

FEFI Final Conference, 24.09.2015, Mainz

On September the 24th academic and practice-oriented experts gathered at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany for the FEFI-Final Conference. The contributions of all eight partners reached a broad audience thanks to a video stream which connected the six national conferences, which were held at the same time in the partner countries. European similarities and differences were presented, as well as practical experiences of measures which were developed and implemented during the FEFI-Project. For documentation reasons a short video was made, which you can find to your right, as well as the press release.

The main suggestion was, that women's prisons should be places of learning where the needs and problems of female inmates are focused and appropriate educational offers are made.

The European Union supported the project under leadership of the Centre for Continuing Education (ZWW) of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) during the past two years with a total budget of 400.000 euros as part of the EU program GRUNDTVIG.

With the positive response of the project, the network of partnership is planned to be continued and expanded to keep on improving the situation of women in prisons Europe-wide.

Press Review

Rheinland-Pfalz TV, from minute 12:15:

<http://swrmediathek.de/player.htm?show=580c1200-62ef-11e5-b26f-0026b975f2e6>

More details

Thanks to Alan Smith, former Coordinator of the EU adult education program 'Grundtvig' in the European Commission, the nine diverse contributions were skillful connected and arranged into the "FEFI-frame".

After a short summary of the Questionnaire results (Dr. Sandra Scicluna Ph.D., University of Malta), The Cypriote speaker began the conference referring to the special challenge in female prison education. She emphasized the necessity to educate the staff members properly. The contribution of Finland (Saku Toiviainen, Pastor and Counselor) concentrated on the personal experience of an inmate, who was interviewed live at this video-conference. Her positive feedback showed, that reasonable measures are a potential benefit to the inmates.

The German contribution "Ressourcenfinder" (Josef Schömann, Prison staff) emphasized, that the formation of social competences is as important as vocational training. Another challenge on the organizational level was pointed out by the Italian speaker (Maria Pia Giuffrida, President Associazione Spondè): The security regulations have to be adjusted to the educational measurements.

The French contribution (Sophie Bleuët, Directrice Interrégionale) shared their experience, that group courses are very valuable concerning the formation of self-confidence of inmates.

Facing the everyday experience the Maltese partner (Prof. Andrew Willis, University of Malta) showed how funding, measurements in women prisons and politics are intertwined. Unfortunately it is a problem to get enough funding to finance successful measures, which is problematic because women need special attention (as acknowledged in the questionnaires).

The Belgian speaker (Bert Vermeulen, prison staff) shared the experiences of their “Ladies on the move”-course, in which education and sports were combined. A positive effect for the women and the structure of the prison resulted from this measure. At last the Turkish expert (Berfu Altay, prison staff) presented their successful project, which were implemented based on the results of the questionnaire. Furthermore the educational standards were changed due to the FEFI-Project. After the exchange with the European partners a panel discussion was held in Mainz, in which the results and recommendations were discussed with regard on the regional integration and implementation.

