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GRUNDTVIG AND LEONARDO DA VINCI

Analysis of Projects and Key Messages

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Pathways to Inclusion –

Strengthening European Cooperation
in Prison Education and Training

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1 INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the results of projects funded by the European Commission in relation to prison education and training and provides an overview of the types of activities carried out and the outputs and results achieved by projects funded through the Socrates II, Leonardo da Vinci and Lifelong Learning Programmes (mainly through the Grundtvig and Leonardo programmes) over the period 2000–2011. Some project examples are provided to illustrate the types of activities undertaken, the achievements of the projects and what led to their success. A short description of all of the EU-funded projects identified in relation to prison education and training can be found in the ‘compendium of projects’.

In order to carry out this analysis of Socrates II, Leonardo and LLP projects, a range of data sources were used, which were either provided by the European Commission, or publicly available. These were:

- Data from the project application forms, including a description of the proposed activities and a list of the partners involved;
- Data from interim and final reports, including information on progress or achievements against the proposed objectives;
- Completed project ‘matrices’ which were returned to the Commission in late 2009 and early 2010 by the project teams. These included information on the partner organisations, the activities carried out, the themes and target groups focused on by the projects and the outputs achieved;
- Project websites and other materials, either accessible via the Internet or provided in hard copy format by the European Commission.

It is important to note that while data from the application form was received for the majority of projects, the remaining data sources were available for only a proportion of the total number of projects. For example, a number of project websites or web pages are no longer ‘live’ and just over half (49) of the 2000–2009 projects completed a matrix, while interim and final reports or outputs were only available for a small number.

This section commences with a brief introduction to the projects funded, the countries involved and the themes and target groups addressed. This first section has been updated with data from projects funded in 2010 and 2011. After this, a review of the projects follows, examining the types of activities undertaken and outputs and impact achieved, as well as suggesting some ‘success factors’ which have helped certain projects to achieve their objectives. The review part of the paper has not been modified from its original version that was prepared by GHK for the *Pathways to Inclusion* conference in Budapest in February 2010. Hence, the conclusions it draws are based purely on data from the 2000–2009 projects.

2 PRISON EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITHIN THE SOCRATES, LEONARDO AND LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMMES

2.1 The projects - updated

This section commences with some quantitative data relating to the projects funded through the Socrates, Leonardo and Lifelong Learning programmes since 2000.

Table 1, below, shows the number of projects relating to prison education and training funded under each of the programmes, by year. In total, 113 projects were funded through the Socrates, Leonardo and Lifelong Learning Programmes, the large majority of which (95) fell under the Grundtvig programme. 45 projects were funded during the three-year period between 2005 and 2007.

Table 1. Number of projects funded through the Socrates, Leonardo and Lifelong Learning Programmes, by year

Total number of projects	Unknown	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Grundtvig		3	1	4	9	14	12	15	6	9	7	15	95
Leonardo	1	3	1	2		1	1	2	1	2	1	1	16
Accompanying Measures			1										1
Joint Actions			1										1
Total	1	6	4	6	9	15	13	17	7	11	8	16	113

Since the *Pathways to inclusion* conference 24 projects have been funded by the European Commission. A very large majority of them were funded by the Grundtvig programme (22), whilst 2 were funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Year 2011 marked a significant increase in prison education projects funded, in fact only in 2007 had a greater amount of projects received grants from the European Commission.

Table 2 shows the number of projects led by each of the countries involved in the programmes. Lead partners were spread fairly evenly across Europe, with no clear geographical trends. The United Kingdom was the lead partner in the greatest number of projects (18), followed by Italy (15), Spain (11), Germany (9) and France (8). Since the *Pathways to Inclusion* conference one new country took up the lead in a project: the Czech Republic. Only eight countries have not yet acted as lead partners: Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Portugal and Sweden. Since the conference, the most active lead countries in prison education have been Italy and Romania (5).

Table 2. Project lead partner countries by programme

Lead Partner countries	Grundtvig	Leonardo	Joint Actions	Accompanying Measures	Total
Austria					0
Belgium	4				4
Bulgaria	4	1			5
Cyprus					0
Czech Republic	1				1
Denmark	1				1
Estonia	1				1
Finland					0
France	7	1			8
Germany	8	1			9
Greece		1			1
Hungary	1				1
Iceland					0
Ireland	2	1			3
Italy	14	1			15
Latvia					0
Liechtenstein					0
Lithuania	4				4
Luxembourg		1			1
Malta	1				1
Netherlands		1			1
Norway	7				7
Poland	4				4
Portugal					0
Romania	4	2			6
Slovakia	2				2
Slovenia	2	1			3
Spain	8	2	1		11
Sweden					0
Turkey	1				1
United Kingdom	15	3			18
Other (e.g international organisations such as EPEA)	4			1	5
Total	95	16	1	1	113

All projects were run by a partnership consisting of a number of organisations. Table 3, below, shows how many projects each country was involved in as partner(s). Where one country was represented by two organisations, this has been counted in the table as one 'participation'.

Almost all European countries were involved in projects as (non-lead) partners, with no clear geographical differences. Only two very small European countries were not involved in projects as partners: Iceland and Liechtenstein. Germany was involved in the most projects as a partner country (34), followed by Italy (33), Spain (31) and France (29). Moreover, overall, 22 countries acted as partner countries in more than 10 projects. With regard to the newer Member States, Romania (21), Lithuania (17) and Bulgaria (15) were involved in the most

projects as partner countries. Since the *Pathways to Inclusion* conference the most active partner countries have been Greece (7), Italy (6), Lithuania and Cyprus (5).

Table 3. Project partner countries by programme

Projects per Partner countries	Grundtvig	Leonardo	Joint Actions	Total
Austria	9	2	0	11
Belgium	17	2	0	19
Bulgaria	11	4	0	15
Cyprus	7	2	0	9
Czech Republic	12	1	0	13
Denmark	13	1	0	14
Estonia	12	2	0	14
Finland	11	0	0	11
France	23	6	1	29
Germany	31	2	1	34
Greece	25	5	0	30
Hungary	5	1	0	6
Iceland	0	0	0	0
Ireland	11	2	0	13
Italy	28	4	1	33
Latvia	7	0	0	7
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	13	4	0	17
Luxembourg	1	0	0	1
Malta	11	0	0	11
Netherlands	8	3	1	12
Norway	18	1	0	19
Poland	11	1	0	12
Portugal	18	4	0	22
Romania	17	4	0	21
Slovakia	4	0	0	4
Slovenia	4	0	0	4
Spain	24	6	1	31
Sweden	10	2	0	12
Turkey	8	0	0	8
United Kingdom	20	2	1	23
Other (international organisations and Russia)	2	0	0	2

In the 'project matrix' template distributed to projects for the purposes of the *Pathways to Inclusion* conference, projects were asked to categorise their project according to the themes in the table below. They were asked to select up to three themes which their project addressed. For those projects which did not complete a 'matrix', GHK categorised them in up to three themes, according to the project information available. Table 4 shows the themes addressed by the projects, according to this process of categorisation. The 2010–2011

projects were categorised into the themes without consulting their preferences. Hence, these projects have been marked in a separate column.

Table 4. Projects by theme, according the first, second and third choice

Total number of projects per theme	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	2010-2011	Total
Adult basic education / Literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, soft skills	18	5	4	1	28
Arts and cultural creativity	14	2	5	8	29
Vocational Training	5	6	4	2	17
Guidance and counselling, Validation of competences, Qualifications frameworks	8	8	3	4	23
E-Learning, Information technology, Distance learning	9	5	5	3	22
The prison as a positive environment for learning: régime issues, role of governors, prison officers supportive of learning	5	12	5	2	24
Initial and in-service teacher training	9	4	4	13	30
Future research needs relating to prison education and training	0	4	4	0	8
Transition and Reintegration	20	10	8	12	50

In total, by far the most commonly addressed theme was transition and reintegration (50), followed by initial and in-service teacher training (30), arts and cultural creativity (29) and adult basic education (28). In the projects from 2000 to 2009, transition and reintegration (20), adult basic education (18), and arts and cultural creativity (14) were the most cited by projects as the principal project themes. The least popular theme was targeted by projects was future research needs (8).

Since the *Pathways to Inclusion* conference, emphasis has been placed in particular on initial and in-service teacher training (13), transition and reintegration (12) and arts and cultural creativity (8). According to this data, there seems to be a shift in focus from adult basic education and prison as a positive learning environment towards teacher training and arts and culture.

In the 'matrix' template, projects were also asked to identify which specific target groups of offenders they had worked with. Only 22 projects responded to this question, with most of other completed matrices indicating that the projects had worked with all types of offenders and not specific sub-groups. Again, for those projects which did not complete a matrix, GHK selected a category, where appropriate. It is important to note that many projects in fact worked with staff supporting (ex-) offenders, e.g. prison educators and prison officers, but these were not included in the list of possible target groups. The 2010–2011 projects were classified according to the specific target groups only if there was a very clear focus on a given group. Five projects were classified according to this criterion. In addition to the target groups listed on Table 5, two projects (2010–2011) focused on fathers in prison.

Table 5 shows the specific target groups projects worked with. Juvenile offenders were recorded by the most number of projects as being the primary project target group (12), as well as one of the target groups (17). Foreign offenders and those with a migration or ethnic background were the second most common group targeted by projects (14), closely followed by short-term offenders (12) and Offenders with learning difficulties or mental health problems (12). Female offenders were the least common target group and were reported by six projects as being part of the target group identified.

Table 5. Projects by target group, according the first, second and third choice

Projects per Target Group	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	2010-2011	Total
Juvenile offenders	12	3	0	3	18
Foreign offenders and offenders from a migration or ethnic minority background	5	4	4	1	14
Female offenders	3	2	1		6
Long-term offenders	4	3	2		9
Short-term offenders	4	5	3	1	13
Offenders with learning difficulties or mental health problems	4	3	4	1	12

Finally, while most projects focused only on prison education and training, some projects worked with a range of target groups, of which (ex-) offenders were one among several categories of disadvantaged persons. This was the case for the Preparing for and Handling Opportunities for Employment, saying “No” to Isolation and Xenophobia (2) project, which developed a course to help disadvantaged groups to access employment and also for the project Crossing the Bridge, which sought to promote intercultural awareness among disadvantaged groups.

Although the focus of this paper is on ‘prison’ education, for the purposes of the analysis we have also considered projects working with ex-offenders. This is in line with the fact that there is growing recognition of the need to provide offenders with a ‘seamless’ support package from arrest through to release and beyond.

As previously stated, all projects which have been considered for this analytical paper had some connection with the education and training of offenders, or ex-offenders. However, the 113 projects set out to achieve a wide range of aims and objectives and carried out many different types of activities. Partners sought to learn from each other by working transnationally; to work directly with beneficiaries, both (ex-)offenders and staff working with them; to create new products for use in prison education and training; and to find out more about or raise awareness of issues connected with prison education and training, amongst others. The following section provides an overview of the projects’ aims and objectives, as well as the activities undertaken in order to achieve these and the outputs and results achieved.

2.2 Mutual learning and developing sustainable networks

While all the projects, by their nature, provided an opportunity for the partner organisations to work together and in doing so encourage participants to learn from each other or exchange experiences, some focused particularly on facilitating mutual learning.

The RESO (Reintegrating prisoners through local partnership) project, for example, brought together six partner organisations (from France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the UK) with the aim of facilitating an exchange of knowledge, experiences, pedagogical resources and good practice. Its ultimate aims were to diminish the isolation in which prisons are often found and to maximise the synergy between prisons and other relevant institutions, thereby creating better links for offenders' transitions.

In order to support this process of mutual learning, the majority of projects undertook some form of mobility activities, for example partnership meetings, events such as conferences or seminars or visits to places of relevance. Electronic communication tools have also been widely used by the projects in order to facilitate 'virtual' exchanges among partners and also with stakeholders (e.g. through project websites or electronic newsletters). For this process of mutual learning to be most effective, **it is important for partnerships to be formed of organisations with complementary strengths and interests.**

These activities enable the partners involved to develop strong and often lasting relationships with peers from across Europe. Participants in the Hidden Arts project, for example, said that "*Hidden arts fills our lives with many new contacts and topics. The project gives us the possibility to cooperate with highly motivated European partners and to learn from each other.*"¹ Partners in this project work with disadvantaged people and use arts, music and culture to help the learners to cope better with life. The project aim was to build up an international network to develop new ideas and inspiration on this field. By taking part in Hidden Arts, both learners and teachers developed their skills of expression, social skills and self-confidence. Furthermore, they developed better European and intercultural awareness. One partner organisation (*Katholisches Bildungswerk* in Austria) was able to introduce prison education to a prison as a result of the project.

By sharing experiences and learning, project partners can develop new ideas or transfer tried and tested practices to improve their own work. This should ultimately result in better quality provision for learners and enhanced transferability of the solutions developed and tested, as demonstrated in the description below of the Virtual European Prison School (VEPS) project.

¹ Quote taken from project 'matrix'

Virtual European Prison School, VEPS² (Grundtvig)

The VEPS project, led by the European Prison Education Association³ (EPEA) brought partners together from eight European countries⁴. It led to the transnational transfer of best existing practice and the establishment of a web-based Virtual Prison School.

Three examples of best practice were identified which could be transferred from one partner country to another:

1. **The Norwegian modular system:** Short-term, modular courses are used in Norway as a way of making education more attractive to offenders, who often have negative previous experiences of the education system, and as a way of supporting those on short-term sentences. The VEPS project provided the opportunity to test the applicability of this module system in Bulgaria, where the existing system of prison education and training was in need of review and restructure.

2. **The Swedish distance learning model:** Over 800 courses can be delivered through the Swedish distance learning system (which is described in the pre-conference background paper), meaning that every prisoner, including non-Swedish prisoners, can have access to wide range of subjects. VEPS partners from the Czech Republic and the UK were able to investigate the applicability of the model for their countries.

3. **Irish Personal Development Programmes:** The Greek VEPS partners decided that one particular element of the Irish approach to prison education and training could be adapted for use in Greece – the Pre-Release Programmes. They designed a generic pre-release programme based on the Irish experiences but relevant to the Hellenic context.

In addition to this process of transferring practices, a 'Virtual European Prison School' was created, which is a repository for educational programmes, materials, etc, which prison educators can access to assist all students to study in their mother tongue or achieve certification from their country of origin while imprisoned abroad. The VEPS Steering Group hopes to develop this resource further over the coming years

By supporting the transfer of distance learning methodologies and the creation of e-learning opportunities, the project helped to widen both provision and access. VEPS also led to significant changes in policy direction and the restructuring of some prison education services. The transfer of the Norwegian modular system to Bulgaria led to a national review of the Bulgarian prison education service, which resulted in the decision to upgrade the service in order to bring it more in line with European counterparts.

A range of dissemination activities were carried out, including the publication and distribution of publicity materials, an International Conference for Directors and Coordinators of Prison Education, local workshops and seminars and the presentation of the project outputs to the Council of Europe. In this way, it is hoped that the project's achievements will be sustained in the longer-term.

Finally, this project led to a unique opportunity for partner organisations to visit the Modern University of the Humanities (MUH) in Russia, to find out how the University provides distance education in a number of prisons across Russia⁵. Partners felt they had a lot to learn from the MUH provision. For instance, one of the lessons learned was the need to ensure quality training is provided to teachers, in order that they are not only familiar with the new technologies but also that they update their own methods and materials for the effective delivery of the new provision.

² <http://www.prisoneducation.eu/>

³ <http://www.epea.org/>

⁴ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England, France, Greece, Ireland, Norway and Sweden

⁵ MUH is the only higher education institution/television company in the world and it is also one of the largest institutions of higher education in Russia with more than 140,000 students and 500 branches in Russia and abroad

Partner organisations in The Will to Dream project learned about the benefits of using theatre and video in prison education. International meetings and events were an important part of the mutual learning process, as described below.

The Will to Dream⁶ (Grundtvig)

This project was led by Manchester College⁷ and brought together partners from six different European countries. The partners wanted to encourage the practical use of theatre and video in adult prison education across Europe, with a particular focus on providing support to countries in eastern and central Europe with limited theatre experience. Partners worked towards a number of aims, including facilitating the exchange of information and best practice between centres experienced in using theatre and video in adult prison education and those with limited experience, especially in eastern and central Europe. International meetings were felt to play an important part in helping to meet the project's aims. These events gave partners the opportunity to share expertise and experiences via presentations, performances and workshops. They were also used to identify how the project outcomes could be presented to a wider audience of stakeholders at local, regional and national level.

One of the key outcomes of the project was to introduce inexperienced partners to the benefits of using drama and video with offenders. Two key events helped to facilitate this outcome: a project meeting in Bulgaria which was held in combination with the conference of another Grundtvig project, the 'PAN European Network' (see below for more detail on this project) and a meeting held in Lithuania, where partners delivered practical workshops to trainee prison teachers, inmates and prison officers. A key project output was the development of a multi-media introduction to developing theatre and video work in prisons, entitled '*The Moral Compass*'. The multi-media tool includes guidance from experienced partners and examples of good practice from professional theatre and media practitioners from all partner countries.

Transnational working can take many forms and does not necessarily imply mobility activities, as shown by the Flexibility in Teaching (FIT) project, which incorporated a transnational activity for learners in the form of an exchange of letters.

Flexibility in Teaching (FIT)

This project, led by the prison teaching section of the Kvadraturen education centre in Norway, had two aims: to develop and reinforce contact between several institutions that carry out prison teaching, and to make teaching for adults in institutions more flexible.

A wide range of outputs were produced as a result of the project and the partners benefited from the chance to learn from each other. Outputs included: literacy and numeracy booklets in English, written by inmates for inmates, learning modules and increased flexibility in the partners' provision of education and training. Offenders participating in the project were motivated to improve their vocabulary and writing skills as a result of an exchange of letters with offenders in partner institutions. Partners shared source materials from each participating country, which again generated interest from learners. For the partner organisations, the chance to "*experience a new culture, a new way of thinking, working and living*" was felt to be a great opportunity to develop greater self-awareness, as well as knowledge about other countries' ways of working. It enabled a reflection on current practices, as well as identification of what should be changed and what should stay the same. Staff involved have gone on to take part in several other international projects and lasting links have been maintained between the partner organisations.

Although the projects themselves are delivered through partnerships, some projects set out specifically to create a network of organisations with common interests and/or aims, in order to

⁶ <http://www.willtodream.com/>

⁷ <http://www.themanchestercollege.ac.uk/>

facilitate more sustainable cooperation and 'networking'. By establishing **sustainable networks**, the projects **enable the process of mutual learning to continue beyond the lifetime of the project**. In addition, by bringing together organisations working on common issues, networks form a stronger tool for raising awareness, sharing information on the issues common to their members, giving a higher profile and added value to the members and opening up possibilities for future cooperation.

Activities undertaken by these projects include recruiting members and developing tools to support the network activities (e.g. websites). The Game On project (described below) made use of its network to test the products developed by the partners.

A good example of a sustainable network which was developed with funding from the Grundtvig programme is the PAN European Network, described in the box below.

PAN European Network: European Network for organisations involved in adult prison arts education⁸ (Grundtvig)

This Grundtvig project ran for three years over the period 2007 to 2009. It was coordinated by City College Manchester (UK) and involved a further 16 partner institutions from across 12 European countries⁹.

The main aim of the project was to develop an interactive network of organisations involved in prison arts education across Europe. Other activities included: examining official policies and governmental support regarding prison art education; identifying good practice and common approaches in teaching arts in prison; identifying training and qualification opportunities for prisoners and in-service training opportunities for staff involved in prison arts education; organising international conferences and workshops; and disseminating network outcomes to partner institutions and a wider audience.

The key output of the project was the successful development of the PAN European Network on prison arts education. Originally established with 15 partner institutions from across 12 European countries, the network has since grown to encompass 100 different institutions, artists and prison teachers from over 20 different countries. Moreover, there has been significant interest from other prison teachers and artists

The Network website has acted as an important online platform through which individuals and institutions involved in prison arts education and art in prisons come together to exchange information and share their work. The website has been instrumental in disseminating reports, articles, photos, videos and music downloads from teachers, professional artists, prisoners and ex-offenders and over the project's three year programme the web-site has published over 150 items from participants across 20 countries and has received over 200,000 hits.

As part of the website the PAN European Network has worked to extend the Anne Peaker Centre database, which identifies prison arts activities in the UK, to cover the rest of Europe. To date, information on 40 institutions from 15 countries has been identified and included.

A journal, *pARTners*, has been established to chart the development of the prison arts experience, highlight key project activities and promote examples of good practice. In total four editions of the journal have been published with over 50 contributions from 15 different countries.

⁸ <http://www.panproject.org/>

⁹ The Galli Group (AT); the Society for European Educational Cooperation (BG); the Danish Prison Teachers Association (FLF) (DK); Sonder Omme Prison (DK); Festival-of-Friends (DE); the SALO Baltic International (EE); 2nd Gymnasium and Lyceum of Avlona (EL); Mountjoy Prison Education Centre (IE); Daugvaplis Probationary Service (LV); the University of Malta (MT); Vught Prison (NL); Grønland voksenopplæringscenter (Gronland Adult Training Centre) (NO); ILA Prison (NO); Belfast Prison Arts Foundation (UK); Anne Peaker Centre for Arts in Criminal Justice (UK); and London Shakespeare Workout (UK)

Furthermore, the Network sponsored three awards at the 2009 UK Koestler Awards, which are organised by the Koestler Trust, a well-known prison arts charity based in the UK.

Finally, the PAN European Network has organised three PAN International Annual Conferences, which have focused on a specific theme and have highlighted a different art form. In total, around 300 delegates from over 25 countries have participated.

Regular feedback through email correspondence via the project's web-site, as well as in response to the network's journal and events, has confirmed that the PAN European Network has had a significant impact on the theme of prison arts education. Moreover, there has been considerable interest from a range of organisations across Europe in becoming members of the network.

2.3 Engaging and supporting (ex-) offenders and staff involved in prison education and training

A number of projects worked directly with beneficiaries - either (ex-) offenders, prison staff / educators or other professionals involved in supporting (ex-) offenders. These projects undertook activities such as delivering courses or cultural activities, organising mobility opportunities and involving the beneficiaries in developing project outputs.

Transnationality brings new dimensions to the projects. By taking part in such transnational activities, participants develop greater intercultural awareness and understanding of the benefits of European collaboration. Furthermore, the projects clearly found that transnational working brought many benefits to (ex-) offenders, staff and at organisation level too such as extending their personal experiences and communication skills; improved motivation and self-esteem; and providing awareness and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their systems. Furthermore, the opportunity to take part in cultural activities, such as visiting partner countries and learning about their society, politics and history, can often be an enriching experience for beneficiaries. It may even be a starting point for developing foreign language skills.

2.3.1 Working with (ex-) offenders

The aims of projects working directly with (ex-) offenders tended to focus on supporting them to develop relevant skills and competences for their social and/or professional (re-) integration. Where projects provided training courses for (ex-) offenders, these were mainly on adult basic education, both the vital basic skills of language, literacy and numeracy and also key social and personal skills. Provision at higher levels was not common among the projects, which is almost certainly a reflection of the fact that many offenders have basic skills needs.

Many participants in training courses provided by the projects developed increased motivation to learn and to take up educational opportunities beyond the project, or earned qualifications as a result of taking part. Many participants in the Open Door Project, described below, continued their learning after the project had ended.

The Open Door Project (Grundtvig)

The Open Door project, led by Dundalk Institute of Technology in Ireland, aimed to support the reintegration of ex-offenders by enhancing their chances of accessing educational / employment opportunities and promoting intercultural awareness and active citizenship. As part of the project activities, training in basic skills and ICT competences was delivered to ex-offenders in Ireland and Bulgaria. The learners were taught 'soft skills' such as confidence building, interpersonal skills and social skills, as well as 'learning to learn' and ICT skills.

For many of the learners, participation in the project was their first opportunity to develop ICT skills. Over the lifetime of the project, it was evident that the confidence levels of the beneficiaries had grown. Learners at the lead partner organisation in Ireland gained accreditation and in most cases, continued informal learning in the area of ICT.

Academic staff participating in the project also gained valuable experience in delivering material to disadvantaged and, at times challenging, learners.

The lead partner organisation also benefited through an increased awareness of the multi-faceted nature of disadvantage for ex-offenders who are of foreign nationality, refugees, or displaced persons. The lead partner learned from the other partner organisations about how to integrate these specific sub-groups of learners into education and training.

In recognition of the high number of prisoners with low basic skills, provision in many countries is focused on providing education and training in these skills. Nevertheless, it is also this group which is the most difficult to reach. Some projects found new and effective ways of engaging their target group.

For instance, it is suggested that teaching reading and writing skills based on the learners' own words, dialect and life experiences "*validates their lives, tells them that they are people with something to say*"¹⁰. A number of projects focused on finding ways of teaching basic skills in context, that is to say by **relating the learning to the offender's own situation**. The project By Learners, For Learners, described in the box below, is a good example.

¹⁰ Warner, K, *A European Perspective on Nordic Prison Systems and Prison Education*, Address to the Nordic conference on prison education, Tromsø, Norway, 22-25 May 2008

By Learners, for Learners (Grundtvig)

This project supported learners working to acquire basic literacy skills within a prison education setting and provided them with an opportunity to share their specific national/ethnic and prison cultures. The main aim of the project was to motivate reluctant learners to participate in education. They were the writers and also the 'judges' since they selected the stories to be included in the reading booklets. They were also the end users of the finished products, as the booklets were a tool to support the learning of reading skills.

The students involved in the project ranged from basic to intermediate level learners. During the project the learners created texts relating to two topics: the prison experience and myths and legends. The students selected written pieces which were compiled into reading books, in all languages of the project partners, suited to the special needs of the adult learners in the prison learning environment.

Materials that could not be included in the booklets are posted on the project website (when security restrictions allow this) which can be accessed by interested parties, such as the families of the offenders.

The Audiovisual Education and Creation (*Education et Création Audiovisuelle*) project is another example of a project delivering activities which relate learning to the individual's own situation / experiences. It shows how this approach can help to engage the learners and improve their self-confidence.

Education et Création Audiovisuelle (Grundtvig)

This learning partnership had two main objectives: to encourage an exchange of practices and thoughts around the issue of creation and implementation of audiovisual creative workshops and training in prison; and to facilitate a dialogue between different learners (students and inmates), knowing that for inmates, there could not be any physical mobility.

Participants in the project created 'video letters' describing their daily life, either inside or outside of prison. These video letters were shared among participants and were also screened in a number of public forums, including a festival (the *Libere di vivere* festival) in Italy.

Through their involvement in the project, the beneficiaries were given the chance review their own experiences – 'to reconstitute their past, to build their present and to modify their future'. Participants *"discovered that in spite of cultural and social differences, they could meet other persons without being judged by them. They also discovered that their desire of making cinema reunites them with the other learners"*¹¹

Arts and cultural activities can be used to support offenders to develop increased confidence and self-esteem, to improve social and communication skills and can motivate them to take up further learning opportunities. As shown above, 21 projects have been identified which related to the theme of arts and cultural activities in prison. The project Improved Service Delivery in Prison Education is another good example of the benefits of participation in creative and cultural activities for offenders, as described in the box below.

Improved Service Delivery in Prison Education (Grundtvig)

This project, led by the Society for European Educational Cooperation in Lovech, Bulgaria, was designed to increase the knowledge of partner institutions of the diversity of educational systems in prisons around

¹¹ Quote taken from project 'matrix'

Europe. The focus of the project was creative and cultural activities because the partners believe that these enable prisoners to develop and express themselves and also help to minimise the detrimental effects of imprisonment.

The project generated both short-term and long-term outputs, including theatrical performances, exhibitions and books (short-term), illustrative books which are now used as teaching materials and an in-service training course (long-term).

In addition, a number of positive results of the project have been identified. Participants were felt to have developed increased self-esteem as a result of taking part and it has been shown that to date, 85% of the participants who have now been released have not gone on to re-offend. One of the participants has gone on to study at university. Furthermore, in the lead partner country (Bulgaria), the national prison service reviewed the measures in place for the use of arts in prisons. As a result of this review, two large European projects were supported: the first European Conference on Prison Arts was organised in 2008 in Sofia and the first International Prison Arts Exhibition was held in Lovech.

A number of the projects in the area of arts and cultural activities also related their activities to the experiences of the learners. For example, The Heart far Away project, described below, used autobiographical activities to enable offenders to develop plans for the future.

The Heart far Away / El Corazon Lejano¹² (Grundtvig)

This project, led by Centro Público EPA Monterroso in Spain, set up an autobiographical activity within prisons, enabling offenders to reflect on their past life and develop plans for a new future outside of prison. Amongst the project objectives were to:

- develop self- identity in the participating offenders;
- reflect on the use of autobiographic work to define a project of life outside the prison;
- encourage offenders in prisons to describe their personal experiences, in order to produce a European communication about the difficulties which they found during the period of their reintegration;
- share and compare the results of the project with similar experiences in European prisons;
- communicate the results of the project to a range of target audiences;
- introduce the methodology of autobiography as a common method of working in adult education in prisons.

The main results of the project included an online blog recording the activities undertaken and the participants' autobiographical writings, the presentation of the results of the project to relevant media, authorities and institutions, and paper and CD Rom outputs with details of the project's achievements. Offenders participating in the project developed an understanding that they could take an active part in European society. Partner organisations were able to develop and pilot new ways of delivering educational activities in prison and share their experiences with teachers and other staff from other institutions in their countries.

The dissemination activities also helped to generate greater awareness of the project activities and lessons learned and the project was awarded an Honorable Mention by the National Authority of Spanish prisons and the Government of Spain.

Motivation is an issue in engaging offenders in learning activities and while there may be a wide range of prison education provision across Europe, it is not always the case that offenders access the opportunities available to them. Some projects found **alternative ways of engaging** this hard-to-reach group. For example, the Movable Barres¹³ project held a

¹² <http://theheartfaraway.blogspot.com/>

¹³ <http://www.movablebarres.eu>

competition among inmates to design the project logo and the project, A New Chance¹⁴, enabled learners to participate through a 'Students Blog' area on the project website.

(Ex-)offenders can also play an important role in advocating the importance of taking up learning opportunities and can be engaged in the process, for example as mentors¹⁵. The Peer Mentor Support Project, described in the box below, used peer mentors to engage juvenile offenders and other excluded or marginalised young people.

Peer Mentor Support Project¹⁶ (Leonardo)

This project aimed to provide a peer mentoring service to support excluded or marginalised young people (particularly young offenders, disaffected young people, people with disabilities and those with severe learning difficulties and autism), to help them to access training, education or employment. The five partners each had expertise relevant to different parts of the project and their combined expertise helped to ensure the project was based on in-depth knowledge.

The project piloted the use of Peer Mentors, working with specific target groups, and evaluated this method as a tool for the successful (re-)integration of the target groups into vocational training and employment. Project outputs include a training Pack on CD and a Mentor Training Course. Beneficiaries have gone on to enrol and complete vocational training programmes, helping to increase their employability and to successfully (re-) integrate into their communities.

Local and regional dissemination has been carried out by all partners, using publicity leaflets, press releases and presentations to policy makers. The project website had attracted over 32,000 hits by December 2004 and the project was assessed by a European Evaluation Team who considered it one of the best ten projects in Europe for supporting the excluded.

2.3.2 Focusing on specific target groups

There is a diverse range of sub-groups within the overall target group of (ex-) offenders. These different groups have a wide range of needs and some projects sought to recognise this and focused their activities on specific target groups, as shown in Table 5 above.

For example, the project Model for supporting correctional training focused on prison education for **female offenders**. Following analysis and research of the provision of education and training opportunities for female offenders in each partner country, training modules were developed, tested and evaluated. Additional learning and dissemination tools were also produced, including leaflets, a project website, a manual, books and a CD ROM. Furthermore, the lead partner organisation in Bulgaria went on to further implement the model which had been developed through a project supported by the PHARE programme.

The Game On project (described below) is an example of a project which set out to support a specific target group, as it developed learning products which would be accessible to **prisoners with disabilities**, in particular those with learning difficulties and deaf prisoners. The project ADHD in Prison Education aimed to find ways of better supporting offenders with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and by that improving their quality of life, as described in the box below. Project partners sought to widen and improve general knowledge about

¹⁴ <http://www.anewchance.net/>

¹⁵ Schuller, Prof. T., *Crime and Lifelong Learning*, National Institute for Adult and Continuing Learning (NIACE). Internet: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-Crime.pdf>

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2/products/detail_prod_en_2000.cfm?Numero=UK-02-129574

ADHD, exchanging experiences as well as teaching methodologies, and carrying out research on the topic.

ADHD in prison education (Grundtvig)

This Grundtvig project commenced in 2003 and was led by the Ringerike prison branch of Hønefoss videregående skole in Norway. With a focus on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the project served to draw attention to the challenge of psychiatric problems in prison populations both in Norway and the partnership countries. The main aim was to find out in what way the health, welfare and school departments can cooperate in finding ways of achieving improvement for offenders with ADHD and by that improve their quality of life. Project partners sought to widen and improve general knowledge about ADHD, exchanging experiences as well as teaching methodologies, and carrying out research on the topic.

Partners felt that the project was a success and had led to pioneering work in relation to the topic. Furthermore, partners found it a *“fascinating and inspiring experience in international work”*¹⁷. The project work also resulted in several conferences, seminars and lectures.

*“It is very likely that prison teachers face greater challenges than “regular” adult education teachers when it comes to finding the right keys to unlock each individual student’s learning abilities.”*¹⁸ As such, prison teachers require support and training to effectively undertake their work. Some of the EU-funded projects provided **training or resources for prison staff**, to enable them to better support specific groups of offenders (see also section 2.3.3 below).

For example, given the high numbers of foreign prisoners in certain countries, the staff needs to be able to cope with foreign prisoners' needs in terms of language, religion and culture. In response, the Eliminating Language Barriers in European Prisons through Open and Distance Education Technology (ELBEP)¹⁹ project offers second language education to prison staff through an on-line learning environment, to enable them to better support prisoners of foreign nationality. The project focuses on Russian, Polish, Spanish, Greek and Turkish, since foreign prisoners speaking these native languages compose significant proportions of the European prison population.

Rather than targeting specific groups, some projects recognised the diversity among offenders by **tailoring their activities to individuals’ specific needs**. The aforementioned project Disseminating European experiences on the development of entrepreneurship skills of ex-prisoners for example conducted a needs assessment for each participant in its programmes, in order to provide individualised support to the project beneficiaries.

2.3.3 Working with prison staff and /or other professionals

Prison educators currently come from a wide range of backgrounds and may have no specific training or experience in working with offenders. In addition, non-educational prison staff and other professionals involved in supporting offenders can play a vital role in motivating them to take up learning opportunities and therefore can help to create a positive environment for learning within the prison. Some projects targeted prison staff or other professionals in their work and delivered training or facilitated the exchange of experience with peers in the partner organisations. Their aims were to raise the skills of those involved in supporting offenders or to change attitudes and practices. Staff taking part in such projects are given an opportunity to

¹⁷ Quote taken from project ‘matrix’

¹⁸ Langelid, T., Mäki, M., Raundrup, K., Svensson, S. eds., 2009, *Nordic Prison Education, A Lifelong Learning Perspective*.

Internet: <http://www.norden.org/is/utqafa/utgefid-efni/2009-536>

¹⁹ <http://elbep.anadolu.edu.tr/>

interact with and learn from their peers, encouraging them to reflect on their ways of working and perhaps to improve these.

The project Law through Experience: Interactive and Participatory Socio-Legal Training for Prison Educators delivered training on topics relating to human rights, at both national and European levels.

Law through Experience: Interactive and Participatory Socio-Legal Training for Prison Educators (Grundtvig)

This project developed a socio-legal training course for prison educators focusing on topics relating to human rights. Educational and methodological materials to complement the course have also been developed, all of which have been adapted to the national conditions of each participating partner. All of the products have been tested both within the partnership (through peer-reviews) and also externally with the project's target groups (prison educators and prisoners). The training has been delivered at national and European level, with positive feedback from participants, trainers, coordinators and the external evaluator.

Dissemination activities were carried out throughout the project and partners felt these had been successful: prison educators from countries such as Russia, Albania, Kenya, India and the USA expressed an interest in taking part in the course, which shows that it was attractive to its target group and applicable in different environments. Furthermore, following their participation in the project, all partners were invited to cooperate with their national prison authorities and to offer training either to prisoners or to prison educators, or to both.

As previously explained, many projects brought together partner organisations to take part in mutual learning activities. Some projects focused specifically on bringing front-line staff together to share their experiences. For instance, one of the objectives of the project E-Learning Education for Prisoners and Prisoners Professionals (EPPP), which commenced in 2009, is to create a community of trainers. Through this community, trainers will be able to undertake a dialogue on issues relating to ICT and distance learning for those at risk of social exclusion (in particular offenders). The dialogue will take place through a series of five meetings over the lifetime of the project and through the use of electronic communication tools.

2.4 Joint development of innovative approaches/products and methods

Many projects brought partners together to develop and pilot new products or methods for education and training in prisons. In doing so, they sought to create new ways of supporting offenders or prison staff to take up and access learning opportunities or new ways of supporting them to gain relevant skills and competences. The types of outputs they created included learning and teaching resources, modules or courses and teaching methods and were available in hard copy or electronic format, including on the Internet. While partners worked together to create their products, these were often **tailored to the specific needs and requirements of the individual partner countries**. Nevertheless, transnational cooperation on the development and piloting of new products can help to ensure their applicability on a wider scale or transferability to other contexts.

The European re-Settlement Education and Training (ESTEP) project, led by ISCA Vision Ltd, developed training for prison educators and officers and an ICT platform, as described below.

European re-Settlement Education and Training (ESTEP)

The ESTEP project coordinators identified a need for increased research and an improvement in the initial and continuing training of prison officers / education specialists working in prisons. They were also aware of the lack of opportunities for offenders to develop ICT skills and benefit from e-learning. Thus, through the ESTEP project, they set out to develop training for prison educators and officers. They also designed and piloted a secure and cost effective IT environment which can be used to equip prisoners with basic IT skills as well as providing opportunities for e-learning.

There were three main areas of work involved in the project:

- 1) **Research:** each partner carried out research in their own country to inform the design of the training programme
- 2) **Training programmes:** two training programmes were designed and piloted: for prison officers and staff involved in education and training; and for teachers and trainers working in prisons.
- 3) **ICT installation:** a handbook was produced detailing the procurement, installation and administration of an ICT suite

At all stages the relevant stakeholders in the prison service were offered the opportunity to inform and comment on the design, content and delivery. Also, an evaluation of the pilot training courses by participants was positive overall. Almost all participants said that they would recommend the course to others. Furthermore, the ICT suite is now installed in four prisons and prison authorities in three of the four partner countries have expressed an interest in rolling out the ICT system further.

A comprehensive trainers' pack has been produced for each training programme containing all the materials that a trainer needs to deliver it. These have been distributed to all interested parties and are available free of charge from any of the project partners. So far, the general response has been very positive. Partners are discussing the possibility of mainstreaming the programme and making it compulsory for teachers working in a prison for the first time. In addition, there has been interest from a university adult education department in certificating the course and plans are underway to offer the teachers' course as a module on a university Initial Teacher Training course for adult education teachers.

Finally, the project partners are now planning to produce a blended learning alternative for staff unable to attend training courses in person.

A key element of the reintegration process for ex-offenders is to find sustainable, fulfilling employment. Some projects therefore focused on creating tools to help learners in their transition to the labour market. The project Educational tool to integrate inmates²⁰ for instance, developed a toolkit to enable offenders to develop knowledge, competences and skills relevant to employment in the care sector. The project was based on the principles of Restorative Justice, i.e. providing educational and work experiences for (ex-) offenders which they might find valuable and motivating, useful for their social re-insertion and for the acquisition of new values. The partners produced a range of outputs, including 1050 handbooks on how to use the educational tool (in seven languages), 1000 CDs and an internet site.

Furthermore, self-employment can be a viable route into work for ex-offenders. The project Disseminating European experiences on the development of entrepreneurship skills of ex-prisoners, developed tools to support offenders to gain skills for self-employment. It is described in the box below.

²⁰ <http://www.eti7.org/>

Disseminating European experiences on the development of entrepreneurship skills of ex-prisoners (Grundtvig)

This project, led by Elektrenai Centre of Vocational Training in Lithuania, developed methodological tools to provide ex-offenders with the skills required to create a successful business (how to: know your customer; test and protect your product; test distribution; create a business plan; find the best legal structure; business model; organisation plan; marketing plan; financial plan; put together a start up team, etc.) or for finding adequate employment (handling paperwork, finding employment support programmes, locating jobs, preparing for interviews, filling out applications and answering questions about having been in prison, etc). The educational methodology developed by the project can be used by any other European community to provide ex-offenders with the skills necessary for the creation of a successful business or for finding adequate employment.

ICT can be a subject of learning, to support the development of digital literacy skills, or a tool to support learning. Nevertheless, due to restrictions on the use of Internet in prisons in some countries, more work needs to be done to facilitate the safe use of ICT in prison education and training. A number of projects sought to maximise the potential of ICT, either as a tool to support e-learning / distance learning or a way of sharing information with a wider audience. Other projects aimed to teach ICT skills and increase digital literacy among (ex-) offenders.

The PIPELINE project aimed to improve prison education in Europe by making ICT available to learners and teachers in correctional education, in line with the security demands of this environment.

Partnership in Prison Education Learning in Networked Environments (PIPELINE)²¹

This project was originally launched in 1999 as a pilot project by the County Governor of Hordaland, responsible for prison education in Norway. PIPELINE was established and received funding from the Grundtvig programme from December 2005 to December 2007. This example looks at the activities which took place over this period.

The PIPELINE project was developed to make ICT available to learners and teachers in correctional education. It also sought to reduce the likelihood of recidivism by bridging the gap between life inside and outside of prison. A number of different activities were undertaken, which centred around the development of a system for secure ICT use in prisons, the development of educational activities, the engagement of prisons and prisoners in future-orientated learning and teaching and the production of relevant material for dissemination.

The key outcome of the PIPELINE project was the successful delivery of a system to allow the secure use of ICT in prison education. The system can be adapted to the different organisational and pedagogical needs and security demands of individual learning environments (i.e. different prisons). Other important project outcomes include the development of an e-learning platform, a publishing system and examples of multi-literacy practice. A CD-ROM with practical examples of work with prison inmates is also available.

In May 2007, a workshop training course was held in Slovenia for 19 participants, including prison educators, on how to use the PIPELINE e-learning platform effectively and on how to make creative use of the publishing system. In addition, a set of manuals outlining the use of the e-learning platform, the publishing system and the installation of the technical solution were created and distributed electronically to system administrators.

Some projects involved offenders in activities to support the achievement of their objectives, such as taking part in the development of or testing resources. **Involving end users in this way helps to ensure that the final products are relevant to their needs.** It can also help those involved to develop new skills and gain confidence, as well as recognising their value in taking part in the project. The MABEL project involved offenders in developing one of the project outputs, a collaborative magazine.

²¹ <http://www.pipeline-project.org/>

Multi-disciplinary Approach to Adult Basic Education and Learning in Prisons, MABEL (Grundtvig)

MABEL was set up to develop and explore new multi-disciplinary approaches to basic education in prisons. Teaching staff from the six prisons involved in the project collaborated to identify and develop teaching methods and techniques, as well as common lessons that can be delivered to adult learners using a cross-curricular approach. One of the project's most innovative elements was the active involvement of the prisoners themselves in producing produced three editions of a collaborative magazine; the Open Doors Magazine. As a result of the project other prisons have started to introduce cooperative projects focusing on different educational topics and encouraging prisoners to discover and use their creativity.

The Game On project involved its target audience in all stages of the design, implementation and evaluation of its products.

Game On²² (Grundtvig)

The Game On project aimed to create e-learning materials and e-games in small, accessible units, to improve personal development and work sustainability skills in prisoners and ex-offenders, including additionally marginalised groups of prisoners, i.e. deaf prisoners and those who are learning disabled.

One of the project aims was to ensure that the target audience was engaged in all stages of the design, implementation and evaluation of the new e-learning materials. Partners wanted to make sure that the products they developed were tailored to the learning preferences of their target audience. They therefore created a 'Network Plan' identifying key stakeholders and end users in each country. These networks were used for design consultation, product testing and piloting.

The project led to a number of outputs for both learners and trainers. An additional outcome was a dedicated project conference in Interactive Technologies, creating a new network for valorisation with accompanying Conference Papers for this and other conferences.

Positive **evaluations provide useful evidence of the validity of project outcomes at dissemination stage**. Evaluation can be carried out both internally (self-evaluation) and externally to the project and can be 'formative' (continuous, throughout the lifetime of the project, focusing on the project development and implementation) or summative (assessing the project outcomes or impacts). Evaluations should be a probing tool to help in future decision making as well as accounting for the past. It needs to identify success as well as failure, strengths as well as weaknesses.

Innovation does not have to be about creating new products. It can also be the **transfer of existing products or methods to a new context**. Some projects set out to adapt existing tools to the specific situation of offenders and the constraints presented by the prison environment. For example, the project Accreditation of prior (experiential) learning in prison (*La démarche de VAE pour les personnes placées sous main de justice*) developed a method of support, assistance and advice for the accreditation of prior learning, adapted for use in the prison environment.

²² <http://gameon.europole.org/>

Accreditation of prior (experiential) learning in prison (*La démarche de VAE pour les personnes placées sous main de justice*)

This project was led by the French Ministry of Education of the Regional Education Authority in Bordeaux and involved partners from Belgium, France, Malta, Poland and Portugal. The project partners in this project felt that in order to offer those in a prison environment the prospect of accreditation to obtain a national diploma, careful consideration and an adaptation of the mainstream system would be required. The partners set out to identify the characteristics of prison environments and populations in each country involved; exchange practices in the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning; conduct in-depth study into the accreditation of prior learning for offenders and take this into account in the training of professionals involved; implement preliminary action research and publish the results.

The final output of the project is a 'ready to be published' report (in English and French) which could be adapted in any national language. The report presents the concepts of social reintegration and the consideration given to accreditation of prior (experiential) learning for those in custody in the various partner countries.

2.5 Research

Some projects set out to find out more about an issue relating to prison education and training. Their aim was to fill gaps in knowledge, both among the project partners and also outside of the project, or to inform the development of a new product or methodology, helping to ensure that their outputs responded to an identified need.

It is suggested in the first part of this paper that, due to the (small, but nevertheless) growing number of offenders who have studied at higher level, it must be made easier to study at university level while in prison. The project entitled Diagnosis of state of Higher Education in Penal Institutions in Europe - EURO-DESIP (*Diagnóstico sobre la Educación Superior en Instituciones Penitenciarias en Europa*) carried out research into the provision of higher education in prisons, as described in the box below.

EURO-DESIP²³ (Grundtvig)

This project, led by the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in Spain, brought together universities and penitentiary institutions to conduct comparative research into Higher Education programmes addressed to students in prisons. Partners feel that this mix of organisations involved in the project was vital to its success.

The aim of the project was to develop a model of good practices and to promote the future development of these programmes through distance learning.

Partners carried out joint work in three stages:

1. Collecting documents and data from official sources
2. Creating statistical data by means of a survey administered to students in prison
3. Carrying out interviews with those responsible for education and higher education in prisons.

These three methods of gathering data were required to meet the different aims of the project, which were to analyse the present situation, evaluate existing programmes, analyse the future potential of the demand for university studies among the prison population; and to survey future possibilities for higher education in European prisons by distance learning.

As previously stated, for some projects undertaking pilot activities or developing innovations, research formed an important stage in the development process. For example, the Preparing

²³ <http://www.eurodesip.org/en/>

for and Handling Opportunities for Employment, saying “No” to Isolation and Xenophobia (PHOENIX) project, which set out to help disadvantaged groups to seek and secure employment, was based on research among its target groups to inform development of a programme of studies focusing on life skills and ICT competences.

Another example is the project Movable Barres²⁴, which commenced in 2008. It is a project to promote music and dance in adult prison education across Europe. So far, a background research report on the current state of play has been produced, which will now inform the development of the materials.

2.6 Awareness-raising and dissemination

It is crucial that the activities delivered by these projects do not take place in isolation and that the outputs of their work are not lost. Dissemination is therefore an important part of the activities of these transnational projects, in order to raise awareness of their achievements or findings and enable the transfer of good practice / lessons learned. The ACMP project, described below, used a number of dissemination activities to raise awareness of its work.

Vocational Training Programme – Assessment and Case Management²⁵ (Leonardo)

The project ‘Vocational Training Programme - Assessment and Case Management’ was led by the Crime Prevention Fund – IGA Foundation in Bulgaria. It was set up with the aim of reducing the social isolation and increasing the social involvement of young offenders (aged 18-25 years), in order to improve their position in the labour market and to reduce the risk of re-offending post-release. The project sought to improve the skills and competences of social workers supporting young (ex-) offenders by providing specialist training.

In particular, the project focused on improving the quality of VET in the field of social work by: developing additional elements to be included in training programmes; developing more practical and flexible training models; and by adapting the training provided to the needs and requirements of working with young offenders. As such, the project activities were geared towards enabling the greater specialisation of social workers.

The project activities were undertaken in a series of processes: the analysis, design, development, testing and dissemination of a specialised multi-module training programme (ACMP) for social workers involved in providing training to young offenders before and after their release. The key project result was the development of an ACMP curriculum and a working version of the ACMP modules.

An important element of the project’s success was the close cooperation between partner institutions, experts and relevant institutions. Regular meetings and sessions were held to keep members up-to-date and to facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge. The positive use of technology, such as the e-sessions held through the web-site meant that meetings could be held and information exchanged despite the geographical distance between partners.

The project has carried out strong dissemination activities; 1000 Handbooks containing the ACMP curriculum and a comprehensive bibliography were produced; 3000 CD-ROMs containing the training programme and ACMP tools have been distributed; and 10 issues of the e-Newsletter were published for the members of a mailing list and made available through the web-site for download by other external users.

²⁴ <http://www.movablebarres.eu/MW/index.php>

²⁵ <http://catalog.iga-bg.org/leonardo/indexen.htm>

The project website acted as an important platform to publish project information, news and documents and was also used as a space to facilitate forum discussions between the partner institutions.

ACMP's successful impact can be seen in the decision by the project coordinators, Crime Prevention Fund – IGA, to implement the ACMP programme developed as a Master's degree specialisation in the 2008-2009 educational programme of the Plovdiv University "P. Hilendarski" in Bulgaria. In total 11 students enrolled in the module, receiving support from the CPF and have recently received their diplomas for their successful completion.

Dissemination activities vary depending on the messages to be conveyed and the audience targeted. Projects have identified different ways of reaching out to their target audiences, as shown in the list of examples below:

- The project Inside Out held three dissemination conferences (one in each partner country), to inform local citizens about the results of the project. By reaching out to the general public, the project partners hoped to overcome the stigma associated with ex-offenders and thereby to support the process of reintegration;
- The Visiting in Prison (VIP) project planned originally to hold a joint conference for dissemination but partners then agreed that a website would be a more appropriate way of sharing their findings. In addition, all of the partners held a local event to celebrate the publication of the book that each country produced. One partner held a high profile conference which attracted several media organizations and appeared on the national news;
- Partners in You also have a chance disseminated the project and the results at international level - at conferences, seminars and meetings. In addition, they held local meetings with prisons, penitentiary units and other institutions to disseminate the project;
- Effective Induction for Prison Educators hopes to reach a wide range of relevant target audiences thanks to its links to the European Prison Education Association;
- The products developed by the project Law through Experience: Interactive and Participatory Socio-Legal Training for Prison Educators are available in all partner languages, which means they can be disseminated to a wide target audience.

2.7 Conclusions

In the past, the development of good practices, methodologies and materials in prison education and training has mainly been practitioner-led and taken place at the level of the individual organisation. As a result, developments and innovations in one prison are rarely shared with colleagues in other prisons or other countries. This means that *"teachers new to prison education or those attempting new approaches and programmes are forced frequently to reinvent the wheel"*²⁶.

This paper has shown that EU funding has helped to facilitate the sharing and transfer of practices and has helped to create sustainable partnerships and networks to ensure this process of mutual learning continues in the long-term. Practitioners and learners alike have also benefited from the creation of tools and materials for use in prison education and training.

EU funding has led to a range of benefits at individual, organisational, national and transnational levels. Individuals taking part in the projects have benefited and learned from

²⁶ Prison Education in Europe: Informing Practice, Policy and Provision 2008. Review of the VEPS Project and its associated Conference for Directors and Coordinators of Prison Education. Internet: <http://www.epea.org>

participating in transnational working and some have created lasting relationships with their peers in other countries. Thus, these projects promote intercultural awareness and understanding across Europe. Organisations have benefited from a chance to pilot new activities, develop new tools or to change their ways of working in line with tried and tested practices, as a result of mutual learning. There have also been some impacts at the level of policy, where EU projects have provided the evidence required to inform such change.