# 6    Case study FR

## Title: House Painting: a bridge to outside" (FR)



The training programme was commissioned by the Prison Authorities and the project was entirely designed and developed by INSUP (Bordeaux/France). It is co-financed by the Aquitaine Region and the Ministry of Justice.


**Introduction**
The principal objective of this training course was to give to prisoners a new trade in hands and to offer them an opportunity to access to a qualification in house painting and decorating. And because the trainers rely on official French standards, the learning is formal. But after debate, we wanted to detect how the prisoners would evolve in front of these same aims but with different ways to reach them: individual competences or abilities, willingness to spend time with prisoners with others type of delinquency, behaviour face to trainers' commandment. So we considered that it would be interesting to watch that and why finally this micro project is related to informal learning. In the end, the results in term of qualification were really good (94%) but evaluation on the same topics were so different from a person to another.
The programme's trainees are a group of prisoners condemned by the French legal system and serving sentences of up to 3 years. The prison authority selects the trainees who, after INSUP's approval, receive house painter training with the possibility of obtaining: 1] A certificate from the Ministry of Employment 2] A work placement on their release from prison or on day release, for example.

**Setting**
The training sessions are spread over 23 weeks (February to August 2010) with 27 paid hours per week. Practical work takes up 60 % of the overall training time. It alternates between technique-learning periods and periods of application based on oral instructions, plans and schemas respecting intervention rules and procedures, as well as implementation of the different materials.
There is high demand from prisoners to carry out activities: work, training, schooling, etc. They frequently approach internal and external structures, because they are perfectly aware that such an occupation can shorten their stay in prison. A training activity such as the one offered by INSUP, for example, is equivalent to approximately 6 days' reprieve, added to the legal reprieve of 7 days (per month). The challenge for our team is to make the training interesting in content and attractive in its objectives, beyond the most obvious one of permitting the earliest possible release from prison.
A dedicated room of 80m² has been entrusted to INSUP and its technical partner –EIPF- by the Prison Authorities, for training purposes. This room, known as the "Training Workshop" is

**ACT-NET**
142207-2008-LLP-
DE-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Case Study 1

Page 1

situated in one of the prison's two buildings and has been fitted out with training cubicles that are essential to learning. When there are prison cells available, these may also become training areas. The teaching team has to cross the detention compound and sports area to reach this room.

Rooms are made available by the detention centre, while equipment (brushes, rollers and scrapers, plastic protection film etc, as well as larger items such as ladders, for example) and materials (paint, coverings) are also provided by the Prison Authorities. Teaching aids are presented by INSUP and the Ministry of Employment (standards).

The target group concerned prisoner precisely adult men aged 20 to 45, confined for minor offences, not crime (European Prison Rules). They have been charged with conjugal or group violence, or violence committed against a person, drug-taking or drug-dealing, theft, forgery and use of false documents, drink-driving, delinquent driving, etc. Their initial level of education is between French level VI (no qualifications, having left school early, lacking in basic knowledge) and level IV (baccalauréat, French A-levels equivalent normally taken at the age of 18).

**Project Activities**

During 23 weeks, 27 hours per week, 6 hours a day, the 13 trainees had different activities such as:

- Discovery of trades in the building industry
- Job Search Skills to prepare for release
- Execution of painting work inside the building
- Execution of simple wall-covering work inside the building
- Security aspects of the professional competence certificate concerning painting work outside the building (installation of scaffolding)
- Validation by a professional jury (Exam)

The theory work was organised as follows:

Research in sub-groups, restitution to the whole group with a dynamic and interactive educational procedure, encouraging active participation from each trainee, exchanges and sharing of the different elements of information collected, for better awareness of the social and economic environment.

The practical work was conducted by the technical trainer as follows:

The method relies on the capitalisation of true-life experiences, enabling each trainee to progress at his own level, using the appropriate tools for his needs and objectives.

The teaching team used the restitution to the group enables exchanges of information, mutual aid and group dynamics.

**Level 5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project**

For our teamwork, it was the first experience with this methodology. The easiest step was to identify two topics within the reference system and amazingly the most difficult one was to choose three trainees for many reasons: are they going to be easy to "read"? Are they going to be more natural than the others? Are they going to stay in the training course (that means as well in prison) till the end? It took time to make a choice among the thirteen prisoners. So, we decided to evaluate the following topics:

Participating in community with others

For us this topic was obvious precisely because that's the reason why we gave a positive notification to the personal penitentiary for half a group. Those six prisoners were incarcerated for the first time and except one, young. In confidence, they said at first they didn't want to integrate the group because they were afraid of the most experienced ones. Finally, they accepted thanks to motivation we gave them and the fact we would be there.

**ACT-NET**
142207-2008-LLP-
DE-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Case Study 1

Page 2

Therefore we were sure to have a safe view on those trainees and on the others as well actually.
Self esteem
In prison, most prisoners haven't got natural behaviour in community that means in private places like cells as in public places such as alleyway, religion room, teaching room or detention compound. We used to say that they wear a mask to make others believe that they're strong-minded. So it was important for us to watch if the masks will fell in order to see the real person and not an actor. Questions: is the self esteem was going forward or backwards? Could we evaluate the person truthfully and not to create more difficulties in a life already complicated?
In order not to interfere in the principal aim of project –obtaining a qualification-, the teamwork decides to be discrete with the evaluation method. Thus, the methods used by the three of us were:

- Observation relied on the reference system
- Individual interviews conducted by the educational reference of teaching team
- Team consultation (twice a month) relied on the notes we regularly took with the assessment grid

**Project Impact**
The training course helps prisoners to acquire skills, competences and knowledge about the building sector which must stimulate them as future active citizenships. It helps them as well to acquire more sense of human being and develops conditions for more successful professional and social integration. Maybe the recognition of this course thanks to mediatization will help the French society to accept more easily this disadvantaged public in the future.
All the trainees find the learning interesting, motivating and really useful. Before and during the training course, the teamwork and therefore the Prison Authorities received 60 demands to join the course which was a record in this prison but unfortunately we just had 8 permanent places.
General measured effects (impacts) of the learning:
-Mobilisation of basic knowledge and acquired professionals
-Social environment and social learning
-Work placement and dynamic employability
-Guidance career and knowledge of trades
More generally for French Authorities, the expected impact of this micro-project is to fight for the prevention of recurrence.

**Discussion & Perspectives**

**Feasibility and usability**
The training's aims were to acquire the professional basis and the qualification to be a house painter end decorator outside the prison, to acquire the skills needed to enter this trade, to diversify and validate professional choices and to acquire general work-adapted behaviour. The prisoners' trainees were above all focused on their training course to have a qualification validated by the Ministry of Employment. Actually, this type of population is perfectly aware that kind of occupation can shorten their stay in prison. The challenge for our team is to make the training interesting in content and attractive in its objectives, beyond the most obvious one of permitting the earliest possible release from prison. In order not to interfere in the main aim of project –obtaining a qualification-, the teamwork decides to choose only two topics (self-esteem and participating in community with others) and to evaluate 3 trainees. The methods used were: observation, individual interviews and team consultation. Concerning the participation in community with others, the three dimensions tested (cognitive, affective and activity) showed a satisfying level of competences acquired (level 3

**ACT-NET**
142207-2008-LLP-
DE-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Case Study 1

Page 3

to level 5): the affective dimension is a bit setback. Concerning the topic "self-esteem", the results are quit similar.

Two trainers out of three were specialists of this public in charge of the training and of the prison sector. For the third contributor, he was the technical trainer in painting and covering for first time and in prison. He did appreciate to give his opinion about the trainees with that approach and not just evaluated the technical progress of the prisoners. The teamwork considers the approach was very useful to determinate precisely the situation of each trainee: that is to say to formalise the informal learning. The Level 5 was very helpful to tell the Prison Authorities how the prisoners advanced on the training course on an individual point of view and within the group. The trainers understood the systematic approach. Because we decided to leave for a while on the side the approach to observe the group and not to interfere on the formal learning, the only difficulty was that the trainers could not hold the training and in the same time, apply the observation grid. That's the reason why, we had one or two consultations per week to keep a link with the approach and our observations.

Especially on this training course (concrete job to do, in group), the dimensions –activity and affective-were easy to describe and to evaluate instead of the cognitive dimension. The context of the training course is an explanation to this point: the prisoners haven't got overall a natural behaviour. They have to prove something to the others prisoners so the difficulty to detect evolution is high.

The 3D-stage system was a suitable approach to describe competence development of our trainees. This training course was a very concrete action and the objectives were very clear since the beginning as extra-possibilities for them: salary, qualification, shorten the stay in prison, work placement…So, the teamwork didn't have to motivate them at all to act or to be in daily life in community. Moreover in prison, emotions are palpable. The observation on the 3D-stage system was facilitated. The evaluation method improved the organisation of the course methodology. It offers a visual representation of the participants' progress and it can be adapted to other forms of training.

**Efforts and acceptance**

The teamwork considers that the methodology was a very good way to share and to compare our point of view on the prisoners. Most of time, we have informal debates on this question and most important, nothing precise to evaluate the trainees. So the effort was real at the beginning but the result very interesting finally: the input-output ratio was good beyond our hopes. The training session in prison gave them necessary knowledge on their general work and the IAS methodology added them fineness and consistency of judgement certainly more adequate in our global approach. The three trainers did have the feeling to learn about their way to observe trainees and the acuity of judgement on them. Our view on prisoners had an influence on the good results of the training. For our teamwork, it was the first experience with this methodology. The easiest step was to identify two topics and amazingly the most difficult one was to choose three trainees for many reasons: are they going to be easy to "read"? Are they going to be more natural than the others? Are they going to stay in the training course (that means as well in prison) till the end? It took time to make a choice. As said before, the cognitive dimension was not easy to define. The team that applied it had to take some extra time in order to familiarise with the IAS content, but in the end, the IAS reference system can prove to be very useful and we intend to use it in other projects as well.

**Preconditions/Pre-knowledge of personnel**

They should understand the importance of evaluating educational programs through the measuring of its impact on every beneficiary. They should have general information about the learning results in terms of competences. They should be aware of the existing evaluation methods. In addition to that, they should be able to create their own evaluation instruments. Even though some participants might not have any work experience in the IAS area, they can take part in a special training that can teach them how to apply the IAS

**ACT-NET**
142207-2008-LLP-
DE-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Case Study 1

Page 4

method. They must learn how to establish the individual system of reference of the assessment and the indicators. That's the key to be sure the team is on the same level of understanding of methodology.

The reference system helped us because it describes in terms of attitude and behaviour every level of competences evaluation.  Previous information about the target group can be very useful. The evaluation levels don't represent singular behaviours, but evolution stages that reunite several behaviours. Because of this, even if a different evaluator observes different behaviours at the same person, our reference system determines him to do the evaluation following certain criteria that evaluate the personal development stage and not the behaviour itself.  Supporting materials proved to be very useful: we needed a video projector (in order to show the participants how to fill in the monitoring charts) and the monitoring forms. INSUP had two projects at the same time approximately but with two different actions. We had different trainers within the two projects and it was the first time fort all of them when they were confronted with the IAS reference system. Supporting materials can prove to be very useful with a limited use in order to appropriate the methodology. An effective training for the personnel and the trainers' abilities to elaborate their own evaluation instruments ensure the project's success.

**Transferability and perspectives**
The approach was used for two projects in our association: for the training with prisoners and for the gypsy's familial area. The evaluation tools, however, were created by different trainers that used different methods. We intend to use the LEVEL5 approach as an intern procedure and to introduce it within the pre-qualifying training system. We do not anticipate any limitations in this moment, but we only applied the method on two projects. The system is flexible and very adapted to our training centre because until now, we had disseminated tools for the trainees. The LEVEL5 system allows its users to adapt to the target groups whatever aims, competences or levels. The best evaluation methods are not the standard ones that are applied to all situations, but those that focused on the target group.

**ACT-NET**
142207-2008-LLP-
DE-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Case Study 1

Page 5