

RECHANCE

REhabilitation approaches for providing former prisoners with personal development and society entry CHANCES



IO3 Adaptation Guidelines Handbook

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Introduction

This Guidelines Handbook is addressed to all those working with ex-prisoners - staff and support organisations aiming to improve their knowledge and skills for their successful reintegration into society and for their successful realisation on the labour market. The guidelines you will find here are the result of both the preparatory research work on the situation in the partner countries, which served for the selection of the topics in the modules, and the practical application of different training models, subsequently adapted to be most useful to the target group. The modules in the platform and the mobile app can also be used in other educational contexts as well as for individual learning, following the guidelines in the last section.

1. About the project

ReCHANCE project - rehabilitation approaches for providing former prisoners with personal development and society entry CHANCES, proposes resources, tools and training programmes that work to empower former prisoners and combat the social obstacles that they face due to stigmatisation and social exclusion. Throughout the course of the ReCHANCE project, 8 project partners from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, and Italy are working with former prisoners to offer curriculums, resources and tools that will support them with their reintegration into society on personal, social, and professional levels.

The ReCHANCE project provides a curriculum, learning components toolbox, training digital tools, and an Adaptation Guidelines Handbook that offers various resources for former prisoners. Through these tools and an e-learning platform, the target group will be able to improve their competencies in life skills development, more specifically: ICT skills, communication, teamwork, stress management, self-esteem, time management, conflict resolution and health and stigma coping mechanisms.



Goals

To address the aims, the ReCHANCE project has the following specific objectives in order to:

Provide former prisoners with skills and knowledge which are essential for their personal development and social reentry into society.

Empower them with real life reflections and competencies towards their social interactions.

Foster their rehabilitation process through tailored learning materials, tools, and resources

Enhance trainers' capacity on how to develop life skills amongst this learner group through innovative solutions and inclusive pedagogy paradigms.

Define for trainers a clear and comprehensive training approach for tackling the diverse background and individual needs of former prisoners.

Digitize the quality learning content in order to increase the quality of adult education provision for this learner group.

Target groups

ReCHANCE addresses primarily the individuals-former prisoners who have been released and need to get oriented in the online world as well as to attain the skills to overcome the gap between institutionalized environment and normal society.

The second target group are the educators, social workers and other professionals working with the first target group – ex prisoners. The materials developed during the project should give them the support when working with their clients and course participants.

During the project life and piloting, the project partners discovered that more people could benefit from the project outcomes and decided to expand the target group for new groups.

First of all, the partners found out, that it would be beneficial to train groups or individuals before their release in order to prepare them better for the life out of the institution. In some countries it is even easier to reach them in prison then after their release. The new target group become of the current prisoners before the release.

Another finding emerged during the piloting among the individuals in their natural environment. Not only the ex-prisoners but also their families and persons sharing the households with them would benefit from the training and materials. We decided to extend the target group for these persons too. The new target group consist of family members and household members of ex-prisoners.

What have been done?



In order to ensure the learning outputs of the project addressed the needs of this target group, we used the first year of the project to conduct extensive desk research and target group analysis to identify the skills most needed for their personal and professional development. We explored the best practice work that was taking place in the partner countries in relation to ex-prisoners and we compiled all our results in a comprehensive and insightful report.

We developed the toolkit of digital resources for all the educational modules: Stress management, Time management, Conflict resolution, Team work, ICT Skills, Health promotion, Communication and Self-esteem. All the educational modules can be used online or offline, with or without the help of facilitator.

What follows?

We need to train both professionals working to support ex-prisoners, ex-prisoners, and prisoners waiting for the release and the family or household members of former prisoners on the ReCHANCE e-learning platform.

All of the resources will be available in all partner languages and freely accessible to the target group.

2. Findings from the Analysis Research Report

Former prisoners need to be supported in the most fundamental pillars of their life after their release, as they are expected to adapt their whole life in a constantly changing life rate. In this present report, certain life sectors have been featured as the most important and urgent field that need to be reinforced, in order to achieve regular reintegration of former prisoners in the social environment. Education is a key- area that plays a huge role, when it comes to the rehabilitation of the confined people. The most important point in regards to education is that the educational process addressed to prisoners and former prisoners reflects a significant social investment for both the correctional system and the society.

The literature review showed that for the smooth reintegration of ex-prisoners into society, they need to be given the opportunity to develop their skills and personal relationships in such a way as to reduce the risk of re-offending after release. “The penitentiary system shall comprise treatment of prisoners the essential aim of which shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation.”

The research we performed, has pointed out the low level of education and lack of qualification inside prisons. The human rights approach underlines the need to implement education activities inside prison, in order to provide opportunities to help and encourage prisoners to develop as a person. In most countries the major problem is finding suitable jobs for the increasingly diverse types of prisoners. Unfortunately, traditional forms of work for prisoners have become irrelevant to the changing work environment. In the reintegration of prisoners now more than ever, learning what are now considered as basic skills and vocational education play a very important role.

The majority of the RECHANCE partners agreed that the project population have poor educational levels, they often lack the skills required to access labour market opportunities, have low self-esteem and weak knowledge to manage to find work. Moreover, the stigma and stress, made them feel isolated and



excluded from the society. Therefore, the RECHANCE research and literature review analysis showed that the population should be equipped with essential skills during their sentence, such as work skills and connecting with members of the wider society, such as those who offer mental health services and substance abuse support, health support, self-esteem skills etc.

More particularly, through the quantitative research conducted for the RECHANCE purposes, the majority of the participants responded that they consider that they should get education concerning the use of digital media and ICT skills. In general, education stands for a necessary institution that creates added value for the former prisoners themselves and, in effect, for all of us. Through education, therefore, the prisoner ideally develops, keeps his mind active and his spirit alive with the major aim of acquiring skills and qualifications for his professional rehabilitation.

In more detail of the research that took place in the RECHANCE participant countries, the fieldwork was based on two structured online surveys with the aim of, “Needs analysis investigation, (i) “Former prisoners’ & (ii) social and educational stakeholders.

Ex- prisoners were invited via email to contribute to the fieldwork through the developed questionnaire. In addition, a semi-structured interview was performed to assess the educational needs of the former prisoners with NGOs and state penitentiaries. The questions that were included were:

- What is the most common educational level of individuals?
- What training is usually provided and by whom?
- Are there any programs in Cyprus that have been done in the past with the aim of reintegration and vocational rehabilitation?
- What are the common problems faced by individuals for vocational rehabilitation?

Cypriot Survey

The results of the former prisoner’s survey in Cyprus showed that their education level is not very good instead the fact that the state penitentiary system is offering opportunities to inmates to finish high school. Most of the training offered is to acquire practical skills. Some of them have managed to get bachelor’s degrees in various fields such as Law, Psychology, Business administration. Until today no program took place before to help them reintegrate to society and they end up as manual workers or in agriculture, these is partly because companies do not want former prisoners to work for them as well as low self-esteem that they have. The most common problems they face is the stigmatization. The majority of the respondents prefer blended learning, while e-learning seems to be the least preferred and the most of them have received blended training programmed and online training programs. None of them have not received any training. Most of the respondents, consider among different ICT skills the most important one the social media, while navigating the web, communication via e-tools, Skype, messenger and health are considered the least important. Moreover, they have chosen preferred training needs stress and time



management and conflict resolution. Finally, as an obstacle for skills education find lack of knowledge and skills as well as lack of information. Nobody mentioned lack of time as an obstacle.

Italian survey

The results showed that former prisoners and actors working with them are in need to improve certain skills and see the training programs, especially in a face-to-face format.

Some of the reasons why most of them are unemployed or work irregularly, were the low education level of most of the respondents, the lack of motivation, the financial difficulties, even more in the context of the Covid-19 socio-economic crisis put obstacles in their access to the labour market, always more digitalized and competitive. The analysis shows that former prisoners seem to be really interested in learning technical skills, such as e-health services, navigation on the internet and use of Office applications, but also personal skills in terms of stress management; on the other side they seem to be least interested about online banking and photo/video editing. Related to the health issues, they would prefer to learn more about vaccinations and addiction related issues. Concerning the competences, the ones they need to develop or to enhance, were: communication skills, interpersonal skills, conflict resolutions, adaptability, time management and planning, working with a team, personal effectiveness.

Bulgarian survey

The results showed that the majority of former and current prisoners are from ethnic minorities, completely or partially illiterate, who do not know Bulgarian not only in writing, but also have weak spoken. The vast majority have never had the need to create e-mail, most of them do not have the necessary equipment and internet. The majority of former prisoners have very low educational status. Practice shows that many of them need not so much school attendance as literacy and vocational courses in training and vocational centres. They prefer only face to face trainings with individuals. The main barriers for attending a training course, were reported financial difficulties, lack of

opportunities and health issues. They need education mostly on ICT curriculum, but is necessary to attend a basic language literacy course beforehand. Moreover, they need further education on soft skills courses related to improving communication, time management, aggression management, problem solving skills, career counselling, to determine interests and guidelines for certain sectors of the economy. Majority of the participants need receiving proper training or education and seem to have positive attitudes towards it, either through learning from peers or by a face-to-face training in groups. All participants agreed that a training related to personal development will restore their place in society. More specifically they reported the need for training in stress management and conflict resolution, MS Office application training, time management and communication skills. Regarding health-related training, participants were interested mainly in receiving training regarding healthy eating, smoking cessation, concerning the skills and competences that they already have and those that need to develop, it resulted from the survey are



interpersonal skills, conflict resolutions, skills in understanding how to deal with grievances and identifying areas of agreement and common ground, while training need was reported in terms of knowing how to think of alternative solutions to resolve conflicts and knowing how to deal with conflict and have difficult conversations with others. Time management is a skill that participants needed as well as collaborative skills.

Ireland Survey

The overall results of the research revealed that the majority of the participants have primary or first stage of basic education, and they were unemployed, most of the received face to face training the last two years and they found very essential the training in conflict resolution skills and communication skills. The prison record also has a negative effect on their ability to access education and employment opportunities as there is still a lot of stigma in Irish society about former prisoners. It was noted that many of their clients use smart mobile phones. However, they often have very poor ICT skills often without email addresses or access to a PC with internet, so this will need to be carefully considered as part of the RECHANCE curriculum design process, it was felt that self-directed e-learning will not yield positive results for this target group.

Czech Republic Survey

The Czech Republic review showed that retraining and school programs in prisons are extremely limited in their availability. Almost half of prison population has finished only lower secondary or second stage of basic education level so they do not have any employment qualification, which could be limiting for them in terms of post-prison employment. The education is limited because education and training are economically disadvantageous because they cannot combine study with employment.

Greece Survey

The survey showed that former prisoners' received education in self-improvement which provide them with professional qualifications that offer them financial boosts and certain career opportunities. Although, the vast majority of these people are facing unbeatable obstacles and difficulties in finding a new job. The majority of the participants believed that the biggest challenge is the regularization of their communication, their relationships and also the reintegration in the daily pace of life.

Conclusion



Taking all the above into consideration and after the evaluation the RECHANCE consortium suggested that the population need more education in the below fields:

Work Skills such as - Time management - Conflict Resolution- Teamwork- ICT Skills

Personal Skills such as - Stress management- Health issues (Vaccinations, Substance abuse, General health

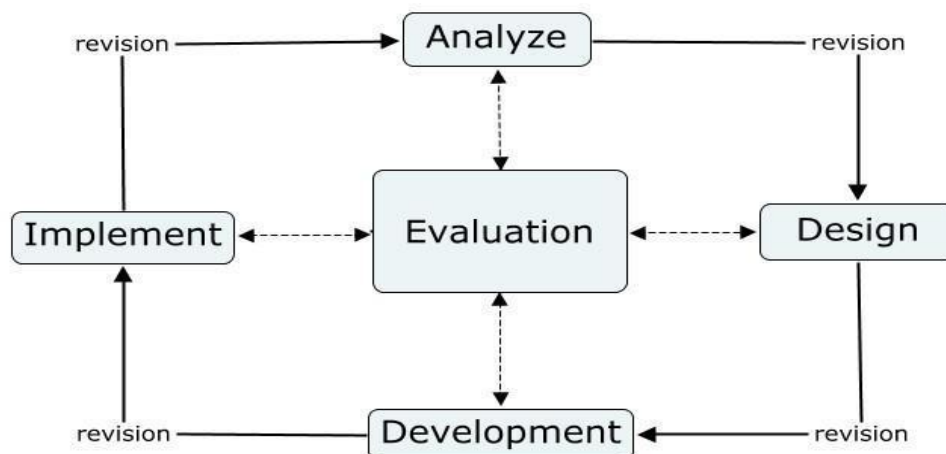
The majority of the project population expressed that they face Stigma from the Society and a lot of things have to be done in order to reintegrate into the society.

The population showed that they need to have further education in Communication skill – in Self- esteem skills – in ICT Skills- E-health services.

3. Introductions (guidelines) for trainers how to create engaging educational setting – mentoring, group support, individual coaching, peer learning

The target group in the project is very specific from an educational and social point of view. The success of the project and the achievement of the intended results are directly linked to the selection of the right environment, approach, communication, mentoring and follow-up support for sustainable results.

Many of the trainers for such target groups have never encountered their specificities, the RICHENS project has thoroughly studied the problems faced by ex-prisoners in their experience of social and educational integration and in this section will try to introduce all those interested in the subject to the nature of the problems and how they can be overcome. For this purpose the ADDIE model was used. An additional challenge is to make the training OER, to enable distance learning and thus reach more users - ex-prisoners. Many of them are far from the resources, lack access to equipment and technology to be able to make it happen. The ADDIE design model that was used is, one of the most popular models for technology-based teaching. ADDIE is an acronym for the five stages of a development process: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation.



During the life span of the project partners did:

- 1) **Analysis** of the institutional situation, target audience, needs and challenges. Which were summarized in a comprehensive Analysis Research Report on the base of a survey between educators for the target group.
- 2) **Design** of a learning solution that aligns objectives in eight modules based on the analysis and with the greatest practical relevance to ex-prisoners. The content, language complexity and exercise requirements of the target group were taken into consideration for the preparation of the modules. Defining specific learning objectives and structuring the content, knowledge or skills participants need to achieve
- 3) **Development** of learning resources, each of the partners prepared a module adapted for use in an online learning environment as a theoretical and assessment part, with interactive exercises. The modules were translated and uploaded to the project's learning platform <https://rechanceproject.eu/login/>.
- 4) **Implementation**. Prior to release for mass use, the partners started pilot testing using different recommendations from the analysis - number of people, mode of implementation - in-person and online, type of resources - paper or online media. Different facilitators were also used. The feedback received was discussed during the meeting in Prague and decisions were taken to adjust the content as well as to expand the target group. The target group was also defined as prisoners with imminent expiration of their sentences and actively involved in educational activities in prisons at the moment, family members of former prisoners who could be mediators in the educational process, as well as preventive actions against persons with criminal records and at risk of going to prison.
- 5) **Evaluation** - as can be seen from the model, the evaluation process goes from the first phase of the project - the analysis. The correct interpretation of the results has led to the creation of 8 modules of great practical relevance to ex-prisoners, each of whom can choose one or several to suit their immediate needs. During pilot testing, however, two opposing views emerged. The first was that the modules were of a very high professional level and could be used with other target groups or in combinations in training. The second mainly based on the low educational status of the overwhelming majority of ex-prisoners to simplify the modules. Naturally, not all ex-prisoners have such educational status and a compromise solution was adopted.

On the basis of all this, we will try to give future trainers and facilitators of ex-prisoners guidelines with examples and analysis for an engaging educational settings. Also they will be supported by ready made inclusive educational parameters(practices) and interactive pedagogical approaches in the next chapter. Naturally, we cannot cover every possible life situation, so we appeal to a creative approach from the trainers, adapted to the specific situation and person. It is quite possible that we have not foreseen a particular feature or element, but this is where you will show your professionalism.



We have divided the guidelines into several groups:

- 1) **Venue** - It would be difficult to say which of the groups of factors matters most in training, but the venue is definitely one of them. Although the course is intended to be administered online, our assumption is that few ex-prisoners will be reached via online invitation. For this reason, the point of first contact and how the training is offered is important. Use familiar venues for this - probation offices, social services, cultural centres of residence, religious communities, and be sure to use a facilitator. Otherwise you risk a negative response. The venue itself can also cause a negative reaction, in the first few training sessions learners will certainly need digital support, both in terms of equipment and how to use it, many of them will be working on computers, tablets or smart phones for the first time. If you don't have the necessary space or equipment to hold group activities, look for a municipal one, many schools offer weekend and holiday access to their computer classes, by arrangement. You can also invite relatives of learners as facilitators there if possible.
- 2) **Number of people** - the online version of the training implies individual training, but quite often better results are obtained when working in small groups at the same level, where you can apply other types of exercises. Peer learning is also a double-edged sword. Considering the main ethnic composition of the target group - Roma, it is possible that conflict situations may arise based on competitiveness in the learning itself as well as from the past or on an ethnic base. Also, a gender problem appeared during the pilot testing. Both in the composition of the groups and to teachers and the other sex. We recommend, if possible, through the probation or social services, to get acquainted with the past, the sentences, the surrounding environment (home, neighborhood, working) of the trainees. They can protect you from mistakes, but also give you additional learning opportunities.
- 3) **Time** - guiding for the timing of the implementation is their willingness and ability. This may result in rearranging your schedule, but that is the price of working successfully with this target group. Be flexible in the choice of training time especially with people who are working, they are usually not treated tolerantly in the workplace either, but it would be good to inform the employer of the ex-prisoner's participation in the training programme.
- 4) **Resources** - during the pilot tests, both paper and online versions were used. A huge problem is the illiteracy of the majority of ex-prisoners - over 50%. This creates problems in reading and learning the theoretical material. Our recommendation in such a case is that this training should be done in a home environment with the use of family members. They can read the content, thus gaining additional knowledge themselves. Always start training with the ICT module by highlighting the benefits of having digital skills in everyday life, which is not just social media and listening to music or watching movies. But even for this, certain skills are needed for their maximum effective use. Be patient especially with older learners. But also insistent, help them create their e-mails, compose their CVs and create their profiles in the search engines for the robe. It is possible to obtain results already during the training, which will serve as a good example and motivate the continuation of the training. If you conduct the trainings in a face-to-face or hybrid version (hybrid in the sense of using online resources in the training space), you can use other training techniques to visually convey the content for part of the training, especially for modules such as Communication, Stress Management, Time management and quite naturally ICT.

After support - it is not important how many modules you will be able to teach, but to ensure consistent assimilation of theory, creation of practical skills and their application. If you receive a categorical refusal through the mediators, try to get feedback on the reasons. By removing them, you may be able to re-engage learners. For success in training this target group, flexibility, empathy for their problems, support is necessary. Mentoring is one option, taking several forms from direct, support in job searching, or receiving medical or psychological help. Indirect - the mediators you use can also be mentors in the essence of their work. Particular attention can be paid to family members, as the most effective helper for continuing education with other modules, family therapy with the help of social services, as well as preventive actions



through probation. Do not underestimate the possibilities of employment offices. Usually, the target group, due to its educational and social status, overlaps with the group of permanently unemployed, who have a special status.

4. Inclusive educational parameters(practices) and interactive pedagogical approaches with inclusive educational parameters and interactive pedagogical approaches and counseling skills for educators for overcoming inconveniences in educational sessions

In this section you will find working models in different partner countries for successful educational initiatives and activities. For convenience and comparison they are in tabular form, taking into account the elements mentioned in the previous section that influence the inclusion of the target group - location, duration, objectives, a description of the activities, materials needed for the implementation, some recommendations to the trainers on a purely practical basis, and the feedback received from all stakeholders. In the heading you will see the country from which these examples are taken, and you can combine elements from them, respecting local legislation.

4.1. BY CSI, Cyprus

Name	Addiction Treatment Community Ayia Skepi
Place	1. Counselling Station in Aglantzia area 2. Reintegration Guesthouse, Filani village
Duration	12 – months
Learning objectives	Daily activities in addition to therapy sessions and groups include organic farming, packing, irrigation, cooking, gardening, and sports.
Description	Ayia Skepi is a member of the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities and follows the cognitive behavioral model of psychotherapy. During their stay in the community, members acquire skills necessary to cope with their emotional difficulties, to heal traumatic experiences and to acquire a new identity as healthy and functional members of society. Work and relationship building are an integral part of the treatment as they enhance the future employment prospects of those in treatment. Daily activities in addition to therapy sessions and groups include organic farming, packing, pickling, cooking, gardening, and sports. There are three ways of joining Ayia Skepi, the first one is voluntarily by telephone to the station, the second one is if the person is serving a sentence and has served 1/3 of it, and the third one is through the advisory committee, i.e., people who have been sentenced to prison for illegal possession or use of drugs, the judge can decide whether it is better to go to the closed community



	instead of prison. The last one is in cooperation with the General Prosecutor's Office and the Central Prisons of Cyprus.
Supporting materials	Depending on the topic of the activities.
Hints for educators	Initially, participants are divided into groups, and they have to complete certain activities in order to be accepted into the 12-month program in Filani village. People there attend individual sessions, participate in various programs that kept them busy and they have to follow certain rules. Even though the only funding they receive is from Machairas Monastery, people that attending the program, are participating in multiple activities and they produce their own organic bakery items, free-range eggs, and vegetables. It also imports and packages foods such as pasta, dried fruits, spices, nuts, spreads and syrups and many more. They distribute those products through their online shop and furthermore, there are international brands of natural and organic products for which Ayia Skepi has exclusive distribution in Cypriot supermarkets.
Feedback	<p>The director of the central prison, is explaining that 62% of the prisoners who completed the program in Ayia Skepi are now clean in society, working and studying, and a portion of them are also working in the Ayia Skepi program. The program is already a huge success, as people from other countries also are showing interest and participate in the program.</p> <p>References:</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/agiaskepibio</p> <p>https://www.agiaskepi.org/reintegration-el</p> <p>https://www.agiaskepi.org/induction-el</p> <p>https://www.agiaskepi.com/</p>

4.2. By K&C Ltd, Bulgaria

Name	Weekend and vacation digital classrooms
Place	School ICT classrooms, non-formal educational centers, game clubs, community centers and other municipality or private places with suitable equipment and internet access
Duration	Depending on the level of the group from two to four hours with brakes
Learning objectives	Improving ICT skills and skills through digital means
Description	Various educational, social, municipal and state institutions which have well-equipped classrooms for training in and using ICT. In most cases, they are free on weekends (with the exception of game rooms), and in the case of formal



	educational institutions, during vacations. Within one weekend, several trainings can be organized with participants of different levels, on different topics, at different times in order to enable as many people as possible to participate at a time convenient for them. Before starting the classes, announce the rules that are mandatory for everyone, the target group is used to rules, and this will help you achieve the learning goals. Use elements or exercises from other modules or even trainings, but choose them carefully so as not to cause offense or conflict during the training. Tactfully encourage, praise, but also prepare short homework tasks that, in the absence of equipment, can be completed during breaks. If you consider that the level is high enough, use different communication platforms for communication and support, as a step towards online learning.
Supporting materials	Computers/tablets/laptops/smartphones, internet, peripheral devices (depending on the topic of the educational course)
Hints for educators	Select the group with participants at equal ICT skills or invite personal facilitators. Use common operational systems (not compulsory Windows on desktops and Android on smart devices) in native language. Try to engage personal facilitators for each learner, which will ensure sustainable continuation of activities outside the classrooms, and thus eventual outcome. This good practice is particularly suitable for initial ICT training and the acquisition of basic skills, but for vulnerable groups with financial constraints and lack of equipment it is suitable throughout the training period.
Feedback	Extremely positive feedback, with good organization and interaction with various institutions, representatives of labor offices can be invited in a more advanced phase, trainings on specific topics can be held - WORD, EXCEL and other applications interesting to the target group. It has a strong socializing effect in family visits, as well as in peer learning with mutual assistance

4.3. By PRISM, Italy

Name	Inmates Art Fair
Place	Art schools' classrooms, non-formal educational centers, community centers and other municipality or private places
Duration	Art production: depending on the prison's material's availability Art fair: two to three hours in one day
Learning objectives	- Enhancing creativity; - Improving social and communication skills (presenting their work to external people)
Description	Expressing emotions can be more easily carried out through art: this is why organizing an art fair has the potential of enhancing the suppressed creativity of inmates. On the other hand, organizing an art fair gives them a new purpose that – no matter the outcome – has the prospective of putting the inmates or former inmates in contact with “external” people to the prison world, while improving their interpersonal skills. This practice is thus divided into two steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organize an art course and/or give a theme, whereas the inmates can have the time to produce a product for the future fair. The course should be open to anyone interested. ● Organize an art fair at any institution available (schools, vet institutions, municipalities etc.), possibly on weekends. The art pieces can be either sold for the prison or donated to charity.



	There are many examples on how the “art fair” worked around the world ¹ .
Supporting materials	<i>For the course:</i> stationery; ceramics etc. (depending on the prison’s material availability) <i>For the fair:</i> a simple set of table to put art-work on
Hints for educators	Participation in any form of creative process offers prisoners or former prisoners way more than recreation or education. The production of artworks can become an important step in their rehabilitation, while leaving room to personal development and reframe their identity in positive ways. The essential thing is to tactfully encourage, often praise the efforts, prepare short homework tasks.
Feedback	The feedback from this kind of experiences has been usually really positive, both for the inmates (having contact with others and developing a more responsible sense of self), and for the general population – hopefully diminishing the stigma.

4.4. By Romodrom o.p.s., Czech Republic

Name	“Mentoring program”
Place	Prisons Heřmanice, Ostrov, Světlá nad Sázavou, Příbram, Oráčov and the whole Czech Republic (at the places of clients’ return after release)
Duration	1. 11. 2021 – 30. 4. 2024
Learning objectives	12 mentors are addressed and recruited, who start the training in the range of 24 hours + 8 hours of self-study. The training successfully completes min. 8 mentors who are put into practice. During the project, their further professional development is ensured.
Description	Within the project, the methodology of the Mentoring Program is created and verified in practice, which serves for the use in practice by other subjects. 8 mentors are trained, who receive support and training throughout the project. The mentors provide support to clients under the guidance of professional counsellors. The project transfers good practice in the area of mentoring from the Norwegian organization Wayback to the conditions of the Czech Republic. Work with the target group takes place in close cooperation of the project team, Prison Service staff and other subjects involved in post-penitentiary care in the Czech Republic. Cooperation with clients starts in prison and support continues fluently after their release. Activities are focused on addressing key areas that have a demonstrable impact on the success rate in integration and on recidivism rate of people released from prison
Teaching method	The mentors were lectured by counselors and mentors directly, the systems of support were introduced to them and methods of work. This is a group activity. Each mentor is supervised after the basic training.
Hints for educators	The persons for the Mentoring program are preselected. They are highly motivated and feel to get unique opportunity. This fact – the high motivation – makes the process of learning easier and smoother.



Feedback	The main benefit of this program is that the persons get a new chance and gain from the experience that is overall perceived as a negative. They are beneficial to the others with the same experience and more trustworthy for them. Also, they have better ability to address and understand their real problems. Their self-confidence grows and they gain valuable experience throughout the education and the follow-up practice.
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Source:

[www.rubikoncentrum.cz \(https://www.rubikoncentrum.cz/dalsi-projekty/with-a-mentor-through-rubikon-implementation-of-the-mentoring-program/?swcfpc=1\)](https://www.rubikoncentrum.cz/dalsi-projekty/with-a-mentor-through-rubikon-implementation-of-the-mentoring-program/?swcfpc=1)

Interview with a Mentor

4.5. By EUC, Cyprus

Name	Social and work reintegration
Place	Cultural centre of Strovolos Municipality
Duration	Pilot program
Organizer	The Association for the Protection of Prisoners' Rights and Support for Released Persons
Learning objectives	Daily activities in addition to therapy sessions and groups include organic farming, packing, irrigation, cooking, gardening, and sports.
Description	<p>The Social and Work Reintegration Program is intended to support individuals in the difficulties they face in the transition of their reintegration into society by strengthening their active and productive participation in it. The reason for the creation of the program is the day-to-day challenges individuals as well as their families face, after they are released from prison. The purpose of the program is to support their effort for social and work integration the best possible way. The program will focus on 4 main pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Labor Integration ● Psychosocial Support ● Legal Consulting ● Financial support <p>Sessions are hosted every Monday 09:00-14:00 after appointments.</p>
Supporting materials	Not known
Hints for educators	Small groups of 3-5 or even 1-1 training
Feedback	Still in pilot level due to covid etc.

4.6. By Prolepsis, Greece



Name	Convicts Up-skilling Pathways (CUP)
Place	Prison school classrooms, other educational settings and community centres
Duration	Depending on the level of the group and the Modules chosen, between 2 and 8 hours
Learning objectives	CUP is a 36-month programme funded by the Erasmus+ program and aims to enhance the medium to long term employability and the social reintegration of 210 female and male participants from six European prisons in Italy, Greece, Cyprus and The Netherlands through the design and pilot implementation of innovative training and monitoring tools. These tools, which can be widely used, will enhance the aim of CUP program to broaden its impact from the local to the national and European level, contributing at the same time to change the narrative on prison education.
Description	<p>By the end of the projects the below results will be delivered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training modules aimed to enhancing the medium to longer term employability of prisoners and ex-prisoners. 2. Developing an evaluation kit that prison administrations and civil society organisations can use to measure the progress and the impact of upgrade actions. 3. Develop a “Call to Action” advocacy strategy addressed to those who are in charge of policy making and to those who are interested to eliminate stigma and reinforce the social reintegration of participants.
Supporting materials	Computers/tablets/laptops/smartphones, internet (depending on the topic of the educational course)
Hints for educators	<p>Educators can use the educational tools to create a community circle in prison. This will enable participants to build strong community relationships, create trust, positive feelings and a sense of belonging. The training content will help participants learn about restorative justice, discuss the needs of the victims, help them take personal responsibility and practice active listening.</p> <p>Educators can also use the tool called “Peace Circles”, which has been designed to promote understanding and cooperation in a context of mutual respect, equality and dignity. This tool teaches participants communication techniques and peaceful, non-violent ways of managing and resolving conflicts. Receiving training in these skills helps participants to reintegrate into society and can prevent re-offending. During the practice, a group of participants and the trained circle keeper are asked to sit in a circle symbolising equality and to allow all participants to see one another. The main aim of the practice is to bring participants closer to each other. All participants sit in a circle discussing a central theme, namely “Who am I?”. The circle keeper facilitates the conversation getting participants to talk about themselves, their feelings and their thoughts. For some participants, this was the first time they expressed themselves in this way and they reported feeling empowered, more self-aware and touched by other peoples’ thoughts and experiences.</p>
Feedback	Participants who undertook the training reported that the skills acquired in prison were invaluable to pave the way for smooth reintegration into society. They also discussed the impact of stigma in their lives and the importance of



	taking agency over their own life, by changing their prospects and helping their peers along the way. For example, a participant from the Netherlands shared their experience of starting a business to facilitate the employment of ex-prisoners thanks to the training and support they received in prison. They are now a successful entrepreneur and an advocate for detainees' employment and reintegration.
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Source:

<https://www.cup-project.eu/en/>

4.7. By XENIOS POLIS, Greece

Name	“European Project CUP-Convicts Upskilling Pathways (Project reference: 2019-1-IT02-KA204-063162)”- EPANODOS, a Legal Entity of Private Law for the Social Reintegration of Ex-Prisoners which operates under the Supervision of the Greek Ministry for Citizen Protection.
Place	The project has been developed and implemented among 7 partners (Fondazione Casa di Carità Arti e Mestierionlus, Casa Circondariale Lorusso e Cutugno Torino, Fondazione Emanuela Zancanonlus, Human Rights 360 Civil nonprofit civil partnership, EPANODOS for the Social Reintegration of Ex-offenders, European University Cyprus, Ministry of Justice and Public Order of Cyprus, PIVught and Tirantes) from 4 countries, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece and Cyprus (Leader: Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo/Italy)
Duration	36 months (August 2019- August 2022)
Learning objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design effective and replicable training modules aimed at enhancing the competencies and medium to longer-term employability of convicts ex-convicts. CUP places a specific emphasis on soft skills identified by employers as core selection criteria when hiring. 2. Promote a culture of evaluation. CUP developed an evaluation kit that prison administration and civil society organisations can use to measure the progress and the impact of their interventions. 3. Develop a “Call to Action” advocacy strategy targeting policy-makers and stakeholders in order to change the narrative on prison education and inform the debate on the employability and social reintegration of convicts and ex-convicts at the national and international level.
Description	The Convicts Up-skilling Pathways (CUP) project aimed to enhance the medium to long-term employability and the social reintegration of 210 female and male convicts in six European prisons in Italy, Greece, Cyprus and The Netherlands. During the 36 months of its implementation, CUP designed and tested training modules based on technical skills with embedded learning for soft and basic skills as well as monitoring tools. These scalable tools enabled CUP to broaden its impact from the local to the national and European levels contributing to also changing the narrative on prison education.
Supporting materials	-Training modules - Video Learning Material, Text-only Learning Material



Hints for educators	The educators develop a more social-friendly relationship with their trainees on a basis of inclusive education parameters and interactive pedagogical methods.
Feedback	The feedback from this kind of experience has been usually really positive, both for the trainers and the educators. From the practical aspect, the RECHANCE project may be beneficially enriched with fruitful results which are derived from the conclusions of the CUP project. As a further step, both projects, on a basis of mutual implementation and dissemination, could create a new idea that will bring new European Projects in progress.
References	https://www.cup-project.eu/en/

4.8. By SRC, Ireland



Image source: <https://deonach.ie/>

Name	Deonach (Tallaght Probation Programme)
Place	Tallaght, Co Dublin
Duration	1995 – ongoing
Learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop desistance programmes and early intervention programmes that facilitate the participants to explore the impact of their offending on the victim, their community and themselves • Develop and deliver relevant education and training and social enterprises designed to be self-sustaining funding models which create opportunities for employment and other meaningful activity and social re-integration • Undertake restorative and reparative programmes for community engagement and re-integration • Create and nurture strategic partnerships which allow more effective or efficient use of resources and opportunity to achieve their purpose
Description	<p>Deonach is a voluntary community organisation that works with persons at risk of reoffending with a focus on training, education, and/or employment. The organisation works towards identifying barriers that may hinder progression for former prisoners when entering education and/or employment.</p> <p>The organisation is a justice project which works with persons from all backgrounds at risk of re-offending. The organisation works with persons with criminal records, taking care to respect their innate abilities and life</p>



	<p>experiences while supporting the person in identifying and tackling their offending behaviour. This is done with the aim of lessening the regularity and magnitude of their offending behaviour, and assist with the transition towards safe, prosperous lives in their communities.</p> <p>Deonach believe that their educational programme to be distinctive in terms of the range of supports available to participants which includes supports for female offenders, families of offenders, as well as community engagement, alongside the education and training afforded to former prisoners and their families.</p> <p>While the majority of the education being offered to former offenders focuses on basic skills acquirement such as literacy, numeracy and computer skills, there are many other educational opportunities afforded to participants by the project including horticulture, cooking, self-care, mental health, and parenting. Some of these are invaluable skills that former prisoners have not have the opportunity to gain, as well as topics that are interesting and transferable for learners such as music and fitness.</p>
<p>Teaching method</p>	<p>The educational programme offers a variety of different methods and programmes in order to suit all manners of students and situations. These include outdoor education programmes, sporting activities, and cultural trips. The educational syllabus is focused around building the numeracy, literacy, and resource teaching. The programme also incorporates a ‘Therapeutic Support Programme’ which aims to provide support to participants by helping them combat the reasons why they get involved in crime, as well as help them to progress through the areas in their lives which require more support and guidance towards a positive destination.</p>
<p>Hints for educators</p>	<p>The programmes are offered alongside therapeutic support for former offenders. This is a great idea as it allows former offenders to gain insight into the thought processes and decision-making processes behind their emotions while also not being the core focus of the participants attendance at the project. This can be invaluable for educators as it gives a great example to educators of how to incorporate and encourage former prisoners to engage in critical thinking about their decisions without pressuring them.</p>
<p>Feedback (Benefits)</p>	<p>The availability of different supports including education to former prisoners have been invaluable to both members of the community, as well as the former offenders. These supports, which are available to the families of offenders, provide invaluable advice and opportunities to persons who would otherwise not have the prospects otherwise.</p> <p>The education provided has been described by a former youth offender who remained anonymous as:</p> <p><i>“I feel safe. I thought it was going to be much different than what it is. They are actually really nice, and they have time for you. I made a mistake. I feel</i></p>

ashamed but I feel I can do something good now. I want to get a steady job. I want a good life.” (Deonach, 2022).

Source: <https://deonach.ie/>

4.9. By SRC, Ireland



Image source <http://pathwayscentre.ie/index.html>

Name	The Pathways Centre
Place	Rotunda, Dublin 1, Co Dublin
Duration	1996 – ongoing
Learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide continuous educational support to former prisoners and prisoners due for release ● Build upon the existing experiences of former prisoners to create new experiences and increase literacy, numeracy, and social skills ● Provide mental health support during the educational journey to decrease the risk of re-offending
Description	<p>The Pathways Centre is an outreach initiative of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board which offers educational opportunities to former prison in the crucial period after release. The Pathways Centre is staffed by fully qualified teachers and counsellors. It welcomes both former prisoners and prisoners preparing for release. The classes are available in person and online and provide former prisoners with important skills alongside some interesting classes to generate new hobbies and interests.</p> <p>There are several different types of training and classes including classes teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health and fitness



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Job skills ● Creative skills ● Cookery ● English ● Literacy ● Mathematics ● Computers <p>The educational opportunities afforded to former prisoners alongside their families. These opportunities have proven invaluable for the local area that suffers from an increased level of community violence. Located near the largest prison in Ireland – Mountjoy Prison – the project offers invaluable support to those who are nearly released and are looking to move forward in their lives, affording the opportunity to improve life skills, as well as employment chances.</p>
Teaching method	<p>The Pathways Centre provides former prisoners with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer support work 2. Education programmes and activities 3. Guidance counselling 4. Personal addiction counselling
Hints for educators	<p>The programmes offered by the Pathways Centre incorporate education with emotional support. The offering of these materials and opportunities to both former prisoners and prisoners near release has been fundamental to the success of programme. The skills offered give a good overview on the skills that are sought-after by former offenders including basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, as well as computers and fitness.</p>
Feedback (Benefits)	<p>Many participants have spoken about the invaluable services that have been provided by the Pathways Centre. The benefits to the participants have been invaluable, increasing their opportunities and allowing them to upskill and move forward with their lives post-prison.</p>

Source : <http://pathwayscentre.ie/index.html>

5. Teaching methodologies – developed and tested supporting and education scenarios based on real life cases



Dear readers, in this material called methodology, we will introduce you to the work of various professionals in the creation, testing, adaptation of the results of the project in a way that will be most useful to the main target group - ex-prisoners in their reintegration into society and the labor market.

Methodology is hardly the most accurate word, we will talk about the challenges and how they were partially or fully overcome in Bulgaria. We hope that professionals working with such a target group or interested in the topics developed in the project will find the information useful and practical.

5.1. PRISM, Italy

INTRODUCTION

This section explores the real-life scenario of a prisoner suffering an episode of intrapersonal discouragement, emerging after an individual exchange with her mentor. In the first page, the reader will find the **description of the episode**, together with **5 questions** and **three possible scenarios** each – stemming from possible choices the educator might undertake in the situation. On the next page, each of the scenarios is defined and explained in its possible consequences.

HOW TO USE IT

The educator should first go through the scenarios and autonomously **pick the choice s/he would take if put in the position**. After that, it is useful to **go check the correct answer** in the following page

HINTS TO EDUCATORS

No matter the scenarios faced or the choices taken, there are a number of obstacles that have to be considered – especially within a prison context or while dealing with subjects suffering Post traumatic stress disorder. When confronted with a situation that feels both sudden and complex (like an individual who opens up intimately, out of the blue) in finding the best answer/question the educators should consider the following aspects, before taking a stance:

- **Gender**

When speaking to an inmate/former prisoner, always consider the extent in which your gender influences the communication. Most prisons are unisex and therefore the inmates have limited the contact with the opposite gender, which might lead to intolerance, shyness or discomfort when talking to you – when bearing the opposite gender. If possible, consider calling a police officer (or colleague) to support you in having the same gender of the inmate who's speaking.

- **Unwillingness to cooperate**

Individual responses might vary with the person. Living in a prison surely does not favor opening up or trusting others, this is why the educator should consider the possibility of total unwillingness to cooperate by the inmate. In this case, it is important to respect the other person's boundaries: present all the option reasonably, but do not insist.



▪ **Unexpected acts of violence**

One last aspect to consider when working in a prison is the potential violent (physical or psychological) acts of the inmates. Whenever surging, the violence should be stopped at once verbally, while immediately calling the nearest police officer nearby.

For more information on the different kind of communication problems, please refer to the RECHANCE Module “Communication”; for more information on the way to overcome the feeling of stigmatization, please go and check both the RECHANCE Module “Health promotion & Stigma” and “Self-esteem”.

SCENARIO - Individual inmate with intrapersonal discouragement

You are just finishing a group activity on conflict management, when you come across a prisoner who begins a conversation with you. Although she does not seem to be visibly upset, she tells you how unhappy she is, using phrases like "my life is worthless" and "I don't know what to do". You know this prisoner does not get on well with some of the other officers, as they often reprise her for showing public display of affection with her partner who – furthermore – gets angry with her in return for being imprisoned.

PAGE 1 – Pick the choice you would undertake if put in the situation

QUESTIONS (Q) & SCENARIOS (S)

Q1	You have just finished your shift with the group activity: How do you react when the inmate start speaking with you?	S	1	Stay with the prisoner as long as it takes until her issues are resolved.
			2	Fill in a monitoring document, evaluating the risk of self-harm. Speak to a staff member about this conversation.
			3	Listen for a few minutes and then promise to continue the conversation when you are back on shift the next day.
Q2	How do you react when she says that she feels her life is useless ?	S	1	You acknowledge her pain and validate her feelings. You say: This must be a hugely difficult thing that you're going through right now. You must be in a lot of pain.
			2	You acknowledge her pain, and trying to cheer her up you say that life is beautiful and she look at the future end of the sentence – everything is going to be ok.
			3	You get upset, and tell her that life is a God's gift. You tell her she should be ashamed for belittling life as such
Q3	What kind of questions do you ask during the conversation?	S	1	You ask general questions, trying to change the topic to something lighter (e.g. weather).
			2	You ask intimate and detailed questions, to describe the suicidal thoughts
			3	You take up to the topics linked to the conflict resolution session, and try to give her advice on solving the conflict with her partner peacefully



Q4	She confides you that another inmate is having similar suicidal thoughts. What do you do?	S	1	Thank the inmate for sharing this information. Go together to the third inmate and talk, the three of you, about this suicidal thoughts.
			2	Thank the inmate for sharing this information. Instruct her on what to say to help the other inmate.
			3	Thank the inmate for sharing this information. Once again, while filling a monitoring document, evaluate the risk of self-harm for the other inmate and talk about it to another staff member.
Q5	She asks what would you do in her situation with her partner. What do you say?	S	1	You tell her about you and your husband/wife fights, how you usually solve them, and urge her to imitate your style
			2	You tell her that every life is different and it is hard to solve issues related to the love sphere. Nevertheless, fighting is normal and she should try to explain her partner what she feels inside
			3	You tell her that every life is different and it is hard to solve issues related to the love sphere. Nevertheless, you tell her to speak up with her partner and to let the partner know that s/he needs to be more empathetic with her as she is in prison, for the moment

PAGE 2 – Have a look at our feedback

QUESTIONS (Q) & SCENARIOS (S) & FEEDBACKS (F)

Q 1	You have just finished your shift with the group activity: How do you react when the inmate start speaking with you?	S	1	Stay with the prisoner as long as it takes until you are satisfied her issues have been resolved.	F	At the end of a shift you should feel able to leave confident that a situation will be dealt with
			2	Fill in a monitoring document, evaluating the risk of self-harm. Speak to a staff member about this conversation.		While assuring deep listening, the document would ensure the main issues are passed to the other prison officers
			3	Listen for a few minutes and then promise to continue the conversation when you are back on shift the next day.		Being tactless and cutting the conversation fast, can have serious on the psychology of the inmate
Q 2	How do you react when she says that	S	1	You acknowledge her pain and validate her feelings. You say: This must be a hugely difficult thing that you're going	F	Opening up about suicidal thoughts takes courage as it is a cry for help. During the conversation, you can validate their feelings by both your



	she feels her life is useless ?		<p>through right now. You must be in a lot of pain.</p> <p>2 You acknowledge her pain, and trying to cheer her up you say that life is beautiful and she look at the future end of the sentence – everything is going to be ok.</p> <p>3 You get upset, and tell her that life is a God’s gift. You tell her she should be ashamed for belittling life as such</p>	F	<p>body language (facial expressions, gestures) and speech.</p> <p>Using a “toxic optimism” is not helpful to the inmate. Reducing her struggle to the wait for the future does not prove useful to her pain.</p> <p>Using religion as a shaming tool is obviously wrong, no matter what God you believe in.</p>
Q 3	What kind of questions do you ask during the conversation?	S	<p>1 You ask general questions, trying to change the topic to something lighter (e.g. weather).</p> <p>2 You ask intimate and detailed questions, to describe the suicidal thoughts</p> <p>3 You take up to the topics linked to the conflict resolution session, and try to give her advice on solving the conflict with her partner peacefully</p>	F	<p>Changing the topic might be rude to the inmate expressing her feelings. She might feel mistreated and react</p> <p>Getting deeper into the private sphere might be dangerous, as you get exposed to topics you don’t know the answer to – better have this conversation with the prison’s psychologist</p> <p>Embracing the topics spoken about during the session can be empowering to both you and the inmate, as she would take you more serious and you could ask detailed questions.</p>
Q 4	She confides you that another inmate is having similar suicidal thoughts. What do you do?	S	<p>1 Thank the inmate for sharing this information. Go together to the third inmate and talk, the three of you, about this suicidal thoughts.</p> <p>2 Thank the inmate for sharing this information. Instruct her on what to say to help the other inmate.</p> <p>3 Thank the inmate for sharing this information. Once again, while filling a monitoring document, evaluate the risk of self-harm for the other inmate and talk about it to another staff member.</p>	F	<p>Improvising group therapy is not professional nor safe in terms of both inmates psychological state.</p> <p>Embedding the inmate with such a delicate task, as she is not a professional psychologist, can have dangerous outcomes for either her or the other inmate</p> <p>Once again, while assuring deep listening, the document would ensure the main issues are passed to the other prison officers.</p>
Q 5	She asks what would you do in her	S	<p>1 You tell her about you and your husband/wife fights, how you usually solve them, and urge her to imitate your style</p>	F	<p>Letting her in your life can be tricky and dangerous to the mentor-mentee relation. Furthermore, urging her to follow blindly your</p>



<p>situation with her partner. What do you say?</p>			example belittles her personal development.
	2	<p>You tell her that every life is different and it is hard to solve issues related to the love sphere. Nevertheless, fighting is normal and she should try to explain her partner what she feels inside</p>	<p>It is important to show empathy, letting her know how her feelings are validated and shared in the “normality” (even within prison, having a love life can keep normality). The only advice you should give her is to be sincere with her partner about her feelings.</p>
	3	<p>You tell her that every life is different and it is hard to solve issues related to the love sphere. Nevertheless, you tell her to speak up with her partner and to let the partner know that s/he needs to be more empathetic with her as she is in prison, for the moment</p>	<p>You don’t know exactly what kind of relationship she has with her partner, and as her mentor you should not know about that. In this sense, avoid giving her detailed advice on how to react to her partner.</p>

CONCLUSION

As from the feedbacks proposed to the different scenarios, we can draw the following conclusions:

- **Be a mentor not a psychologist**

Most prison have a tenured psychologist, so you should work hand-in-hand with him/her. Whenever touching sensitive topics, always remember to take notes and bring your monitoring document to the psychologist – you might be able to save a life!

- **Embrace your educator role 360°**

Being an educator in a complex context like a prison can expand way over your role (and your shift!). Remember that you are dealing with a disadvantaged target, whereas boundaries could easily be overcome. It is important that, whichever experience you live, you see as a lifelong learning process.

- **Remember to validate all inmates’ emotions (as long as you manage them)**

Whatever the scenario, the emotions felt by an individual in a session of mentoring (be it sudden or planned) can be multifaceted. Try your best to make the inmate feel accepted no matter his/her thought. Just be careful of any potential violent reaction – consult your colleagues and/or the police officers in that case.

5.2. Know and Can Ltd, Bulgaria

The methodology is divided into three main parts, characterized by specific features requiring sometimes non-standard approaches for their resolution.



Approach and sustainable interest

Implementation specifics

After support for sustainable results

1. Approach and sustainable interest.

Already during the preparation of the national report on educational opportunities for ex-prisoners, and subsequently during the focus groups, several facts became clear which, although taken into account, created subsequent problems in testing and implementation. We will start with the mass profile of ex-prisoners - predominantly male (just over 75%) with no, primary or basic education, and virtually no functional or digital literacy. Depending on the length of time in prison, seriously alienated from the value systems of society, little interested in educational development (except for some professions practiced in prison and bringing in decent incomes), many with broken families, homeless and in financial debt of varying sizes.

Initial contact was extremely difficult; we used mediators in the form of probation and social services officers - familiar with individual cases. The individual knowledge and subsequently the individual approach was the key to creating trusting relationships, convincing of the need to increase knowledge and skills as a prerequisite for the return to the labour market and reintegration into society. One specific point is the language you will use - ex-prisoners, especially those who have served long sentences or those who have already been to correctional facilities several times use slang. It is desirable to be familiar with at least some of the basic terms in it, especially to avoid ambiguous definitions in your conversation. It will be difficult for you to use, but it will be good if you understand it.

During the implementation of the project it was decided to involve another sub-target group, namely prisoners with imminent release, both those participating in educational activities and those not participating. The interesting thing about this group is that with the right approach through educational intermediaries (in Bulgaria prisons can be taught by specially accredited companies) they become your future learners relatively easily, many of them already have established learning habits. Others are eager to quickly integrate into the job market, which especially in Kovid's time has changed greatly.

We recommend that the first two meetings are in the presence of their confidants and in individual mode. After the changes that have been made during the project, the presence, and subsequently the use in a different way, of family members, friends or people from the natural environment - neighbours - has a strong motivational effect.

These two meetings were exploratory - literacy level, areas of interest, identification of strengths and weaknesses through informal methods. Based on this information a learning plan can be built. Be flexible with timing, compromise on your own, but keep up with what works for them. Watch carefully for verbal and non-verbal signs of fatigue, boredom or misunderstanding. Don't rush! Make sure you've established the foundation and build on it. Without this foundation, you will find it difficult to implement:



2. Implementation specifics

This is where trainers have the most freedom, but it is also a breeding ground for mistakes. It is recommended to implement the exercises described in the previous chapters in groups or pairs, but practice shows that this is "slippery territory". Be prepared to react instantly, including to the prevention of physical conflict. There is not a wide variety of conflict resolution tools in the target group's repertoire (yet!!!)

Choose the venue carefully - it should be familiar to the trainees - a probation or social services office, a local community centre, an interest club. Learners' reaction to being seen entering may vary - from one extreme to the other, be prepared for change on the move.

Decide according to your level of digital literacy what learning option you will use - paper or electronic. If you have brought in a home(family) facilitator actively use them, information received in a home environment carries other weight. The certificate issued upon completion of the module is also interpreted at both extremes. In the larger cities where we piloted we also used the unemployment offices to recruit trainees, for those officially registered there, certificates definitely have value, especially in the absence of any other documents confirming educational level. Conduct the training informally, take breaks, use real examples, provoke the learner to be more active - sharing, commenting, his/her views on personal problems and help to find virtual solutions for the moment. Try to make the solutions to the problems in the modules directly relevant to the learner's current life - support and facilitate it.

Recognise that despite simplification of language and content the modules are still too difficult for some learners, if you see signs of misunderstanding - explain in a different way but make sure it is understood. Again, emphasise recent examples from the real environment - topics of concern in society or the community.

Again digitization came to the rescue, we have to admit quite successfully using this text to sound (speech) converter <https://micmonster.com/> . We do not want to advertise it, but it can solve problems not only for this target group, but also for many other vulnerable groups - especially people with functional illiteracy, people with vision problems, people with other physical problems that do not allow them to read.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)

3. After support for sustainable results

A major psychological problem for this target group is the feeling of abandonment, of being forgotten by society about their problems. Do not let this happen after your training. If you have managed to uncover strengths and weaknesses, skills and abilities, put them into a decent CV are the first steps, help with setting up electronic job search engines, create a profile, support it with the necessary documents. Be interested in the progress of the job search, play out an interview with the specific requirements. It won't hurt if you accompany the trainee to the Job Centre to register in a completely different way or to a possible



workplace. If they are looking for a job abroad (quite common in Bulgaria for poorly educated and skilled people, and abroad they rarely look for criminal records for this kind of work), help them not to fall for scammers. Teach them, too, how to tell the real from the hollow job companies.

5.3. Romodrom Czech Republic

In Romodrom, we specialize in social work and we were looking for solutions, how to use the educational modules in our practise. Our target group are the persons, who have the experience of being imprisoned in past, or they are family members of prisoners or ex-prisoners. They are usually threatened by social exclusion or are socially excluded. What they have in common is the interest in the topics of the educational modules, or more precisely, the lack of knowledge or lack in competences, the educational modules offer.

In this methodology, we describe, how to use the online version of the platform when working individually. Individual work is the key element in using the platform for that specific target group. Otherwise it is too complicated and too boring for them to be used.

Incorporate the modules in Individual plans

The work with a client usually starts with creating an individual plan. This plan reflects the aspirations and goals, the client wants to achieve during the process of service provision. Except of the goals, it contains social anamnesis and the concrete steps to achieve the goals. The steps are very specific short term tasks. And this is a great opportunity for the use of educational modules, as acquiring the special knowledge and skills can really help to clients to move on with their steps towards the goals. Of course, this is not as easy as described, however, the educational modules, the platform offers can serve as a great tool to reveal how the persons think and act and offer them better knowledge and exercises to get better. Start with the very specific one such are: ICT, Communication or Time management.

Online challenge

For many clients, this may be the very first time working online. Count with it, be patient, have enough time, do not try to do everything in one session. You can even split the module in several parts.

The registration into the platform requires an email account. Some clients do not have it or share it with their relatives and friends. It is worth to create them the email account and explain them, how it works. Explain the all the safety and privacy issues. This is learning and giving them the opportunity to communicate online. They may join with their social media accounts, they may apply for job or search for better housing.

It may cause troubles to get used to the computer work, some clients will definitely have a problem with coordination of the mouse, and some will have troubles to read from the screen. Give them their time, give them the tips, where they can practise (e.g. Public Library, friend or family member with computer, office of the service...)

Going through the modules

Start with those, which are the most relevant to the client and his/her needs. Do not persuade them to try those, they do not want to do. The modules start with tests/quizzes. Some clients



do not may feel comfortable about it. Skip this part if it makes a client feel nervous. Most of the modules will require assistance from your side, read it aloud with the client, explain him/her what was meant by the sentence or phrase, give them examples and encourage them to show you examples from their lives. If they start to speak of their experience, let them speak. Ask them how they understand it. Encourage them, praise them and give them feedback on their progress through the module.

What to do next?

Once the module is finished and the certificate obtained, encourage the client to use the knowledge gained. This is the way, they can incorporate the new information and transform them into a new skill. Help them to see the new knowledge in everyday life around them. Observe together, ask them, and reflect together.

Conclusion!

The use of the educational modules will not change the person, however, it may offer new alternatives, deeper understanding and different angle. Many clients during our piloting enjoyed the experience of learning very much. They felt intellectually challenged and they told us their stories connected to the educational topics. There is a big potential – both in the clients and in the modules, let's make most of it.

5.4. SRC, Ireland

In delivering the ReCHANCE project, Spectrum Research Centre collaborated with both the Cavan Probation Service and the Cavan 365 Project with professionals and clients taking part in the training, implementation and multiplier events foreseen as part of the project. Cavan 365 is a Garda (Police) Youth Diversion Service Project covering the region of county Cavan. The project works with 'at risk' young people and juvenile offenders and aims to direct them away from anti-social and criminal behaviour and promote personal development and civic responsibility to create safer communities by helping offenders to desist from committing crime. The Probation Service is an agency within the Department of Justice in Ireland. They play an important role in helping to reduce the level of crime and to increase public safety by working with offenders to help change their behaviour and make good the harm done by crime. They are the lead agency in the assessment and management of offenders in the community and together these two organisations were the most appropriate associate partners to work with SRC to deliver the ReCHANCE Project locally.

The target group engaged locally for ReCHANCE were people who had an experience of being imprisoned in past, young people involved in small-scale public order offences, and family members of prisoners and ex-prisoners. Many of the participants in the project had faced challenges with social exclusion and where at the margins of society. Through the project, we aimed to offer pathways away from crime and anti-social behaviours, and to demonstrate the options and supports that exist to re-integrate them into society and the labour market. The training methodologies employed within the ReCHANCE project were addressed primarily to individuals and former prisoners and tried to support them on their personal development journey through specific interventions and the cultivation of new knowledge and skills.



The methodology or processes in Ireland were as follows:

Recruiting participants for the project:

With assistance from the support workers, youth work professionals, and Gardaí within Cavan 365 and the Cavan Probation Service, we selected participants to participate in the ReCHANCE training that we felt were suitable for the training and also would get some benefit from it given their own personal journey. We held a series of small focus groups with participants in advance explaining the project to them and also discussing their expectations of the training. The participants were mainly young people, most of whom were male although we have extended invitation to all, but it was mainly young males that participated. All participants had either primary level or very basic education and showed little interest in developing their skills further therefore motivation to engage was challenging and required a lot of effort on behalf of the trainers and support staff. With the help of support workers, we started the project on a 1 to 1 basis until we created trust relationships and then identified key elements like competencies, education level, ICT skills, general knowledge, and their interests before embarking on the training. As ICT skills were very low (outside of social media use), we focussed the training on a more client-centred and in-person approach.

The 1:1 approach was crucial for participants to gain confident in us as a new agency working with them and also to building their confidence to move to a group work setting before the implementation of the project. The support workers recommended that group not exceeding 3 to 5 participants and we followed their advice as they were the experts in this field, and we benefitted greatly from their experience and knowledge.

Implementation of the Project:

Although most of the participants had primary or very basic education; there were different levels of literacy, skills and knowledge within the learner group so working with in smaller groups was useful as it helped the facilitator to build up their skills and abilities and identified the participants' strengths and interest without leaving anyone behind. We selected the modules that were most useful and of interest to the participants and we also simplified the language to meet the requirements of the learners. Where possible, we used and implemented the activities within the modules and facilitated discussions and role plays to keep the learners engaged and interested. Training was held over short sessions to maintain focus and interest and also to avoid any conflict within the group.

We delivered the training in a local community centre as it was accessible to all learners and also familiar to them so that they felt comfortable and relaxed. The facilitator safety was also taken into consideration and there were always two facilitators working with the group. They were prepared that disagreement could result in physical conflict so watched carefully for verbal and non-verbal signs.

Conclusions:

Overall, it was a challenging and enjoyable project to implement in Ireland. The learner target group for ReCHANCE is complex, with multiple needs and they faced many barriers to both



personal and vocational development within society. It was essential for us to partner with experienced and well-established services working long-term with the target group as the need for ongoing contact and support is essential for this target group. Given the lifecycle of Erasmus+ projects, we needed to ensure that learners were engaged in ReCHANCE as an additional offer to the mainstream supports rather than a replacement service so that when the project ends in December they do not feel abandoned or let-down.

5.5. CSI&EUC Cyprus

The RECHANCE project has two partners in Cyprus; the European University Cyprus (EUC) and the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI). The two organizations worked together especially in the tasks that had to attract volunteers as Cyprus is a small country and the specific volunteers needed were hard to find. Having said that in this description of our methodology we will refer to that approach followed by both organizations as it was a “shared task”.

Another thing that should be made clear for the Contribution of Cyprus is that we focused on educators or professionals that will be using this tool as the numbers of ex prisoners, the stigma, the data protection etc did not allow us to identify them and reach the critical mass required.

This document is merely a methodology, it is a description of the approach we have undertaken and the challenges and obstacles we encountered. It is roughly a guide on how to use the platform from an educators point of view. As already mentioned we did not experience the perspective of ex prisoners as the numbers would make sense to generalize.

We have made one pilot study to see first hand the experience of the educators/professionals. This pilot study was split into two sessions. We had people attending that were mental health professionals, nurses, psychologists, educators as well as nursing students that expressed interest in this project.

What we have noticed from the piloting is that individual work for ex prisoners would not be an easy task as the material in many of the modules was at a higher level than what was anticipated that the ex prisoners would have (based on results from work performed in IO1). Besides being too challenging for them, working on their own would not be ideal as the material was not interactive enough, thus many would not find it interesting but boring.

The audience we received found the platform interesting and quite rich in material. What they have shared with us is that they would not follow the platform from A to Z but would first identify the needs of their “clients” and then go through the platform and identify the required material. They would use the platform as a rough guide on what to provide knowledge on.

In addition they would not try and complete a module at once but would break it into smaller parts based on their clients skills and knowledge, they would take baby steps empowering the



client along the way. For example, somebody mentioned that they would provide education through their account and when they reach the ICT module they would ask the client to log in as this would be an opportunity to create an email account for those who do not have one. This would empower the client and would cease the opportunity to create other accounts such as online banking, healthcare account as well as social media (this was the number one priority of Cypriots ex prisoners found in the results of our research IO1).

After their clients become more competent they would be able to “leave them on their own” with the platform to go over the modules themselves. Besides the successful completion of the module, the certificate provides a feeling of achievement and this also works in favor of keeping the client engaged/motivated.

In conclusion, the material generated suits better educators or ex prisoners that have good ICT knowledge and are competent users of online platforms. The educational platform created by RECHANCE cannot make miracles but it is a tool that can be used by educators not only for providing the knowledge to their clients but also to help them boost their self esteem.

The educational material that were created during those two years of this Erasmus+ Program and the e learning courses we already used them to educate our students from the Department of Health Sciences and Humanities Sciences. We taught and educated them on how to use them in their every day clinical practice while they were placed in mental health services specifically in the Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Centres, Drug Addiction Detoxification Centres that usually hosted ex- prisoners and their families and during their clinical practice in an open prison where they have the opportunity to meet and talked with this target group population. The students during their clinical practice had the opportunity to have education on how to use the e-learning platform during their lectures of Mental Health Nursing, Health Psychology and Sociology, they learned the purpose of educating those target group of people as well as the educational needs that usually they have. Moreover, the e- learning courses and the link of the Rechange Program is available on the blackboard as a learning material for the students of Nursing, Sociology Psychology and Occupational Therapy students and will continue to be as a part of their educational and clinical practice material for the following four years where the platform will be available

In addition, in our internal education process we educated our lecturers, Professors about the program and the use of it and how they can use it and disseminating to their students as a part of their reading educational materials in their blackboard information. Moreover, we educated the students clinical mentors at the Ministry of Health that they are responsible for the clinical practice of the students in their everyday activities in mental health services and in an open program in the society for unreelable populations.

Furthermore, during the whole period of the project, the Cypriot partners got in touch with different organizations that are working with ex-prisoners and tried to share the results and the platform with potential “clients”. Thus, we approached the addiction treatment community, Ayia Skepi, and we reached a phsycologist who was willing to share and use the platform with a group of people in the specific center. The learning objectives there, are daily activities in addition to therapy sessions and groups which includes farming, gardening, sports and learning activities. They were excited with this different kind of approach in order to learn more about the eight thematics that exist in the platform such as the teamwork, stress management and self esteem.



5.6. Prolepsis&Xenios Polis, Greece

Introduction

Nowadays, teachers and adult education trainers face diverse profiles of students from vulnerable backgrounds and marginalized groups in risk of exclusion, such as ex-prisoners. In the context of the ReCHANCE project, adult educators used their interpersonal and social skills in order to understand the different realities of these learners and tailored their educational approach to address ex-prisoners' needs. Empathy, active listening and other special skills are necessary when working with learners from difficult socio-economic situations, persons with literacy challenges, seniors and learners from different cultural backgrounds such as; Roma, refugees etc. Thus, working closely with ex-prisoners and tailoring our teaching methodology to local needs enabled us to identify the best avenues for rehabilitation and offered learners the opportunity to improve their self-esteem, decision-making capacities and confidence in their future.

Implementing the ReCHANCE Training Curriculum in Greece

While implementing the training curriculum in Greece, significant work was being undertaken to the platform in order to correct mistakes to the educational material and to the platform presentation. This was reflected in the feedback regarding the content as well as the usability of the platform.

The piloting was implemented in collaboration with organisations dedicated to supporting ex-prisoners as well as with prison school teachers and multiple professionals of the field (e.g., forensic psychologists, occupational doctors, health promotion specialists, etc.) who generously provided their feedback on the quality and suitability of the platform and the educational content. The general consensus among piloting participants was that the thematic categories and the content was interesting and could address the needs of the target population. However, the language used throughout is too academic. Arguably, participants with prison experience reported that they enjoyed learning new material with a supporting staff and they recognised some of their own worries being reflected upon the educational material (e.g., having low self-esteem, or having difficulty managing conflicts). Participants with prison experience explained that they were not familiar with technology in general, and educational platforms in particular. Thus, they found it difficult to navigate through the platform without the guidance of a mentor or supporting staff. Thus, we concluded that the material should be used as a foundation for people who support ex-prisoners during their reintegration journey and needs to be adapted to their needs on a case-by-case basis.

Teaching Methodologies

Through the project, we aimed to offer ex-prisoners learnings and support that will facilitate their reintegration journey. We also aimed to provide useful tools and materials to educators that would cultivate and further enrich their skills and knowledge on several areas of interest. The training methodologies employed within the ReCHANCE project emerged during the Rechance consortium's extensive piloting work with the target population and could help teachers successfully address potential challenges in their educational journey.

Below, teachers, adult education trainers and professionals who support ex-prisoners during their rehabilitation journey will find useful tips and teaching methodologies to adjust their educational approach of the Rechance training curriculum to their learners' needs.



1. Incorporate learnings that relevant to the learners' personal experiences and needs, while using active teaching methods.

Based on the adult learning theory, some basic principles are that adult learners tend to learn best when:

- i. their education can be self-directed especially when they are involved in the planning of their education,
- ii. the lessons incorporate their background knowledge and experiences,
- iii. the learning material is being taught in an active manner rather than passive and
- iv. the learning is relevant to their current circumstances and can be applied to some aspect of their lives.

Following the above principles during our piloting experience revealed that ex- prisoners as well as professionals were more motivated to complete the educational curriculum when they saw their difficulties reflected in the content of the Modules. For example, several ex- prisoners recognised their own struggles with their low self-esteem when discussing the Self-esteem Module and found useful tools to improve their view of themselves and their self-worth. Additionally, professionals who were actively involved in the educational process of the Rechange Modules, reported that the content resonated with their personal experiences of supporting ex-prisoners and identified areas of their work that the training curriculum could be useful.

2. Familiarise with the training material and adjust the content to accommodate the needs and goals of ex- prisoners.

Adult learners tend to seek education relevant to their needs and goals and need to understand why learning is beneficial. Our piloting work in Greece revealed that although the content of the Modules is interesting and relevant to the target populations' needs, the language used in the Rechange Modules is too academic. To ensure that the content can be beneficial to learners and help them identify the areas that can accommodate their needs, we suggest adult trainers to download the Modules and familiarise themselves with the materials and tools. Understanding the learning topics and selecting specific areas of interest (e.g., essential vaccination information) will enable them to use the content or parts of it in a way that matches their learners' educational level, individual needs, interests and goals.

3. Adapt the training material for group teaching.

Educators should bear in mind that the Rechange content has been developed for on line, independent learning. Our piloting work revealed that to reap the benefits of the curriculum, the content should be used as a tool by people assisting and supporting ex-prisoners rather than by ex-prisoners, individually. To use the learning material for group learning sessions, we suggest the below key considerations:

- a. Decide which topics are most relevant to the groups' needs and goals.
- b. Extract the relevant topics form the training curriculum and adjust the wording to the literacy level of the group.



c. Several activities can be used from the Rechange Modules such as the prompts for reflection. However, additional activities will need to be developed for group work, such as case studies inspired by common challenges faced by learners.

4. Develop activities and case scenarios based on common challenges.

One of the principles that we abided by during our piloting was to provide educational material in an interactive and problem-based manner. Adult learning is more effective when learners solve problems and address tasks using reasoning. Educators should use the Rechange tools to incorporate task-oriented educational activities which will be more effective than standard passive teaching methods. Try to use activities like the quizzes, multiple choice questions and reflective activities as a starting point for discussions to involve the learners. Learners will have a lot of varied knowledge to share which will make the educational process more enjoyable for both parties; the learner as well as the teacher.

Conclusion:

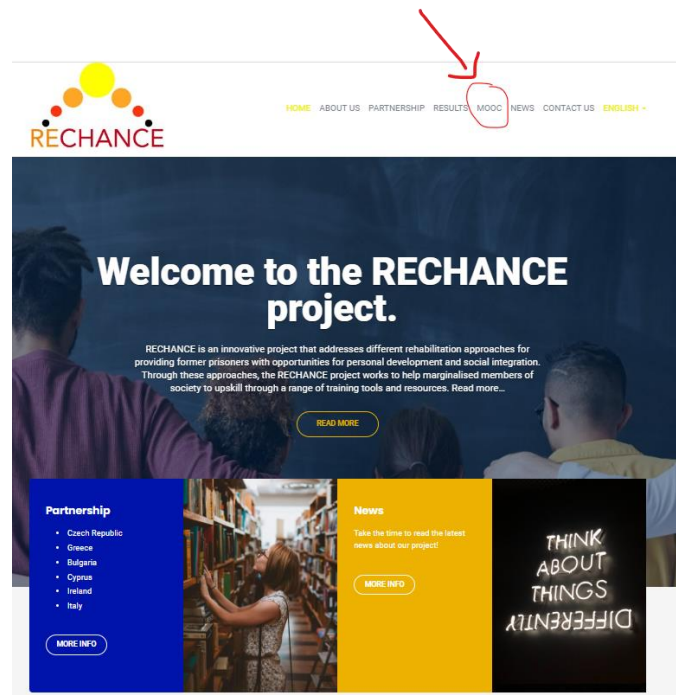
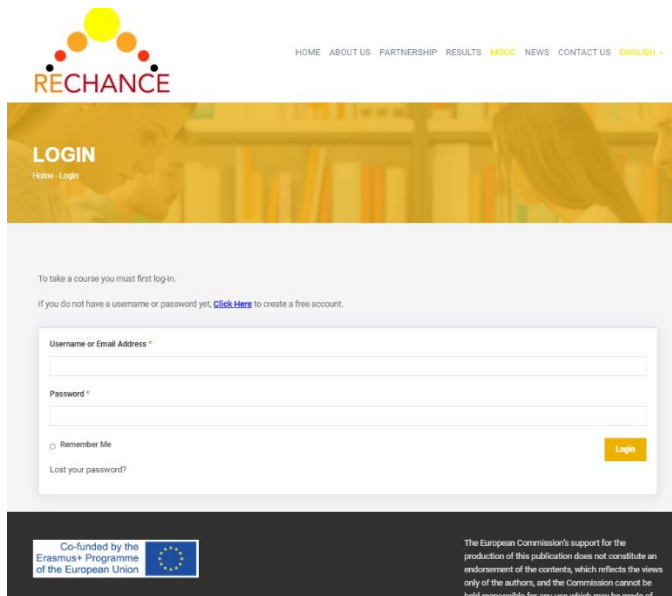
Overall, implementing the ReCHANCE curriculum was a complex, yet enjoyable endeavour. Understanding the barriers and challenges faced by the target population was key to develop vocational training that would address their personal and professional development. Collaborating with organisations with long term experience supporting ex-prisoners ensured the involvement of professionals throughout the piloting stage and provided useful insights into the target population's needs. In the context of an ongoing engagement of the target population with the project even after its completion (December), we encourage adult learners who support ex-prisoners to use or incorporate the teaching methodologies offered in the present guide in their educational approach. Since every learner is different, we hope that the guide will provide a smorgasbord of teaching approaches suited to the needs of your learners.

6. RECHANCE App and Platform as a facilitator in the educational process. Essentials from the Manual for the Platform and App.



The RECHANCE consortium has designed, created, and implemented technological outputs such as the website and the platform of the project. To explore the platform and, in continuation, the app of this project you need to follow the steps below.

1st step: Open your browser (e.g. Google Chrome) and enter the website of the project <https://rechanceproject.eu/> and then click on the MOOC section on the main menu.

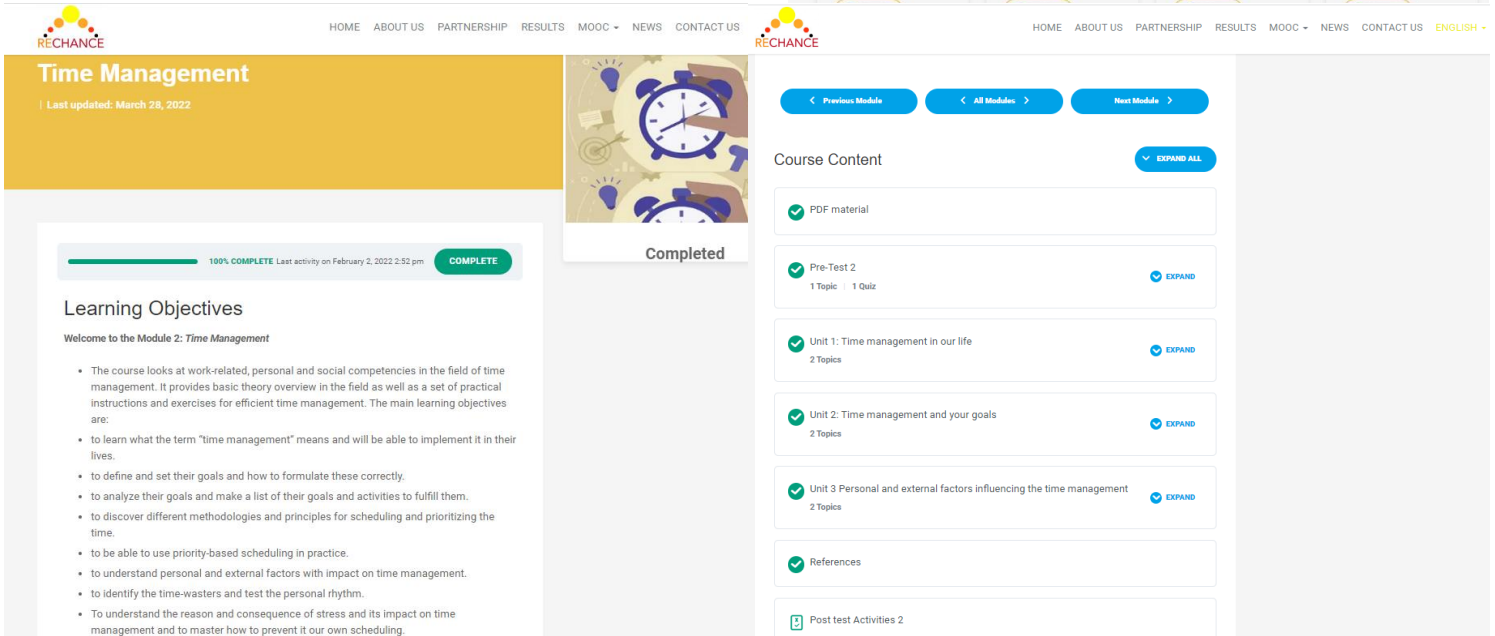
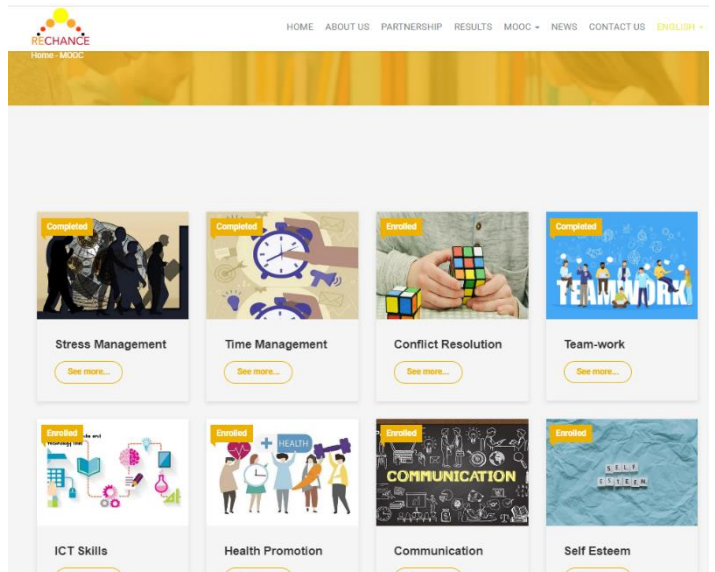


2nd step: Register to the platform. Enter a username or an email if you have, and a password, and you are ready to explore our platform!



3rd step: The platform will look like this It contains 8 modules with different, interesting, and valuable topics which will help the users grow their knowledge regarding the topics below:

- a. Stress management
- b. Time management
- c. Conflict resolution
- d. Teamwork
- e. ICT skills
- f. Health promotion
- g. Communication
- h. Self esteem



A module with different topics and units will be available for participants to explore, upgrade their knowledge and learn new things. In the beginning, you will notice that we mentioned some learning objectives, which are helpful to guide you on what is included in the specific module. Then, for your convenience, you or your facilitator has the possibility to download all the materials in PDF format. To start with a module, you need to enter to the **Pre-Test** activities and answer some questions. Don't worry, they should be easy, and you will have to answer them again at the end of the module at the **Post-Test** activities, when you will read and learn the context of it! So, it is actually to test the level of your knowledge and afterward you will read all about it and your questions should be answered! At the end, you will find some references that helped to develop the specific module, as well as some more activities to test what you have read.



When you go through the whole module and completed all the activities, an automatic counting system will count your results and a certificate will be automatically provided to you.



You can continue by exploring all eight modules, but you can also pause whenever you feel like!

In addition to the platform and to make easier the access to this interesting platform, we created the mobile application. It is available to Android phones only, and you can download it by searching in the Android App Store the word **Rechance**. You can install it and open all modules that were mentioned above. It is easy and free! You can see the picture below and you are ready to navigate in the mobile application.



10:28 | 26.6KB/s



Rechance

Center for Social Innovation

Uninstall Open

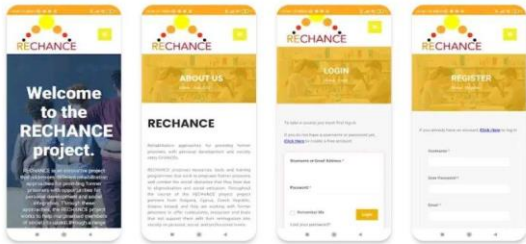
Developer contact ▼

About this app →

Rehabilitation approaches for providing former prisoners with personal

Education

 Parental guidance 



Data safety ▼

Ratings and reviews 

We hope that you will enjoy the content of each module and do not hesitate to contact us if you need anything - <https://rechanceproject.eu/contact-us-2/>!



RECHANCE

REhabilitation approaches for providing former prisoners with personal development and society entry CHANCES



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