June Spotlight: Developing prisoners' skills

We're devoting this PrisonerActionNet Spotlight to looking at how prisoners’ skills can be developed and the benefits of providing practical training to prisoners. Examples of projects providing training in practical trades are listed below, along with the topic for this month’s forum discussion, projects working to help prisoners identify their existing talents and skills, a request for your project examples, and much more.

PRISONERS’ INDEPENDENCE

To achieve a life of independence after prison one needs a combination of practical skills and the ability to solve day-to-day problems. Offenders can be supported in developing these skills while in prison and after they have left... Read more about prisoners’ independence from PrisonerActionNet.

FORUM DISCUSSION

On the forum this month we'll be discussing: What are the 'soft outcomes' of developing prisoners' skills and how can they be measured?

Please share your thoughts on the PrisonerActionNet FORUM by clicking here.

EXAMPLE OF THE MONTH

Changing Paths Charitable Trust, Stonemasonry Training Programme
Changing Paths created the Stonemasonry Training Programme in July 2012 with the support of the Prison Service, staff at HMP/YOI Rochester and Wates Giving. They have created a fully equipped stonemasonry workshop inside an old prison workshop that will provide an opportunity for 12 trainees to learn a heritage craft with industry recognised and accredited certification and provide each trainee with relevant skills for employment upon release.... (more)
MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Tanjit Dosanjh, Optometrist, Liberty needs Glasses CiC

Read a blog about Sarah Frankenburg’s visit to the Liberty Needs Glasses workshop or go to the Liberty Needs Glasses PrisonerActionNet page for more information and a video.

FROM TANJIT’S PRISONERACTIONNET PROFILE:

What inspires you? ‘Tupac’s music. Someone so young and from a poor background used his music to raise awareness for so many different problems. If you need convincing listen to “Brenda’s Got a Baby”, “Dear Mama” or “Keep ya head up”…’

What’s the most important thing you’ve learnt? ‘Perseverance is the key to success.’ [more]

MORE PROJECTS IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS IN PRISONS

Rideout, Talent 4… programme
The Talent 4… programme aims to assist offenders and others who are facing the challenge of finding employment, by identifying their skills and talents. This diagnostic approach proceeds from the premise that often learners are unaware of what they do well... [more]

Media for Development, The Media House and Time TV
This is an educational media course and prisoner-made television channel which can be viewed by other prisoners in their cells at HMP Downview women’s prison. The channel offers information, advice, celebration of cultural and religious festivals and peer-to-peer programmes... [more]

The Conservation Foundation, Tools Shed
Tools Shed collects old and broken garden equipment for prisoners to repair and recycle as free start-up packs for schools and community gardens. Thus, the project recycles old tools, provides semi-skilled work for prisoners and gives them the opportunity for practical involvement with the outside community.... [more]

Visit PrisonerActionNet for more projects improving prisoners’ and ex-offenders’ skills.
YOUR EXAMPLE

Do you know of or are you involved in a project working to develop prisoners' or ex-offenders' skills, such as those listed above? Please let us know:

- What did the project aim to achieve?
- What activities did the project involve?
- What would you say the project has achieved?
- Has the project been assessed or evaluated?
- Are there any other aspects of the project you would like to tell us about?

Please reply to this email or email amyd@lemosandcrane.co.uk

SURVEY

Would you spend 5-8 minutes to be a part of an important research project The Mark Leonard Trust and The Monument Trust have commissioned on 'The Art and Science of Project Engagement'? (more)