture qui nous convient, par exemple, Arabie, France, Engles, Chinoise, etc...

- La deuxième : C'est le droit de l'homme qui est respecté, c'est à dire, le droit de lire et on d'avoir une bibliothèque aux prison.

Alors au nom des autres prisonnier signer si dessous nous disons:

- Vive les droits du l'homme
- Vive la démocratie

in their study.

The national library adviser takes part in the prison teachers' working group to enable the adviser to keep up to date with educational developments within the prisons and to keep the prison teaching staff informed of the facilities available from the libraries.

**What support can the libraries actually give to education?**

The librarian, the teaching staff and other supervisors should examine this question together, considering the following possibilities:

- **Support for supervisors of educational projects.**
  - Libraries should develop appropriate specialist collections or obtain relevant material from outside libraries;
  - Train supervisors to use their own libraries, by displaying and discussing relevant material. Information on what outside libraries have to offer should be available;
  - Develop selection criteria; for example librarians and teaching staff should select material jointly and discuss its usefulness;
  - Screen relevant newspapers and periodicals for interesting articles;
  - Offer collections of interest to particular groups which can be borrowed from outside libraries for short periods;
  - Provide simple materials; for example, reading and writing courses, if prisoners do not obtain the material themselves;
  - Assist supervisors in the selection of material - such as audiovisual aids - which can be used in group work.

- **Support to prisoners participating in education, libraries should:**
  - Provide small collections of material on particular themes for use in lessons. This may include books, periodicals, articles, newspapers, cuttings, brochures from various institutions, video/audio tapes, slides, etc;
  - Give proper training in the use of the library. A slide programme designed to instruct prisoners in the library use was issued for this purpose; this could also be used by teachers or by group leaders;
  - Permit prisoners to borrow books for longer periods for special purposes;
  - Purchase multiple copies of simple learning materials;
  - Collect information on distance learning courses;
  - Process inter-library loan requests for language courses, specific textbooks etc. on behalf of prisoners who are taking particular courses or who wish to do so;
  - Allow classes to use the library premises if they have to use its material as a group;
  - Refer prisoners to the teaching staff if it appears that they need or want some form of education;
  - Collect a proper collection of self-study materials for students who want to study on their own.

With very few exceptions, the resources of prison libraries are currently adequate to provide support in the ways outlined above. Also, it is possible to offer some facilities with the help of local public libraries, provincial library systems and university libraries. Prison libraries should therefore liaise with them. Where this is not happening it would be helpful to invite outside library officials to prisons to give them a clearer picture of what is required. Similarly, the prison libraries would be performing a service if, following consultation within the institution about future activities, they were to contact outside (public) libraries in good time to find out about the materials available and the possibilities of borrowing them. Supervisors and teaching staff should also visit public libraries to learn about the facilities they offer.

If a start is to be made on cooperation between the different disciplines within institutions an effort must be made on both sides. Both teachers and librarians must realise that cooperation make sense and will benefit their work.

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AN IRISH PRISON TEACHER VISITS

A NICARAGUAN PRISON

It was hot in the open back of the pick-up truck as we came up the hill towards the prison. The soil looked poor and the landscape rather bleak. Of the seven of us, I was probably the most interested in this visit, since I work as a prison teacher.

This was one of many visits and meetings set up for us by Isobel, who organised our six week stay in Nicaragua. An Irishwoman, she has worked for more than a year as the local representative of the Irish Nicaraguan Support Group, and has been organising visiting groups and work in Nicaragua.

We were expected, and gained admission to the administration area without difficulty. There seemed to be very few people about. Carlos, a lieutenant in the prison service, greeted us and took us to his office for a preliminary talk. We sat around and listened to his introduction to the prison system.

The modern system dates from the 1979 revolution. Prior to this Nicaragua was typical of the many central-American countries in that murder, torture, general neglect and ill-treatment of prisoners was commonplace. With the fall of the Dictator Somosa, the Revolutionary Government - the Sandinistas - took office. The old prison system was scrapped. The new Minister of the Interior, Tomas Borge, had suffered under the Somosa regime and was no stranger to prisons. He drew on the experience of many countries to set up a humane system, and to train prison officers in its implementation. A poet as well as a politician, Borge wrote of his revenge on his torturers......

"My personal revenge will be to offer these hands you once ill-treated
With all their tenderness intact."

Prison Officers were recruited from the Sandinista army. Our guide, Carlos, who had spent some years fighting against Somoza, and later the American-backed Contras, was amongst the first recruits.

Carlos described a system whereby good behaviour lead to progressively better privileges. After a period of acclimatization, prisoners are expected to work. They are paid for working and are allowed home to visit their families at this stage. Maintaining family ties is considered of major importance, and even before the prisoner is eligible for a visit home, his family may come and stay with him for a weekend, in a special part of the prison. As the sentence progresses, the prisoner gets more and more freedom and in the latter part of the sentence can go home once a month for forty-eight hours, and for eight days every six months.

Great emphasis is placed on education. The Sandinistas organised an extraordinary nationwide literacy campaign during the 1980's, and the prisons included. Prison inmates are guaranteed access to literacy training, and participation is encouraged. With the active participation of the prisoners the officers organise cultural, sporting and recreational activity. Further help is given with the supply of books, newspapers and TV, all designed to aid prisoners in their contact with the economic, social and political life of the country. Each prison has a library and a school.

Carlos is responsible for organising educational activity, but the teaching is done by prisoners. Classes range from basic literacy to maths, geography and history. Vocational training is limited by a lack of finance, but the prison does have a carpentry workshop and a hairdressing training unit.

There were 500 inmates in large dormitory-type cells of 50 to 100 prisoners. I asked how many officers there were, and was told, to my surprise, that there were between five and eight by day, and fewer by night, all unarmed. When pressed about the accuracy of this figure, Carlos, trying to be helpful admitted that there was a woman who did some cleaning in the administration area, and another who did some of the cooking! There had been no indiscipline for the past three months.

Our time was very limited, as we had another meeting later that day, so we headed off to see the prison proper. I wondered to what extent I would be able to confirm or deny all that we had been told.

I relaxed completely once we had passed through the gate. The energy and atmosphere was very different to anything I have experienced. We passed large groups of prisoners going about their business. I asked Carlos if I could take some photographs and he answered "Why not?" We were allowed into all the large cells, with or without Carlos, who hadn't the slightest interest in monitoring our conversations with the prisoners. I was the only male in our group and the only one with experience of prisons, but we all felt safe. No one contradicted anything that we had been told. There seemed no animosity towards the officers.

We had been told that food and medicine were in particularly short supply since the recent change of government, following the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas. The prisoners understood this and didn't hold the officers responsible.

Even by the standards of a very poor country, the prison fare is meagre. As Carlos put it, "Rice and beans for breakfast, beans and rice for lunch and gallo pinto - a mixture of rice and beans - for dinner." The cooking is done on a large open fire.

Recently there had been an epidemic in the prison which they feared was cholera, but fortunately turned out to be stomach amoebae, a lesser evil. They have no disinfectant or cleaning utensils. (Cont'd PAGE 19)
NICARAGUA

(From PAGE 18)

but they do their best to maintain a standard of hygiene. The prison is very vulnerable to the South American cholera epidemic which could hit the country at any time. At their own request, a group of inmates are allowed out once a month, in a loudspeaker-equipped truck, in order to beg for food in the nearby town of Matagalpa.

I spoke to teachers in the large school area, and later saw the packed classes of attentive students - men and women mixed for educational purposes. They lack books, paper, pencils, guitar strings, sports equipment and everything else you care to mention. They cannot supply work to all the prisoners who are eligible for it, and the neighbouring land is too poor to grow crops. They used to get help from non-governmental organisations, but these have now largely withdrawn from Nicaragua. Carlos says that no one thinks of ‘twinning’ prisons, and this is a pity. The prisoners need so much in terms of education, sport and cultural material, but they are forgotten. I make no promises, but I say that I will think about what might be done in terms of aid from Ireland.

As we walked towards our truck Carlos said, “we are unarmed and safe.” He thanked us warmly for coming and asked us to sign the Visitors Book. I noted that there were few visits these days. Lurching back down the hill to town for lunch, I think of the hundreds of questions that I should have asked had I had the time, but I am deeply impressed by what I have seen.

Some weeks later in Ireland, Kevin, a colleague of mine, suggested that I write this article and I said that I would, except that there are so many things that I don’t understand - such as why, in a country where ‘machismo’ rules and violence is far from unknown, some 500 inmates and a handful of officers can live in such apparent harmony?

Does anyone have any ideas on the ‘twinning’ of prisons?

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Fort Mitchell Prison
Spike Island
Cobh
Co. Cork.
Ireland

GROUPS OF INMATES ARE ALLOWED OUT ONCE A MONTH TO BEG FOR FOOD

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NINETEEN
Prison Education and Living Skills


This was the sixth Scandinavian conference on the theme of Prison Education. The conference takes place every two to four years and has been held in different countries. It started in the early seventies with two conferences in Sweden, then in Finland, Denmark and in 1989 it was in Norway. This year it was back in Sweden again to restart the cycle. Each conference has been arranged through the Nordic Folk Academy (NFA).

The main purpose of the conference has been to provide a forum to compare, discuss and develop the prison education in the Nordic countries. Each conference has had about 35 to 40 delegates, most them prison teachers and administrators.

The August 1991 conference was held in Gothenburg, on the west coast of Sweden. The NFA hosted the conference in their new buildings on the Gothenburg dockside. 50 delegates from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden met for an interesting week in the middle of August. For the first time we were really international, with Hendrik Hoekema from Simon Fraser University of Vancouver, Canada, joining us. Normally we were able to conduct these conferences in our own languages. The ‘Canadian-day’ in English was a great success because of Hendrik’s brilliant performance and very interesting thoughts on prison education and the programmes of ‘Living/life skills’ from Simon Fraser University.

Even an interesting programme must have breaks where people can meet new friends and discuss similar problems and perhaps see a different way of handling them. We think that many of us will most remember these moments when we felt that there are common concerns and commitments that are independent of nationality. As teachers we all know that doing things together is a good way of breaking through ‘walls’. So, one evening we had a ‘self-made ‘Nordic Cabaret’ a brilliant, marvellous show of dancing, singing, talking, theatre......

Did we give information about the EPEA?? Of course we did, and as a result of this the European Prison Education Association has 29 new members!

From the Nordic/Scandinavian point of view we look forward to the next conference in 1993 (perhaps we should integrate the Nordic meeting with the EPEA conference in 93???)

Torfinn Langelid / Svenlov Svensson.
Norway and Sweden

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Conference on PRISON EDUCATION in TALLINN ESTONIA

May 26 -29 1992

Conference fee US$400, includes accommodation, meals, prison visit and sightseeing. Working language will be ENGLISH. Flights can be booked from Frankfurt or Budapest. Ferry-boat services from Helsinki or Stockholm.

A warm invitation is extended to all E.P.E.A. readers.

Details from: MADE KIRTS

FAX (7) 0142 425 943

or 0142 437 892

Phone 0142 437 891

(Please ‘phone on Monday, Wed or Thursday only from 9am to 12 noon - local time)
The OPEN UNIVERSITY Advanced Diploma in Prison Studies - England & Wales and OPEN TO EUROPEANS

Since 1972 the Open University has been actively involved in the Home Office Education Department in the provision of courses for undergraduate level study for inmates in many prisons throughout England and Wales. Similar opportunities have been created in Scotland and Northern Ireland. There are currently about 350 men and women who are inmates in more than 70 prisons registered on OU degree courses.

More recently the university has been concerned to provide an Advanced Diploma in Prison Studies which will create new academic and training opportunities for those with a wide range of interests in the many aspects of work relating to prisons.

The diploma will extend over a period of two years. Study throughout will be on a part-time basis extending to some 15 hours per week for 30 weeks of the year.

The objectives for Part 1 of the diploma are:

- To give students a thorough grounding in historical, sociological, psychological and social policy aspects of the criminal justice system.
- To introduce students to major areas of penological and institutional theory.
- To enable students to evaluate and use published criminological and penological research.

Successful attainment of Part 1 will require completion of an established third level course D310, (honours level), Crime, Justice and Society. This course includes an especially written block dealing with criminological research which will be taken by all who wish to gain eligibility for registration for Part 2 of the diploma.

Teaching on this course will follow the established multi-media methods employed for OU undergraduate courses. Teaching and learning are predicated on distance teaching methods. Students receive printed texts of the course materials which they study in their own homes. Some materials are presented on audio-cassettes. Students must complete six written assignments which are marked by tutors who will include substantial teaching comments on the scripts when these are returned to the students. A programme of optional tutorials will be arranged at locations throughout the UK. Assessment of this course is 50% through continuous assessment and 50% through a 3 hour closed book examination held at the end of the course. Students must successfully pass both elements of the course.

Students will need to write in English, and to telephone or meet their tutors face to face.

Part 2 of the diploma will be presented for the first time in 1992. Materials will include printed texts, a number of set books and audio-cassettes. The objectives for Part 2 of the course are:

- To enable students to prepare an outline proposal for penological research, and
- To enable students to carry out a limited piece of independent research.

Successful completion of this diploma will demand thorough skills of independent studentship, the capacity to work well without constant supervision and the ability to plan and organise one's own work. Because of the level of work required in this Advanced Diploma, students should normally have completed appropriate courses at a further or higher education level before registering for the diploma. Students who do not have the appropriate prerequisite academic experience may wish to register on suitable OU undergraduate courses before embarking on D310.

All enquiries should be addressed to the Open University at Walton Hall Milton Keynes MK7 6AA UK, or to any of their thirteen Regional Centres in the UK, or to one of their agents in Europe.

Liz Cronhelm
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This Newsletter was produced by
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