

1st JCN Project Workshop

Workstream 1: “Working out the common basis”

Tallinn (Estonia) 13 – 16 of March 2013

Minutes



Aim

The aim of the first JCN project workshop is to assess the state of the art on the existing national services in the field of high risk offenders and transition management in the JCN partner countries.

Introduction

During preparation period Estonian team followed the overall aim of the project - to integrate existing informal links, expertise and best practice through shared learning, improved best practice among partners and a strong network.

Concrete goal for the workshop was to find a shared understanding of and report on the definitions and terminology in the field of high risk offenders and transition management in the partner countries and to assess the state of the art on the existing national services - prison, probation, etc- in the field of high risk offenders, transition management.

Estonian team together with other project partners tried to plan the program in such a way that by the end of the workshop would be achieved the common bases in understanding who is and how project partners define a high risk offender.

The aim was to create a safe environment for the participants to encourage them actively participate in the discussions. Target group was planned altogether 40 experts from different countries, approximately half of them from Estonia. Information about the Tallinn workshop was promoted inside Estonian Prison Service in all regional areas. To the potential participants were introduced and sent a brief overview of the seminar aims and also a program.

The used approach was to involve participants in different ways such as through the meeting of prison directors, also through direct contacts by telephone, email, meetings. Information about the project was also published on the webpage of the Prison Service.

Chosen target group who were asked to participate on workshop were in majority the specialists-practitioners in the Criminal Justice System (from prisons and probation departments) but also the stakeholders from Ministry of Justice.

Experts involved

Prof. Dr. jur. Frieder Dünkel, University of Greifswald

Frieder Dünkel studied law at the universities of Heidelberg and Freiburg/Germany (second state examination in 1976). His Ph.D. in 1979 dealt with an empirical research on the effectiveness of therapeutic treatment in prisons. From 1979 until 1992 he worked as a researcher at the Max-Planck-Institute of Foreign and International Penal Law, Criminological Unit, in Freiburg (together with Prof. Günther Kaiser). The subject of his "Habilitation" in 1989 was "Juvenile imprisonment and other forms of deprivation of liberty in an international comparison". Since 1992 he teaches criminology, penology, juvenile justice, criminal procedure and penal law at the university of Greifswald in the north-east of Germany. The research at the chair (department) of criminology covers a wide range of empirical studies in juvenile criminology, penology, prisons and alternative sanctions, alcohol and drunk driving, drug policy etc. Prof. Dünkel is the co-editor of the Journal "Neue Kriminalpolitik" since 1989 and has organised many international conferences.



Jakko Salla Estonian Ministry of Justice, Criminal Policy Department, Adviser of the Criminal Statistics and Analysis Division

Jakko Salla has studied Public management in the Tallinn University and continues studies in PhD Sociology. His MA at 2009 dealt with Civil servants, politicians and civil servants with a political mission: roles and impacts in the policy making process. He is currently working in Criminal Policy Department with the execution of performance inspection, i.e. analysis of the activities of criminal institutions, in order to find out whether and how the policy of the government is carried out. This is accomplished through statistical analysis, activities audit, and scientific research. More information available at the webpage of Estonian Research Portal.

Kätlin-Chris Kruusmaa Estonian Ministry of Justice, Criminal Policy Department , Adviser of the Criminal Statistics and Analysis Division.

Kätlin-Chris Kruusmaa has studied at the university law and social work. She has worked for many years in different positions in Criminal Justice System. Currently she is working at the Criminal Policy Department in Criminal Statistics and Analyses Division with the execution of performance inspection, i.e. analysis of the activities of criminal institutions, in order to find out whether and how the policy of the government is carried out. This is accomplished through statistical analysis, activities audit, and scientific research.

Conclusions

Two days workshop was based on the presentations of different countries, group work and discussions between the seminar participants. Through these activities participants tried to improve the understanding of the views/practice of other participating countries and to gain a common understanding in the field of high risk offenders management and definitions.

Discussions held during the workshop were focused on the following topics: definition of high risk offender, risk assessment, criminogenic risk factors and dangerousness, needs (factors to be contributed to the positive outcome), hierarchy of needs (prioritize them), protective factors (pro-social attitudes, education, family etc), pro-criminal attitudes, case management, involvement of offender, self-management, attitudes, problem solving skills, focused interventions, team and multiagency work, information sharing, continuous care before and after release.

On the second day participants were divided into groups with the task to form their version of the term “high risk offender”, discuss and decide whether “risk” and “dangerousness” should be dealt as one or two different definitions.

By the end of the workshop participants agreed on the definition of the term “high risk offender” what was formulated as following - a high risk offender is someone who presents a high probability to commit crimes which may cause very serious personal, physical or psychological harm.

Through this definition was formed a basic frame for targeting project activities. Project shall keep its focus on offenders falling under mutually agreed definition. The definition covers under this project the concept of dangerousness and risk of reoffending and it is applicable for all project partners despite of the set up of existing evaluation and planning mechanisms or respective legal system.

Definition and principles agreed on the workshop allow continuing with achieving project aims through following activities described in project plan.





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