



Active Inclusion Learning Network Marginalised in Communities Transnational Event 11-12 June 2014, Athens

Report on Sub-Theme: [Ex-offenders](#)

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1. The good practices selected for the Peer Review Meetings are:

1. **OFF 26**

Name of the intervention: Reintegration of addicted people into society and labour market in the salad bar “My Guru”

Country: **Lithuania**

1st day score: 78

2nd day score: 8

2. **OFF 34**

Name of the intervention: Choices Programme (Programa Escolhas)

Country: **Portugal**

1st day score: 92

2nd day score: 7.5

3. **OFF 31**

Name of the intervention: Jobtrack

Country: **Northern Ireland**

1st day score: 86

2nd day score: 7.5

4. **OFF 8**

Name of the intervention: The Chrysalis Programme

Country: **England + Australia**

1st day score: 74

2nd day score: 7

5. **OFF 36**

Name of the intervention: Ready for Work

Country: **UK + Rep. Ireland**

1st day score: 73

2nd day score: 7

Reserves:

1. OFF 21

Name of the intervention: SARTORIE SOLIDALI

Country: **Italy**

1st day score: 77

2nd day score: 6

2. OFF 12

Name of the intervention: Directions

Country: **UK**

1st day score: 70

2nd day score: 6

3. OFF 18

Name of the intervention: Youth Advocate Programme

Country: **USA + Southern Ireland**

1st day score: 66

2nd day score: 6

2. The innovative points drawn from the collected practices were:

- 1. Holistic partnerships:** practices show the importance to “work in common” in order to solve issues related to the social inclusion of (ex) offenders. This mainly means ensuring an integration of local partnerships through a correct mix of government, NGOs, local employers, private social enterprises (the provision of 24 hour holistic support at home for young people was one of the innovative elements stressed during the workshop). For experts a good partnership, aimed at working together to challenge lacunas, should also involve participants.
- 2. User participation:** some practices show the usefulness of using “the voice” of previous participants to strengthen the implementation of interventions. Indeed on the basis of their experience ex-offenders can mentor or teach mentors, as well as help practitioners in identifying and improving services for specific needs. Thus their involvement allows the end user to gain credibility and this gives an insight into their knowledge. For experts involving participants in activities this could also mean giving offenders a sense of responsibility in terms of funding. Thus for example involving participants in running an enterprise strengthens the sense of self-supporting and empowerment.

3. The learning points drawn from the innovative practices were:

1. **Long term (funding + mentoring):** practices show that continuity in interventions from prisons to the community is essential to increase success and resettlement of offenders into society. For the experts, the transitional period from secure custodial setting to the outside world particularly requires a form of continued support/mentoring. This is a critical moment with the highest success rates for no re-offending, thus work and guidance/coaching after release should be supported. Furthermore the integration and sharing of budgets as well as a long-term funding strategy allow bolder and bigger projects.
2. **Mixture of participants:** experts stressed the added value of those practices that are able to target participants with different needs (alcohol/drug abuses, offenders, disabilities,...) through an integral approach. Furthermore from the surveys it seems that the mixture itself of young and old experienced offenders with other disadvantaged groups (women, immigrants, etc...) can lead a project to success.

4. The main critical factors that led to success in the collected practices were:

1. **Labour market awareness and synergies. Link with contextualised community:** successful practices are interrelated with the involvement of the local community. Experience shows that it is particularly important to increase and better link activities with the local labour market demand, to start synergies with local social enterprises and local employers. One of the factors underlined by experts was the more active involvement of employers in programmes/projects and training would lead to success. This should also be accompanied by the strengthening of the entrepreneurial spirit often found in offenders.
2. **Individual approach/tailor made:** practices show that though the groups are “individual” they are a significant percentage of our “inclusive” population with a wide range of needs. Some of these practices have been able to meet the individual needs of participants. Thus an appropriate identification of specific needs allows to implement approaches making the projects fit for purpose.

5. The aspects that the experts would like to be transferred into their own national context, and why were:

1. **User designed/involvement:** make 'through the gate' working not just with the involvement of employers and local actors but also through the involvement of ex-offenders in the design and implementation of projects. Thus for instance, the user involvement in delivery and decision making process is a successful factor. Service users voice is vital and programmes are stronger where they are involved in the design.
2. **Evaluation/evidence:** improving evaluation of activities as well as taking into account some evidence based solutions is fundamental for the success of practices everywhere. Furthermore evaluation itself allows the transferability of practices. To this end experts suggest that it could be valuable to transfer the "payment by results" method as this "forces" the evaluation of practices. A multiagency synergy is desirable in this phase too in order to find out innovation in cooperation with local and public actors.

6. Further important points that experts identified about the collected practices were:

1. More multi-organisation and support for private + public sector
2. Lobby for tax incentives for all companies to make available places/jobs for ex-offenders.
3. Provision of high quality staff training.

7. The questions to be taken to the Peer Review meetings in order to identify the most innovative and collective practices are:

1. How do you know what you do has an effect?
2. Evidence: what have you got?
3. What do you do to make them employable? (soft skills)
4. Have you assessed the employers need?
5. What is relevant for the intervention from the employer market?
6. What would you do differently? (start again)
7. What is unique to this intervention?

8. Any other comments or observations from the sub-theme group:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.