

## **BUILDING A NETWORK AND SHARING WHAT WE KNOW**

### **CEP Education and Training in Probation Network meeting**

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 - Barcelona**

#### **CONCLUSIONS WORLD CAFÉ SESSION**

##### **PREEMPLOYMENT TRAINING:**

###### **What works well?**

*This topic turned out as a tricky one but it also proved one of the aim of the group itself – to find a common language. We were divided to the two groups in understanding the preemployment training: one group understood it in sense of some training that comes before the contract is signed, whilst the other group understood it in sense of the very first, brief training that usually comes into play in a first few days after the contract is valid. So the first group simply stated that there is no preemployment training in their organisation. The other group put emphasis on:*

- it should be at hand (periodicity of training)
- it should be short and intensive, up-to-date
- it should be obligatory
- it should be relevant (motivational)
- the form of b-learning is preferred
- it can also be in form of learning on the job
- tutors or mentors engaged

###### **How well trained are professionals when they arrive to the probation service?**

- the question is, how to measure? (knowledge/craft is specific)
- the most often M.A. or B.A degree holders
- field of expertise: social sciences, humanities, criminology, pedagogy, law
- they have got the theory and the practice is often missing
- different theoretical backgrounds imply different starting points in education

###### **Are there particular challenges/gaps?**

- different backgrounds of probation workers
- low level of public knowledge of probation and restorative principles
- different levels of understanding the principles amongst probation workers themselves

- gender gap in the field
- non-competitive salary in the field
- question of career development
- digital tools in use in post-pandemic era

#### **How might these would have to be addressed?**

- a need for flexible and made-to-measure education and training
- core skills development of probation workers
- establishment of professional register in the field
- cooperation with job agencies
- continuous work on public opinion on probation activities
- getting probation activities to university curricula
- awareness of resources other than official budget

### **« IN SERVICE » TRAINING**

#### **What works well?"**

Gathering all inputs would recover:

- trainings regarding specific topics as mental health, addictions ... both with trainers coming from the field and from the central administrations so that it is linked with real situations encountered and also taking account of the politics lead and the global vision
- shorts sessions but continuing trainings with small groups and based on practical situations where peer to peer can take a place dedicated to good practice exchange
- training in motivational interviewing as well as tools that can be used with clients as well as with professionals and employees or partners
- Adaptation of organisational standards common to each function and situation so that it creates a clear institutional identity
- Giving a common background to both probation and prison officers
- Trainings respecting a workflow based on "6 steps": how does a client arrive, what information should I have and should I give, how is lead the first conversation, how to write an advice....
- Online sessions with both interactions, role plays and theory
  - one hour in common on Moodle
  - 5 blocks
  - Knowledge test

### **What needs to be improved?" - Ideas on how to improve it**

New employees and their turn over are a challenge. They should be trained from the beginning of their contract. Another challenge is how to develop soft skills at a professional level. To be known, to be recognised for specific skills, to be professional, are prerequisites for continuing education to be meaningful.

- One way to professionalise the sector would be to enter into SLA-type agreements with universities, which would provide input at an early stage and could have the advantage of sending students into the field.
- Another way would be to reinforce the fact that recruitment is indeed exclusively dedicated to the function.
- The creation of tools for continuing education could be achieved through contributions from academics or universities
- Strategic guidelines for further training should be provided on an annual basis. These guidelines should be drafted taking into account both theoretical or legislative developments and practice. The latter should be designed in particular by seeking to assess the impact of our practices through, among other things, the support and follow-up we can offer to our staff. Managers have thus to be committed and connected to the field.
- CEP or EU could edit a set of necessary competences/standards such as: empathy; working to empower and improve people's lives; boundaries; balance between aid and control; human rights; ethical code....
- Multi-agency should be developed wisely and more widely with training on how to manage it (professional secrecy, etc.)
- Training that helps us to take into account the particular risks of burn out in these front-line jobs should be systematic...

### **Are the experience/instruments/methodologies that trainers can share between different European jurisdictions?"**

We all shared a general approach to the main skills needed by a probation officer: Empathy; assertiveness; communication; ability to assess the needs of the client; intervention planning; feedback.

Being clear about the goals and values within which the work is carried out provides a framework on which the probation officer can build. It is even more effective if officers are involved in developing the work instructions that follow.

The supervision and positive management by the leaders creates a safe working environment which is mirrored in the quality of the work with the clients.



“Forensic-criminal-justice-social-work” is already well developed in Netherlands and could be shared...