

VOLUNTEERING IN PRISON ECOSYSTEM

Legenda:

- Prisoners volunteer
- People volunteer to support prisoners

2021

- Together with external volunteers, they organise demonstrations, meetings and other activities in high schools, municipalities, parishes, with the aim of making people aware of and sensitizing them to the prison reality and to problems relating to detention.
- Collaboration in volunteering activities for external entities (such as online newspapers, volunteering organisations) to create and develop materials useful for the continuation of the activities of not-for-profit organisations.
- Prisoners or/and former prisoners that leave the penitentiary buildings and involve themselves into volunteering activities, monitored by a volunteering organisations or by the municipality where the volunteering activity is supposed to take place.

CONTINUOUS & REGULAR VOLUNTEERING & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

VOLUNTEERS & PRISONERS DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES TOGETHER OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. THE IMPACT AND SCOPE OF THIS VOLUNTEERING CAN BE DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL CATEGORIES.



PEOPLE AS BENEFICIARIES

- Recreation activities
- Learning educational experiences and activities
- Mentorship/listening activities

TASK-ORIENTATED

- Psychological support
- Legal Support
- Religious Support
- Recreational Activities
- Associations supporting the family and friends visiting the prisoners

PRISONERS VOLUNTEER

Prisoners get involved in volunteering activities as volunteers either inside or outside the prison settings (when allowed by a jurisdictional decision).

MOTIVATION

Self-esteem
Employability

Counteract
boredom

Increased
family contact
possibilities

Early Parole
Possibilities

“Giving back”

Mentors can be former prisoners that implement mentoring tasks towards other prisoners.

HOW

- Communication is key.
- Mentors should have prior experience or have received specific training to help them in better implementing their role. Especially in the case of prisoners volunteering.
- Meetings should be scheduled and planned, especially in the case the prisoners don't have easy access to external communication.
- Support in listening to the prisoner on the challenges and/or the positive outcomes the volunteering activities are bringing up. Being a reliable listener in case of personal doubt in relation with the volunteering activities.
- Support the volunteers in their personal attitudes and growing resulting from the experience inside the prison settings. A sort of reliable shoulder.

MENTORS

MENTORS ARE USUALLY VOLUNTEERS, EXTERNAL TO THE ORGANISATIONS PLANNING THE VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES (NO STAFF MEMBERS OF THE ORGANISATIONS) THAT COME IN SUPPORT OF THE PRISONERS VOLUNTEERING BY LISTENING TO THEIR NEEDS. MENTORS SUPPORT IS ALSO MEANT TO HELP VOLUNTEERS CHECK THEIR DEVELOPMENTS AND LEARNING EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES.



Mentors can be volunteers following prisoners close to the end and after their prison time.

HOW

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- Mentors should have prior experience or have received specific training to help them in better implementing their role. Especially in the case of prisoners volunteering.
- Support in listening to the prisoner on the challenges and/or the positive outcomes the volunteering activities are bringing up. Being a reliable listener in case of personal doubt in relation with the volunteering activities.
- Support the volunteers in their personal attitudes and growing resulting from the experience inside the prison settings. A sort of reliable shoulder.

PEOPLE VOLUNTEER TO SUPPORT PRISONERS

As complementary and/or optional activities that only take place because of volunteers or supporting core activities taking place anyway but with an increased impact due to the involvement of volunteers.

MOTIVATION

Supporting
family
members in
prison

Work
experience

Religious
motivations

Forgiveness

Belief in the
capacity
to change

Social
inclusion

“Giving back”

SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

SUCH AS VOLUNTEER CENTRES AND VOLUNTEER PLATFORMS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE VOLUNTEERING ECOSYSTEM FOR PRISONS

HOW

Volunteers Centres can be of support in finding activities for the prisoners volunteering and for the people volunteering to support prisoners, developing a structure inside the prison or offering the space outside the prison to develop and carry out volunteering activities.



HOW

Legal advice, training, matching volunteers with the activities, advocacy and policy action on the topic, relationships with the prison staff, if any, in charge to monitor and implement the volunteering activities or being the one responsible to develop and organise the activities inside the prison.

Present to/discuss with involved actors requests or complaints from inside the prison related to the volunteering activities and how they are organised.

The reasons could be:

- to develop volunteering activities even from scratch (prisoners ask for them)
- To improve the present volunteering activities
- Gather possible complaints or issues and present them to those organising the volunteering activities. They can be prison's staff or volunteer centres' staff.
- Gather suggestions and arguments for policymakers to convince them to allow, support, encourage and finance volunteering in prisons.



THOSE WHO ADVOCATE

FOR BETTER VOLUNTEERING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR VOLUNTEERING IN PRISONS

Present to/discuss with involved actors requests or complaints from outside the prison from volunteers or volunteering organisations involved in the volunteering activities.

The reasons could be:

- Implement new activities
- Improve the communication between internal and external structures
- Start new collaborations
- Implement or improve a supportive system inside the prison for prison volunteers
- Gather possible complaints or issues and present them to those organising the volunteering activities. They can be prison's staff or volunteer centres' staff.
- Gather suggestions and arguments for policymakers to convince them to allow, support, encourage and finance volunteering in prisons.

- Preparing and acting in a play outside the prison settings

- Join a conference or a school event bringing their experience of the prison



SPORADIC & AD HOC VOLUNTEER & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

FOR MANY PEOPLE ENGAGING AS A VOLUNTEER IN A SPORADIC AND AD HOC WAY IS MORE ACCESSIBLE AND SUITABLE FOR THEIR SITUATIONS, INTERESTS AND LIFESTYLE

- Refurbishing a library
- Accompanying prisoners on a specific day release excursion
- Organising a specific art exhibition or workshop
- Developing a sport activity such as a football match (many times supported within a project and visibility object)