



# **Prison Education in the Nordic countries**

by

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# Rights to education

## Human Rights (European convention)

*No person shall be denied the right to education*

## Education in Prison (Council of Europe 1989)

*All prisoners shall have access to education,...*

## The European Prison Rules (Council of Europe 2006)

*...each prisoner has the right to as comprehensive educational programs as possible, that satisfy their individual needs and preferences*



# Different organizations for Prison Education

- **Ministry of Education is responsible**
  - Teachers are employed by ordinary schools in the community (N, I, F)
  - Contracted teachers from the community (F)
- **Ministry of Justice is responsible**
  - Teachers are employed by the Prison and Probation Services (D, F)
  - The same but the education is equivalent to adult education in the community and under supervision of the Ministry of Education (S)
- **Principle of normalization**
  - Release privileges to get access to the regular course range in the community (D)
- **Mixed organization** (F, D)



# **Nordic survey 2006**

*Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Finland*

## **- educational background of inmates**

Heterogeneous population:

- age
- kind of crime
- length of sentence
- learning difficulties
- educational background

Roughly the same proportions of prisoners who have university degrees and who have not completed any educational level at all



# Nordic survey 2006

*Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Finland*

## - **educational background of inmates**

**Main motivation for participating in prison education:**

- *constructive use of time*
- *improving the prospects on the labour market*



# Nordic survey 2006

## - educational background of inmates

### Reasons for not participating in prison education:

- *No suitable education (vocational training)*
- *No information*
- *Not interested*
- *Other reasons (e.g. short sentences)*



# Nordic survey 2006

## - educational background of inmates

### Problems relating to prison education:

- *Shortage of ICT equipment*
- *Transfers while serving sentence*



# Needs found through the survey:

- Dealing with learners' reading, writing and mathematic difficulties
- Information in different ways, continuously repeated
- Motivating activities – particularly among young inmates with short sentences
- More vocational training





## Needs found through the survey:

- Educational opportunities during short sentences
- Access to ICT – computers and Internet
- Continuity when inmates are transferred
- Opportunities to continue when released
- Improved opportunities to higher education



# The "perfect" organization...

- meets individual needs
- gives *adult* education to adult prisoners (respect)
- offers a wide range of subjects (theoretical & vocational)
- makes the education independent of time, place and study pace (mix of local and distance learning can solve the problems with transfers)
- provides education all the year round (think e.g. of short sentences)
- gives grades equivalent to the educational system in the community (legitimacy)
- gives access to ICT (basic skills)
- makes it easy to continue outside prison (equivalence)
- develops good co-operation between different agencies



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