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Analysis of EuroPris Working Group Questionnaire on Prison Education in Europe

FINAL REPORT

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Comparison of Questionnaire Responses with 1989 Council of Europe Recommendations

The questionnaire that is the subject of this report was prepared with the intention of informing review of the Council of Europe’s 1989 recommendations on prison education. The following table compares the current Recommendations with relevant data from the questionnaire.

No.	CoE Recommendation 1989	Relevant Questionnaire Responses
1	<i>All prisoners shall have access to education, which is envisaged as consisting of...</i>	Educational opportunities appear to be available to most prisoners, but there are still some barriers and restrictions of access primarily related to length or status of sentence (especially in the cases of short-term and remand prisoners) and language ability (particularly affecting foreign national prisoners). The requirement to show proof of educational level attainment also restricts ability to participate. (See Section 2 .)
2	<i>Education for prisoners should be like the education provided for...</i>	Most respondents offered a wide range of education provision in their prisons including general education, arts, computing/IT, physical education, vocational training, life skills. However, responses suggest there is still an emphasis on vocational and basic education (literacy and numeracy) in education provision. And while computers now are part of most prison classrooms, and many respondent countries allow prisoners limited access to the internet, recognition of the digital nature of today’s world is not well-embedded as a priority or practice across prison systems of respondents. (See Sections 2 and 3 .)
3	<i>Education in prison shall aim to develop the whole person...</i>	Only a handful of respondents explicitly mentioned a person-centred or a whole person approach to education as an aim. Rehabilitation, reduced recidivism and reintegrating into society remain the dominant themes cited in prison education visions. One respondent noted that resource constraints limit the ability to achieve a whole person focus; two respondents stated their education systems are not meeting this aim. (See Section 1 .)
4	<i>All those involved in the administration of the prison system...</i>	Questionnaire responses did not directly address this recommendation.

- 5 *Education should have no less status than work within prison...* More than half of respondents reported prisoners are paid to attend education, though it is common for prisoners to be paid less for education than for work in the prison. (See [Section 4.](#)) Many vision statements and priorities for prison education among respondent countries emphasise employability (as a reintegrative and recidivism strategy) which, along with strong focus on vocational training as education, may undermine the quest for equal status (and a broad-based definition) of education. (See [Section 1.](#))
- 6 *Every effort should be made to encourage the prisoner...* Participation levels, reported by all but four respondents, varied greatly. In some places, about half of all prisoners are involved in standard and lower level education. Very few prisoners, generally, are involved in higher level learning, especially when compared to levels of participation in university education among non-imprisoned members of society. Most prison systems are providing some training, education and use of ICT and internet access, but these vary greatly in terms of level and type. (See [Section 4.](#))
- 7 *Development programmes should be provided to ensure...adult education methods* Many respondents mentioned a predominance of standard level education and the involvement of local education authorities which implies traditional educational approaches remain dominant; however, the survey alone is not adequate to verify this supposition. Only a small minority of respondents, however, used language to suggest an adult education or social practice approach to education is in use. (See [Sections 4](#) and [1.](#))
- 8 *Special attention should be given to those prisoners with particular difficulties ...* More than half of respondents stated learning difficulties are a priority, but there were no specific questions about how these are assessed and managed. This suggests there is strong awareness of learning difficulty, but we do not have information about how and whether these are addressed in practice. (See [Section 2.](#))
- 9 *Vocational education should be aimed at the wider individual...* A wide range of vocational training courses is offered across respondent countries demonstrates responsiveness to shifts in the labour market towards service and information sector jobs. But there is still quite a lot of training focused on manual labour and trades jobs. (See [Section 6.](#))
- 10 *Prisoners should have direct access to a well-stocked library...* Most respondents defined libraries as part of prison education, but the quality of libraries and the frequency and opportunity of access for prisoners was not clear. (See [Section 2.](#))

- 11 *Physical education and sports for prisoners...* Most respondents identified physical education as important and part of prison education, but, as with libraries, the quality and frequency of opportunities to access this is not clear. (See [Section 2.](#))
- 12 *Creative and cultural activities...* Nearly all respondents provide arts education and practice in prison, and there is an extensive amount of partnering with outside arts organisations and charities in these activities. There are also diverse forms of arts offered including visual (drawing, painting), music and drama/theatre; dance was the least common form of arts education. While many respondents said arts are an important part of education, some explicitly stated they are not a priority compared to other activities like basic education and ICT. (See [Section 5.](#)) Few had dedicated arts budgets. (See [Section 5.](#))
- 13 *Social education should include practical elements...* Nearly all respondents offer some form of life skills as part of education provision. This likely refers to formal education, training and certification opportunities and may not capture informal education in these areas (e.g. peer support groups, community volunteers in prison, etc.). The focus of life skills seems to be on post-prison integration rather than on coping with the institution. (See [Section 2.](#))
- 14 *Wherever possible, prisoners should be allowed to participate...* Access for prisoners to outside education was not specifically asked in the questionnaire, though a few respondents suggested that prisoners occasionally can have access to local universities while in prison, while others participate in distance learning access to university courses. (See [Section 4.](#))
- 15 *Where education has to take place within the prison, the outside community...* It was clear that a good deal of the arts provision in prison depends on outside community involvement in the form of local groups or arts charities. (See [Section 5.](#)) In responses to delivery of education, it is evident that most education is delivered by the state or by designated education providers, but it is not clear how frequently these bodies work with community groups. ([Section 1.](#))
- 16 *Measures should be taken to enable prisoners...* Enabling prisoners to participate in education after they leave prison was not directly asked in the questionnaire, and it is difficult to infer from other responses how this is being achieved. (See [Section 4](#) which offers related data.)
- 17 *The funds, equipment and teaching staff needed...* There is some evidence that funding for prison education is a challenge. One respondent, for example, noted that resource constraints affect the prison service's ability to achieve the CoE 1989 Recommendation 3 (education for the 'whole person'). (See [Section 1.](#))

Executive Summary

Introduction and Methodology

- ❖ This report presents results of the European Prison Education Policy Review 2017-2019 Questionnaire carried out by a Working Group set up by EuroPris with support from the the European Prison Education Association.
- ❖ Of the 30 European countries invited to take part, 22 completed and returned a questionnaire for a response rate of 73%.

I. Educational Policy & Strategy

- ❖ Responsibility for deciding prison education policy was fairly evenly divided between countries where it primarily falls within a national government remit, and places where it is a regional/local government responsibility, but in most cases the prison service is involved.
- ❖ Respondents were asked to comment on the visions and aims of their education policy. Five main themes emerged: (1) Education as a right/normalisation (2) Education to support rehabilitation, reintegration and reducing recidivism; (3) Managerial and security functions of education; (4) Providing a person-centred approach to education and personal development; and a (5) Basic education/core skills focus.
- ❖ There was a nearly universal belief that vision statements or aims are consistent with the 1989 Council of Europe recommendation to develop the whole person, but only half of respondents felt confident that policy is achieving these aims.

- ❖ There was no dominant approach to the entity delivering education, with most reporting multiple bodies involved including host country (8), the regional/federal government (6) and/or a contracted education provider/NGO (14).

II. Educational Priorities, Access & Delivery

- ❖ General subjects and vocational skills were selected as a core focus by all but one respondent, with slightly smaller but still substantial majorities considering arts, life skills, and to a lesser extent physical education core parts of prison education offerings.
- ❖ In terms of educational priorities, general subjects, vocational training and literacy were rated as the top priorities.
- ❖ Nearly half of respondents defined learning disabilities/difficulties as part of prison education but there was scant comment on how these are addressed.
- ❖ Nearly all respondents reported domestic prisoners have at least the opportunity to take part in education but length of sentence and requiring proof of prior educational attainment were identified as restrictions to accessing this opportunity.
- ❖ Foreign national prisoners (FNPs) were also reported by nearly all respondents to have the opportunity of engaging in education with some restrictions; restrictions primarily related to language ability and requirements.

III. Information Technology

- ❖ Most respondents saw computer skills as a core part of prison education. Most reported that training in basic computer software applications is offered.

- ❖ More than half of respondents reported prisoners have at least some internet access. In all cases where prisoners have internet access this is restricted in some way.

IV. Participation Levels, Distance Learning & Higher Education

- ❖ Fifteen of the 22 (68%) respondents were able to provide data about the numbers or rates of participation in education. However, how participation is measured and reported varied greatly.
- ❖ There is a large range in the rates of participation especially in education at higher (ranging between none and 5% of the population) and standard levels (ranging apparently between less than 1% and nearly 50% of the population).
- ❖ Nearly all respondents have some form of distance learning available in prison; this is mostly university level courses. Generally only a very small number of prisoners take part in this.

V. The Arts

- ❖ Half of respondents agreed arts are an important aspect of the education curriculum in prison, but a few made clear it is not or that other subjects take priority.
- ❖ Generally most prison systems offered a range of arts and creative activities including visual arts, music, drama, and to a lesser extent, dance.
- ❖ Art education is delivered by a range of groups, rather than being solely delivered by the education provider. Typically education providers' provision is supplemented by professional artists and arts companies, NGOs and arts charities, volunteers and prison staff.
- ❖ Most respondents do not have a dedicated arts budget (14 of 22) and it is clear arts are supported and subsidised in a range of ways.

VI. Vocational Training

- ❖ Vocational training was reported as a core part of prison education by nearly all respondents.
- ❖ Vocational subjects included numerous and diverse activities in addition to those listed in the questionnaire, particularly relating to service sector jobs (e.g. catering and hospitality, beauty, retail), trades work, agriculture, crafts and welding.
- ❖ For a few respondents, prison education complements and supports but does not directly involve vocational training.

Conclusion

- ❖ There is widespread awareness of Council of Europe Prison Education Recommendation (1989) 3 that education should 'aim to develop the whole person', and availability of a range of educational offerings that might support this aim.
- ❖ However, it is clear also that vocational training and basic level education remain the dominant focus and priority for many European prison systems.
- ❖ Reasons for this include: priority placed on rehabilitation and employability of prisoners post-release; resource constraints; limited access to education by short-term and remand prisoners; and limited access of higher level education to mainly longer term, domestic prisoners with a pre-established aptitude for learning.
- ❖ Future questionnaires can maximise the robustness of information and reliability and validity by adding guidance, term definitions and increasing precision to questions.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents an analysis of a questionnaire on prison education that was administered in the spring and summer of 2018. It has been prepared by a research team based at the Scottish Centre for Crime & Justice Research (SCCJR).

The questionnaire was commissioned by the Working Group on Prison Education, set up within EuroPris (European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services), and the questionnaire was distributed to numerous countries that make up EuroPris with additional support from the European Prison Education Association (EPEA). The questionnaire contained an introductory page explaining its background and aims. The main aim of the survey was to gather information which would allow the Working Group to *'consider the nature of prison education across Europe in respect of its compliance or ability to provide education that addresses the needs of the whole person'* in line with the *'Council of Europe published Recommendations on Prison Education 1990'*. The results then would be able to inform deliberation about whether and how to *'establish minimum provision [for education in prison] and promote good practice ... establish links with other interventions [with the concerted objective of] promoting better integration and coordination of key rehabilitative services'* (Working Group on Prison Education, 2018).

The questionnaire comprised six sections which structure the main content of this report:

1. Education Policy and Strategy & Priorities
2. Content and Delivery of Prison Education
3. Information Technology
4. Participation Levels, and Higher Education & Distance Learning
5. The Arts
6. Vocational Training

In these sections we summarise data according to these categories, aggregating responses by question, highlighting patterns and themes. The report concludes with a discussion and suggestions for further research.

METHODOLOGY

1.1 Design and Guidance

SCCJR researchers were provided completed questionnaires to collate and analyse respondent data, but did not have responsibility for its design or administration. The questionnaire was designed by Jim King, Head of Learning and Skills in the Scottish Prison Service, at the invitation of the EuroPris Working Group on the Review of Prison Education in consultation with members of the EPEA and a range of academics and practitioners involved in prison and/or adult education. The questionnaire contained 42 questions, spread across the six sections with additional spaces provided for open-ended comments.

Initially the questionnaire was prepared in MS Word to be emailed and completed by hand or typed and then returned via email. Subsequent to this, an online survey was generated in Google Docs based on the Word questionnaire. There are some differences between the online and Word versions of the questionnaire which on rare occasions limited the capacity to compare or interpret results. We note the main differences in the Appendix.

1.2 Distribution and Response Rate

The survey was initially sent to all members of the EuroPris Working Group, comprising representatives of ten European countries (for a total of 11 people, as one country had representation from two federal regions). It was subsequently distributed to 18 additional countries via the EPEA's network of members, with some further distribution from these countries to contacts in additional jurisdictions. Hence, the total number of countries or regions that received an invitation to participate was 30. This includes two federal regions of Germany, and three of the United Kingdom's four jurisdictions (Northern Ireland, England and Scotland). Of these, 22 surveys were completed and returned (i.e. N=22 and is the baseline for all questions unless noted otherwise), *resulting in a response rate of 73%*.

All responses provided were in the English language. Responses were received from all parts of Europe including its northern, central, eastern, western and southern parts. There was greater representation from Western (N=6) and Central (N=8) countries of Europe than other areas (between two and three surveys received respectively from the rest).

The survey was initially distributed with a deadline for completion in April 2018. The deadline was extended, allowing for completion by countries subsequently invited, to May 2018, but to support maximum inclusion, surveys were accepted through the end of June 2018.

We refer to respondents rather than countries as the latter term would not be exactly precise when discussing the entire group of responses (given two participating regions of Germany). However, for the most part the data can be understood as if the responses are from different countries. We also generally do not name particular respondent countries focusing attention on aggregated results.

1.3 (E)mailed and Online Completions

Five respondents completed the online version of the survey, and the rest (17) returned by email or post an MS Word version of the survey (with typed or handwritten responses). References to questions throughout this report are numbered as they appear in the Word version, the form that most returns used; where an online question is referenced, this is made clear. See also Appendix comparing differences between versions.

1.4 Limitations

We identified a number of responses which contained some ambiguity. For example, one respondent answered 'No' to a question (Question 2.1) about availability of General Subjects, but in a following question about which subjects take priority (Question 2.2), selected 'General Subjects'. It is not clear in this case whether there was a misunderstanding between the two questions, or if there are no such subjects offered, but they would be a priority if offered. While this was an infrequent issue, we made an attempt to interpret answers in the most evidenced, logical way. Where this was not possible, we make this clear and excluded from analysis. In another example, about the agency/entity responsible for deciding policy (Question 1.3), options include National Government, Prison/Correctional Service and Educational Service and many respondents selected two or all three of these. It is not clear whether such responses reflect the fact that many prison services are a department or agency and hence part of the national Government, or distinct agencies/arms. This issue arose also in the question about *delivery* of education (Question 1.8).

There also may be issues of language and terminology to consider in future iterations of the questionnaire. Terms such as 'learning difficulties' might mean different things in different places, and the definition of literacies differs between children and adults (Prinsloo, 2005), which might require further inquiry into how this concept is understood in European jurisdictions.

Finally, the questionnaire appears to be (except in the case of arts education) exclusively about *formal* education, meaning education that is specifically identified as such and delivered by a professional educational provider. However, most prisons also offer *informal* forms of education which can include peer to peer learning (mentoring, tutoring), involvement of prison staff, volunteers, non-accredited educational opportunities and so on. Future questionnaires could distinguish or make explicit formal and informal learning to capture additional detail and accuracy.

1.5 Approach to Analysis

The SCCJR team logged all received questionnaires, and entered and stored data in an MS Excel file. A data entry guide was prepared to assist standardisation of data entry between the online and (e)mailed versions. We also made a small number of corrections to raw data where responses to different questions contradicted each other; we worked to determine the correct response and to update data entry accordingly where possible. This involved a degree of speculation in some cases, but we feel reasonably confident we have accurately captured the respondent's intention. If it was not possible to determine the intended entry, data was excluded from the analysis. The research team then extracted responses for all questions and reviewed open-ended comments. Where comments for one question were applicable to another question, these were included under the summary of the question where the comment made most sense.

SECTION 1: EDUCATION POLICY & STRATEGY

The first section of the questionnaire addressed overall responsibility and vision for education in prisons. Most respondents have a formal strategy for the delivery of education in their countries, though there is a split between countries where it is the national government's responsibility or a local/regional government responsibility to decide policy. In either case, the prison service also plays a dominant role in deciding policy in most respondent's countries.

The majority of respondents reported having a vision statement for prison education policy, and these visions can be broken down roughly into five main themes about the aim of prison education: (1) education as a right/normalisation (education in prison should be the same as the quality of education outside of prison); (2) rehabilitation, reintegration and reduced recidivism; (3) managerial/security functions (order and safety in prison); (4) having a person- or prisoner-centred education focus; (5) basic education/core skills focus. These themes are not mutually exclusive; respondents frequently described multiple themes as part of their vision statements or strategies for education. Nearly everyone agreed that their education *visions* were consistent with the 1989 Council of Europe recommendation to develop the whole person. However, only a little more than half expressed confidence that policy is *achieving* aims.

In terms of delivering education, there was no dominant approach, and most respondents said multiple bodies are involved in delivery with regular mentions of this being done by the host country (8), the regional/federal government (6) or a contracted education provider/NGO (14).

Q1.1 & Q1.2 Existence and availability of formal education strategy for prison education?

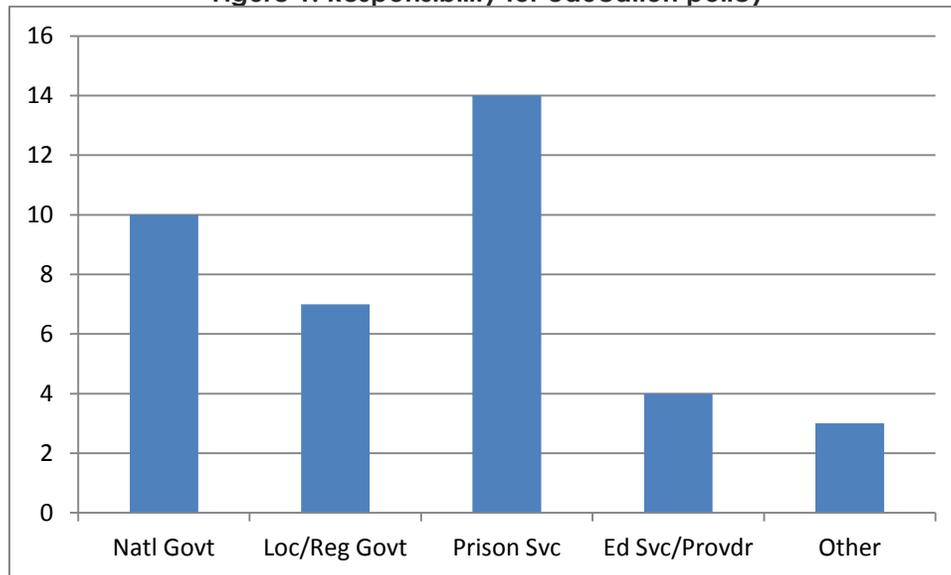
- 17 of 22 respondents reported having a formal strategy for the delivery of education in their country, with 5 reporting no strategy.
- Most of those with a policy, reported that it was available (12) in print, with some also providing a web link (8).
- Two countries noted their policies are available but not in English.
- One country noted that it has a policy that is distributed to prison Governors and education staff but is not publicly available, but there is a strategic document which eventually will be.
- Some of the online links provided related to justice or prison strategies generally, of which education played a part, while other web links related specifically to prison education policy or strategy.

Q1.3 Who decides the policy and strategy for prison education?

- National Government involvement in policy was selected more than any other single option by 10 of 22 respondents, with 2 selecting it as the *only* decider of policy.

- A Local/Regional Government role was selected by 7, with 2 selecting it as the *only* decider of policy.
- A Prison Service role was selected by 14, with 2 selecting it as the *only* decider of policy.
- Education Service/Provider was selected by 4.
- More typically responses identified multiple entities involved in policy:
 - 5 said National Government and the Prison/Correctional Service (sometimes also with Education Service/Providers)
 - 7 respondents identified a Local or Regional Government role but only two respondents stated policy was the exclusive preserve of Local or Regional Government – most also selected National Government and/or Prison Service involvement.

Figure 1. Responsibility for education policy



One country added in comments that while the National Government decides policy they are moving towards a de-centralised system giving autonomy to individual prisons to decide and design their own strategies to meet national policy and the needs of their prison demographic. It was unclear if all respondents understood 'Prison/Correctional Service' to mean a central prison agency/HQ or if some might have understood this as individual prisons having control over policy (one country selected Prison Service plus 'other' as responsible for policy, specifying 'other' to mean Prison Service Headquarters). Overall it appears that national level governments and prison agencies play the largest role in determining education policy, compared to local/regional governments and educational services/providers. However, it also appears there is an axis emerging between countries that organise education policy nationally (10), and those that decide it at more local levels of government (7) (with two respondents reporting both national and local government involvement).

Q1.4 Is a vision statement included as part of education strategy/policy?

The vast majority, 17 of 22 respondents, noted there was a vision or statement of aims for their prison system's education. Many detailed aims/vision that related to giving prisoners the opportunity to gain skills through education to help them return to society with better employment opportunities and to contribute to their successful reintegration.

Open-ended comments to this question sometimes included a statement by the respondent, but alternately included a quoted excerpt from the policy. This set of responses would benefit from a focused thematic analysis to assess how well Council of Europe recommendations and principles of prison education are being reflected in policy. Though it was not possible to conduct a sustained thematic analysis of vision statements for this draft report, an initial analysis suggested some important themes. Most respondents' comments fell into more than one theme, as summarized in Figure 2.

A right to education and normalization of education: This theme captures comments from respondents about providing the same quality, amount or level of education to those inside prison as is enjoyed by those outside prison. It often went along with the statement that education is a right not a privilege. It also includes statements about complying with legal requirements to provide education. Typical comments related to this theme were:

“to have the same Education System in the prison as in the free society”

“The prison[er] has the right [to] education”

“[In our country] the right to free education for all adults is guaranteed by law, up to and including upper secondary level.”

Education is important for rehabilitation, reintegration and reduced recidivism: Education for many was seen primarily as having an important role in rehabilitation, remaining offending free and able to reintegrate into general society on release. Typical comments related to this theme were:

“support for those inmates who are now in probation, out of prison, and are involved in education”

“assist the convicted person to obtain an honest approach to life”

“Reducing recidivism ... improv[ing] possibilities to be successful on the labour market”

“To prepare them for the life after being released”

“increasing employability...effective resettlement and reducing the risk of future offending”

Managerial discourses and security interests: Some saw education as part of a wider approach that maintains prison and societal security, and/or mentioning partnerships and focusing on arrangements and quality control of delivering education. This theme captures both a performance management discourse which focus on the good order and operation of the prison, as opposed to prisoner's life after prison. Comments also noted education helps prisoners to cope with, manage or maintain wellbeing in prison. Typical comments related to this theme were:

“result-orientated management”

“integrate prison education in an overall perspective on the matter of joint training”

“sharing and dissemination of good practices”

“good balance between dynamic and passive security”

Person-centered: This refers to working with individual learners, tailoring the types and modes of education according to the specific stage and needs of the individual learner. Included here are also a small number of comments relating to the importance of the well-being of the individual (without specifically tying this to additional outcomes like employability). Typical comments related to this theme were:

“creative and flexible learning that unlocks potential”

“learner-centred and that facilitates life-long learning”

“taking the interests of the inmate at heart”

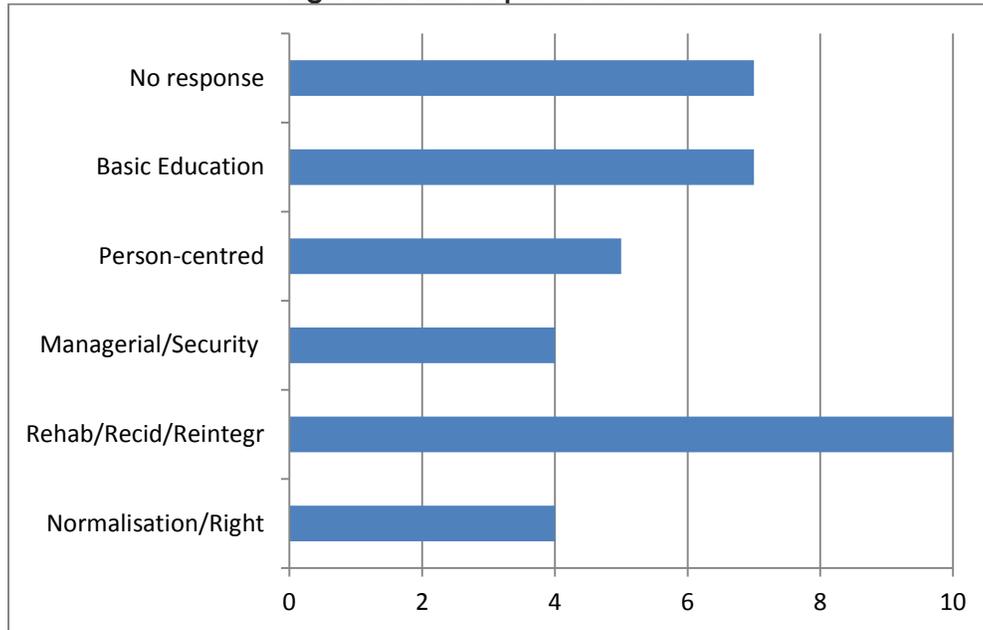
Basic education/core skills: As with other themes, this one often overlaps with other stated aims of education vision. It captures comments about the goal of education to support attaining basic educational levels, minimum levels of competency, e.g. in literacy and numeracy. Typical comments related to this theme were:

“occupational therapy, work training, alphabetisation, educational and vocational training and labour”

“to encourage and motivate convicts to acquire a general education and profession”

“Elementary School level and High School level education, vocational training”

Figure 2. Aims of prison education



Q1.5 Consistency of vision with 1989 CoE recommendation to address needs of whole person?

- 19 of 22 reported their vision was consistent with the Council of Europe (CoE) Recommendation on Prison Education to 'aim to develop the whole person bearing in mind his or her social, economic and cultural context'.
- 2 of 22 respondents said their vision was *not* consistent with this recommendation, and one country said in comments that this was not checked and so no answer provided.
- One country said its educational policy aligns with all 17 of the CoE 1989 recommendations.
- One country said resources restrict the ability to adopt a whole person approach.

Q1.6 Confidence that education policy is achieving aims?

- 13 of 22 reported they were confident that prison education policy/strategy was achieving aims.
- Two respondents selected both yes and no, with one of these respondents stating confidence of achieving aims for domestic prisoners but less confidence for foreign national prisoners, where it is not clear where they are going when they are released from prison.
- One respondent is in the early stages of updating strategic aims.
- One country specified it ensures achievement of aims through independent inspections of education delivery.

Q1.7 Formal evaluations of prison education?

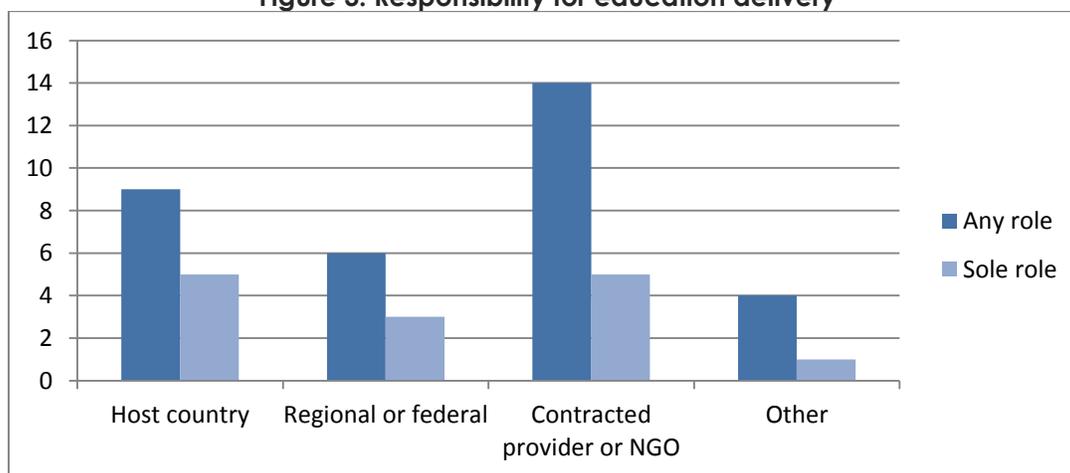
- Only 5 of 22 respondents reported having completed a formal review or evaluation of prison education.
- The sources of evaluations and reviews varied between independent academic evaluations to Government appointed commissions to private research contractors.
- Web links to available evaluations and reviews are below:
 - England (2016 review by the Coates Commission):
www.gov.uk/government/publications/unlocking-a-review-of-education-in-prison.
 - Switzerland (2011, final report of a two year evaluation by the University of Fribourg; next planned evaluation is 2019): http://assets.sah-zentralschweiz.ch/downloads/ev_suisse_romande_p_p_1_7_09_bis_30_6_11.pdf
 - Norway (2017 evaluation by Deloitte) web address:
<https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/tall-og-forskning/forskningsrapporter/evaluering-av-tilskudd-til-opplaring-i-kriminalomsorgen---endelig-rappor....pdf>

Q1.8 Who delivers education to prisoners?

There is about an even balance of countries where the national or regional government (combined total of 15) plays a role delivering education compared to prison systems where a contracted service provider or NGO does (14). For places where there is a single entity with responsibility for education delivery (the red columns in the figure below), local or national governments were more commonly cited (8) than contracted providers and NGOs (5).

- Overall, 13 respondents said there is only one provider of education while 9 respondents reported multiple entities sharing responsibility for prison education.
- Figure 3 shows those with some or the sole role in educational delivery.
- Of those selecting 'Other', respondents specified: government Education departments (national level) or boards (regional/local), volunteers, prison staff, prison service HQ, and NGOs that provide support during holiday periods (summer, Christmas).

Figure 3. Responsibility for education delivery



SECTION 2: EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES, ACCESS & DELIVERY

The second section of the survey mainly addressed the subjects and activities that are part of and priorities of a respondent's prison education provision. There is strong, shared agreement amongst respondents about the subjects and activities that prison education includes. General subjects and vocational skills were selected as a core focus by all but one respondent, with slightly smaller but still substantial majorities considering arts, life skills, and to a lesser extent physical education also to be a part of education. These views were similarly reflected in assessment of educational priorities, with general subjects, vocational skills and in addition qualifications and literacy issues rated as the top priorities. Nearly half of respondents identified learning disabilities/difficulties as part of prison education but provided no detail about how this is addressed or incorporated into provision of services.

In terms of participating in education, nearly all respondents reported domestic prisoners have at least the opportunity to take part in education, but one person noted sentences can be too short to actually do so. Other limits or restrictions on participation mentioned were the requirement to show proof of previous level of educational achievement, exclusion of violent and disruptive prisoners, and limitation of education to convicted prisoners only. Similarly, foreign national prisoners (FNPs) have the opportunity of engaging in education with some restrictions in nearly all countries. Restrictions on access for FNPs primarily related to language ability; many reported that FNPs may be required to take language courses or show language competency before accessing educational opportunities.

Q2.1 What activities are included in the term prison education?

Responses to this question showed common understanding of certain activities as part of prison education, which was generally understood to encompass general subjects/general education, creative arts, life skills, vocational training/skills, and physical education. This question may be ambiguous in that it is not certain if it asks about how prison education is *defined* in a particular place or what is actually *provided* as part of prison education.

- All but one of the 22 respondents identified General Subjects as included in the overarching term of prison education, however the one stated 'General Education' is a priority (in Question 2.2) suggesting it is understood as part of prison education.
- 19 of 22 respondents identified Creative Arts as part of Prison Education. One of the respondents who replied negatively to this question noted, however, that such activities may be provided based on individual interest with the cooperation of prison officers.
- 19 of 22 countries offer Life Skills as part of prison education, with three stating these are not part of education.
- All but one of the respondents include Vocational Skills training as part of prison education.
- 16 of 22 respondents included Physical Education as part of prison education. Two respondents noted that physical education is generally delivered by prison staff but there is an aim to align this with educational aims, such as supporting qualifications in this area.

- 16 of 17 respondents identified libraries as part of prison education (the online survey did not include libraries as an option and are excluded here).
- About half (10 of 22) included learning difficulties/disabilities as part prison education.
- One respondent listed numerous areas their provision includes, giving a sense of the range of opportunities available to prisoners: Mathematics, IT, Yoga, Creative Writing, Design graphics, Multimedia, Horticulture, Business Studies, Career Guidance, Woodwork, Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy, Needlework, Music Technology, First Aid, Communications.

Q2.2 Do certain activities take priority?

The differences between the (e)mailed MS Word and online versions of the survey were greatest in Section 2. For this question in the Word version, a single tick box was provided for each educational area; in the online version a Likert scale was created (with five boxes numbered 1-5 to specify the strength of the priority). However, no detail was provided in the online version about the orientation of the scale (e.g. whether 1 = highest or lowest priority). It was possible to deduce that most (4) online survey respondents used one orientation (1=highest) and so their responses can be included; however one respondent appears to have used an opposite orientation (1=lowest), but as this could not be confirmed this survey is excluded from the analysis.

- 13 of 21 selected literacy/numeracy as priorities.
- 9 of 21 countries prioritized employability skills, with three specifying this as the highest priority.
- 16 of 21 countries selected multiple activities as a priority.
- 2 of 21 respondents prioritized Vocational Skills above all other activities, with one commenting that 'Improving vocational skills will help them to find a job after living in prison'.
- One respondent specified the priority placed on accreditation noting 'interests in all subjects, but no.1 priority is for certified subjects'.

A summary of priorities showing the predominance of vocational skills, literacy and general education is in Table 1.

Table 1. Priority areas of prison education

Area	No. of Responses
Literacy	13
IT	5
General Education	10
Certification/Qualification	10
Employability	6
Vocational training	13
Physical Education	1

Q2.3 Does every domestic prisoner have opportunity to participate in education?

21 out of 22 respondents stated every domestic prisoner in their country has the opportunity to engage in education. Only one respondent answered 'No' stating 'some prisoners can't participate in prison education because of the length of the sentence (too short)'.

Q2.4 Restrictions or preconditions to a prisoner accessing education?

- About half, 10 of 22 respondents, have restrictions on prisoners attending education.
- Restrictions or preconditions of education included:
 - Violently disruptive prisoners given limited access (1 response)
 - Only convicted prisoners can access (1 response)
 - Proof of previous educational achievement required (multiple respondents)

Q2.5 & Q2.6 Access and restrictions for Foreign National Prisoners to education?

- 20 out of 22 respondents (i.e. 21 countries) said foreign national prisoners can attend education. One of the respondents selected 'No' to this question specifying that prisoners must be able to learn in the domestic language of the host country.
- 8 out of 22 respondents restricted access to education for FNP's, with one answering both Yes and No, stating that foreign nationals are encouraged to complete courses in the host country's language first.
- 9 of 22 respondents (representing 21 countries) restrict courses on the understanding the FNP is competent in the domestic country's language.

SECTION 3: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are essential to modern life, and to some extent all respondents reported some engagement with these in their education provision. More than half saw computer skills as a core part of prison education with nearly all of these respondents offering some training in basic computer software applications (predominantly MS Office or similar – MS Word, Excel, etc.).

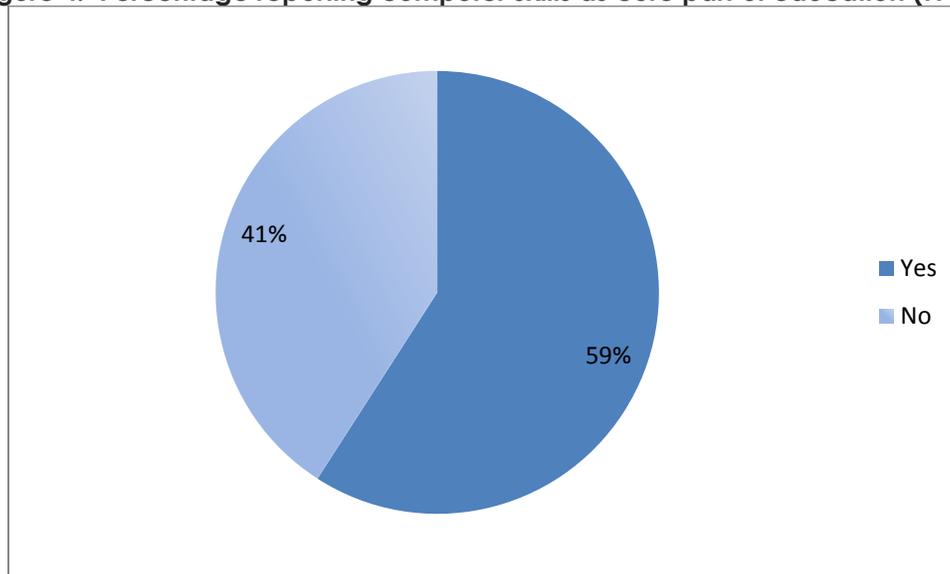
In terms of internet access, more than half of respondents reported prisoners have at least some access. Of these, all limited internet access in some way. Limitations included making the internet available only in a small number of prisons; to certain prisoners based on risk and need; or to certain sites (e.g. government sites or Wikipedia).

Internet access was most commonly reported by respondents located in western parts of Europe (5 out of 6 surveys). However, internet access is fairly evenly spread across Europe with all regions having some countries allowing and some denying access to the internet.

Q 3.1 Computer skills a core aspect of prison teaching?

More than half of respondents (13 of 22) said computer skills are a core part of education, with 9 reporting that computer skills are not a core aspect.

Figure 4. Percentage reporting computer skills as core part of education (N=22)



Q3.2 What computer skills taught in your prisons

Of the 13 who responded Yes to computer skills being a core part of education, almost all offered basic Microsoft Office package skills; one country who responded No to computer skills being core said they offered courses but not ones leading to a certificate.

Q3.3 Do prisoners have access to the Internet?

- 14 of 22 (including one answering both Yes and No) reported prisoners have internet access at least sometimes. One respondent who answered yes specified access was to a virtual learning environment, however, and it is not clear if this actually involves internet access.
- 8 answered No (one having answered Yes and No, as above) to this question.
- Comments about prisoner access to the internet included that it may be limited to certain prisons, or to certain times; it may be supervised; it may be limited to particular kinds of sites (e.g. government pages) or part of a particular course (e.g. social media); finally internet access more commonly will be limited to particular prisoners (e.g. low risk or those who have a particular need to access it, e.g. on a social media course).

Figure 5. Percentage of respondents providing internet access in prison (N=22)

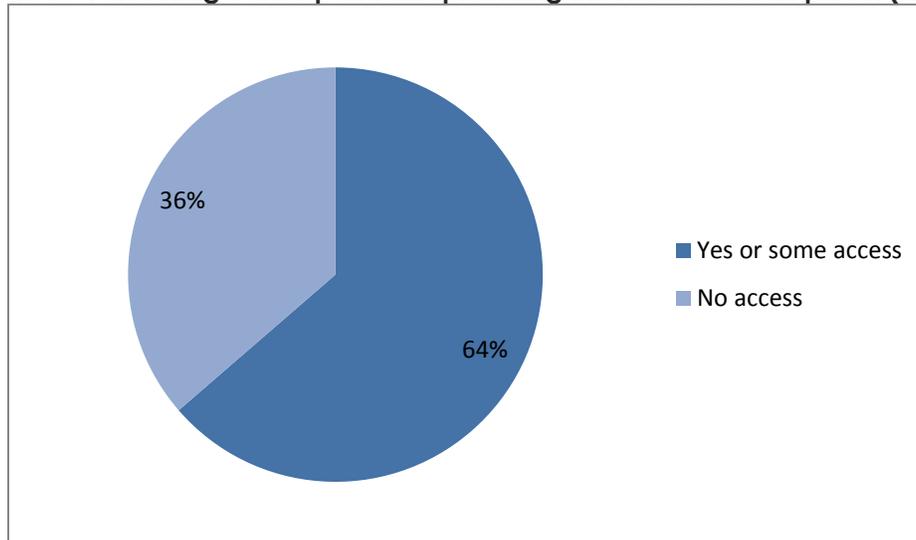


Table 2. Internet access by respondent region of Europe (N=22)

European Region	Yes	No	% Yes
Central	3	5	38%
Eastern	2	1	67%
Northern	2	1	67%
Southern	1	1	50%
Western	5	1	83%

Q3.4 Management of internet access

Specific options limiting access to the internet were provided in the questionnaire. The table below summarises these responses. All such respondents limited access in some way, as noted, with most selecting multiple ways.

Table 3. How internet access is managed (N=14)

Limitation of access to...	Responses
White sites	9
Supervised	9
Skype or similar technology	7

Respondents also noted in comments other techniques of limiting and managing access to the internet, including:

- In one country, prisoners on temporary release preparing for permanent release have access to the internet.
- In one country the prison service has created an ICT infrastructure, which enables cooperation between schools and Correctional Services authorities. There are two levels of security in this system where there is an internet filter based around categorising web pages.
- Some respondents noted that prisoners can be individually assessed and allowed to use the internet or categorically assessed where 'high security prisoners have no communication to the outside world via the web, while lower security prisoners can access statistics from the internet or look up facts on Wikipedia.'

Q3.5 & Q3.6 Allowing and managing access to the internet from the prisoner's cell?

None of the respondents reported in-cell internet access for prisoners.

Q3.7 Intranet or other non-internet access?

- 10 of 22 reported having intranet or other non-internet access.
- Examples include:
 - Trialling in-cell technology (laptops, tablets) with access to a controlled intranet environment offering limited content.
 - A prison-based computing cloud in a limited number of prisons with a secured digital platform in every cell.
 - Info-Kiosk points that provide access to information about legislation, rights, obligations and information about one's sentence.
 - Access to learning programmes and offline versions of Wikipedia.

Q3.8 Other forms of technology in learning?

Three respondents reported piloting or planning use of tablets (e.g. I pads) in various ways.

SECTION 4: PARTICIPATION LEVELS, HIGHER EDUCATION & DISTANCE LEARNING

Section 4 of the questionnaire covered how many prisoners participate in education and at what level. Fifteen of the 22 (68%) respondents were able to provide data about the numbers or rates of participation in different levels of education: lower, standard and higher. This data is important for monitoring and assessing achievement of educational aims. However, reporting standards and definitions vary making interpretation and comparison difficult. No definition of the different levels of education was provided in the questionnaire guidance.

Despite this, some interesting themes emerge here including the great range in rates of participation especially at higher levels (ranging between none and 5% of the population) and standard levels (ranging apparently between less than 1% and nearly 50% of the population).

Nearly all respondents reported availability of distance learning opportunities in prison; this is mostly university level courses. About half of respondents reported prisoners can be paid to attend education; of these eight said payment to prisoners to attend education is the same as the prisoner would be paid to do work in the prison.

Q4.1, Q4.2 & Q4.3 Availability and cost of distance learning and higher education courses in prison?

- 19 of 22 reported having distance learning options available to prisoners.
- This is mainly to access university level of study (13 of 19 positive responses) and upper secondary levels (3 responses).
- In comments, one respondent says distance learning is available in principle but never accessed, while another notes that if a prisoner was on a university course prior to imprisonment they can continue this.
- Access to distance and university courses seems to be to local universities, except in the UK where there is a main provider of degree level courses in prison (the Open University).
- 7 respondents reported there is a fee (i.e. distance learning is not free), and one country requires by law that the prisoner (or another person, presumably family or friend) must pay for their own distance learning; one respondents notes there is no distinction between free and imprisoned persons for educational access; one respondent noted there is a significant discount (65%) for imprisoned students.
- Several commented that while education may be free, student prisoners must pay for books and additional support themselves.

Q4.4 Number and percentage of prisoners involved in different levels of education?

- Some reported numbers, others percentages of participation. Only half of respondents were able to report data about levels of participation. Data was from 2017 and 2018, with some also

including numbers for 2016. It is not always clear how participation levels are measured, which means it is impossible to draw comparisons between countries/regions.

- The definition of ‘Lower Level’ education was not made explicit in the survey, and comments to this question showed different understandings: one respondent specified this as work therapy, and another as primary school level; some responses grouped ‘Standard’ and ‘Lower’ levels together.
- There is a very large range of levels of participation at all levels of education, though figures may not be comparable. At the HIGHER level, participation ranged from 2 people (in a prison population of circa 9,000 prisoners) to nearly 6% of the total population. At the STANDARD level the range is from less than 1% to nearly 50% of the population. At the LOWER level, participation ranged from less than 1% to more than 40%.
- Table 4 lists all respondents with data for those where reported. It includes overall prison population size where known. There appears to be no obvious relationship between size of prison population and availability of statistics on education participation.

Table 4. Participation rates in different levels of education

Respondent Code	Nat'l Prison Rate*	Higher	Standard	Lower
1	80		0.26%	0.36%
2	80			
3	100	2	56	236
4	60	1.8%	29.7%	8.6%
5	190	0	488	77
6	200	0.02%	3%	3%
7	80	5.9%	49.4%	43.1%
8	170	2.4%	7%	4.6%
9	110	5	1541	905
10	270			
11	80	4	228	
12	50	5%	20%	5%
13	240	6	42%	
14	60	5%	47% of rest	
15	100			
16	80	18	178	200
17	80	1%		
18	60			
19	140	1,181	**	**
20	90			
21	140			
22	80			

*Imprisonment Rate (rounded to nearest 10) source: World Prison Brief.

**Link was provided for this data but did not work.

Q4.5, Q4.6 & 4.7 Payment for participating in education or achieving qualifications?

- 12 of 22 reported prisoners are paid to attend education (though one respondent said Y and N, explaining where education times conflict with work times, they can be paid)
- Only 4 of 22 respondents answered Yes to whether prisoners can be paid for achieving qualifications and certificates.

Table 5. Is payment for education the same as for prison work?

Response	Number
no	6
yes	8
sometimes	1
no answer	5

SECTION 5: THE ARTS

Half of respondents agreed that the arts are an important aspect of the education curriculum in prison, but a few made clear it is not or that other aspects (such as general education subjects) take priority. Most typically multiple arts activities are offered in the different respondents' prisons, including visual arts, music, drama, and to a lesser extent, dance. Generally a range of groups deliver art education and experiences in prison including the education provider, professional artists and arts companies, NGOs and arts charities, volunteers and, finally, prison staff. Most respondents reported not having a dedicated arts budget (14 of 22), and it is clear arts are supported and subsidised in a number of ways (e.g. through volunteers and charitable work or outside charitable funding).

Q5.1 Are arts an important part of curriculum?

- 13 of 22 reported the inclusion of arts as an important aspect of the curriculum.
- One respondent qualified this by saying 'it depends on what is meant by "important aspect" [with the main focus] on Maths, English, ICT and English for Speakers of Other Languages and ... it's for individual [prisons] to decide what subjects are delivered based on the needs of their prisoners.' Another respondent commented arts is considered part of prison education, but not an important one.

Q5.2 What arts are part of the curriculum?

- Most of the 19 of 22 who reported the inclusion of arts as an important part of the curriculum offered three or all four of the options listed (visual arts, drama/drama therapy, music and dance).
- Dance was the least selected arts option. One respondent noted dance can be included as part of theatre projects.

Q5.3 Who delivers arts?

- 16 selected Educational Provider, 7 selected Professional Art Companies, 12 selected Other; three respondents did not answer this question.
- Arts are mostly delivered through a combination of bodies, with only five respondents (3 choosing Education Provider and 2 choosing Other) stating arts are delivered by only one of the options listed (Educational Provider, Professional Arts Company, Other).
- The most commonly selected options related to Artists/Art Companies, NGOs/Charities, volunteers and prison staff (Table 6).
- The option 'Professional Arts Company' was not selected by many who did select 'Other' specifying artists (e.g. artists in residence, community-based artists).

Figure 6. Providers of arts in prison

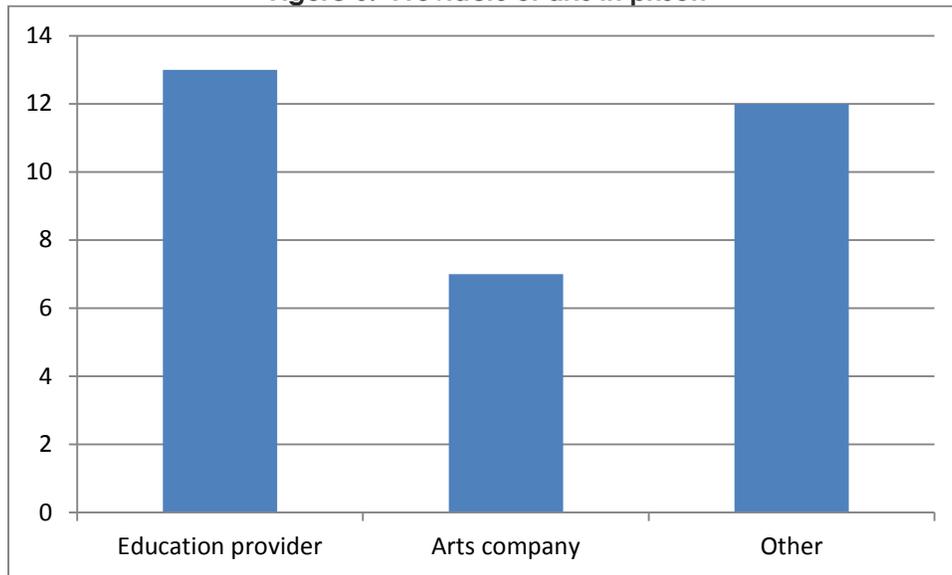


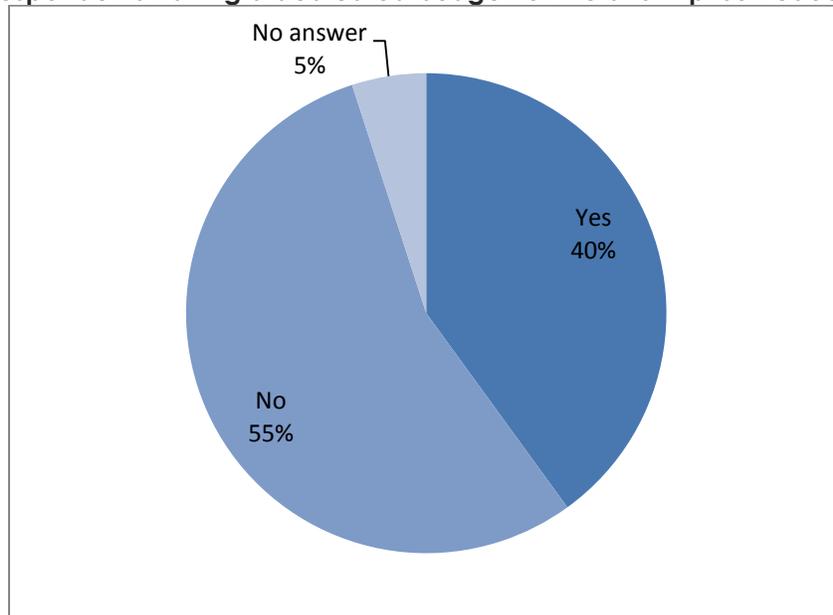
Table 6. Examples of 'other' groups providing arts education in prison

prisoner artists
writers in residence
national Arts Council
state school (lower and high school) curriculum
volunteers
community professionals
NGOs
prison staff
arts charity

Q5.4 Dedicated arts budget or strategy?

- 8 of 22 countries have a dedicated arts budget, with 13 of 22 having no dedicated budget; one survey contained no answer to this question.
- Only 2 of 22 respondents reported having a dedicated arts strategy.
- One respondent, however, notes the national government administers and Chairs a group bringing together organisations active in the prison arts which offers an informal arts agenda and also part funds art charities that work with prisons. In comments, other respondents noted charities or volunteers being involved in arts delivery. Overall, it seems that arts delivery is supported partly through external/volunteer resources.

Figure 7. Respondents having a dedicated budget for the arts in prison education (N=20)



SECTION 6: VOCATIONAL TRAINING

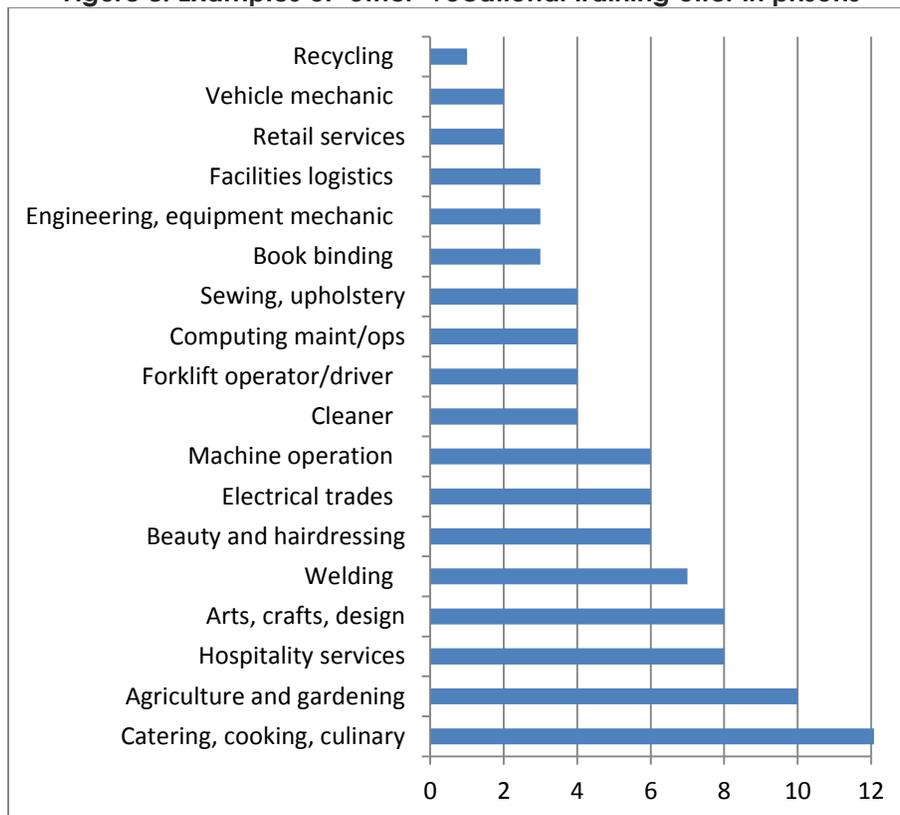
Provision of vocational training is clearly seen as a core part of prison education with nearly all respondents identifying it as such. The vocational subjects listed in the questionnaire did not include a range of many other activities that prisons provide, and in detailing these in comments, respondents exposed a number of common subjects that are included as vocational activity, particularly relating to service sector jobs (e.g. catering and hospitality), trades work, agriculture, crafts and welding.

A minority commented on the distinction between prison education and vocational training, positioning the former as complementary to the latter. For example, prison education might be a way of supporting the literacy or math skills needed to achieve a qualification in a vocational subject.

Q6.1 & 6.2 Vocational Training part of education provision? What subjects?

- Nearly all respondents, 20 out of 22, say vocational training is part of education provision.
- 14 of 22 offer all or all but one of the vocational subjects explicitly offered as an option in the questionnaire: carpentry/woodwork, bricklaying/plastering, plumbing, painting/decorating.
- Additional examples of vocational training areas included those in the figure below:

Figure 8. Examples of 'other' vocational training offer in prisons



- Three of the 22 respondents commented on the relationship of vocational *training* to education, noting that the educational element of vocational training is a complementary element provided by or aligned with education. For example, one respondent said there is a theoretical and practical part to vocational subjects, and the education providers deliver the theoretical element; another respondent noted that literacy and numeracy attainment can be part of gaining a vocational skill/qualification.

Q6.3 Recognised industry qualifications?

20 of 22 respondents said vocational training provided recognised industry qualifications.

Q6.4 & Q6.5 Training for employability offered and what does it consist of?

- 20 of 22 respondents report that they provide training for employability; only two respondents said they did not do this.
- Most reported providing several or all these employability elements: writing a curriculum vitae (CV); writing/drafting a job application form; interview skills; appropriate attitudes and behaviour for the workplace; new technologies.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This report collated and analysed responses to the EuroPris Prison Education Policy Review 2017-2019 Questionnaire. There is widespread awareness and aspiration among most respondents to achieve the Council of Europe 1989 Recommendation 3 for education in prison to develop the whole person. There is also a widely shared understanding of what activities count as prison education. However, there is divergence over what activities take priority and a continued emphasis on vocational training and basic education as the core priorities and possibly even primary functions of prison education. That said, the vocational training on offer in many respondent countries shows a diverse range and responsiveness to the changing nature of the wider economic and social needs of the world.

The dominant understanding of education in prison as primarily supporting offender rehabilitation and reducing recidivism conveys perhaps a less aspirational model than envisioned in the Council of Europe 1989 recommendations (see Warner, 2007). As the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right To Education, Vernor Muñoz noted, 'Education is however much more than a tool for change; it is an imperative in its own right' (2009: 2). Aspiration shines through in many places, however, including in the ways prisoners have access to education outside of prisons, the growing use of ICT in teaching and learning and the diversification of activities within categories like Physical Education (where yoga and wellbeing or mindfulness training are becoming more common).

However, the impression from the aggregated responses is that the most stimulating and high level educational opportunities may not reach some parts of the prison population, especially those serving shorter sentences or detained pre-trial and those with limited language skills. Even basic education provision, however, offers opportunities to pursue transformative models of education (Bayliss, 2016).

Adult education methods are also encouraged by the 1989 Recommendations. Pedagogical approaches were not explored directly in the questionnaire, and so it is difficult to conclude whether this recommendation is being aimed at or achieved across Europe. This will be an important future area of inquiry. In particular, the notion of a social practice approach to literacy moves away from basic, standardized acquisition of reading and writing texts to a person-centred approach that emphasizes an individual's ability to communicate in ways that are important for their own personal development, relationships and aspirations. Being able to operate fluently in today's digital society is an unquestionable priority for education everywhere, inside and outside of prison, and, arguably, gaining competency in digital technology should take priority over traditional notions of reading and writing literacy.

We conclude this discussion with some comments about the value of evaluating prison education and how future such efforts can be strengthened in order to offer the most robust basis of informing policy and practice.

- Consider reviewing existing evaluations of prison education (as cited by respondents as well as consulting wider research, e.g. Hawley et al. , 2013; GHK, 2011) to identify desired criteria for survey, as well as to note how particular variables and issues are framed;
- Gathering as part of a future survey, basic information on the organization and breakdown of the prison system and population would offer useful context (for example the number of prisons and

their size, prison population and rate, the breakdown of domestic/foreign prisoners, gender, adult/youth, etc.);

- It would be useful for respondents to specify how participation levels and education levels are defined and measured in order to allow even rough comparisons between countries;
- Make translated versions of questionnaires available and allow for responses in multiple languages;
- Provide detailed guidance about the meaning of questions;
- ‘Culture proof’ surveys by ensuring terms are understood in a similar way in different jurisdictions, and by providing explicit definitions of terms where appropriate;
- Consider inclusion and framing of open-ended questions that would support presentation of brief case studies to convey diverse models of prison education and what these offer and look like in practice.

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Appendix I Countries invited to participate

Country	Q'aire returned?
Austria	Y
Belgium	Y
Bulgaria	
Croatia	Y
Cyprus	Y
Czech Republic	Y
Denmark	
England	Y
Finland	Y
France	
Georgia	Y
Germany / Mecklenburg Western Pomerania	Y
Germany / Rhineland Palatinate	Y
Hungary	Y
Ireland	Y
Italy	Y
Latvia	
Lithuania	Y
The Netherlands	Y
Northern Ireland	Y
Norway	Y
Poland	
Portugal	
Romania	Y
Scotland	Y
Slovakia	Y
Slovenia	Y
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	Y

Appendix II Comparison of online and emailed questionnaires

QUESTION	ONLINE SURVEY	(E)MAILED SURVEY
Consistency of education strategy over years		Not included
recent change to education strategy		Not included
Comment		Not included
1.1 formal policy		
1.2 If Y, is it available?		
1.2 comment		
1.3 who decides policy		
1.3 Other		
1.4 vision statement		
1.4 vision detail		
1.5CoE'89 vision consistency		
1.5 comment		
1.6 confidence in achieving vision		
1.6 comment	Labelled '1.5 Comments'	
1.6 Any evaluation or review	Incorrectly labelled 1.6	Correctly labelled 1.7
1.6 reference /Comment	Incorrectly labelled 1.6	Correctly labelled part of 1.7
1.7 Ed Deliverer	Incorrectly labelled 1.7	Correctly labelled 1.8
1.7 Other specify	Incorrectly labelled 1.7	Correctly part of 1.8
2.1 What activities included in Prison Ed	Organised as categories (with bracketed lists of examples)	Presented as list of tick box list including bracketed examples as list items; Libraries not included as option
2.2 Do certain Activities take priority over others? If so indicate the highest priority	List of yes/no tick box options	Likert scale (1-5) used for each option
2.2 Comment		
2.3 Domestic Prisoner Access		
2.4 Prisoner Restrictions to Ed?		
2.4 Comment		
2.5 FNP education rights and opps		
2.6 FNPs restricted classes?		
2.6 Comment		
3.1 Computer Skills core aspect		

3.2 Computer Skills taught		
3.3 Internet access		
3.3 'Sometimes' Detail		
3.4 Management Internet access		
3.4 Other (please specify)		
3.5 Internet access from cell?		
3.5 Other detail		Not included
3.6 Is cell access restricted?		
3.6 Comment to 3.6		
3.7 Intranet or other non internet access		
3.7 comments to 3.7		
3.8 Other technology used in teaching?		
3.8 Please specify to 3.8		
4.1 Distance learning available?		
4.1 If Y, level and type courses/degrees		
4.2 Is Distance Learning free?		
4.2 Comments	[mislabelled as 4.3 comment]	
4.3 If HE and/or DL avail, free?		
4.3 Comments to 4.3		
4.4 Can you provide details of the number or percentage of prisoners engaged in different types of learning activity?		
4.4 Higher Level		
4.4 Standard Level		
4.4 Lower level		
4.4 Comments to 4.4		
4.5 Prisoners paid to attend Ed?		
4.6 Ed payment rate comparable to Work?		
4.6 Comments to 4.6		
4.7 Paid for quals achievement?		
5.1 Inclusion of Arts in curric?		
5.2 What arts subjects and activities?		
5.2 Comments to 5.2		
5.3 Who delivers arts?		
5.3 If others please specify		

5.4 Dedicated arts budget?		
5.5 Detailed arts strategy		
6.1 Vocational Training provision		
6.2 Voc Training Subjects		
6.2 If you answered Other please be specific	Mislabelled as 6.3	
6.3 Recognised industry qualifications?		
6.4 Training for general employability?		
6.5 Employability training consists of...?		