



County Governor
of Hordaland
Norway

A BALTIC-NORDIC SEMINAR ON EDUCATION IN PRISON in Jöhvi, Estonia

23-24 September 2009

Presentation of the Nordic network of Prison Education

By Torfinn Langelid

First of all I am very pleased that I on behalf of the Nordic network of Prison Education have the pleasure to welcome you all to this Baltic/Nordic seminar – two days here in Viru prison in Jöhvi. Many thanks to the Ministry of Justice in Estonia with Krister Tüllinen and Kaile Pöldme who has taken the main responsibility for planning and organising this seminar. Also many thanks to the governor of Viru prison who is hosting the seminar.

This seminar is supported economically by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic Council of Ministers launched a new Nordplus Framework Programme for the period 2008-2011. The programme is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers by the five Nordic and three Baltic countries. The Nordplus Framework Programme offers financial support to a variety of educational cooperation projects involving partners in the area of lifelong learning from the participating countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. All countries are represented at this seminar.

The main aims of the Nordplus Framework Programme are:

- To promote Nordic languages and culture and mutual Nordic-Baltic linguistic and cultural understanding;
- To contribute to the development of quality and innovation in the educational systems for life-long learning in the participating countries by means of educational cooperation, development projects, exchanges and networking;
- To support, develop, draw benefit from and spread innovative products and processes in education through systematic exchange of experiences and best practice;
- To strengthen and develop Nordic educational cooperation and contribute to the establishment of a Nordic-Baltic educational area.

Four sub-programmes

The Nordplus Framework Programme 2008-2011 consists of four sub-programmes. This seminar is supported by Nordplus Horizontal. You will find more information about the programme in the conference folder.

Nordplus Horizontal is a cross-sector innovation in the Nordplus Framework Programme. The programme aims to link the various sector programmes and to provide new and extended partnership opportunities in lifelong learning. It is designed to help improve synergies and cooperation between educational sectors, support projects across traditional categories and sectors and support projects that tackle other, new, broader and more complex problems and challenges.

The objectives of this programme are both a Nordic and a European perspective. If we look at the programme we will get information about the prison service and prison education in the Baltic states and the two interesting projects; one from Estonia by researcher Rene Mottus, University of Tartu and the Nordic project by professor Terje Manger from the University of Bergen in Norway. Further we will get an European perspective on prison education by Anita Wilson, chair of the European Prison Education Association (EPEA)

In this Nordplus Framework Programme there is a lot of possibilities to get support and to make contact with colleagues in other countries. I encourage you to contact your national agencies to get more information.

The Nordic Network for prison education

The Nordic network for prison education was formally established on 1 January, 2006. The members of the network work in key positions in the correctional services and at the educational authorities with specific responsibility for prison education in the Nordic countries. The network was originally informal; our collaboration has actually been ongoing since the 1970s. But now, since 1st of January 2006 we are supported economically from the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (which is an advisory body for the Nordic Council of Ministers) so we can meet 3-4 times a year and take initiative to develop prison education in the Nordic countries further.

The current members of the network are: Morten Bruun Pedersen, Danish Prison and Probation Service, Karoliina Taruvuori, Finnish Criminal Sanctions Agency, Erlendur S. Baldursson, Icelandic State Prison Administration, Inger Marie Fridhov, Correctional Service of Norway, Central Administration, Torfinn Langelid and Sissel Mehammer, County Governor of Hordaland (liaison officer – the County Governor of Hordaland is on behalf of the Ministry of Education, responsible for prison education), Norway, Lena Axelsson, Swedish Prison and Probation Service, Head office, and Svenolov Svensson, Swedish Prison and Probation Service, Regional office for Western Sweden. For more information about the network see our website: www.fengselundervisning.net

Training and education for inmates is a central theme in the legislation of each individual country, as well as in international conventions and recommendations. In some countries, the basic rule is that prison inmates have the same right to education as other citizens. But there is a need for more knowledge about the educational backgrounds and needs of prisoners.

It was for this reason that, in 2006, the Nordic network for prison education took the initiative to a Nordic survey of the educational background of prisoners. We contacted scholars from the relevant research environments in the Nordic countries, and filed a joint application for financial support from Nordic Council of Ministers (Ciriuss Nordplus Adult in Denmark) to carry out a study with the title: “Survey of educational backgrounds, rights to education, and motivation concerning education among inmates in Nordic prisons.”

We were fortunate to be awarded funding from the Nordpluss Programme (CIRIUS) for this joint Nordic survey. Each of the Nordic countries therefore produced a national report, on which this final joint report is based. The national reports provided new knowledge concerning the educational backgrounds of prisoners, and resulted in more focus on the needs of this group by politicians, decision-makers, the correctional services, the educational authorities and the mass media. Research-based knowledge is essential to develop good, well-structured educational programmes that satisfy the needs of the target group.

We also received funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers for translation of the report into English. The report has been distributed to all ministries of justice and education in Europe, and we hope it will be a source of inspiration for similar studies. Professor Terje Manger will give more information about this report tomorrow.

Nordic Prison Education A Lifelong Learning Perspective

You have also received another report about prison education: *Nordic Prison Education A Lifelong Learning Perspective* which is a revised and updated English version of the 2005 edition. Both the Nordic and English edition became so popular that they are out of print. The first English edition is for example translated into Georgian and used as a handbook by the prison service in the country.

The background for this report was that in 1999 the Nordic Council adopted a recommendation on prison education in a Nordic perspective. In September 2001, a Nordic project group was appointed to carry out a study, with representatives from the prison and probation services and the educational authorities.

The purpose of the project was to provide a concise, overall and updated comparative view of education and training in prisons in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, as well as a brief description of the situation in Iceland, Greenland, the Faeroe islands and the Åland islands.

Some recommendations from the report:

- If convicted prisoners are to be offered education on equal terms with others in society, the right to education must be clearly stipulated in the legislation.
- According to this report, good cooperation between the prison and probation services and other authorities is one of the key starting points for satisfying prisoners' educational needs. The prison education offered today does not satisfactorily correspond to prisoners' educational needs. Increased investments in prison education would probably be of added value for society as a whole.

We the authors, Kaj Raundrup from Denmark, Marianne Mäki from Finland, myself from Norway and Svenolov Svensson from Sweden, together with Erlendur Baldursson from Iceland and Vuokko Karsikas and Kirsti Kuivajärvi from Finland, think that this report provides useful documentation for individuals working with any aspect of the wider problem complex relating to prison and probation services.

On behalf of the Nordic network for prison education I hope that this seminar will give us new and useful knowledge about prison education in our countries and by this develop this important area further.

Again welcome to the seminar. Thank you!