

METHODOLOGY:

INTEGRATING YOUNG (EX-)OFFENDERS INTO YOUTH WORK



The methodology is prepared during the project "Climb-Over" (project No. 2018-2-LT02-KA205-005928), which is implemented in the frame of the Erasmus+ programme, Key Action 2. The action provides opportunities for cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices. The projects funded under this action focus on sharing, developing and transferring innovative practices in education, training and youth provision between participating countries.

The project is coordinated by a public body Vsl "Integracijos centras" (Lithuania) and is implemented together with: Brodoto d.o.o. (Croatia), charity "Voyage" (United Kingdom) and Kaunas Juvenile Remand Prison-Correction House (Lithuania).

The activities presented in this booklet are based on the results of the research conducted previously in the project, where youth, youth workers and young (ex)-offenders were inquired in Lithuania, Croatia and the UK. Respondents' answers were taken into account during the preparation of activities, ensuring their relevancy and usefulness.

The opinions expressed in this publication, conclusions and recommendations do not necessarily coincide with the position of the European Commission.

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INTRODUCTION

COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Before going deeper into the details of the activities used to facilitate the integration of young (ex-) offenders, it is necessary to remember that any work with a group of people requires thorough preparation of a facilitator. It is the same with activities and methods we have developed for young (ex-)offenders (that will be provided further in this booklet). Groundwork (careful organization) of the activities is the key thing to ensure that they will have the expected impact. The main focus points are summarized below.

WHAT HIDES BEHIND THE CRIME?

People who have been **sentenced to prison often refers to the experience as getting a ticket to the whole different world**. The way back to the "normal" world is difficult, sometimes it is not even there.

Sadly, young people who were once sentenced usually get entrenched within the correctional system. That means they are being transferred from one prison to another as they keep committing crimes once they are released (if they are).

Society takes an enormous role in the situation. **Being focused on revenge, anger and fear of (ex-)offenders, society blocks all the possibilities for the latter to start over**. In other words, (ex-)offenders are being discriminated, not being treated equally, which, in turn, makes the society less secure.

How? By not perceiving (ex-)offenders as human, not giving a chance for them to start anew, society leads the person back to criminal world (recidivism).

And so the real problems that are hiding behind the crime are remaining unsolved.

As a rule, most of the offenders are from dysfunctional families. Growing in such surroundings means that child's basic needs are not met. To name a few: security, love, parenting, education, moral growth, financial security. Dysfunction is usually caused by various addictions of the parents, emotional or physical absence of them or constant abuse.

Not meeting the core needs of the child, causes the latter to:

01 have poor connection to one's feelings. It means, that the child hardly recognizes his/her feelings, emotions and tend to ignore or completely shut them down. It often results in causing physical conflicts (e.g. break someone's property, fight peers, disrespect others) as it is the only way to get in touch with the feelings and connect with other people.

02 have poor social skills. In dysfunctional family, child's feelings may be often traumatized by not paying attention to them, making fun about them or demean its value. This results in unconscious distrust in the environment that manifests in complete avoidance of any relationship with other people (love, sympathy, attachment). This is why such a child will tend to openly disrespect any authority (teachers, parents, grandparents, etc) that is always resulting in (harsh) conflicts.

03 take over someone else's role. It often happens so, that children in the dysfunctional families are neglected. This is why one of the children takes over the role to take care of his/her siblings; stand up for the abused ones in the family; try to provide food or other essential things to ones or his/her family's survival. It most of the times "breaks the spirit" of the young person, as the responsibility is too big to be taken over by a child.

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be physically or mentally left behind. Physical absence of the parent(s) can manifest in parents disappearance from one's life or being absent for the reason (e.g. earning money abroad). Mental absence happens when parent(s) are nearby but the kid is "invisible" or strongly neglected. Any absence causes the unconscious desire to do EVERYTHING to be seen and noticed.

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*One well known politician in Lithuania, Robertas Šarknickas, grew up in orphanage. He recalls the experience of being transferred from one orphanage to the other, which was crucial, as he started developing love and attachment to the workers there, but had to be transferred. For a young soul it meant surviving separation again and again. In early teenage years, he and a couple of his friends started running away from the places, committing minor offenses. "We were doing our best to be seen" **CLAIMS ROBERTAS.***

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start toxic relationship aka criminal romance. Young person with a huge desire to be noticed and cared for, to feel secure emotionally and financially, often makes a decision to join gangs. If it is not a conscious decision, such youngsters are an "easy target" to be involved in gangs. This leads young people to starting admiring/following the examples from the criminal world, therefore, one starts believing in committing crimes, thus sees the world inadequately (e.g. everything is only black and white).

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A very successful man in Lithuania, Martynas Driukas-Trimurti, has been involved in the criminal world since young age. He managed to turn his life upside down and escape from the "career making" in the criminal world. Today, when recalling that period in life, he states: "I honestly thought, that all the world is like that. And I thought I was the one acting honest. For example, people are not paying taxes or committing other crimes secretly, whereas I was committing them openly."

start using drugs / alcohol in an early age. Drugs or alcohol may be exposed to child's life by addicted parent(s) or followed examples from the criminal world. Usually it transforms into: 1) "help" in staying disconnected from one's emotions, as intoxication leads to temporary forgetting or total "black out"; 2) loss of control over the hidden emotions, which, in turn, show off uncontrolled (e.g. the anger suppressed and hidden appears as strong aggressiveness released in random fights or property destruction). Most of the crimes are committed while intoxicated.

Growing up in dysfunctional family may negatively affect the developing personality in many different ways, however, the ones described above are noticed to be the most prevailing for the youngsters currently imprisoned in the juvenile correctional facilities. Some youngsters have experienced only one of the problems, some - all of them at once.

It is extremely important to highlight, that **dysfunctional family is not a driver to the crime itself.** There are many cases known, that the experience of dysfunction in the family motivates people to creating a better life and therefore, they achieve a lot, namely, education, stable job, healthy family, etc. But it is stated, that these good examples usually stems from people who had a chance to see a "better life". In other words, may be they had a relative, a teacher, another adult who (un)consciously revealed to them how the different life can be. There is a saying: a crocodile cannot see a plane in the sky, because such a construction does not exist in its world. To comment on that in relation to youngsters, it can be stated, **that if one did not have a chance to experience nor sneak peak or witness what is functional family, what are the values of respect, love, he/she will not know such virtues, nor he/she will understand them. Therefore, it will not become her/his life goal.**



During career workshops in Kaunas juvenile remand home with Lina Danienė, it soon became clear, that young convicts experienced poverty, which they accepted for granted. It comes from categorizing the society into WE and THEY. WE stands for unlucky, poor people with no opportunities. THEY stands for lucky and rich people (e.g. kids of rich parents). This shows that young convicts perceive people are simply lucky or unlucky, not (un)successful, as if all people have today was destined or given to them. Additionally, both groups are separated by a huge, dark and deep abyss, which may not be overcome. Lina Danienė tried to explain that it is not true: one can overcome the abyss by stepping up career stairs (e.g. gaining education, skills, etc). The response from the youngsters was as follows: "OK, but where and how one can purchase those STAIRS?"

It only shows that it is hard for them to understand how the success is being built if they had no experience of it through themselves or others close by.

SUPPORTING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

"WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF ME? MUST BE PUT ASIDE FOR BLISS"



HOW CAN I OVERCOME THE COMMUNICATION PROBLEM?

Some of the young people and youth workers, who were inquired during the survey conducted by Erasmus+ KA2 Project "Climb Over" partner organizations, were concerned about the fact that they do not have skills to communicate with young offenders.

On the one hand, having this kind of concern is perfectly normal: you will come into contact with youngsters whose psychological condition and backgrounds they are coming from are very complex and difficult. Accordingly, this can clearly influence the way they interact with others.

On the other hand, you should remember that at the beginning, young offenders can be similarly worried about the communication as you.



A GOOD START IS HALF THE JOB

To overcome the initial tension, it is crucial to start with ice-breakers and activities in smaller groups. This should make it easier for shy participants to introduce themselves, get to know others and gain confidence to express their opinions and/or emotions. We highly recommend starting with activities that do not require opening up on a higher level (e.g. group discussions) and only later move on with activities that require more reflection and opening up in a team (e.g. workshop about different emotions).



KEY ADVICE:

It is said that people are more engaged in and enthusiastic about the activities, if you give them the chance to take part in their preparation and decision-making. During the survey mentioned above, young offenders expressed their wish not only to attend the activities but to help organizing them as well. Delegating some (clearly defined) responsibilities, cooperating with young offenders and allowing them to contribute to the organizing processes can naturally build the relationship and evoke mutual feelings of trust and reliability. Of course, it makes sense to start with giving out simple tasks (e.g. form a team, make a presentation, etc.) to be explained clearly and to be fulfilled without any pressure.

INDIVIDUAL APPROACH TOWARDS PARTICIPANTS

**"NEITHER AN INDIVIDUAL NOR A SOCIETY CAN BE UNDERSTOOD
WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER"**



WHAT KIND OF APPROACH SHOULD I ADOPT WHEN WORKING WITH YOUNG (EX-) OFFENDERS?

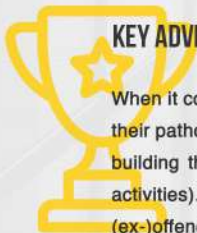
As it was already mentioned, young (ex-)offenders' psychological conditions and backgrounds they grew up in are generally very complex. Therefore, a question that may arise is how to interact with them when face to face.



"SAME BUT DIFFERENT"

It is essential to remember that young offenders should be treated as any other group of young people, who, like ordinary teenagers, face various challenges, have their own opinions and hobbies. Most importantly, our main goal is to foster their reintegration in the society. It means that treating them in a different way can indirectly foster the idea of them being different and, accordingly, strengthen their isolation.

Also, the approach towards young offenders should be personalized within the group as much as possible, because even though they are/were brought behind the bars for similar choices in the past, it is not a homogenous group. Oppositely, it is a group of individuals who have different backgrounds, experiences and diverse personal stories. Therefore, the ability to inspire individual motivation is another demanding task for youth workers.



KEY ADVICE:

When it comes to motivation, we recommend focusing on strengths of young offenders rather than on their pathological or risk characteristics. Supporting their strengths and positive habits could help with building the trust between youth workers and young offenders (which is the key action during the activities). It is also important to keep in mind that trust is a mutual process: to gain young (ex-)offender's trust, we need to trust them too.

MANAGING POTENTIAL CLASHES

"THE MORE WE RUN FROM CONFLICT, THE MORE IT MASTERS US"



HOW CAN I MANAGE POTENTIAL CLASHES THAT MAY ARISE DURING THE ACTIVITIES?

Of course, some clashes and exchange of different opinions can occur during the activities. Thus, it is handy to be prepared to mediate disputes and help facilitate communication smoothly.



BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

One of the elements that can be very useful is management of potential risks. Before the start of activity: 1) make a brief analysis (the list of possible risks) and 2) identify ways how to avoid them (if it is not possible to avoid them, think of the ways how to minimize the risks that threaten the success of the activity).



KEY ADVICE:

Clashes and conflicts may arise for two main reasons.

The first one is related to competing: most of the activities are carried out in the competition (e.g. sports, quiz, etc.). Participants are likely to struggle with admitting and/or accepting their loss in such activities positively. Having this in mind, it makes youngsters avoid the loss as much as possible. Therefore, they are likely to use unpleasant means to win, namely, aggressiveness towards an opponent peer/team or cheating. Thus, as the facilitator of the activity, you can think of untraditional means to avoid or minimize such behaviors (e.g. skip using the usual scoreboard; skip defining winners and losers; reward youngsters/teams for playing fairly, etc.). In this way, the atmosphere of harsh competition will be softened as neither winning, nor losing would be stressed during the whole activity.

The second is related to defense (unconsciously) and/or coping (consciously) mechanisms commonly used by youngsters: some activities require young (ex-)offenders to open up, and/or can trigger their hidden experiences. That, accordingly, might make them feel uncomfortable. After appearance of painful or difficult emotions, they may isolate themselves, act aggressively and/or use rude humor. When youngster(s) start using one or several coping or defense mechanisms, a good ideas for facilitator may include: 1) accepting their behavior and making sure it is okay if they feel anger or other negative emotions; 2) If the mechanisms used by youngster(s) offends others in the activity, having a brief one-to-one conversation might help. We highly recommend trying not take anything personally, as well as remaining calm if anyone during the activity starts openly use their defense and/or coping mechanisms. Reacting negatively can make things worse and harm those already sensitive young people.

OVERCOMING THE STIGMA

"WE OFTEN FEAR WHAT WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND..."



HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DEAL WITH THE GENERALIZED STIGMATIZATION OF (EX-) OFFENDERS?

You have to take into consideration that the topic of juvenile delinquency is a sensitive matter (for somebody even a taboo). Young (ex-)offenders usually have to face stigma and assumptions (or prejudices) about themselves.



"... OUR BEST DEFENSE IS KNOWLEDGE"

Working with convicted youngsters and helping them to accept themselves, as well as not define themselves with their past, decisions is not enough. There is a wide society which will still not accept them after leaving the correctional facilities. This makes reducing (or even destroying) the existing stigmatization on juvenile offenders the main challenge.

The involvement of non-offending youth and community into these activities could bring this goal closer to coming true. Meeting young (ex-)offenders face to face, talking to them, getting to know them personally and hearing their stories (if shared) is the most natural way to make people rethink and change their opinions about this sensitive group. In other words, people, when engaged in activities with convicted youngsters, will be able to see the story beyond the bare fact of crime and sentence.



KEY ADVICE:

Combating the stigma is, of course, a long-term and very difficult task as any change introduced to the society. However, that does not mean that you have to absolutely avoid touching the subject of youngster's criminal past. Avoidance or denial might feel unnatural. In fact, some of the youngsters will eventually want to test you and say explicitly what they did. Accept that and do not judge.

MAKING ACTIVITIES INTERESTING AND USEFUL FOR YOUNG (EX-)OFFENDERS

"WE OFTEN FEAR WHAT WE DO NOT "COMPOUND INTEREST IS THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD"



HOW CAN I MAKE ACTIVITIES INTERESTING AND USEFUL OR YOUNG (EX-)OFFENDERS?

As young offenders are the target group of all the activities presented in this methodology, it is essential to ensure that these activities stimulate their interest and play a concrete role in reintegrating them back into the society. But how can we make sure of it?



PLAN YOUR WORK AND WORK YOUR PLAN

As reintegration is a long-distance run, the time is definitely needed. It is advisable to define the main goal of each planned activity and to think of the possible follow-up activities. Carrying out an activity once will probably bring only short-term benefits, namely, joy, pleasure and well-spent time. Continuous activities would be more likely to bring long-term individual benefits, including deeper understanding of a topic, developed social skills or bloomed positive attitudes towards oneself, peers and the world.



KEY ADVICE:

Below we will describe different types of activities in detail (and what has to be taken into account when planning each of them). Engaging participants in them is crucial, but it is also important to observe the choice of young people when (s)he wants to stop or step back. With this in mind, first of all feel & listen to the actual needs of the youngsters you will be working with and be always ready to improvise. This will ensure the success of your work with young offenders more than sticking to the initial plan (which may not always work).



SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Researches show that sport is beneficial for physical and mental health. Through sport activities, one can develop useful values and mindsets (e.g. better understand working in teams, learn how to support each other, respect the rules, etc). Many young people would name sports as their favorite leisure activity. Young (ex-)offenders, indeed, are not an exception. Sport has a huge role in their everyday life behind the bars. Therefore, sport activities can be **perfect to start the programme with**.

Even though at the first sight it may seem that such activities should run smoothly, there are risks behind these youngsters-favored activities that are worth to be considered and prevented. Most of these risks are related to one of the basic components of every sport: **competition**. Aside from preparing youngsters for wins and losses in their future, competitive activities help in developing important skills like determination, perseverance and focus. Through competing youth becomes aware that to do well in competition, you need to invest in **cooperation**, precisely, in team work: take turns, encourage others, develop empathy.



However, competing is always about undesirable “zero-sum” game (i.e., in order for you to win, someone else must lose). When placed in competitive settings, youngsters are often left with feelings of disappointment, defeat and guilt. Worse yet, losing the game **can be destructive to self-esteem**, especially if they feel like they do not measure up or that they are not being recognized for their efforts. For young (ex-)offenders these experiences can be crucial as their emotional state is already quite unstable. In this case, they can start acting out of control, aggressively and/or even start a fight with their opponents or team-mate(s) that, for example, caused the lost score.

To make the competing nature of sports more fun and free from fights, we highly recommend to **skip emphasizing the dimension of win and loss**. Firstly, you can bring the focus on cooperation in teams. Talking about it is not enough, rather motivate them to put effort on team-work than the win itself. This can be done by **developing a behavioral board** (can be also referred to as token board) to change the usual scoreboard used in competitions. Behavioral board is a visual board with desired behaviors that you would want to encourage. For example, while competing those could be supporting the team-mate by giving high-fives; helping the opponent to stand up if one falls; coming up with a wonderful play during the game. The team that managed to collect the most behavioral points on the board would be considered the winner and be awarded. Secondly, you could **apply the idea that no one is a loser and award everyone** who participated. For example, we can adopt the idea of the wooden spoon. It is a special prize for the team that took the last place in the Six Nations rugby tournament. Its aim is to remember that even the “back-marker” team must be proud of being able to take part in the competition. **Winning does not define the actual capacities and talents of the team:** it is just a one-time performance that could be affected by various external and internal factors. We can remind this to all the teams, introducing this prize before the beginning of the activity and, after it, celebrating giving it away with honors.

BASKETBALL/FOOTBALL/ VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENTS

(REPLICABLE FOR EVERY OTHER TEAM SPORTS)

PROS/BENEFITS:

Basketball/football/volleyball is easy to explain because almost everyone knows the rules

Bonds between people are created effortlessly and pretty fast because the game stimulates the ability to cooperate even without knowing other players at all

Sports is a natural and big part of young offenders' life and this is normally interesting for them

Sport is a universal language through which numerous values can be learnt: honesty, respect, discipline, friendship, mutual support, teamwork, fair play, acceptance of failure

CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Participants can tend to focus only on scoring points but it not the only thing the game is about

Arguments and clashes may arise because participants often are not able to admit their loss or their teammate's mistakes

Some participants can express bad reactions/emotions because they tend to struggle with losing the game

Youngsters are likely to blame less talented players and this, in turn, can generate tensions, violence and/or bullying

“ In the beginning, young (ex-)offenders that took part to the activity were shy; however, after a few matches , they started to be more confident and to talk and share their stories with volunteers. Obviously, they love sport: it is the one of the main activities in prison, and this was an important factor to engage them. Basketball - and , in general, sport - can be used more to integrate them back to society.

- TOMAŠ JENKELEVIČ
YOUTH WORKER AT ACTIVE YOUTH



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Making sure that you will be able to manage clashes and arguments
- Encouraging "healthy" competition
- Demonstrating the meaning of teamwork values (as support)



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Organize sport event at the beginning, because we witnessed that sport creates the bond between people pretty fast. Also, there is no need to speak which makes it even easier.
- Have a referee who will count the points and lead the game.
- Stress the meaning of teamwork and use examples of teamwork during the team sport matches to prove it.
- After the game, sit in a circle for a while and discuss which skills we have learnt or practiced (e.g. ability to support others, ability to do not judge ourselves or others)
- Focus on the things that we can learn or develop as friendship, support, team spirit, stamina, ambition, honesty, tolerance."

CAPOEIRA WORKSHOP



DESCRIPTION:

Capoeira is a martial art that was found in Brasil 500 years ago. It combines elements of fight, acrobatics, music, dance and rituals in a very elegant and magnetic way. Performed by two people, it is often called Capoeira game that is played, not a fight. What makes capoeira different from other martial arts, it is always played with a smile on face symbolizing that the capoeiristas are not afraid from the danger that is coming. As it comes with physical & mental benefits from the ones involved, it is worth trying organize this activity for young (ex-)offenders.



PROS/BENEFITS:

Bonds between people are created and reinforced pretty fast because Capoeira fundamentals include singing together, dancing in a circle and following a common rhythm.

It is, at the same time, a dynamic and artistic activity because it combines music, dance and sport. This allows people to both express themselves and have fun.

In Capoeira there is no room for arguments and clashes because it's not about winning or losing: its main aim is to create a teamwork and have fun



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

It can be initially perceived as "weird" because Capoeira is a new field for many and generally uncommon in the world

During the first phase it may be perceived as boring or meaningless because it takes time to understand Capoeira's real goal and meaning of its spirit.

Some sensitive participants may have bad reactions because Capoeira has some parts/movements of martial arts.



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Avoiding self and other judgement stemming from participants (as Capoeira might be a new field of activity for them, they might be making fun of it or those who take part)
- Fully engaging all the participants since the beginning of the activity



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Make a proper introduction to the activity, by explaining the meaning and aim of Capoeira and outlining that it may seem “weird” only because it is a very unusual kind of martial arts.
- Present the instruments of Capoeira and teach participants (if interested) how to play them, to make them feel more involved
- Organize several (more than one) Capoeira workshops, as learning and understanding Capoeira requires time



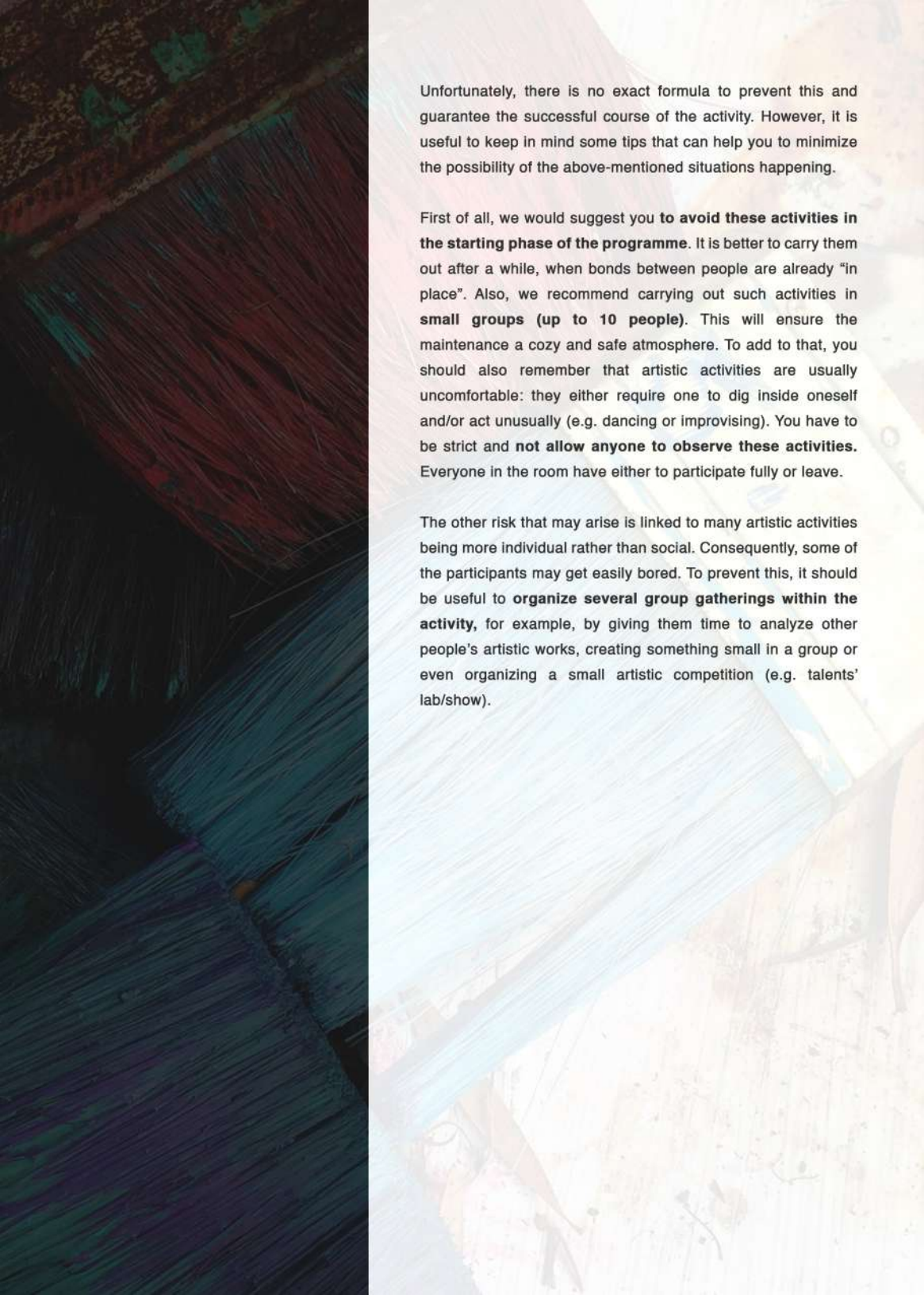


ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

Art is not a therapy; but it surely has a therapeutic power.

This slogan sums up perfectly the main aim of all the activities described in the following chapter: allowing young (ex-)offenders to understand, accept and express themselves better.

However, because of the strong link between artistic activities and emotions, there is a concrete risk for participants to act out their **defense and/or coping mechanisms**. Expressing our deepest feelings means opening ourselves up. This is often scary for people. For sensitive youngsters with criminal pasts the fear might reach a higher level that turns on (un)conscious battling mechanisms. The most common acts could be rude humor, isolation and aggressiveness. That can be dangerous, because it would lead to **discomfort and judgmental feelings** among the participants. Eventually, no one would feel comfortable enough to be really involved in the workshop.



Unfortunately, there is no exact formula to prevent this and guarantee the successful course of the activity. However, it is useful to keep in mind some tips that can help you to minimize the possibility of the above-mentioned situations happening.

First of all, we would suggest you **to avoid these activities in the starting phase of the programme**. It is better to carry them out after a while, when bonds between people are already “in place”. Also, we recommend carrying out such activities in **small groups (up to 10 people)**. This will ensure the maintenance a cozy and safe atmosphere. To add to that, you should also remember that artistic activities are usually uncomfortable: they either require one to dig inside oneself and/or act unusually (e.g. dancing or improvising). You have to be strict and **not allow anyone to observe these activities**. Everyone in the room have either to participate fully or leave.

The other risk that may arise is linked to many artistic activities being more individual rather than social. Consequently, some of the participants may get easily bored. To prevent this, it should be useful to **organize several group gatherings within the activity**, for example, by giving them time to analyze other people's artistic works, creating something small in a group or even organizing a small artistic competition (e.g. talents' lab/show).

EBRU ART/ PAINTING ON THE WATER



DESCRIPTION:

Ebru is the art of creating colorful patterns by sprinkling and brushing color pigments on a pan of oily water and then transforming this pattern to paper. The special tools of the trade are brushes of horsehair bound to straight rose twigs, a deep tray made of unknotted pinewood, natural earth pigments, and more. It is believed to be invented in the thirteenth century Turkistan.



PROS/BENEFITS:

Ebru art can be an opportunity to express emotions and feelings especially because many young (ex-) offenders are (secretly) artistic

It can make participants feel pretty safe because not being in a center of attention fit different people (especially, the shy ones)

Very simple technique there is no need for any "talent" or experience in drawing. In fact, the less good painter one is, easier it is to produce an ebru art masterpiece

Art allows people to use their fantasy and has a therapeutic power it stimulates creativity and can be used as a relaxing technique



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

The action is more individual rather than social this does not help creating a bond between people

It can be perceived as boring especially by participants who tend to be more restless and impatient



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Engaging all the participants in the activity
- Creating or strengthening bonds between people
- Getting all the Ebru art equipment (in some cases)



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- **Briefly present the history of Ebru Art** and show the technique of painting (how to use brushes, colors, papers, how to clean water) at the beginning, as it has some specifics. However, the theory should take just a little time in the beginning of the activity, as the theory captures youngster's attention just for a short while.
- **At the beginning, present and utilize the activity as an auto-therapy through art**, where an individual can relax and concentrate on creativity while making his own piece of art.
- **Organize a second part of the activity that would include group reflection**, to make the event more helpful and support the creation of bonds between people. This part can be carried out in a group discussion, during which sharing of emotions that appeared while painting is welcome. The group can also describe each painting: the feeling of the painting, the idea, etc.

CREATIVITY WORKSHOP - MAKING PERSONALIZED T-SHIRTS



PROS/BENEFITS:

It has similar pros as Ebru Art namely, it allows people to express themselves and involve them regardless their artistic ability

It allows participants to express their identity e.g. decorating t-shirt with their hometown names, the basketball teams they support, etc.

Bonds between people and team spirit can be strengthened e.g. by creating a common/team t-shirt.



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

It can be perceived as boring especially by participants who tend to be restless and impatient

The action can turn to be more individual than social this does not help creating a bond between people



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Avoiding self and other judgement stemming from participants (as Capoeira might be a new field of activity for them, they might be making fun of it or those who take part)
- Fully engaging all the participants since the beginning of the activity



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Make a proper introduction to the activity, by explaining the meaning and aim of Capoeira and outlining that it may seem "weird" only because it is a very unusual kind of martial arts.
- Present the instruments of Capoeira and teach participants (if interested) how to play them, to make them feel more involved
- Organize several (more than one) Capoeira workshops, as learning and understanding Capoeira requires time



For some, creativity and self-expression on the t-shirt worked perfectly. I recall one of them confessing the willingness to take an exam in art. He shared sketching tattoos during his free time. Some of them he realized on his own hands, so starting to pursue his dream of becoming a professional tattoo artist. The workshop gave a lot to participants, but everyone took what they wanted with them. For sure, everyone took new t-shirts out! However, I would highly recommend putting in practice the making of t-shirts for each other. The process could be done only by communicating, getting to know somebody, trying to find out one's need and hobbies. In other words, participants would need to take time in finding out what the other one likes in order to create a t-shirt to be liked. Here, the skills and positive social features such as openness, communication, friendliness, care would be encouraged to develop.

- ROMAN TOLSTOKOROV

A PSYCHOLOGY AND CRIMINOLOGY GRADUATE

THEATRE IMPROVISATIONS

PROS/BENEFITS:

Theatre teaches non-verbal communication so that participants can learn to understand other people without actually talking

It stimulates creativity and can help people to recognize and express their feelings

Bonds between people are created and reinforced pretty fast because improvisation makes people to listen and support to each other for a common goal (e.g. a good play)

Improvisation raises a self-esteem of participants if activities are carried out continuously (more than once)

CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Some participants can feel uncomfortable because not everyone likes being in the centre of the attention

Some participants can feel judged if someone makes fun of them while acting



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Making participants feel comfortable to express themselves in acting
- Stimulating people to express their feelings and not be afraid of (showing) them
- Avoiding bad comments/jokes/judgment



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- **Not organize theatre improvisation activities at the very beginning**, because they require the absence of judgement and stronger bonds between people
- **Make a proper introduction to the activity by:**
 - 1) explaining that theatre improvisations requires freedom and braveness
 - 2) emphasizing that all the participants should contribute to creating a "safe-area" in which no one is judged
- **Define some "rules"**: e.g. at the end of every improvisation activity all the participants will clap their hands to show support.
- **After the activity, sit in a circle for a while** and reflect on how did everyone feel, which they have learned or practiced.




Improvising is helpful for everyone. It teaches mindfulness as one has to be present in the moment: observe and follow everything what's going on. It stops overthinking, because you have to just go with your creativity, spontaneity and fantasy. There remains no time for self judgement or the other. It is replaced by support at all times: no matter what one says, all the others clap warmly to express the support and keep the good atmosphere. Besides, such activities teach communication. One learns how to listen carefully and accept different people and their thoughts, ideas. Sometimes improvisation ends up in friendships, but in the moment, it becomes an open game, where everyone is welcomed and accepted. So it develops some psychological and social skills. It may serve in the future, let's say, in job interviews. One just goes in one, with great self confidence and inner freedom. It makes you accept whatever outcome of it.

- **INDRĖ MČIULYTĖ**
MEMBER OF IMPRO KAUNAS

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

With the expression leisure activities, we usually mean the activities targeted at participants' **entertainment**. However, we firmly believe that **with every entertainment, great lessons come**. In fact, learning through entertainment is the fastest and the most effective way to learn. Even though most of the activities include winning or losing, having fun on the way usually minimizes the importance of the extremes mentioned.

In this sense, leisure activities are very similar to sport activities: participants are engaged in the process, which is entertaining itself and, simultaneously, teaches the values of team-work, support, fairness and respect. However, sport requires not only a lot of physical stamina but also the competition nature of "zero-sum" game is more defined in sport related activities. Leisure activities, on the other hand, require greater **mental engagement (strategizing, socializing, quick thinking, focus, or sharing of different knowledge)**.



Applying or trying out these skills during the activities makes them enjoyable and promising enduring value (e.g. participating in a quiz teaches participants some new facts). Taken this into account, it does not make a big deal whether the team/individual loses or wins.

What makes leisure activities even more beneficial is **inviting as many volunteers as possible to join them**. Gathering very different participants and having them to spend some fun moments together adds a lot to learning. Even while observing each other, noticing different ways of behavior and how it works in practice (e.g. showing respect makes one to show respect in turn) **stimulates learning while observing**. As mentioned before, young (ex-)offenders grew up in very complex backgrounds, meaning, that they probably have never experienced a kind way of communicating and/or other accepted norms of social conduct. On top, poor social skills and direct linkage to the criminal past makes it nearly impossible for young (ex-)offenders to find new friends from quite different backgrounds. **Organizing a fun activity (e.g. board games afternoon) turns you into a mediator between people with different backgrounds**, which may lead to (ex-)offenders learning different ways of behaving in contact with others (as well as making friendships).

On the other hand, bringing so many different people and putting them in teams for a game might **raise some tensions**. The ideal scenario that encourages learning through observing might not come true if certain people trigger some feelings to (ex-)offenders that would be expressed in already mentioned defense or coping mechanisms. For example, seeing how well someone acts might make: 1) the other feel uncomfortable or/and 2) even a little jealous for this type of behavior, 3) left with no clue in understanding how to even behave like that. On a more general level, different people might not necessarily trigger something sensitive, but they might be **too different to accept each other** (as it happens in daily life). Having this mind requires a thought on how to manage tensions that may be happening at the same time in several different groups.

BOARD GAMES

PROS/BENEFITS:

Bonds with people can arise easily (if playing in teams) because teammates have to cooperate and make decisions together in order to achieve a common goal

Board games facilitate the development of soft skills such as logical thinking, connection with peers, acting, strategizing, etc.

Board games encourage learning social skills if groups are formed of people from very diverse backgrounds, participants may learn by observing

The activity don't necessarily require already existing strong bonds among participants or very specific preparation thus, can be used in the beginning phase (like sports activities)

CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Some board games are difficult to explain and understand so it may be difficult to involve all the participants and/or start playing quickly

Board games can be perceived as "boring" because most of them may be "static"

Gathering different people for a game may cause some tensions which are not easy to manage if happening at the same time in different groups



Table games help to connect people. It can improve the social behavior in a lot of ways; taking responsibility in explaining the rules; being capable with winning and losing; making group decisions when creating common rules or choosing the game; having fun; other skills used during table games, namely, acting, logical thinking, connecting with peers.

- CLASS JANZEN

SOCIAL WORKER FROM GERMANY AND
VOLUNTEER AT YOUTH CENTRE, VARTAI



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Picking board games that would be interesting & keeping an attention for a longer time
- Encouraging teamwork and mutual support in some groups
- Making sure that you are able to manage clashes and arguments (as playing board games may require several different groups playing different games)



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- **Choose board games that are not too difficult** to explain and/or understand, because participants can get either bored or/and frustrated if they don't understand them quickly.
- **Define the exact duration of the activity before carrying it out (if possible)**, to manage time properly and not make participants bored
- **Organize mixed groups of volunteers and (ex-)offenders** and have more than one youth worker to notice an arising conflict and solve it before it actually happens.
- **Assign one/two people in a group to explain & manage the game** (e.g. giving out the figures, cards, money; following the time and turns, ensuring the fair game).

QUIZ



PROS/BENEFITS:

Quizzes raise participants' self-esteem because by answering correctly they become more aware of their knowledge and skills

It is an engaging activity because time pressure, teamwork and brain teasers make participants more active and interested

Participants widen their knowledge because the activity itself is meant for share what one knows with others, and eventually, learn something new

Participants develop new skills such as problem solving, socializing, negotiating and providing arguments to support your answer

Bonds between people are created pretty fast because working in teams requires constant interaction, assigned responsibilities and trust to be gained by providing the team with (correct) answers



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Some participants may feel uncomfortable if questions are too difficult for them to figure out (making them isolate themselves or start acting out)

Time pressure might have a negative impact on participants as it may become too stressful to come up with a correct answer in a group in a very short period of time

Bullying may arise if someone provides the team with a wrong answer

Not everyone might be engaged as 1) it is easy to have a free-ride and count on other teammates or 2) brave teammates might grow over the shy participants



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Manage potential clashes that may arise based on someone's fail to provide a correct answer, or arguments when teammates disagree what answer to provide
- Make all the participants active during the game



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Choose board games that are not too difficult to explain and/or understand, because participants can get either bored or/and frustrated if they don't understand them quickly.
- Define the exact duration of the activity before carrying it out (if possible), to manage time properly and not make participants bored
- Organize mixed groups of volunteers and (ex-)offenders and have more than one youth worker to notice an arising conflict and solve it before it actually happens.
- Assign one/two people in a group to explain & manage the game (e.g. giving out the figures, cards, money; following the time and turns, ensuring the fair game).



Quizzes always help in raising self-esteem. In the quiz you can show you are more clever than anyone has expected. For instance, before the quiz even started some young ex-offenders repeated several times that they are stupid and that they don't have any knowledge, probably they will be useless in the team. However, during the quiz these people who claimed to be the most stupid, were the most active in finding the right answers. I assume it boosts confidence and interest in different topics.

- ŽIVILÉ SIMUTYTĚ
HISTORY TEACHER

COOKING TOGETHER: INTERNATIONAL LUNCH

PROS/BENEFITS:

It allows to widen participants' cultural horizons because by preparing traditional dishes of other countries, they discover a new culture

It can be carried out to learn more about various cultures and foods e.g. by organizing a cycle of workshops aimed to discover traditional foods "all across the world"

It allows participants to strengthen and/or test their English knowledge because they have to use English to communicate with possibly international guests

Bonds between people can be created and reinforced pretty fast if the workshop is organized as a group activity in which each one has a different task

It strengthens the team spirit as all the participants develop one final product – meal together

CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

It can be perceived as boring if the tasks are not well-divided for example, some participants may finish their task(s) early and have nothing to do after that

Communication can be a problem because not all the participants may be able to speak English/the foreign guest might not be able to speak their language

Not so easy to find foreign guests especially the ones who would be able to teach how to cook



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Divide the cooking task(s) equally, so that participants would never be task-less during the activity
- Finding guests who could teach to cook their country's native dish,
- Language/interpretation issues



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Ask the foreign guest to pick a complex recipe, that would allow a good distribution of tasks in the preparation. In other words, **the chosen recipe has to allow for as much hands-on preparation as possible.**
- **Mind the number of participants**, so it would be adequate to the preparation of the particular meal
- **Make the clean-up part** after the lesson & enjoying the meal, so everyone could be involved in this closing stage as well.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES



The activities described in the following section are aimed at enabling participants to: 1) become aware of their strengths, weaknesses and possessed potential; 2) recognize, understand and express their emotions in socially accepted ways.

In other words, psychological support activities mean leading a **light group psychotherapy or life coaching session**. Having such activities is very risky, as no one can ever predict what individual scars might be stepped on during the activity. To be more precise, the risks lay in **possibly targeting very sensitive memories and feelings** (that participants were trying to hide or run away from). Making them face such hard feelings in a group means danger for the person's well-being and, accordingly, for the overall success of the activity itself.

The first risk to keep in mind is that **participants are likely to keep themselves shut**. Talking about feelings and emotions, or sharing personal experiences is not always easy. It takes a lot of time. Some reasons are **conscious**. To name a few: 1) not feeling completely comfortable to talk while the whole group is listening, 2) perceiving being open as a case of showing off yourself as a weak person (e.g. convicted youngsters normally perceive coming out with most of the vulnerable feelings as weakness, while being weak is a failure, according to them). However, some of the reasons are **not conscious**.

To be more precise, some feelings and emotions may be still unrecognized by participants. For instance, not experiencing love by parents may truly hurt (but it is hard to talk about it if you do not know what/why is this hurt caused by exactly). As another example, not willing to have a thought on the future career might mean that the person is given up on his life and/or feels like (s)he has no future prospects but maybe cannot admit that. Keeping the true feelings inside (consciously or unconsciously), usually turns on the coping and/or defense mechanisms mentioned earlier. **Directly targeting and/or focusing on unpleasant emotions may cause these mechanisms to be showed even more extreme.**

Another risk is linked to **complexity of the topic(s) within the field of psychology**. Psychological well-being possibly was never a matter of discussion in their families or with friends. Thus, most of the topics (as simple as they might see to us) are extremely difficult to comprehend for them. For example, **even naming a few emotions is usually a great challenge** for young (ex-)offenders. Therefore, you risk failing the activity (meaning, not reaching any higher goals) if youngsters will 1) feel lost; 2) reject what is being said; 3) show disrespect by minding their own business and/or openly refusing to listen.

As concerns life coaching topics, we should stress that not the field itself is complicated but life behind the bars is. As cliché as it sounds, the youngsters that have spent their teenage years in the correctional facilities **have no clue how the society functions**. To be more precise, they have neither clue of the rules of social conduct, nor legal means one needs to survive, nor how groups within society are interlinked. Life coaching is focussed on giving them a chance to develop their **soft skills**. Those are subjective skills that are hard to teach and to prove one possesses the skill(s) as well. It is often the skills related to one's productivity or professional performance and they are usually an important part of any job or crucial in getting one.

To avoid or minimize the risks, we highly recommend:

1) **Not to start with** carrying out psychology related activities in the beginning of your programme with young (ex-)offenders. When the time comes, carry them out **in small groups** (up to 8 people) to keep the environment cozy and safe.

2) **Do not allow any observers in** the activity (e.g. prison staff, random people, etc.) and **participate yourself** by sharing your own feelings. This will guarantee the safe place for everyone's thoughts and strengthen the trust.

3) Moreover, it is recommended **to hire a professional** to carry out the activity. Meeting different reactions is a challenge for a person that might lead to wrong responses. However, for someone with a psychological background it might be not even a bit surprising. Does not matter what emotion participant might show (e.g. disrespect, anger, aggressiveness, etc.), it must be seen beyond this defense or coping mechanism and make sure the person is **accepted with all the feelings**. After demonstrating the acceptance, move on with carrying out the activity.

4) Furthermore, presenting psychological topics should be kept simple. **Avoid buzz-words** (e.g. reflection phase, resonating, coaching techniques, meditate, etc.). Instead, **adopt their pattern** of speaking (e.g. very basic language, slang, etc.); **start small** (e.g. naming emotions they know or the basic prices for decent living, ways to sustain oneself, etc.); **use materials to take the focus off them** (e.g. coaching/Dixit cards, music, discussing about live-examples, etc.).

5) **Avoid a lot of theory** and find ways to learn or comprehend something through practical activities and games.

WORKSHOP ON EMOTIONS



DESCRIPTION:

PART 1 - BLAH BLAH BLAH: start with ice-breaker: speaking in gibberish and dada languages in pairs. This makes participants feel a little uncomfortable and laugh at the same time. The key of the activity is to stop overthinking and live the moment.

PART 2 - RECOGNIZE WHAT YOU FEEL: spread a variety of coaching cards on the table. Turn on a song and listen it in a group for around 1min (instruct participants to listen in silence with eyes closed or while looking down). Afterwards, guide participants to the cards one by one and instruct them to choose the card that reflects the feeling the song has evoked. Discuss the choices. Repeat 4-5 times (make sure you pick very different styles of music. One round can be just plain silence).

PART 3 - ATTENTIVE LISTENING: make a short presentation of what empathy is. Make sure to give real life examples. Present attentive listening as one way to show empathy. Carry out attentive listening exercise in pairs (one listens, one tells a story).



PROS/BENEFITS:

It raises participants' self-awareness because the activity is focused on recognizing their emotions and feelings

Bonds between people can be created and reinforced pretty fast because it gives participants the opportunity to open up and share their feelings with others

Benefits of improved emotional intelligence are talking themselves. As even the people with no criminal past sometimes still need to improve how to deal with certain emotions, needless to say about young (ex-) offenders



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

The topic might be too difficult as it can be perceived as too abstract, challenging, theoretical and refused

Coping or/and defense mechanisms may be demonstrated extremely after directly targeting some unpleasant emotions

Some participants may feel uncomfortable if they notice that their emotions are being listened to but neither accepted, nor understood



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Turning difficult (and often abstract) topics into an engaging activity
- Ensuring safety for participants' thoughts and feelings
- Managing potentially demonstrated coping or/and defense mechanisms



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Divide participants in small groups (6-8 people each), to create a cozy and safe atmosphere.
- Carry out the activity without any external observer(s) (i.e. allowing only participants to enter the room), so that they could feel free to express their thoughts.
- Accept all the feelings, to show participants that all the emotions are accepted and natural
- Find a professional to carry out the activity
- Analyze all the topics (mainly) through games and other practical activities, to keep them engaged and ensure they comprehend the topic
- Avoid very difficult terms or expressions (if possible), or clearly explain them if it is not possible to go on without using them

ANGER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP



DESCRIPTION:

After an introductory group conversation about the causes and consequences of their anger, by using the technique of role-playing, participants will learn how to:

- 1) constructively solve conflicts
- 2) calm down when they are feeling angry or overwhelmed.



PROS/BENEFITS:

It raises participants' self-control because they learn to recognize and control their anger without being overwhelmed by it

Bonds between people can be created and reinforced pretty fast because it gives participants the opportunity to open up and share feelings



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

It can be perceived as too abstract, difficult and/or theoretical if the activity is carried out through theory rather than through practice

Coping/Defense mechanisms may be demonstrated because some participants may struggle with accepting and/or coping with their own anger

Some participants may feel uncomfortable if they notice that their reactions are neither accepted, nor understood



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Managing tensions and unpleasant behaviors caused by coping and/or defense mechanisms.
- Accepting different perceptions (e.g. some of the participants can strongly believe that not paying attention when provoked is a sign of being weak)



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- **Divide participants in small groups (6-8 people each)**, to create a cozy and safe atmosphere.
- **Carry out the activity without any external observer(s)** (i.e. allowing only participants to enter the room), so that they will feel free to express their thoughts.
- **Accept all the feelings and their expressions**, to show participants all the emotions are accepted (because they are all natural)
- **Find a professional** to carry out the activity.
- **Analyze all the topics (mainly) through games and other practical activities**, to keep them engaged and ensure they comprehend the topic.
- **Avoid very difficult terms or expressions (if possible)**, or clearly explain them if it is difficult to go on without using them.

WORKSHOP: STOP BULLYING!



DESCRIPTION:

Participants will be divided into smaller groups. Each of the group should come up with the definition of bullying and present (draw/write/rhyme, etc.) the moments of bullying that they have witnessed. They will learn what bullying is and how to differentiate behavior which is to be held acceptable and when to be considered bullying.

PROS/BENEFITS:

It can have a positive impact on participants' behaviors because the activity will help them to recognize their wrong-doings

It may help participants to face and/or overcome their bad experience(s) because they will have (optionally) the chance to share their personal stories and let them go

Bonds between people can be created and reinforced pretty fast because it gives participants the opportunity to open up and share feelings

CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Coping/Defense mechanisms may be demonstrated because some participants may struggle with accepting and/or coping with their own anger

Some participants may feel uncomfortable because sharing their personal story about being bullied or being a bully can be difficult

Activity can encourage some actual bullying if not lead properly



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Ensuring safety and coziness of the environment for participants to open up
- Managing tensions and unpleasant behavior (e.g. actual bullying) of participants who are led by coping or defense



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Divide participants in small groups (6-8 people each), to create a cozy and safe atmosphere.
- Carry out the activity without any external observer(s) (i.e. allowing only participants to enter the room), so that they will feel free to express their thoughts.
- Accept all the feelings and their expressions, to show participants all the emotions are accepted because they are all natural
- Find a professional to carry out the activity
- Focus on bad consequences caused by bullying, e.g. analyze real examples.

CAREER EVENTS



DESCRIPTION:

PART 1 - I CAN: participants will discover their personal strengths, skills, passion(s) and motivation through different means (e.g. the Japanese IKIGAI method). Then, starting from this, they will learn how to put all that in a CV and cover letter.

PART 2 - I KNOW: participants will learn what do employers usually look (regardless the position one applies for) and what are the “do’s” and “do not’s” during the job interview.

PART 3 - I GOT THE JOB!: participants will take part at the job interview simulation(s) and get feedbacks about their personal “performance”.

We highly recommend highly to carry out each part as a separate workshop in the provided sequence. Also, we recommend to give homework after each workshop (e.g. writing the desired CV).



Young (ex-) offenders don't have the same opportunities that other youngsters have; among others, they can't attend to job interviews and, collect experiences about the labour market. For this reason, career events are a good chance for them to think about their own skills and the way to use them to find a job. Besides, this kind of workshops allow young (ex-) offenders to think about their dreams and what they want to do in their life after their release. This, in my opinion, is particularly important: having a clear idea about what they want to achieve once free will help them to understand what they should do.

- RAIMONDAS KLEZYS
ACTOR AND THEATRE TEACHER



PROS/BENEFITS:

Career events (practically) prepare young (ex-)offenders for reintegration after their release because during these workshops they are provided with the basic tools and knowledge to find a job

They raise participants' self-confidence because during the workshop everyone is ought to discover & list their strengths

Participants get a better understanding of social norms and lawful ways of living because during the workshop they are acquainted with labour market tendencies, averages of salaries and expenditures (e.g. housing)

Participating youngsters will possibly define their professional aims as during the workshop they will analyze themselves and get to know the labour markets, leading them to making up their minds for future profession



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

The main subject of the activity can be perceived as “too complicated” if explained too formally

It can be perceived as boring especially by participants who tend to be more restless and impatient or for those who are not being released soon



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Carrying out all the topics in practical and entertaining ways
- Keeping participants' attention and interest throughout the whole activity



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- **Invite professionals to carry out each activity**, to make what they say more plausible. On top, it helps if you know professions of young (ex-)offenders' interest. Throwing them often in the conversation keeps participants focused.
- (Ex-)offenders usually put a very strong focus on money. **Take time and explain** the averages of salaries and taxes to be paid.
- **Enforce as many practical activities as possible** to keep participants engaged and ensure they comprehend the topic
- **Give success stories!** Youngsters that have spent many years behind the bars usually lose their hope to get a well-paid job. Prove them wrong!



A career event is very useful for young (ex-) offenders, because it offers them a chance to be presented to potential employers. It also teaches them how to make a good impression and get the result - i.e. end up with job offer; they can learn new interview skills, and they can learn about the job search as well.

- JLIJJA STANKEVICIUTE
RECRUITMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT MANAGER AT ATRANKA360



During the activity, young (ex-) offenders enjoyed their time with an absolutely different kind of people than the one that they are used to see every day. They have a lot of opinions and approaches; unfortunately most of those opinions are pretty wrong, but because of their background. I believe that constant communication with motivated people might really help them. The main point of an event like this should be making them want to actually become part of society. I believe in some of their heads, some light turned on after all of us talking with them.

- VYTAUTĖ JURGAITYTĖ
CEO AT UAB GANSA

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND PRESENTATIONS WORKSHOP



DESCRIPTION:

PART 1 - STRUCTURE, organisation and content: participants will learn how to organize the information and ideas that they have into a coherent and organic discourse.

PART 2 - PRESENTATION AND THE USE OF VISUAL AIDS: participants will learn how to prepare good visual presentations by using Powerpoint and other useful tools.

PART 3 - COHESIVE DEVICES AND DELIVERY TECHNIQUES: participants will learn and put in practice some useful public speech tips & techniques, aimed at catching the public's attention, reducing nervousness, avoiding filler words and a monotone delivery.

[Part 1] [Part 2] and [Part 3] can be carried out during the same workshop, or in three different workshops



PROS/BENEFITS:

It has a positive impact on participants' future professional development because public speech and presentation skills are appreciated in many working environments

It raises participants' self-confidence because they will improve their ability to get other people's attention and overcome their shyness

It allows participants to express their creativity because each of them will realize his/her own presentation

Participants will broaden their speech pattern (or vocabulary) as when preparing a presentation, they might have to find and use new words

CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Some participants can feel uncomfortable because not everyone likes being at the centre of the attention and stepping out of the comfort zone

Some participants can feel judged if there is a tension and/or if someone makes fun of them while doing their speech

Some participants may not want to involve at all as public speeches cause a lot of stress

CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Making participants feel comfortable to express themselves
- Avoiding bad comments/jokes/ self and others judgement

WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- **Divide participants in small groups (8-10 people each)**, to give to each of them the time and attention that they need (as more people means more public speeches and, thus, more time required)
- **Not organize theatre this activity at the beginning**, because it requires the absence of judgement and bonds between people. Ideally, this could be organized after/together with theatre improvisation workshops.
- **Make a proper introduction to the activity**, by explaining that speaking in front of a public is difficult for everyone and that all the participant should contribute to creating a "safe-area" (in which no one is judged)
- **Get involved in the activity yourself**, to give to the young (ex-)offenders a concrete example and to gain their trust
- **Define some "rules"**: e.g. at the end of every speech all the participants will clap their hands etc.

TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP



DESCRIPTION:

Time management is the skill that is useful for everyone. Young (ex-)offenders is not an exception. However, this is not the thing which basics' they teach at school or university. The workshop is aimed to teach young (ex-) offenders how to plan and control how much time they spend on specific activities. Participants will analyze: 1) how much time they spend on each activity, 2) what would they like to do more often and 3) on which activities they spend too much time. Finally, the activity will enable participants to set their goals and plan ahead to achieve them.



PROS/BENEFITS:

It enables participants to pursue their goals in a successful way because they will learn how to use their time to achieve them

It enables participants to spend their time more efficiently because they will have the chance to reflect about what time they dedicate to each activity (and discover where they spend too much/too little time)

Participants will learn to avoid stress because time management is the key to a healthier and less stressful life



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

It can be perceived as "too technical" and/or boring especially by participants who tend to be more restless and impatient



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Facing the topic in a practical and engaging way
- Catch and keep participants' attention and interest



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Analyse the topic (mainly) through games and other practical activities, to keep participants engaged and allow them to really understand each topic
- Divide participants in small groups (6-8 people each), to analyse their time management in a deeper way

FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

By functional support we mean all the activities that are aiming at developing skills are needed **to make their ways in the “outside world” after their release**. It can be the teachable abilities or skill sets, that are known as hard skills. Typically, one is able to learn hard skills in the classroom, through books or other training materials, or after receiving a job. Currently, the labour market is strongly focused on IT sector. Thus, we highly recommend organizing continuous workshops meant for **developing IT skills**.

This ambition might be a little utopian if they are expected to be carried out in the correctional facility, as many of them have a **limited number of computers, or limited access to Internet**. If this is a case, we highly recommend to compile a list of different websites where it is possible to learn mentioned hard skills for free or contact details of companies that provide such trainings for reasonable prices.

However, if you are about to start working with young (ex-) offenders outside the correctional facility (e.g. in your youth center), we highly recommend you including some of the functional activities in your work plan (Indeed, if you have adequate resources).

PROGRAMMING WORKSHOP

(PYTHON/SCRATCH!)

DESCRIPTION:

Python is one of the most popular programming languages in the world, because of its simple and readable syntax. Alternatively, Scratch is a popular dynamic visual programming language for children to create animations. It allows users to mix different media (graphic, sound, and more) in a creative way by "remixing" different projects. During the workshop participants will learn to program in a fun way and to express their creativity through programming.

PROS/BENEFITS:

It has a positive impact on participants' professional development because they will develop programming skills (which are highly appreciated in today's labour market)

It raises participants' self-confidence because they will learn new things and improve their skills

It allows participants to express their creativity because each of them can realize his/her own project while using Python or Scratch!

CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Participants won't learn at the same rate and this may be a problem if there are many people taking part to the activity

It can be perceived as boring especially by participants who tend to be more restless and impatient

During the activity, some participants can use internet for other purposes because generally they are not allowed to use it in the facility and this can "tempt" them

The activity is not feasible everywhere because we need a number of PCs to carry it out, and not all the facilities/youth centers have computers



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Managing participants' different pace of learning
- Engaging all the participants, even the more restless and impatient ones
- Having an adequate number of resources to carry out the activity



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Have a small number of participants to ensure an adequate level of support for them
- Find a professional to carry out the activity if you do not have enough knowledge yourself
- Block access to some websites (e.g. social networks) to avoid participants accessing them during the activity

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP



DESCRIPTION:

World of Web Development is a really complex one. It takes some time to become a pro, however, the basics (especially if using such rather simple platforms as WordPress) can be learnt by anyone who is interested. Needless to say, how much these skills are appreciated in the labour market (even regardless the work field – in most of them, it is a huge bonus). Thus, if possible, it is really useful to teach young offenders some basics. During this web development workshop, participants will learn how websites are created through practical examples and independently set up and edit a website.



PROS/BENEFITS:

It has a positive impact on participants' future career because nowadays website development skills are largely appreciated in the labour market

It raises participants' self-confidence because they will learn new things and improve their skills

It allows participants to express their creativity because each of them will create his/her own website



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

Participants won't learn at the same rate and this may be a problem if there are many people taking part to the activity

It can be perceived as boring especially by participants who tend to be more restless and impatient

During the activity, some participants can use Internet for other purposes because it may be tempting for them

The activity is not feasible everywhere because we need PCs to carry it out, and not all the facilities/youth centers have computers



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Managing participants' different pace of learning
- Managing time properly (as creating a website requires time)
- Engaging all the participants, even the more restless and impatient ones



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- **Carry out the activity with small groups (6-9 people each)**, to manage better participants' different pace of learning and dedicate to each of them the time and attention (s)he needs
- **Divide participants in teams (2-3 people each)**, to allow them to divide tasks and to create websites faster
- **Organize several workshops**, as creating websites requires time
- **Organize (if possible) a small competition**, to make the activity more engaging and funny
- **Block access to some websites** (such as social networks) to avoid participants accessing them during the activity

WORKSHOP ON INTERNET THREATS



DESCRIPTION:

As technology evolves, new threats are emerging that young people need to be aware of. For example, sexting, bullying online or fake news are a relatively new threats on the Internet, especially for youngsters. For the start of this workshop participants will watch the videos made by Interpol about different Internet threats.

Participants will get to know what are the main Internet threats. Also, they will discover which of them (and why) are considered to be a crime. The last part of the workshop is dedicated for informing them about the consequences of each Internet threat and what to do if it happens to them.



PROS/BENEFITS:

It raises young (ex-)offenders' awareness about the "outside world" and may prevent them to face some troubles after their release



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

It can be perceived as boring especially by participants who tend to be more restless and impatient



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Engaging all the participants, even the more restless and impatient ones
- Make participants understands that internet threats are a concrete issue that should not be in over their heads



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:


- Carrying out the workshop through practical and engaging activities, such as role-playing, simulations and/or quizzes, to avoid participants to get bored
- Stress out the importance and frequency of Internet threats, by making concrete examples and/or inviting as guests people that have gone through them

WORKSHOP: BASICS OF ROBOTICS AND ITS USE



DESCRIPTION:

Many would argue that robotics is the future of the humanity. Thus, if there is a chance, it is useful to get the youngster familiar with what does it mean. The workshop on the basics of robotics and its application will bring participants closer to the world of robots and their applications in everyday life. After the introductory / descriptive section, they will be given the opportunity to work with a robotic arm. That will allow gaining practical knowledge of the mechanisms and logic behind the robot control. The last part of the workshop will be dedicated to analyse the application of robotics in different fields.



PROS/BENEFITS:

It may have a positive impact on participants' future professional development because they may find robotics as a great interest

It raises young (ex-)offenders' awareness about the "outside world" and of the possibilities that it offers

It is a new and interesting field and, thus, participants can be engaged more easily



CONS/POTENTIAL RISKS:

The main subject of the activity can be perceived as "too complicated" if explained in a too formal way

It can be perceived as boring or theoretical if participants won't be allowed to use any equipment or engaged in other ways



CHALLENGES CAN BE:

- Finding a balance between allowing participants to use the equipment and avoiding them to damage it
- Engaging all the participants, especially the more restless and impatient ones
- Most of the facilities/youth centers can be lacking of possibilities to lead such a workshop (or find someone who could lead it)



WE WOULD RECOMMEND TO:

- Carry out the activity with small groups (6-8 people each), to allow them to use the equipment without damaging it
- Avoid very difficult terms or expressions (if possible), or clearly explain them if it's not possible to do it

ATTITUDES WHEN GUIDING TO THE CHANGE

Usually, all the fears to join the activities or work with (ex-)offenders are thought to come from the latter. To be more precise, (ex-)convicts are perceived as unstable, unpredictable, violent. But the biggest danger actually stems from and can be diminished by no one else but the youth workers themselves.

TOO MUCH RESPONSIBILITY

In existential psychology, the responsibility is referred to when **"a person is responsible completely for his/her life: not only for certain actions, but also for inability to take any"**. This definition is often times forgotten by people who jumps on board to activities in facilitating the social inclusion of young (ex-)offenders and yet, that causes a lot of problems.

While in contact with (ex-)convicts, it is possible that one will get attached to some of the people after getting to know them. It is natural and perfectly normal, but sometimes the attachment can get so strong that the person may start strongly caring for the imprisoned youngster and seek to provide any personal help he or she can (e.g. constant emotional support, daily calls, life coaching, etc). Sounds beautiful? Yes, until certain limits are overstepped, and those are: taking full responsibility to (help) change the (ex-)convict. When the interaction between the (ex-)convict and the worker becomes close in terms of frequency, openness and trust, the worker may be led into thinking that he/she has a crucial say in (ex-)convicts life. Soon after, the person may unconsciously take the full responsibility for the imprisoned youngster's actions.

The responsibility for the other person's actions practically is impossible, but one might get caught into having such a feeling. It manifests usually as obsessive overthinking or/and willingness to control the person on each step of his/her way. One youth worker who joined the activities of the project "Climb over" refers to this overthinking as to being in love: „I wake up in the morning thinking what he is doing, why hasn't he contacted me for a while, is he keeping his word and acting nicely in the facility, did he get any more fines?". The youth worker claims suddenly coming to realization that her personal life was put aside, emotional resources wasted on constant thinking about something that is totally not in her hands. Additionally, **when taking the responsibility for someone else's actions also causes feelings of guilt after they commit the crime again**, or break the promises and misbehave within the bars.

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU ARE TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOMEONE ELSE?

- You are thinking about somebody more than half of your days.
- You cannot concentrate on your tasks or hobbies as you are constantly planning on HOW you will help the certain person (not necessarily help).
- You are doing things FOR the person (e.g. looking for job vacancies, educational opportunities, etc).
- You are overwhelmingly stressed if you get to know that the person misbehaved.
- You are overwhelmingly stressed if you get to know that the person broke a promise that he/she gave to you.
- You are overwhelmingly stressed if you get to know that the person lied about him/herself or hid something from you.

- You feel ashamed or guilty for that certain person's wrong-doings.
- The first question that pops into your mind when you get to receive the information about the person's wrong-doings is "what did I do wrong?" or "what could I have done differently?".

If most of the questions applies to you and your interaction with that one certain person - you might be having what is not yours - the responsibility.

WHAT IS THERE TO BE DONE?

Before starting your work or volunteering in the field of social inclusion of young (ex-)offenders, draw limits for yourself beforehand that cannot be overstepped by any means. Those limits are as follows:

you are not responsible for the other person's decisions

you can only give your opinion and advice

you are not responsible for the other person's future

you may only make positive influence by your presence and opening up

you cannot do things for everyone

you can only give advices and directions

you cannot tell someone what to do and expect it from him/her

you can only share what you would do in his/her place

you should not let the other person in your life and take over (e.g. overthinking)

you should be fully present during the activities/direct work and disconnect afterwards

you should not expect gratefulness from the youngsters you are trying to help

you chose to enroll on working with them, not vice versa

Eventually, remind yourself, that even though you open up, share your experience, give advice - it does not mean the person is obligated to listen to you or behave as you expect them to behave.

Individual, personal changes takes time and you can only witness them or unknowingly accelerate them. The only personal change you can drive yourself - is YOUR change, but not the others.



CONCLUSIONS

Helping young (ex-)offenders is not easy, as it is not easy trying to help any other teenager. It does not matter how well you will plan the activities ahead, it might not go as well as you wish. Despite the fact that during the activities some sensitive memories or feelings can be touched, you have to remember that the mood of the person is affected by different factors that might be not even related to the activity itself (e.g. participants have slept terribly). As youngsters usually do not recognize such feelings and/or cannot react adequately, you might face aggressiveness, rude jokes, disengagement, but you have to stay calm and react professionally. Remember that **young (ex-)offenders are vulnerable youngsters that have gone through terrible things and have to live with their past decisions which includes crime.**

We expect the tips listed in this guidebook will help you get involved more in the work with young (ex-)offenders. **Be sure that through them you will not only help young offenders develop some sets of skills, but you will undoubtedly improve some skills of yours as well.** Be ready for this sometimes challenging, but, in the end, rewarding journey!