

**GENERAL COUNCIL: EPEA General Council**

The general council takes place every two years.

DENMARK: Danish Prison Education under the Magnifying Glass

2nd leg of a research is completed

EPEA CONFERENCE 1: Opening Address

Opening address of the EPEA Chairperson and other reports

GERMANY: Der Spiegel reports

Germany reports more closed institutions for juvenile prisoners

COUNCIL OF EUROPE: INGO produces newsletter

1 issue published

ALBANIA: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION UPGRADE

The General Directorate of Prison invest more in prison education

NETHERLANDS: PHOTO WORKSHOP

Photo manipulation – the new subject in prison education

ENGLAND: ERWIN JAMES BLOG

Presentation of an EPEA conference keynote speaker and his blog

CALENDAR – SEMINARS

Grundtvig contact seminars

EPEA CONFERENCE 2: IMPRESSIONS

Pictures from the conference

EPEA General Council

20 members attended the General Council.

Secretary Anita Wilson presented the work of the EPEA since she was elected as a Secretary. The report was accepted.

The treasurer Gisle Gral-Jacobsen presented the EPEA budgets stating that the EPEA has a healthy economy. It was suggested to spend money on a LP meeting in 2008. The report was accepted.

The membership secretary Torfinn Langelid stated that the EPEA currently are having 590 individual members and 1400 members in general. 37 countries have members in the EPEA. The report was accepted.



Torfinn Langelid gave his last report as membership secretary

The suggestion to change the constitution was accepted. The new constitution is on the web site.

The result of the elections of regional representatives is as follows:

Western region:
Ms Katinka Reijnders,
The Netherlands

Central Region:
Péter Ruzsonyi,
Hungary

Eastern Region:
Valentina Petrova,
Bulgaria

Northern Region:
Kerstin Ekholm-Erestam,
Sweden

Southern Region:
Petros Damianos,
Hellas

On a meeting following the General Council the Steering Committee decided to continue the co-option of Valentina Petrova as Project Coordinator, Janine Duprey-Kennedy as CoE representative and Per Thrane as Webmaster.

Danish Research

Prison Education and inmates wishes concerning education has been in focus in a recent research conducted in Danish prisons by the Danish Pedagogical University.

11,5% states that they have not completed any education or training at all. This includes basic schooling. Among the age group from 18 to 24, 16,1% have no education at all. The figure for inmates older than 35 is 8%. In comparison 0,0% of the total Danish population over 18 years of age is registered as having no education at all by The Statistical Bureau of Denmark.

36,6% - of the inmates who does not attend education or training while imprisoned states that it is because the prison does not offer suitable educational programs.

App. 20% of the inmates study while imprisoned.

38,8% - of the inmates who does not attend education or training while imprisoned states that it is because they have never been informed about the educational opportunities.

A full overview will be published in a forthcoming issue of the EPEA Magazine.

Conference Opening Address

The conference was opened with an address of the Chairperson Anne Costelloe. She said:



Since our last conference in Sofia (and I must complement our Bulgarian friends for that success, it's indeed a hard act to follow), many of the trends in prison policy and tendencies in prison education that were emerging there have become even more evident now. In particular, I am referring to European-wide trends in penal discourse and political rhetoric that are promoting a 'hard-line'

attitude to crime and punishment. It would seem to me that the 'get tough on crime' and 'lock 'em up' discourse has become even more entrenched in our public psyche and is thus given central stage on political agendas. As educators, this can be very disheartening because such rhetoric fuels the public perception that we must build more prisons, put more people in them, and then tighten the regimes within which we operate.

Of course, when it becomes accepted as common sense and justified to imprison more people, increase the length of sentences, reduce the amount of temporary release options, restrict access to open prisons and alternative programmes, and so on, when that tightening becomes accepted, the next question, is what do we do with them all now that we have locked them all up? Unfortunately, it would seem to me, that in answer to that question, prison education is finding it increasingly difficult to have its voice heard. Instead, options and regimes that emphasise 'programmes that seek to directly address offending behaviour' have become flavour of the month and de rigour. Of course this is not surprising because our politicians, our policy makers, and indeed the public, want to hear of instant success stories. They want to hear that it is possible to quickly, easily and cheaply fix all that is wrong with our criminals once they are imprisoned. Therefore, more traditional, or 'old-fashioned', Socratic education programmes and less instant options are finding it difficult to compete, and I believe, are in danger of being sidelined.

The speech in total length can be read from the home page:
http://www.epea.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=313&Itemid=375

Germany reports many new closed institutions for juvenile prisoners

The German news magazine Der Spiegel tells that Germany has 19 closed juvenile prisons for young offenders between 10 and 14 year. 260 juvenile prisoners are behind bars. Just 8 years ago this number was 120. More of these prisons are in planning.

Most of the children has lived as prostitutes or have been threatening the life of others like teachers or parents.

The young offenders stay in average 11 months in the institution and they are released when their situation according to psychologists and pedagogues is stabilized.

A recent research shows that most children have recorded severe difficulties already from the age of 8. Over half of the children have been raised by the mother alone, but if the father had been present in the family the children reports that they have been beaten by the father. About 30% come from presumable well situated families.

Almost all of the juvenile prisoners' miss schooling and education, sports and cognitive activities are an important part of the strict daily routine.

Der Spiegel reports that all prisons have a Jugenschutzraum or a special cell to isolate juvenile prisoners that are getting out of control in the institution.

There are no statistics or research that shows the effect of the special institutions, but the institutions estimates that about half of the juvenile prisoners manage to live an almost unnoticed life in the future.

The closed juvenile prisons are debated in Germany and called Child Prisons by opponents. Der Spiegel asked 1000 persons in a survey if they approve the existents of the institutions. 53% said yes, 35% no.

INGOs at the CoE produce a newsletter

The EPEA representative at the CoE Janine Dupre-Kennedy reports that the The INGOs at the Council of Europe has produces a first rainbow issue of a newsletter.

The newsletter will on a regular basis report on recent developments and inform about the work of the INGOs.

A blog with the purpose to discuss the organisation of the INGOs at the CoE is opened for all to take part in.

Retrieve the document here
http://www.coe.int/t/e/ngo/public/INGO_%20NEWS.doc

A Spoon?

From the Prison Art Network



The wooden sculpture is produced by an anonymous inmate in a prison in Scandinavia. Working with the sculpture the inmate experienced a lot of interesting comments and conversations on what it could be while working on the sculpture. The inmates own explanation is,

"The story this piece of wood is telling is the story about a half burned piece of pine full of knots, tensions and rot - in other words a piece of scrap wood, however there is a beauty and from only waiting for a will to become and get expressed, and through its form, tell its story. The form is the story, which however is determined by the eyes watching..."

The picture was presented in form of a blog and the sculptor got some feedback on his art work.

His reply:

First of all I'd like to express my gratitude for the possibility to work

on this piece of wood as well as for all the positive feedback.

I also think there is 'hope' for all of us - and that we all with the will for changes being there as well as the right treatment/ help/ advice do have the possibility to express our 'inner' beauty. And yes, I do think that this is part of the message told by this piece of wood - thus the form being the content.

As to what each individual sees in the form, what content it reveals I leave that up to the eyes watching to determine :) ...

See and take part:

www.panproject.org

Photo Workshop in Netherlands

www.panproject.org

The special individual care unit of the secure prison of Vught in The Netherlands held a graffiti, rap, dance and photo workshop with the inmates.

An old tradition to work with photos has changed with the use of digital cameras.

Photo art and picture manipulation becomes the new photo tradition in prisons as seen with these examples from Vught.



Erwin James Blog

One of the keynote speakers at the EPEA Conference in Dublin was Erwin James.



Erwin James served 20 years of a life sentence before his release in August 2004. In prison he took a degree course with the Open University, majoring in history, and graduated in 1994. His first article for a national newspaper, the Independent, appeared in 1994. He won first prize in the annual Koestler awards for prose in 1995. His first article in the Guardian appeared in 1998 and he began writing a regular column, entitled A Life Inside, in The Guardian in 2000. A collection of his columns, A Life Inside, a Prisoner's Notebook, was published in 2003. A follow-up, The Home Stretch, From Prison to Parole, was published in April 2005.

Erwin James has a blog on The Guardian home page

http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/erwin_james/

Albania improves prison education

The Albanian General Directorate of Prisons has financed a new prison education initiative.

All prison schools and educational staff has to find vocational schools near their institution to cooperate to include their programs and teachers in special vocational courses. The prisoners that will attend the courses will be certificated by the vocational school. In parallel the General Directorate of Prisons are working with the Ministry of Education to have an arrangement over the recognition of the certification after inmates have completed their sentences in prison.

Calendar - Grundtvig contact seminars

1st-4th November 2007: Prague, Czech Republic

Theme: 'Intercultural Education'
Target Group: Representatives of institutions/organisations who are interested in the above theme and who are committed to developing a Grundtvig project.

11th-14th November 2007: Berlin, Germany

Theme: "Active Citizenship"
Target Group: Representatives of institutions/organisations who are interested in the above theme

and who are committed to developing a Grundtvig project

7th-11th November 2007: Bordeaux, France

Theme: "Inclusion of disabled adults and their families".
Target Group: Representatives of Institutions/Organisations who are interested in the above theme and who are committed to developing a Grundtvig project.

22nd-25th November 2007: Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland

Theme: 'Family Literacy and Numeracy'
Target Group: Representatives of institutions/organisations who are interested in the above theme and who are committed to developing a Grundtvig project

5th-10th December 2007: Toulouse, France

Theme: "LLP and Intercultural Dialogue"
Target Group: Representatives of institutions/organisations who are interested in the above theme and who are committed to developing a Grundtvig project.

11th Conference in Dublin

Congratulation to the IPEA who organised the very successful 11th International EPEA Conference, which took place in Dublin during June.

Over 180 prison educators experienced an excellent mix of practical and academic workshops, cultural activities and social events. The Keynote Speeches were noteworthy and deftly managed to set an uplifting and celebratory tone for the whole event.

A full report on the conference will be published over the coming months; in the meantime, the following photographs might serve to bring back some happy memories.





Photos: Josef Polcer (Czech Rep.) & Per Thrane (Denmark)

