

VIP

Analysis of practices aimed at (re)entering the labour market

GRETA DU VELAY

June 2013

Step 0. Description of the practice

Name, context of intervention, group/individual, cost, financial supporters, place, actors involved, numbers, since when, feedback, duration...

The training we organise in prison is the preparation of a diploma of cook (level 1) or a qualification as a cook.

We run a group of 8 learners. It is organised on an “open” base: learners can enter or leave the training (up to a maximum of height welcome).

The training is financed by the French administration of employment at a cost of 8,9 euros per hour.

5 trainers from Greta du Velay are involved. In addition a teacher from the Ministry of education is full time

The training lasts from September to June, 850 hours in total, meaning 25 hours per week.

Step 1. Team brainstorming

Method: group discussion with the members of the team, a moderator fills the SWOT table on a paperboard.

S, W: internal, you can directly act on them

O, T: external, linked to the context, more difficult to manipulate

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Trainers are used to act in the prison. There are regular team meetings every three months to evaluate the training where they can exchange together.</p> <p>The staff of the jail is present.</p> <p>We have take all the necessary steps so that prisoners can prepare a full diploma (a national diploma that gives opportunities to find jobs).</p> <p>It has been proposed to one technical trainer to exchange with a more experimented peer trainer, working in a prison in another town. Unfortunately this has not been done yet for organisational reason. It remains an open option for the coming months.</p> <p>Two times per year we invite external professionals (cooks) to evaluate the competences of the learners.</p> <p>We organise the weekly timetable so that the prisoners can have at least half a day of physical exercises during the week. We also organise the courses so that they do not interfere with the daily walks (at least once a day).</p> <p>For national exam, it is compulsory to provide an ID card. Here around a third to a half of them do not have ID and are not able to prove their identity. Nevertheless we accept them for the exam.</p> <p>Learners take their exams with a continuous control procedure. For each of them we keep a pedagogical file that keeps track of all their</p>	<p>Trainers need to adapt their content to the possibility of the prison. Eg. They have to reduce the practice and they tend to do more theoretical courses.</p> <p>Trainers do not always behave as they usually behave with other learners. They are not so natural. They need to maintain a distance and keep in mind that if these learners are in jail, there is a reason. They must take care not to enter into a “person to person” process. because prisoners develop many strategies to manipulate the trainer and to soften up the relationship.</p> <p>Trainers never had the opportunity to be trained to act in prisons. The process to organise such a training is complicated as it involves two different ministries, the Education and the Justice department.</p> <p>Trainers have to take care during the preparation and service of the meals that some prisoners do not give more food to their friends and do not give less food or the bad parts to the prisoners they don't like.</p> <p>As a general rule (in France and outside of prisons), learners who already have a certain level (diploma) should not follow the general course (everything that is not professional). But here, due to the difficulty to obtain the proof of their past diploma, they all have to take all courses.</p> <p>. It is difficult to be locked in a room with 8 persons and to go through many control steps. Trainers have a bip they can activate in case of</p>

<p>marks and results. They can keep the benefit of their marks for two years (if they leave, leave and come back, fail).</p>	<p>problem. Since 1,5 years a camera is active in the training room.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<p>The fact of participating to a regular program with fixed schedule and regular training hours obliges the prisoners to change their daily rhythm. They have to wake up to follow the courses, etc. This is a factor that may influence positively their future vocational inclusion.</p> <p>If learners are interested by the domain (cooking), they have the possibility to continue with the same trainers their learning path. They can continue, starting from where they stopped in the prison.</p> <p>When recruiting the learners and at each team meeting, are present the SPIP (a public service for vocational integration of prisoners – which purpose is to help prisoners and ex-prisoners to find a job) as well as the employment agencies (both for under 26 and for over 26). They help us to evaluate if the training objectives of the prisoner are consistent with his previous path and experience. Themselves feel also more comfortable to tutor each prisoner in their vocational integration path.</p> <p>Learner who participate to training courses benefit from a little grant (around 50 euros per week).</p> <p>The prison organises each year a job forum where professionals come to explain their job and discuss about the employment opportunities in their sector.</p> <p>For every newcomers in the prison, a test is organised to assess is school level (to detect illiteracy, to estimate the level in French and to see if there is a need for French as a foreign language courses).</p>	<p>Problems of material. We cannot use internet, we cannot come with a USB key.</p> <p>In physic and chemistry, that is only based on practice, we cannot bring glass material, not electric material.</p> <p>Learners cannot make practice periods in companies so they cannot be evaluated like the other learners preparing the same diploma. An arrangement could be find with the validating authority: As learners prepare the meals 3 days a week for 60 prisoners (as an average) it is considered as the equivalent of the activity realised in a traditional private restaurant.</p> <p>Some learners are not interested at all by undertaking a real training path. They only register to do something else and they are not motivated by the content of the courses nor by the possibilities of employment opened by the diploma.</p> <p>Some prisoners do not finish their path. The reduction of the sentences participate to the high turnover.</p> <p>Sometimes the meeting with family take place during the courses (prisoners knows this and should not ask for having meeting at this time) and it creates disturbances of the learning process.</p> <p>Learners may bring their stress and interpersonal conflicts in the course. The trainer has to be watchful as they manipulate knives.</p>

Step 2. Identification of consequences, actions to undertake and prioritising

Strengths	<i>Consequences</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Learners can keep the benefit of their evaluations for 2 years	They can continue their diploma, even after leaving the prison	Develop motivational actions and stronger follow-up with the probation services in order to pass the diploma	1
Exchange between peers	Better inclusion of new trainers and exchange of practices between trainers	This should be developed, including at EU level	3
Invitation of professionals to evaluate the work of prisoners	Employers get to know the skills of prisoners, and may have another opinion of them	Use this meeting to valorise the learners and facilitating practice periods or employment, when they leave the prison	2
Weaknesses	<i>Consequences</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>
They have to reduce the practice (because of restricted access to material and products)	Learners are less well prepared than non-prisoners	Test and develop the use of videos and simulation software	1
Trainers never had the opportunity to be trained to act in prisons.	They are not prepared to act in a jail, they are more easily manipulated by some prisoners.	Develop peer to peer training mechanisms.	2
Some trainers (especially the new engaged) feel stressed to work with prisoners	They are not happy to go to work and it may have negative consequences on the quality of their work	Organise a day session with other trainers and a psychologist to sensitize them. Possibly organise a short tutoring period so they are not alone the first time they intervene	1

Opportunities	<i>Consequences</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Prisoners pass a test to evaluate their level of French when they enter the prison.	This allows to detect training needs.	The test could be enlarge to an evaluation of the eight key competence	2
A job forum is organised each year within the prison.	Prisoners get to know the economic context of the area and the employment opportunities.	Development of the job forum to include information on self-employment and creation of cooperative and a focus on training linked to the jobs.	2
The public service for vocational integration of prisoners is present at the regular meetings organised to evaluate the training.	This helps the training team to have a better view of the whole learning / vocational integration path of the prisoners	Reinforce the cooperation with the public service for vocational integration of prisoners	1
Threats	<i>Consequences</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Learners cannot make practice periods in companies	They cannot be evaluated like the other learners preparing the same diploma	An arrangement could be find with the validating authority. As they prepare the meals, it may be considered as the equivalent of the activity realised in a traditional private restaurant.	2
Some learners register for the course but are not interested by undertaking a real training path.	They take the seat of someone else and may have a negative effect on the motivation of the learners.	The selection committee should take this better into account (eg. by adding an interview with a psychologist)	1
The meeting with family take place during the courses.	Interruption of the learning process.	Be more strict with this, and prevent this from the first interview. Ensure that it is not the fact of the prison authorities.	3

(Adapted from QAS methodology – <http://qas.programkontoret.se>)

Step 3. Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses against Opportunities and Threats

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	<p><i>What strengths do you have and how can you use them to take advantage of new or existing opportunities?</i></p> <p>The training team is motivated and willing to improve.</p> <p>The European network built in the VIP project, can be maintained and used for future peer training process.</p> <p>The training team includes a psychologist.</p> <p>The contacts with the local authorities facilitating integration and with the companies and the sectorial organisations.</p>	<p><i>What strategies are needed to overcome weaknesses so that you can take advantage of opportunities?</i></p> <p>A training plan for trainers (based on informal and formal learning opportunities).</p> <p>A specific action on the motivation of learners to involve them in the continuation of their path, after they leave the jail can be implemented (together with a sensitization on the process).</p> <p>The development of the partnership with the probation service may be a way to strengthen the vocational integration path of prisoners.</p>

Threats	<p><i>What strengths can be used to minimise threats?</i></p> <p>Trainers have a good knowledge of IT. They can experiment videos and simulation software to reduce the consequences of a limited access to tools and products.</p> <p>The training coordinator has built constructive relationship with the validating authorities. They can be used to re-evaluate the situation of the practice periods (done in the context of the prison).</p> <p>Trainers have a strong experience in their job.</p>	<p><i>What strategies will minimise weaknesses and help your team to cope with threats?</i></p> <p>A specific training plan can be organised for the trainers (based on co-training and peer training).</p> <p>A psychologist can be present at the recruitment of learners to ensure a safer procedure (really motivated learners).</p> <p>More communication with the staff of the prison (a specific awareness day?)</p>
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(Adapted from QAS methodology – <http://qas.programkontoret.se>)

Step 4. Main operational conclusion

Three items that works well and that you would like to transfer

1.	Continuous assessment procedure for the obtention of diplomas
2.	Job forum organised within the prison
3.	Participation of employers to the evaluation of skills of learners

Three points that you commit to improve in the 2-year VIP project

1.	Organise more pedagogical meetings between trainers
2.	Test simulation software to improve the sciences teaching (physics, chemistry, biology)
3.	Work on the motivation of (ex)-prisoners to maintain them in the learning path even when they leave the jail.

