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A handbook for promoting social reintegration, sustainability, and inclusion in prison and post-prison settings, drawing on the key insights and outcomes of the **FAIR\*** project.

**\*FAIR, Favouring Autonomy Innovation Reintegration**

An Erasmus + project aiming to share practices and knowledge on the topic of prisoner reintegration between 4 cities : Marseille, Naples, Madrid and Belgrade.



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## Context

### The idea of a handbook

At the conclusion of the FAIR project, the partnership publishes a comprehensive handbook that brings together the project's key outputs, experiences, and learnings. This handbook stands as a central and lasting resource, designed to inspire, inform, and guide future initiatives focused on social reintegration, sustainability, and inclusion, particularly in relation to prison and post-prison contexts.

Beyond technical content, the handbook is enriched with firsthand testimonies, analyses, and reflections from the four transnational workshops, which acted as learning expeditions. Through visits to social enterprises and third sector organisations working with marginalised populations, participants exchanged knowledge, deepened their expertise, and strengthened European cooperation in the fields of education, reintegration, and social innovation.

Despite some implementation challenges, such as the inability to enter the Pozzuoli prison due to earthquake-related restrictions, and to enter the female prison in Belgrade due to the local political context, the partnership adapted swiftly. By engaging with educators, staff, and former detainees, learning goals were met and new forms of knowledge exchange were created. **This flexibility exemplifies the spirit of FAIR: turning limitations into opportunities for creative problem-solving and deeper impact.**

To ensure long-term accessibility, all materials have been made available through a multi-channel dissemination strategy. Dedicated sections on partner's website or social media, the handbook under open licences, allowing free download and reuse. Social media campaigns on Instagram and LinkedIn broadened outreach and raised awareness among professional and community audiences alike.

Ultimately, this handbook is more than a final output, it is a living resource and a starting point for future projects in Europe and beyond, promoting reintegration, green transition, and inclusive practices for vulnerable groups.



# Context

## Who is this handbook for?

This handbook is intended for a diverse audience working at the intersection of social inclusion, education, and sustainability, with a particular focus on prison reintegration and support for vulnerable groups. It is designed to be useful for social enterprise founders and managers, educators and trainers in prison or community settings, third sector organisations involved in social innovation, and public institutions engaged in justice reform or reintegration policies. It also addresses the needs of researchers, students, local authorities, and advocates committed to inclusive practices, restorative justice, and environmental responsibility. Whether launching a new initiative, strengthening existing programmes, or seeking inspiration, users will find practical tools, tested models, and adaptable strategies grounded in real-life experience throughout this handbook.

## What will you find there?

Developed collaboratively by all project partners, the handbook includes:

1. **Guidelines for the creation and management of social and sustainable enterprises in prison environments**, based on real-life models such as Bistrot Lazzarelle (Naples) and Les Beaux Mets (Marseille).
2. **Two tailored business canvases**, developed for potential application in Belgrade and Madrid, offering adaptable frameworks rooted in local needs and resources.
3. **Prototypes of green practices**, co-designed for implementation in Marseille and Naples, reinforcing the project's commitment to environmental sustainability within inclusive social models.
4. **Guidelines on restorative justice (RJ)**, promoting alternative, human-centred approaches to conflict and reintegration.
5. **Training materials on innovative teaching methods for incarcerated adult learners**, supporting educators in delivering inclusive and transformative learning experiences.

## Why use this handbook?

This handbook offers practical, field-tested tools, strategies and contacts for anyone seeking to promote social reintegration, sustainability, and inclusion, especially within or in connection to prison contexts. Drawing from real-life experiences, pilot projects, and cross-national collaboration, it provides replicable models, business canvases, and guidelines that can be adapted to various local realities. It also bridges theory and practice by combining professional insight, training materials, and personal testimonies. Whether you're starting a social enterprise, designing inclusive educational programmes, or looking to implement restorative justice approaches, this handbook serves as both a step-by-step guide and a source of inspiration for sustainable, meaningful change.



## The partners behind the handbook

### Marseille Solutions

**Marseille Solutions** is a non-profit organisation, expert within the social innovation field. MS job is to allow the emergence and the construction of projects with social and environmental impact in the territory of Marseille.

We imagine and design tailor-made solutions while transmitting our expertise to our partners during the development of each project. These solutions answer to the issues of Marseille and its Metropolis (poor housing, access to culture, unemployment, waste, public space access, prisoner reintegration, etc...) and can take different shapes: a project, a support programme, a training programme, a structure, a company, a social innovation, a public-private action, a place, a museum, a restaurant etc...

We set up each of the projects by creating new alliances by mobilizing extremely different partners (public, private, associations and universities) for almost 10 years and thanks to the ecosystem, they are transforming a territory full of potential.

Marseille Solutions wants to prove Marseille is an inspiring model, a pioneer in the field of social innovation and has already developed more than fifty projects.

One of the projects MS has developed with [Festin](#) is Les Beaux Mets.

Les Beaux Mets is a training restaurant and work integration project, which opened its doors on November 15, 2022. Located at the heart of the Baumettes penitentiary center in Marseilles, its aim is to help inmates nearing the end of their sentence to find work.



**The social cooperative Neapolide** was created with the mission of offering detained women at the Pozzuoli Prison real job opportunities, and it gave life to the first Bistrot in Italy managed by incarcerated women. More than a workplace, it serves as a vibrant hub for non-formal education and professional orientation, where women can rebuild self-confidence while developing both social and technical skills. Neapolide operates alongside the cooperative *Lazzarelle*, where detainees produce artisan coffee within the prison. The Bistrot itself is designed as a zero-impact business model—using local and organic products, fully biodegradable materials, and promoting a culture of healthy, mindful eating. As a member of the *Extra-MANN* network, Neapolide also links cultural heritage and innovation by connecting the Archaeological Museum of Naples with the wider urban community. The Bistrot is a cultural catalyst, regularly hosting book presentations, political talks, art workshops, and sports events. In the context of this project, Neapolide focuses on the social and professional reintegration of women, helping reduce recidivism by building empowerment through real work experience. Acting as a bridge between prison and society, it actively fights stigma by creating spaces where detainees and citizens interact, shifting public perceptions of incarceration. Staff and users—who often coincide—also become promoters of food education in a city dominated by fast food and fried street snacks. In doing so, the Bistrot offers a tangible and inspiring alternative: one that nourishes both body and social change.



**AMEE - Asociación para la mediación, el encuentro y la escucha** is a non-profit organization that was formed in 2013 with the aim of contributing to a transformation in our society, helping people who have been victims of crime and their perpetrators to elaborate on the criminal acts suffered and acted upon, with the objective of facilitating Restorative Justice processes that heal the suffering and harm experienced and enable a full reintegration into society.

Since 2017 we have been developing programmes in prisons and open centers in Spain. Initially we developed training in Nonviolent Communication and Listening Spaces. Subsequently, we saw the need to address the crime, the consequences it generated and the possibilities of reparation offered by the Restorative Justice Paradigm. To this end, we work in collaboration with the General Secretariat of Penitentiary Institutions, as well as with public and private entities that support our projects both in prison with offenders and in the social environment with victims.

Among other projects, we would like to highlight the processes of Accountability and Reparation of the damage that we carry out with prisoners through professional experts in Mediation and Nonviolent Communication. These processes help inmates to become aware of the consequences of their crime and seek tools to repair the damage they have done to themselves, their families and the victims.



Opservatorija  
Obrazovanja

**Observatory of Education** is non-profit and non-government organization, founded in 2023.

The organization was founded with the aim of research and improvement of adult education and lifelong learning. We practically deal with research and theoretical work, organization of events and workshops, cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions, Belgrade University and the entire community.

Our main mission is the development of education in different contexts, especially the strengthening of its social function. In the work of the organization, special attention is paid to the development and improvement of the competences of teaching and non-teaching staff and to the development of innovative and inclusive methods of education with the aim of improving its development. The organization achieves the described vision by organizing various forms of education, primarily by organizing various trainings and conferences for different profiles of students and members of the local community. Specific areas in which we want to improve the educational function and educational activities are the education of prisoners, the education of the elderly, family life education and education in support of different social categories of the population.

As a newcomer organization, OE doesn't have any project yet. Thanks to the diverse past experience, the founders of OE wanted to develop their personal potential through the newly founded organization, as well as the potential of professionals in the field of adult education and thus the entire community. Therefore, participation in this project is very important to us.



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# Guidelines for Social and Sustainable Enterprises

Inspired by the Models of Neapolide - Bistrot Lazzarelle (Naples, Italy) and the Restaurant Les Beaux Mets - prison Baumettes (Marseille, France)

## Introduction

These guidelines are designed to support TSOs, and cooperatives, social entrepreneurs, in creating and managing socially impactful and environmentally sustainable enterprises. Drawing from the experience of Bistrot Lazzarelle and Les Beaux Mets—two pioneering initiatives that operate in or in connection with prison contexts—this guide outlines key principles and replicable strategies to foster inclusion, dignity, and sustainability.

### 1. Understanding your social mission

Define your social purpose clearly and ensure it drives every decision.

- Both Lazzarelle and Les Beaux Mets prioritize social reintegration, especially of women and detainees, through dignified work and skill-building, in order to reduce recidivism rate and offer concrete opportunity of training and placement leading to effective societal reinsertion.
- This mission remains central across all operations, from hiring to marketing.

*Tip:* Draft a Social Charter that clearly outlines your mission and identifies your target groups (detainees, survivors of violence, migrants, NEETs).

### 2. Create meaningful employment pathways

Design structured, certified, and dignified work opportunities.

- Lazzarelle trains incarcerated women in coffee roasting, cooking, chocolate-making, and facility services.
- Les Beaux Mets offers culinary training and operates a gourmet restaurant inside a prison, certified by state authorities.

Ensure contracts, fair wages, and mentorship.

Link to external employers to ease post-detention reintegration.

### 3. Embrace environmental sustainability

Pair your social impact with ecological responsibility.

- Use seasonal, local, and organic products.
- Apply waste reduction strategies: composting, reusable containers, and recycling.





- Employ eco-friendly cleaning products and sustainable facility management.

Adopt a circular economy approach.

Regularly measure and report your environmental impact.

#### **4. Build strategic partnerships**

Leverage networks to support sustainability and scalability.

Collaborate with:

- Prison administrations and reintegration services (e.g., UIPEP).
- Local governments and ministries.
- NGOs, cooperatives, and training agencies.

Use formal agreements (MoUs) to define roles and responsibilities.

Involve universities, cultural centers, and sponsors to enrich your impact.

#### **5. Foster participatory management**

Make your organization inclusive at all levels.

- Empower staff, especially from marginalized backgrounds—to participate in decisions and planning.
- Build a culture of mutual respect, feedback, and collective growth.

Use tools like anonymous surveys, peer evaluations, and team meetings.

Consider cooperative governance models where possible.

#### **6. Communicate with purpose**

Turn communication into a tool for change.

- Lazzarelle and Les Beaux Mets tell powerful stories of transformation.
- Events (book launches, art shows, prison dinners) foster public dialogue and challenge stigma.

Build a strong, values-based brand identity.

Use social media, ethical marketing, and public storytelling to raise awareness.

#### **7. Ensure long-term viability**

Combine mission-driven action with solid business strategy.

- Diversify income streams: products, services, training, events.



- Continuously train your staff and maintain quality standards.
- Track your social and environmental performance.

Develop a business plan with KPIs.  
Reinvest profits into social innovation and community outreach.

## **8. Monitor, evaluate, replicate**

Turn local success into global inspiration.

- Lazzarelle reduced recidivism to below 10%.
- Les Beaux Mets created a scalable prison-restaurant model.

Use both qualitative (testimonies, stories) and quantitative (employment data, recidivism rates) evaluation tools.

Share toolkits, reports, and training materials openly to facilitate replication.

## **Conclusion**

Social and sustainable enterprises are not just businesses, they are platforms for transformation. They reduce recidivism, combat stigma, and promote dignity for those on the margins. Lazzarelle and Les Beaux Mets show that inclusion, excellence, and ecological responsibility are not only compatible, but mutually reinforcing.

These guidelines are an invitation to act: adapt them to your local reality, expand them with your own innovation, and become part of a European movement for social justice through enterprise.

## **Framework for tailored business canvas**



Board From the problem to the solution		FAIR	
<b>Scope</b> What is the central problem to be solved? How big is the problem?	<b>Beneficiaries</b> What is the value proposition for the beneficiaries?  1. Women victim of domestic violence - Age ?	<b>Description</b> How does the recommended solution work?	<b>Business model</b> What revenue can be generated? What abundant resources can be used? Are there key stakeholders available to pay for the impact?
<b>Cause</b> What are the main causes you want to address?	<b>Others stakeholders</b> Are there other key stakeholders who can benefit from the problem solved? What value do you want to generate for these key stakeholders?	<b>Impact</b> What are the key impact indicators to be monitored?	<b>Innovation</b> How does this solution differ from what already exists in the market? What are the comparative advantages?
<b>Existing solutions</b> Are there alternative solutions that seek to minimize the effects of the problem? If yes, what is the dominant one? Why the alternative solution doesn't solve the problem?		<b>Growth</b> What is the growth and dissemination model of the solution?	<b>Next steps</b> What are the next small steps?
<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>VALUE PROPOSITION</b>	<b>SOLUTION</b>	

1. **Tailored business canvas**, developed for potential application in **Madrid** offering adaptable frameworks rooted in local needs and resources.

Board From the problem to the solution		A place for Restorative Justice and Ceramics in Madrid	
<b>Scope</b> RJ outside of the community, it should be given to everyone according to the law, RJ as a way to prevent, RJ as a service for conflicts (any of them)  Amee doesn't have a room/ office/ space	<b>Beneficiaries</b> What is the value proposition for the beneficiaries?  Beneficiaries : Victim, offender, the community and people in the middle of the conflict (everyone)  Customers : buyers of ceramics, coffee lovers, event lovers (cultural events), people curious about restorative justice, people who want to be trained in ceramic making.	<b>Description</b> A place for ≠ uses  1 floor for a coffee place 1 floor for a workshop place  The RJ @AMEE : 1. Support 2. Reparation 3. Reinsertion with the community	<b>Business model</b>  1 area for coffee/ tea + selling ceramics and others products 1 area for world and art's events + place for meeting for private clients (renting the place)
<b>Cause</b> RJ/ RP as a tool for the community Less crime in the community, re-creation of a community, space for dialogue, reinforcement of relationships, A new experience of community a way to solve conflict (to resolve)	<b>Others stakeholders</b> Are there other key stakeholders who can benefit from the problem solved? What value do you want to generate for these key stakeholders?  Ceramic schools, volunteers of AMEE, the community, bank (Santander?)	<b>Impact</b>  Reinsertion of the inmates and victims within their community.  Raising awareness around prison condition. Art as a way to restore (Transformation) 2 ways to measure the impact One for the RP and another for events and practices of R.Art with a survey.	<b>Innovation</b>  Creating a place for RJ and art therapy Using art as a way to transform the people damaged Having a place for reinsertion, where former inmates could work and have an emotional reinsertion with friends' circles.
<b>Existing solutions</b> Are there alternative solutions that seek to minimize the effects of the problem? If yes, what is the dominant one? Why the alternative solution doesn't solve the problem?		<b>Growth</b> <b>What is the growth and dissemination model of the solution?</b>  - Look for a place with different areas - Social media - Contact with ceramic's artist - Look for money for a place and pay people from AMEE	<b>Next steps</b>  Meeting with the direction team Make a team to work on the idea Make a AMEE SL Intention note Look for friends to work on the art area
<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>VALUE PROPOSITION</b>	<b>SOLUTION</b>	



## 2. Tailored business canvas, developed for potential application in Madrid offering adaptable frameworks rooted in local needs and resources.

Board		Freedom art in Belgrade	
From the problem to the solution			
<b>Scope</b> Prisoners in women's prisons in Serbia are in a very difficult economic situation. OO would like to improve the economic situation of female prisoners. The problem is permanent and affects the majority of female prisoners.	<b>Beneficiaries</b> The end users of the product are individuals and institutions from the local community. It is important that the sensitization of the local population always follows the organized support of female prisoners. Through the artworks, the community will have the opportunity to get to know the prisoners better and better understand their personal life stories.	<b>Description</b> We have created several solutions: - networking of female prisoners with the social enterprise "Zadrugarstvo", which recycles cigarette packs and obtains paper. Prisoners could have their drawings/photos printed on their paper - making New Year's and birthday cards	<b>Business model</b> All proceeds from the sold works would go to the prisoners and the "Cooperative". As "Zadrugarstvo" makes paper from cigarette packs, within the women's prison there would be collection points for packs, which would support the production of recycled paper. Also, in front of significant local institutions, there would be collection points for cigarette packs, which would enable the local community to support paper production. Accordingly, the required investments are very small.
<b>Cause</b> By empowering women economically, we would like to improve their position in society and reduce the rate of repatriation.	<b>Others stakeholders</b> - Female prisoners, their families and the local community would have the greatest value. Economic empowerment is one of the prerequisites for a dignified life for women prisoners after leaving prison. Also, helping the family financially while they are serving their sentence is very important to them. On the other hand, sensitizing the community and getting to know the prisoners will be very important. Key values are solidarity, respect, acceptance of mistakes and faith in change. - Other social enterprises who are willing to cooperate - non-governmental organizations gathered around the topic of prison education	<b>Impact</b> It would be necessary to track the number of women who are involved in printing their artwork on the one hand, as well as the number of people to whom the art of female prisoners has reached.	<b>Innovation</b> The biggest advantage of starting a social entrepreneurship for women prisoners is that this field in general (social entrepreneurship) is very poorly developed. Such a business concept is still in its infancy in Serbia, and by starting such a business there would be multiple benefits both the prisoner and the community.
<b>Existing solutions</b> Some of the female prisoners are employed, but they earn a very small amount of money. In addition to doing low-paid jobs, part of their earnings also goes to the prison, and the prisoners are left with money with which they cannot achieve independence, or adequately support their families while they are serving their prison sentences.		<b>Growth</b> - employment of a person who would deal with social networks and product marketing - the price of printing pictures/photographs of female prisoners - space in the local community where works would be sold (local concept store)	<b>Next steps</b> The next small steps are learning about social entrepreneurship and advocating the opening of prison systems to the non-governmental sector. Organizing some smaller artistic actions that could be some kind of pilot project, in order to examine the possible reaction of the community, but also of a small prison. Also, necessary next step is to develop business relation with "Zadrugarstvo" cooperative.
<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>VALUE PROPOSITION</b>	<b>SOLUTION</b>	



# Green practices prototype

The following prototype outlines a set of sustainable and inclusive operational practices for **Bistrot Lazzarelle**, the flagship social enterprise of Neapolide. These practices are designed to promote environmental responsibility, social inclusion, and responsible consumption in alignment with the cooperative's mission of reintegration for women in detention and post-detention.

These practices will be submitted to further evaluation and analysis by project staff and involved stakeholders, with the objective of identifying their applicability, scalability, and potential for replication in other institutional and community settings.

## 1. Waste reduction and circular economy

- **Implementation of an internal waste audit** to assess current practices and identify critical areas of improvement to be noted. (1 to 5)
- **Introduction of a structured sorting and composting system**, in collaboration with local composting facilities or urban gardens.
- **Development of a “no-waste” menu design strategy**, using surplus ingredients for weekly specials to propose an alternative menu.
- **Internal training module** on food waste prevention for all staff.

## 2. Ethical and local sourcing

- **Mapping of local, seasonal, and solidarity-based suppliers**, with a focus on cooperatives and ethical businesses.  
**Establishment of sourcing protocols** that prioritize local KM0 ingredients and transparent, inclusive supply chains.
- **Rotating “Local product of the season” campaign** to highlight sustainable and ethical ingredients.

## 3. Eco-responsible materials and packaging

- **Complete transition to reusable packaging or compostable** for takeaway services. To further encourage sustainable habits, **customers who bring their own reusable containers will receive a price reduction** on their order.
- **Elimination of single-use plastics** and switch to sustainable alternatives (bamboo, glass, steel).
- **Implementation of incentives for customers** who adopt eco-friendly behaviors (e.g. reusable containers). To further encourage sustainable habits, **customers who bring their own reusable containers will receive a price reduction** on their order.

## 4. Energy and water efficiency



- **Energy audit of kitchen and service areas**, followed by a progressive plan for replacing outdated equipment with energy-efficient appliances.  
**Installation of water-saving devices**, including aerators and low-consumption appliances.  
**Monitoring of monthly utilities consumption**, with reduction targets to be evaluated semi-annually.

## 5. Environmental education and staff empowerment

- **Structured green literacy training pathway** for employees, including monthly workshops and access to resources on sustainability in hospitality.
- **Creation of a rotating “Green Practice Facilitator” role** among staff to promote internal monitoring and continuous improvement.

## 6. Public engagement and transparency

- **Creation of an in-house awareness area**, including displays, digital content (QR codes), and infographics explaining the sustainable practices behind each product or service.
- **Integration of sustainability narratives** in the Bistrot’s communication and marketing materials.
- **Organization of public engagement events**, such as green aperitifs, sustainability-themed talks, and collaborations with local schools.

## 7. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

- **Development of a green impact dashboard**, including KPIs such as:
  - % of sustainable products used
  - Kg of food waste diverted from landfill
  - Monthly utility consumption
- **Quarterly staff feedback sessions** to ensure participatory evaluation and promote ownership of sustainable goals.

This prototype does not only represent a roadmap for Bistrot Lazzarelle’s internal development but also a **reference framework** for the **project partners**, particularly **Partner 3 and Partner 4**, who are in the process of identifying and shaping their own models of **social and sustainable enterprise**.

By analysing the prototype’s practices, these partners will be able to **co-design context-specific models** that leverage **sustainability as a tool for reintegration**, active citizenship, and economic inclusion of detainees and formerly incarcerated individuals. The process will also provide a platform for cross-national learning, comparative analysis, and the emergence of a **shared European methodology** on inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurship.



# Guideline of restorative justice in prison

The following section aims to show how restorative justice works in the prison setting. Therefore, we initially analyze the concept of restorative justice and its characterization. We then address the regulations that govern restorative justice at the European level. Finally, we conclude with evaluation practices and systems. This seeks to provide a broad, yet rigorous, and systematic overview that will allow readers to apply the restorative approach in their countries and, specifically, in the several prison systems.

## 1. Introduction: What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice is a paradigm of justice, as such, it has a set of values, principles and foundations that underpin it. There are two relevant definitions of Restorative Justice. Firstly, the theoretical reference Howard Zehr, defined it as:

*A process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a **stake** in a specific offense and to **collectively identify** and address **harms, needs, and obligations**, in order to heal and put things as right as possible.*

The criminologist John Braithwaite is also a reference for the field of criminology and reintegration projects in which the FAIR project is framed. This researcher defined Restorative Justice as:

*Restorative justice involves a shift **from passive responsibility** to which offenders are **held** by professionals for something they have done in the past to **citizens taking active responsibility** for making **things right into the future**. Active responsibility is a virtue of **civic participation**. (...) restorative justice is about creating **participatory spaces** where active responsibility might be taken by offenders. [\(Braithwaite, 2004, p.28\)](#)*

In addition, another relevant contribution of this author both for the framework of Restorative Justice<sup>1</sup> and for prison intervention is the concept of "reintegrative shame" (Braithwaite, 1989). This term explains a fundamental principle for RJ, and it is that every criminal act should be socially condemned, as it is a violation of coexistence and generates social harm, but in no case should this disapproval of the crime be transferred to the offender, therefore, we condemn the crime and not the person. Based on this principle, Braithwaite encourages communities to support young people who have committed crimes in their reintegration and

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<sup>1</sup> From now on we use the acronym RJ.





social reintegration processes, pointing out that they should condemn the conduct and behaviour of adolescents, but not isolate them socially, as this would exclude them and push them to form social ghettos united by crime.

Another fundamental element of RJ is its principles. Thus Zehr pointed out 3 keys to understanding RJ in particular:

**Table 1:** Restoration Justices Threes

Restoration Justices Threes: <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Assumptions</b> underlie restorative justice:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When people and relationships are harmed, needs are created.</li> <li>2. The needs created by harms lead to obligations.</li> <li>3. The obligation is to heal and accept right the harms; this is a just response.</li> </ol>
<b>Principles</b> of restorative justice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledges and repairs the harm caused by, and revealed by, wrongdoing (restoration);</li> <li>2. Encourages appropriate responsibility for addressing needs and repairing the harm (accountability);</li> <li>3. Involves those impacted, including the community, in the resolution (engagement).</li> </ol>
<b>Values</b> provide the foundation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect</li> <li>2. Responsibility</li> <li>3. Relationship</li> </ol>
<b>Questions</b> are central to restorative justice:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who has been hurt?</li> <li>2. What are their needs?</li> <li>3. Who has the obligation to address the needs, to put right the harms, to restore relationships? (As opposed to: What rules were broken? Who did it? What do they deserve?)</li> </ol>
<b>Stakeholder</b> groups should be considered and/or involved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Those who have been harmed, and their families</li> <li>2. Those who have caused harm, and their families</li> <li>3. Community</li> </ol>
<b>Aspirations</b> guide restorative justice: the desire to live in right relationship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With one another;</li> <li>2. With the creation;</li> <li>3. With the creator.</li> </ol>

Accordingly, It is a specific paradigm that understands crime and coexistence from the interrelation and interdependence that exists between the members of the community. Therefore, Restorative Justice always involves the 3 types affected by the crime, the victim, the offender and the community and invites the active participation of all of them to actively participate in the resolution of their disputes. In this way, it goes beyond the traditional criminal justice model where focus on the crimes that have been committed, the laws that

<sup>2</sup> <https://restorativejustice.org/rj-archive/howard-zehrs-restorative-justice-threes/>





have been broken and stipulate a punishment. By involving all participants in the Restorative Justice process we want to humanise the crime and understand how it has impacted them and what ways they find to repair the harm caused to the victim. To conclude with the essential foundations of Restorative Justice we present a comparative table between the common criminal justice model and the one proposed by RJ:

<b>Retributive approach (common justice model)</b>	<b>Restorative approach</b>
<b>What laws were violated?</b> The crime is an offense against the state (Prosecutor's Office) and is included in the criminal law that has been violated.	<b>Who has suffered the damage?</b> Crime is an offense against people and the relationships they maintain.
<b>Who did it?</b> The commission of a crime generates guilt.	<b>What are the needs of the people affected?</b> Crime generates negative consequences for victims.
<b>What punishment does he deserve?</b> Justice provides proportionality to punishment according to the crime committed.	<b>Who is obliged to meet these needs?</b> The crime generates obligations of reparation for the offenders. In addition, all parties are counted on to amend the damage caused (victims, offenders and community)
<b>Punishable legal act:</b> Rewarded by some kind of penalty. The central axis is the proportionality of punishment, that is, a just punishment.	<b>Restitutable legal fact:</b> Tangible damage caused The central axes are the needs of the victims and the responsibility of the offender in their tangible reparation.

## 2. International standards and recommendations

Given that the FAIR K210 project is made up of countries with very different penal, penitentiary and legislative regulations in general, we have considered it appropriate to integrate the international recommendations applicable in a generalised way to all countries. On the one hand, we start with the United Nations, which has developed an extensive work to promote Restorative Justice in the different countries and the European Union.

### 2.1. United Nations

Thus, on the one hand, they developed the Principles of Restorative Justice in 2002 together with the first guide on the application of Restorative Justice (UNODC, 2006) , they have recently produced another guide where they have updated and collected the different



international experiences as well as the most significant good practices in this area. Thus, in the manual, they define Restorative Justice as defines Restorative Justice as:

*the term "restorative justice programmes" is given the same broad definition as that found in the Basic Principles, that is: "any programme that uses restorative processes and seeks to achieve restorative outcomes" ( UNODC, 2020, p.4).*

He adds:

*Any process in which the victim and the offender, and, where appropriate, any other individuals or community members affected by a crime, participate together actively in the resolution of matters arising from the crime, generally with the help of a facilitator (UNODC, 2020, p. 5).*

Therefore, we observe that Restorative Justice must have restorative methods and outcomes, which are set out in the Basic Principles, among which the participation of all those affected by the crime stands out. Furthermore, it is significant to take into account the objectives that should guide the methods and outcomes, as well as the Basic Principles.

The objectives that should guide Restorative Justice practices are:

1. **Pay special attention to victims.** The restorative justice approach should take into account the needs of the victims by addressing the consequences of the crime. In this way, restorative processes are encouraged to support victims by listening to them, favouring the expression of needs and wishes, offering answers to them and stimulating their participation in the process, always on a voluntary basis.
2. **Repairing relationships affected by crime.** The restorative approach understands that crime affects the natural relationship between the people who have been affected by it, such as offender, victim, community, personal networks of the victim and the offender. It must therefore understand what these relationships were and how they were affected.
3. **Reaffirming community values and denouncing criminal behaviour.** It coincides in this point of denunciation of Restorative Justice with the justice of the common criminal model, but its methodology differs. In this sense, Restorative Justice focuses on reaffirming social community values, as well as on the circumstances and needs of the offender and the victim.
4. **Promoting the responsibility of the parties involved in the crime.** It is necessary to assume responsibility for a crime, especially for the direct offender, but also for the different agents who participated directly or indirectly in the commission of the crime. While from the common criminal justice models the processes focus on the culpability of the offender, the Restorative Justice model moves from recognising responsibility for the harm to focusing on how the harm caused can be repaired and prevented.
5. **Promoting restorative outcomes.** The Restorative Justice approach is based on a forward-looking view of the situation. While recognising the harm caused in the past, both to the victim and to the community, its orientation is to develop mechanisms to repair the harm, to improve the relationship between the parties and to prevent the commission of crime.



## 6. Prevent recidivism by promoting the reintegration and re-education of offenders.

Restorative processes should promote the prevention of recidivism, on the one hand, through accountability for the crime and the harm caused, and, on the other hand, by encouraging the participation of different relevant agents in the reintegration process such as the family, community representatives or authority agents.

These objectives are proposed as key points to be addressed by the different Restorative Justice practices, although they may vary according to the method by which they are carried out or the participants. What is most significant in this sense are the values that must be given, regardless of the model or the resources of the programme. Thus UNODC points out:

*Restorative justice practitioners tend to agree that what truly makes a particular response to crime a "restorative" one is not only a specific practice or process, but more importantly its adherence to a broad set of values that provide a common basis for the participation of parties in responding to a criminal incident and its consequences. These values include truth, fairness, physical and emotional safety of participants, inclusion, empowerment of participants, safeguarding of victims' and offenders' rights, reparation, solidarity, respect and dignity for all involved, voluntariness and transparency of process and outcomes. (UNODC, 2020, p.5)*

## 2.2. European Union

Firstly, within the legislative framework of the European Union, we find the Council of Europe Recommendation (2018) 8 on Restorative Justice in Criminal Matters which replaces the Recommendation No. R. (99) 19 of the Committee of Ministers on mediation in criminal matters. Its objective is: "to encourage Member States to develop and implement Restorative Justice with regard to their criminal justice systems"<sup>3</sup> (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 3). From this perspective they bring together a total of 67 points where they address the definition, the basic principles, the legal bases and the functioning and development of Restorative Justice. In order to approach the focus of this recommendation, we will analyse the first two points. Regarding the definition, they point out:

*3. Restorative Justice" refers to any process which enables those harmed by the crime and those responsible for the harm to actively participate, if they freely consent to do so, in the resolution of the consequences resulting from the crime, with the help of an independent and qualified third party (hereinafter referred to as the "facilitator"). 4. Restorative Justice consists of a dialogue (either direct or indirect) between the victim and the offender, and may also involve, where appropriate, other persons directly or indirectly affected by a crime. These may include victim and offender support persons, relevant professionals and members or representatives of affected communities. Hereinafter, for the purposes of this Recommendation, Restorative Justice participants are referred to as "the parties". 5. Depending on the country in which it is used and the way it is administered, Restorative Justice may be referred to as victim-offender mediation, criminal mediation, restorative conferencing, family group conferencing, sentencing circles or peace-making circles, among others. (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 3)*

Subsequently, the recommendation qualifies that such processes can take place at any stage of the criminal process (6), that may or may not occur with judicial supervision (7) and

<sup>3</sup> The translation of the Department of Labour and Justice of the Basque Government (unofficial) has been used.



that restorative justice practices may or may not involve a dialogue between victims and offenders (8).

In terms of basic principles they point out (Council of Europe, 2018):

- a) Principle of **participation**: the victim and the offender should be able to actively participate in the resolution of the crime. To this end, it is important that the parties are duly informed of the process and its consequences (13).
- b) Principle of **reparation** of harm: the parties must be able to provide responses aimed at repairing the harm caused by the crime (13). To this end, concern for the needs and interests of the parties, dialogue, mutual understanding, avoiding domination (14) through the creation of a neutral space (15) is significant.
- c) Principle of **voluntariness**: the parties involved must give their consent freely, which requires the principle of information to be made effective (16). And they must be able to withdraw their consent to participate at any time during the process (16).
- d) Principle of **information**: all parties should know before participating in the proceedings the nature of the proceedings, as well as their possible outcomes and implications (19). These implications may affect the criminal proceedings and they should be fully informed of the possible impact (16).
- e) Principle of **confidentiality**: restorative encounters are private, and the information and conduct of the encounter should remain confidential, unless the parties involved give their consent (17).
- f) Principle of **accessibility**: Restorative Justice services should be accessible to all victims and offenders, regardless of the offence, the stage of the crime or the geographical location (18)(19).
- g) Principle of **autonomy**: referring to the agencies carrying out restorative processes in relation to the judicial system. They should be co-ordinated but maintain their autonomy to ensure proper compliance with these principles (20).

The European Committee goes on to clarify how these practices should be developed and their relationship with the criminal justice system. It is important to note that this recommendation follows on from *Recommendation No. R (99) 19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on mediation in criminal matters*, but that this recommendation has had a low degree of implementation in the member states. Thus, the recommendation we are analysing, Rec(2018)/8, calls for a broader change in criminal justice where a more



restorative culture and approach is encouraged. (European Committee on Crime Problems, 2018)

On the other hand, we have the Declaration of the Ministers of Justice of the Council of Europe Member States on the role of restorative justice in criminal matters. underlines the growing importance of Restorative Justice as a key tool in improving criminal justice systems. It recognises its potential to reduce recidivism and promote social cohesion through dialogue between victims and offenders.

The statement examines the importance of voluntary participation and informed consent in restorative processes, ensuring that victims and offenders participate willingly and are supported throughout the process. On the other hand, it highlights the need to expand the use of Restorative Justice, not only for minor offences, but also for serious crimes. The Council of Europe urges Member States to integrate restorative practices into their penal systems, and to provide an adequate legal framework to enable their wide and effective application. Also, emphasis is placed on specialised training of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and mediators in Restorative Justice techniques, promoting a cultural change in how responses to crime are perceived.

The document highlights Restorative Justice as an alternative or complement to the traditional penal system, allowing it to focus more on reparation of harm and reconciliation. They stress that this approach is especially relevant in cases of juvenile delinquency, where the aim is the social reintegration of young offenders. The statement also mentions that the Council of Europe will continue to support research and practices to strengthen and expand Restorative Justice throughout the European Union. Finally, the declaration underlines the commitment of Member States to improve the accessibility of Restorative Justice programmes, in order to ensure that more people can benefit from these innovative and restorative methods.

### **3. Restorative Justice in Prison (Project)**

With this proposal made by the Council of Ministers of the EU, we propose in this section to develop an explanation of how Restorative Justice works in the penitentiary environment. First of all, we must take into account that all penitentiary contexts are different, although they share common features such as being closed institutions, oriented to social reintegration and complying with European standards such as Nelson Mandela's norms (in the case of the European countries that are in this project), the reality is that from one



penitentiary centre to another there is a very different reality. Therefore, we are going to highlight 3 elements that we consider fundamental in order to be able to transfer the practice that we carry out in AMEE to the other countries of the FAIR project. These are the methodology based on Nonviolent Communication and the Internal Family System model. On the other hand, the techniques based on restorative practices as well as the typologies of existing RJ programmes in prison. And finally, the programme that we carry out as an example of the integration of methodological and technical aspects. The idea of this approach is that from the methodological principles and technical aspects, specific programmes adapted to the characteristics of each prison of the FAIR members can be configured.

### **3.1. Methodology of RJ in prison: NVC and IFS.**

The main methodological strategies we use to carry out RJ programmes in prison are Nonviolent Communication and the Internal Family System.

#### **a) *Non Violence Communication***

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a communication model developed by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg, designed to foster understanding, empathy, and peaceful conflict resolution. According to Rosenberg (2003), NVC aims to replace defensive and aggressive communication with a compassionate dialogue that strengthens relationships and mutual respect.

NVC is based on four fundamental components:

1. **Observation:** Distinguishing objective facts from personal interpretations or judgments. This prevents miscommunication and emotional reactions based on assumptions.
2. **Feelings:** Expressing one's emotions honestly, without blaming others, to create a space of authenticity and connection.
3. **Needs:** Identifying and communicating the underlying needs behind feelings, fostering self-awareness and mutual understanding.
4. **Requests:** Making clear, positive, and feasible requests rather than demands, encouraging cooperation and voluntary contribution.

The implementation of NVC brings numerous advantages, both in personal and professional environments:



- **Enhances empathy and deep listening**, reducing misunderstandings and strengthening relationships.
- **Encourages emotional intelligence**, helping individuals to express themselves with clarity and honesty.
- **Facilitates conflict resolution** by promoting dialogue focused on needs rather than blame.
- **Fosters a culture of respect and cooperation**, improving teamwork and social interactions.

As Rosenberg (2003) states, "When we focus on clarifying what is being observed, felt, and needed rather than on diagnosing and judging, we discover the depth of our own compassion". This approach not only improves communication but also transforms relationships, promoting a more harmonious and understanding society.

#### **b) Internal Family System:**

The Internal Family Systems (IFS) model, developed by Dr. Richard C. Schwartz, is a therapeutic approach that views the mind as a system of subpersonalities or "parts," each with its own perspective, emotions, and roles. This model helps individuals access their core Self, a compassionate and wise inner presence that can lead to inner healing and integration. IFS is particularly valuable in trauma therapy and social intervention as in prison, because it recognizes that painful experiences often fragment the psyche, causing internal conflicts between protective and wounded parts. Instead of pathologizing these parts, IFS encourages individuals to approach them with curiosity and compassion, fostering deep emotional healing. The model helps individuals:

- Understand and unburden parts that carry trauma, fear, or shame.
- Reduce internal struggles by fostering harmony among parts.
- Cultivate Self-leadership, allowing the Self to guide healing rather than reactive emotions or protective mechanisms.

The primary benefits of this model include:

1. **A Non-Pathologizing Approach:** IFS does not view symptoms as disorders but as parts that have adapted to protect the individual. This reduces stigma and promotes self-compassion. This advantage is fundamental in prison intervention.
2. **Deep Emotional Healing:** By addressing the root causes of trauma rather than just managing symptoms, IFS facilitates profound and lasting change.
3. **Increased Self-Compassion and Inner Harmony:** Clients develop a nurturing relationship with their inner world, leading to greater emotional resilience.



4. **Effectiveness Across Various Issues:** IFS has been successfully applied in treating PTSD, depression, anxiety, addiction, and relational conflicts.

As stated by the IFS Institute, "When the Self is in the lead, it knows how to heal and restore balance to the system". This transformative approach empowers individuals to reclaim their inner wholeness and live with greater authenticity, peace, and emotional freedom

### 3.2. Restorative practices and programmes.

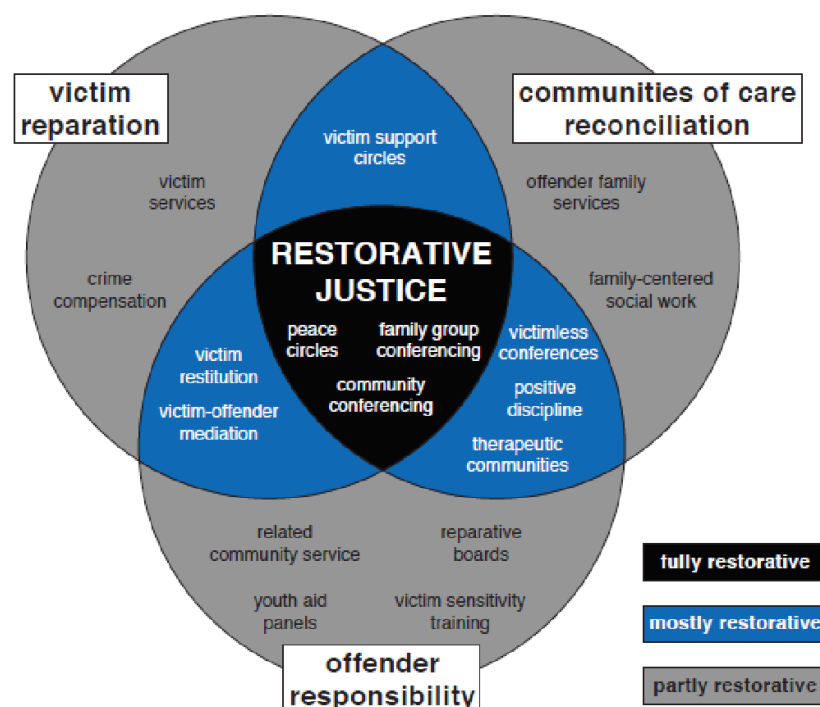
Secondly, we find restorative practices as a fundamental element to implement Restorative Justice in the different countries. Thus, restorative practices are a set of tools aimed at increasing social capital and learning social discipline through active participation (Watchel, 2013) . The usefulness of restorative practices goes beyond the framework of criminal offending referred to in the RJ. Thus, restorative practices can be used in the educational framework, especially useful for the Serbian *Education Observatory*, in the community framework, improving and strengthening interpersonal relationships between members of the community, especially a reference for *Marseille Solutions* or to generate better relationships in working groups that can be taken into account in all entities and especially for *Lazzarelle* in its project for the socio-labour reintegration of women prisoners. Thus, within the restorative practices we find the more informal ones, which can be implemented on a daily basis towards practices with a higher degree of formality such as restorative circles. As can be seen in graph 1, there is a spectrum of techniques that can be implemented.





Image takes from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqgaEFGyN\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqgaEFGyN_Y)

These restorative practices have been applied to different contexts, e.g. the image above was taken from their application to the educational context. Thus, in the RJ context they have been developed according to the parties involved in the process. Distinguishing by degrees of restoration, the more parties are involved and the more they can participate, the more restorative the process is considered to be. In the reality of prison, it is sometimes very difficult for the victim and the community to participate, either because of structural barriers (the prison does not allow entry or sets specific limits) or because of social and cultural barriers (victims and the community fear entering prison) or because of the consequences generated by prison (offenders feel that they are victims of the system and are imprisoned). There are various reasons why we may have difficulties in integrating all participants, but even so we should not lose the restorative focus, trying to integrate as much as possible and work restoratively. In Figure 2, the founder of the International Institute for Restorative Practices Watchel (2013) lists the different possibilities that exist depending on the participants:



The main programmes that can be found in prisons are located at the lower part of the circle to the centre, as they involve offenders to different extents. In addition, they may also involve



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prison staff, e.g. in the case of restorative prisons there is a strong involvement of prison staff. Table 2 lists the main models of RJ programmes in prison and their references.

**Table 2 :** *Typology of Restorative Justice Programmes in Prisons.* (Source: own elaboration)

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Accountability and victim empathy	Awareness of harm. Reparation of the consequences of crime.	Related and unrelated victims. Offenders	Group sessions mainly with offenders.	Sycamore Tree (Brennan & Johnstone, 2019) Restorative Dialogues (Castile and Capecci, 2021) Sori Programme (Beech & Chauhan, 2013) Open Doors (Johnstone, 2014) Partners in healing (Crocker, 2013)
Mediation and restorative circles with people affected by crime.	Reparation of the consequences of the crime.	Related victims. Offenders. Community of interest.	Individual sessions. Victim-offender mediation or restorative circles.	Restorative Encounters (De Marcos, 2021). Victim-Offender Mediation (Wagner & Wagner, 2015)
Restorative imprisonment	Change in the integral functioning of the penitentiary system from the paradigm of Restorative Justice.	Prison staff and inmates. Community of interest.	Structural change in the prison system: prison work, sentencing, conflict management and relationships.	Restorative detention or Restorative prison. (Edgar & Newell, 2006; Petrellis, 2008; Robert & Peters, 2002; Wallace & Wylie, 2013).
Inmate conflict management programmes.	Approach through restorative practices, especially mediation, for the resolution of conflicts between inmates and with prison staff.	Prison staff and inmates.	Mediation, restorative circles and meetings.	MEREPS (Barabas, 2012) Dialogued Conflict Management or Prison Mediation Programme (Lozano, <i>et al.</i> , 2020) Circles of Support and Accountability (Bohmert, <i>et al.</i> , 2018)



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### **3.3. Spanish programme.**

Finally, we explain our current programme as an example of how the NVC and IFS methodologies can be configured with restorative practices in the prison context to form a programme of accountability and reparation of harm to the victim by the offenders. Thus, the programme is made up of two sub-programmes, firstly, the accountability programme called "restorative dialogues" and secondly the programme "restorative encounters" focused on the reparation of the harm to the victim through mediation and dialogue encounters. These programmes are discussed below. It is important to bear in mind that they can be done separately or jointly, but always bearing in mind that in order to reach the restorative encounter the offender must know the causes for which he/she committed the crime, feel responsible for it and be willing to repair the damage.

### **3.4. Restorative Dialogues Programme.**

The general objectives of this programme are:

- Understand the impact of your crime.
- Connect with the experience of the person who has suffered the consequences of this as a victim.
- Feeling the need to seek formulas for reparation with the victim and within the social context in which it has been committed.
- Promote a transformation in individuals aimed at breaking the criminal pathway and thus prevent recidivism.

To this end, 10 group sessions are held with inmates. Before starting the process, an interview should be carried out to assess the degree of responsibility and identification with the criminal acts. This prior selection will allow us to homogenise the initial level of responsibility of the group. Furthermore, we should not worry if inmates are discarded, it is important to bear in mind that RJ is not for everyone and that it must make sense for the person to carry out the process. It should always be voluntary and we should never manipulate or impose our will on them to participate.

Table 3 shows the content of the 10 sessions together with the objectives. For more detailed information on the session, see (SGIP, 2020b).

**Table 3** *Restorative Dialogue Programme Activities*

Content	Objectives	Activities
<b>Welcome, presentation and group reception</b>	<p>Introduce the facilitating team and each participant.</p> <p>To make known the legal framework in which the workshop is inserted as a way of serving a sentence.</p> <p>Encourage group cohesion, thus generating a climate of trust that facilitates participation.</p>	<p>Introduction of participants and facilitators.</p> <p>Information on the descriptive workshop and legal implications (TBC).</p> <p>Dynamics of group cohesion and consensus on rules.</p> <p>Individual interviews</p>
<b>Justice Models</b>	<p><b>3.5.</b> Understand and reflect on the impact of the retribution process on the parties involved.</p> <p>To understand and reflect on the opportunities and benefits of the restorative justice model.</p> <p>Encourage listening, dialogue and empathy to manage conflicts.</p>	<p>Reflection on the concept and types of justice.</p> <p>Reading of the story "The Two Justices".</p> <p>Reading and reflection on moral dilemmas raised.</p>
<b>Empathy and non-violent communication</b>	<p>Reflect on the importance of empathy in the development peaceful coexistence.</p> <p>Understand the impact that the way you communicate has on another person.</p> <p>To know the keys to non-violent communication as a means of developing self-knowledge and empathetic expression of needs.</p> <p>Participate in activities that encourage empathy from the one who has caused harm to the one who suffers it.</p>	<p>Explanation of the concept of empathy and exercises to practice it.</p> <p>Explanation of communication styles and exercises to analyse them.</p> <p>Non-violent communication training.</p>
<b>Accountability</b>	<p>To become aware of the act committed through an objective analysis of the damage caused.</p>	<p>Explanation of the concept.</p> <p>Narrative of crime.</p>



Content	Objectives	Activities
	<p>Reflect on the consequences of that harm in a subjective way.</p> <p>Reconsider the choices that led to the behaviour in order to avoid it in the future.</p>	Ways in which to avoid responsibility and individual questioning of responsibility.
<b>Who is affected by the offence and types of damage</b>	<p>Awareness of the impact of the criminal act.</p> <p>Understand the broad spectrum of people who may be affected by a crime, beyond the direct victim and the person convicted.</p> <p>Deepening the concept of harm, beyond the obvious ones.</p> <p>Understand that the impact of criminal actions should not be minimised.</p> <p>Become aware of the full consequences of criminal acts, even if they are not obvious at first sight.</p>	<p>Exhibition on those affected by crime.</p> <p>Dynamic analysis of a real case to identify those affected.</p> <p>Presentation on types of damage and their application to a case.</p>
<b>The other side of crime</b>	<p>Reflect on the impact of crime from a different perspective, outside themselves and their environment.</p> <p>Connect with the feelings and experience of the victim of a crime.</p> <p>Be able to connect the victim's account of their experience with their own experience.</p>	<p>Listen to victim.</p> <p>Reflection on the experience of crime.</p>
<b>Forgiveness in Restorative Justice</b>	<p>Understand how forgiveness affects the parties in a restorative process.</p> <p>Know what facilitates forgiveness and look at different types of forgiveness.</p> <p>Reflect on the psycho-sociological elements of forgiveness: thoughts, emotions, behaviours and consequences.</p>	<p>Explanation of regret.</p> <p>Reading a text and watching a video on forgiveness.</p>



Content	Objectives	Activities
<b>Reparation by Encounter.</b>	<p>Reflect on the meaning of the concept of reparation and its implications for relationships and crime.</p> <p>Understand the impact of the crime on the victim and his or her need for reparation.</p> <p>Engage in activities that encourage empathy from the one who causes harm to the one on the receiving end.</p> <p>To encourage reflection on the impact of the crime itself on the direct victim(s) and on how best to redress it.</p>	<p>Exposure to the concept of reparation and first-person application.</p> <p>Analysis of forms of reparation and group discussion on approaches to reparation.</p>
<b>Change. Prevention and resilience</b>	<p>Identify own strengths and sources of resilience.</p> <p>Prevent recidivism by assessing personal risk factors/attitudes</p>	<p>Share the repair practice carried out.</p> <p>Explain the concept of resilience and personal change.</p> <p>Prevention and management of conflicts and future difficulties.</p>
<b>Conclusions and farewell</b>	<p>Review the evolution suffered by the participants, in relation to the concepts that have been worked on throughout the workshop.</p> <p>Evaluating the passage through the Restorative Dialogues workshop on the concept of their own role in the offence for which they are convicted.</p> <p>Preventing the commission of new crimes</p>	<p>Presentation of accompanying person and commitment to repair.</p> <p>Presentation of diplomas.</p> <p>Group closing feedback.</p>



### **3.5.1. Restorative Encounters Programme.**

The previous programme had the objective of making the inmates responsible, so at the end of this phase many of them felt the need to repair the damage they had caused. Thus, from the reflection on the crime and the consequences that it generates to themselves, to their environment and to the victim, the desire to change and contribute socially with reparation measures arises. From this experience, we developed the programme called "restorative encounters" aimed at facilitating dialogue between victims and offenders as a measure of emotional and symbolic reparation. Thus the objectives of these programmes are:

- Listen to the victim in relation to the crime experienced and its consequences, not only physically, but also emotionally and psychologically.
- Sharing with the victim his or her personal experience of the crime and the consequences of the crime for the offender.
- Find ways in which the offender can make reparations to the victim.

Although the methodological principles remain NVC and IFS, they are used for the meetings, transversally to all the activities listed in table 4 and 5:

- Meditation, guided relaxation or storytelling: at the beginning of each session we propose the development of these practices to facilitate an attitude of calm.
- Drawings as a means of expression: they are used to address aspects related to the crime, its experience and personal implications. This facilitates the expression of the facts, emotions and thoughts involved.
- Poems: these are integrated as specific content in each session and serve both as an introduction and a conclusion, to reinforce what has been worked on.
- Alternative dynamics: in order to be able to adapt the methodology to the needs of the participants and the professional tools of the facilitators, the methodology includes the option of introducing other dynamics that favour the consolidation of the restorative process.

**Table 4.** Restorative Encounter Activities for Offenders

Content	Objectives	Activities
Restorative justice	Reflecting on the justice system. Working on the paradigm of Restorative Justice: its concept and phases. Connecting with the essential part of each participant	Introduction and standard setting. Explanation of justice and analysis of the restorative justice model. Experiencing the justice and prison system.
The offence committed and the harm caused.	To deepen the understanding of the crime committed as a preliminary to the next session, in which empathy towards the victim will be addressed.	Analysis of the experience of crime. Differentiation between needs and strategies, link to the timing of the crime. Consequences generated by the crime.
Empathy with the victim.	To develop empathy towards the victim as a preparation for the encounter by improving the victim's ability to understand and accept their pain.	Consequences for the victim of the crime. Preparation for the meeting.
Restorative encounter.	To enable and accompany the convicted person to express what he/she wishes regarding the motives for committing the offence, the needs he/she had at the time of the offence, the consequences of the offence and his/her responsibility for the offence. To enable and accompany the convicted person to express his or her repentance regarding the criminal act, his or her request for forgiveness (if he or she so wishes), and his or her concrete desire to repair the damage caused by the offence committed.	Presentation of participants. Establishment of guidelines for the functioning of the meeting. Dialogue between the parties. Conclusion, closure.
The encounter: forgiveness and reparation.	Sharing the experience of the Restorative Encounter held. Linking the encounter with the concept of Restorative Justice.	Reflection on the experience of the encounter and its application to social justice and improvement. Letter of forgiveness to the victim.



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Specify, where appropriate, the complementary repair actions that have been agreed.	Possibility of continuation of the process with other social reparation measures.
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**Table 5.** *Restorative Encounter Activities for Victims*

Content	Objectives	Activities
Restorative justice	<p>Inform the victim about the programme, the meaning, objectives, structure and methodology, personal and legal implications.</p> <p>Welcome the victim's pain, suffering, difficulties, prejudices, uncertainties and reservations about it.</p> <p>Prepare it for the possible Restorative Encounter with the convicted person.</p>	<p>Presentation of the restorative justice model.</p> <p>Interests and needs that the victim may have in the process.</p> <p>Exposure of the experience of the crime.</p>
The damage experienced. Preparing for the meeting.	<p>Analyse the timing of the crime suffered and its consequences.</p> <p>Prepare the Restorative Encounter with the person who committed your crime or another crime similar to the one you suffered, in case you are a non-related victim.</p>	<p>Account of the crime suffered.</p> <p>To explain the methodology of the meeting and the practical indications.</p> <p>Closing of the work and reflection prior to the meeting</p>
Restorative encounter	<p>To enable and accompany the victim to express, after the work carried out at an individual level with the facilitator, what he/she wishes to express about the crime, the harm he/she has suffered, the vital consequences that this event had on his/her life, the doubts about the motive of the offender, etc.</p> <p>Enable and accompany the convicted person and the victim to reach a reparation agreement.</p>	<p>Presentation of participants.</p> <p>Establishment of guidelines for the functioning of the meeting.</p> <p>Dialogue between the parties.</p> <p>Conclusion, closure.</p>
Experience of the restorative	<p>Share your experience at the Restorative Encounter held.</p> <p>Recover the concept of Restorative Justice and share how it is being put into practice.</p>	<p>Sharing the experience of the restorative encounter.</p> <p>Explain how it has contributed to your personal restoration.</p>



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encounter .	Satisfaction survey and closure of the restorative process.	Satisfaction survey and closure
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#### **4. Evaluation system and related research.**

RJ allows for a new approach, even a break with penal modernity if the programmes were to be extended. Consequently, “the change of lens” must encompass the criteria and methodology of its evaluation. New evaluation parameters or criteria will have to be sought. There are no fixed formulas, but we must scheme with a diversity of programmes and limits that have in common certain international principles that allow them to be compared in the state, European and world spheres. (See point 2.2)

One of the examples for evaluating RJ processes is the one developed by the *European Forum for Restorative Justice*. They developed a toolkit aimed at self-assessment of facilitators' compliance with RJ principles and standards as well as participants' compliance.

All the tools can be found at: <https://www.euforumrj.org/values-restorative-justice>.

We recommend the use of this tool in combination with satisfaction questionnaires and external performance evaluations. In this way, we can assess the impact of the programmes, how participants rate the process and design changes for improvement.

For the development of evaluations we can find 3 levels that respond to distinguished objectives and that vary depending on the development and implementation of the programme. As the entities that make up FAIR do not have extensive knowledge of the RJ, it is recommended to start with the first level and progressively advance.

**Level 1:** Process analysis for the achievement of the stated objectives: evaluate the objectives of the programme in terms of impact on the participants. This may be through facilitator observation, external evaluation or through a pre/post restorative interview or questionnaire. The purpose of this level of evaluation is to measure the changes generated.

**Level 2:** Analysis of results, at individual and social level, and in the short, medium and long term. Once the restorative process has been implemented, for example, in a prison, we have to evaluate the impact it generates at the social level. We can rely on the Bronfenbrenner model, for example, understanding the different levels of interrelation of the participants with their close, medium and external environment in order to know what impact it entails.

**Level 3:** Analysis of the changes produced, positive and negative, considering the previous scales, according to the criteria of international standards and specialised literature. Once the programme has been set up and data has been collected over the years, it is necessary to compare it with other programmes, to evaluate long-term compliance with international standards and to allow for improvements through the



exchange of good practices with other entities or spaces for exchange. In this regard, we recommend the congresses and seminars of the *European Forum for Restorative Justice*, which meet annually to share experiences, evaluations and new programmes, with testimonies from victims, offenders and facilitators. It is an appropriate forum for exchange.

Finally, we would like to share a set of accessible studies that can serve as a reference for both forms of evaluation and identification of good practices. In any case, the research will help to improve both our own restorative processes and those of others. We encourage all FAIR members to always take into account the results of other research in their development of RJ in order to identify what works and what needs to be improved or does not generate any impact.

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On the other hand, we consider it appropriate to share some international platforms that have been highlighted for the development of techniques and tools for both



evaluation and facilitation of RJ that could be useful for FAIR entities in the development of their projects:

- EFRJ: <https://www.euforumrj.org/>
- Why me? : <https://why-me.org/>
- The International Institute for Restorative Practices:  
<https://www.iirp.edu/>
- National Association of Community and Restorative Justice:  
<https://www.nacrj.org/>
- United Nations Office of Crime and Drugs: (training Course of RJ):  
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/cpcj-restorative-justice.html>
- Restorative Justice Council of UK: <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/>
- Australian Association for Restorative Justice: <https://www.aarj.org.a>

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[https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/20-01146\\_Handbook\\_on\\_Restorative\\_Justice\\_Programmes.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/20-01146_Handbook_on_Restorative_Justice_Programmes.pdf)





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<https://www.iirp.edu/pdf/Defining-Restorative-Spanish.pdf>

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# Innovative and inclusive methods of education of prisoners

If we were to ask someone who has spent time in a correctional facility whether it is more challenging to serve a prison sentence or to reintegrate into society after release, the answer might not be so clear. Although prisons primarily exist to enforce sentences, their deeper purpose should be in the resocialization of individuals and their preparation for reintegration into the community—where education plays an indispensable role in this process.

In most countries of the world, prisoners formally have the right to education, but the degree of realization of that right varies significantly. Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) defines that everyone has the right to education, including convicted persons, who do not lose this right by going to prison. In 2015, the United Nations created the "Nelson Mandela" Rules (Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners), which define minimum standards in the treatment of prisoners. Among the mentioned rights, they especially emphasize the importance of education and emphasize that it must be available to all prisoners, and that it should be as similar as possible to education outside prison. Education is a key tool in the process of resocialization of prisoners, offering them the opportunity to build a new identity, develop useful skills and prepare for a successful return to society.

Despite the fact that education is recognized as an important source of support for prisoners in the process of resocialization and preparation for life outside bars, the availability and quality of education provided to prisoners is questionable. There are numerous reasons for insufficiently adequate education in prison systems, and one of them is certainly the inadequate preparation of prison staff to teach prisoners. Creating an open and safe educational setting, motivating convicted persons and applying adequate didactic methods in the education process, leads to higher quality education that will actually help/support prisoners during and after serving their prison sentence.

Therefore, in this handbook, we will present some important knowledge about the education of prisoners that can enhance the educational activities provided to prisoners. The content will be divided into five thematic units: *communication and social aspects of prisoner education*; *development of professional and soft skills of prisoners*; *didactics*; *the role of emotions in the education of prisoners* and *contact with family and education of prisoners*. Special attention will be paid to topics related to didactics, so that there are concrete examples that can be applied in practice.

## Communication and social aspects of prisoner education

The education of prisoners not only contributes to their intellectual development, but also has a profound effect on their communication skills and social reintegration. The prison environment often fosters isolation, violence and mistrust, which makes it even more



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difficult to establish healthy interpersonal relationships. In this context, education becomes a powerful tool to help prisoners restore or develop the skills necessary for functional communication and social inclusion.

Through educational programs, prisoners have the opportunity to learn how to express their thoughts, needs and emotions in a constructive way. Group learning, discussions, joint work on tasks and presentations in front of others encourage the development of social skills such as active listening, empathy, tolerance and conflict resolution without aggression. These skills are crucial not only for daily functioning inside prison, but also for successful reintegration after release.

Education also provides a sense of belonging and identity. Many prisoners come from marginalized communities and have not previously had the opportunity to engage in the education system. Participating in educational activities can create a sense of value, self-confidence and appreciation among peers and teachers for the first time, which positively affects their perception of themselves and others.

The social aspect of education in prison is additionally reflected in the reduction of violence and tension among prisoners. When engaged in learning, individuals are less likely to engage in conflict and more likely to develop a sense of community and mutual support.

Education in prison is much more than acquiring knowledge - it restores communication bridges and paves the way to healthier social relations, thus becoming a key factor in the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners into society.

## **Development of professional and soft skills of prisoners**

One of the key goals of modern prison systems is to prepare prisoners for successful reintegration into society, and the development of professional and soft skills occupies a central place in that process. Prisoners often come from backgrounds with limited access to education and employment, contributing to a vicious cycle of poverty and crime. Through professional training and work on personal development, prisoners get the opportunity to get out of that cycle and start a new life after serving their sentence.

Vocational skills, such as trade skills (carpentry, cooking, construction), computer skills or skills in logistics and production, enable prisoners to acquire specific occupations that are in demand on the labor market. Such programs not only increase the chances of employment, but also strengthen the sense of self-confidence and personal worth. As it often happens (in less developed countries of the world) that prisoners are misused as cheap labor for the needs of the economy, it is necessary to expand the range of professional training and professions for which prisoners are prepared while serving their prison sentence. If prisoners are prepared exclusively for low-paid and socially stigmatized jobs, it will only create the appearance of providing adequate professional qualifications, and more likely, it will only contribute to ex-prisoners returning to breaking the law after leaving prison.



It is difficult to talk about priority knowledge that needs to be provided to prisoners. With that, it is necessary to point out that the so-called soft skills - communication, teamwork, self-confidence, problem solving, emotional control and responsibility - are equally important. Prisoners often lack these skills, and they are necessary for successful functioning both with the family and in everyday social relations, as well as at the workplace. They are developed through group workshops, learning in teams, mentoring and various forms of psychosocial support. Unlike the development of professional skills for which there are often clear procedures for teaching them, soft skills require much more. First, it is important that educators working in prisons believe that prisoners can learn, educate and change. If the implicit beliefs of employees who are in direct contact with prisoners do not support their learning and development, the progress of prisoners will be hindered. Also, for the development of soft skills, it is necessary to create an adequate atmosphere for learning in which convicts will feel safe and accepted, and educators should also demonstrate a high degree of development of soft skills by their example.

Developing professional and soft skills within the prison system contributes to reducing recidivism, improves the atmosphere in the institution and facilitates the transition to the community. People who leave prison with concrete knowledge, skills and new patterns of behavior have a significantly higher chance of becoming independent and living in accordance with the law.

## **Didactics**

Didactics, as a science of teaching and learning, has a central place in every educational process. When it comes to the education of prisoners, didactic principles, methods and approaches must be carefully adapted to the specific context of the prison environment and the characteristics of the trainees themselves. Prisoners represent an extremely heterogeneous population - in terms of age, previous education, cultural origin, language, level of motivation and emotional stability. Therefore, the didactic approach must be flexible, inclusive and aimed at empowering prisoners, so that education has a transformative and resocializing role.

## **Specifics of education in prisons**

The prison context brings numerous challenges to the educational process. Limited space and time, controlled working conditions, lack of resources, safety rules, frequent interruptions due to transfers or disciplinary measures, all of this affects the didactic organization of classes. Also, prisoners' motivation for education is often low or directed towards practical goals, such as shortening the sentence or obtaining a certificate for future employment. This requires special engagement of teachers and educational experts, in order to create a stimulating environment for learning and personal development.

In prison education, it is necessary to connect cognitive goals with the emotional and social development of students. Teaching must not be exclusively aimed at imparting knowledge, but must contribute to strengthening self-confidence, a sense of meaning and self-reflection.



Many prison staff working in the education sector did not acquire knowledge during their professional training about the specific characteristics of adult learners or how to work with them effectively. Since adult prisoners do not differ significantly from the general adult population in terms of learning characteristics, below is a basic overview of the key elements necessary for working with adults.

## 7 Characteristics of adult learners

1. **Experience** – The education of children and adults differs significantly, which is why different didactic approaches must be used in adult education. One of the fundamental principles of adult learning is respecting and utilizing the learner's prior life and work experience. In the prison system, where power relations and authority structures are clearly defined, it can be challenging to involve prisoners in shaping the learning process or to value their prior experience, especially given their subordinate status. Nevertheless, it is the educator's responsibility to design instruction in a way that acknowledges learners' experiences and encourages their active participation.
2. **Independence** – Adults are autonomous and self-directed. They know what they want to learn and what is important to them, and they make their own decisions about their learning goals. They prefer learning environments based on collaboration, equality, and mutual respect. Therefore, teaching methods that foster independence and active involvement are recommended.
3. **Real-life relevance** – Adults learn what they want to learn, what interests them, and what they find useful in their lives. Lessons should include examples from real life and focus on topics that learners can apply in everyday situations. Case studies and experience-based discussions help learners identify with the material and engage more deeply.
4. **Problem-solving orientation** – Adult learners typically engage in education to gain specific knowledge or skills they feel they lack. They prefer practical content that can be applied in real-life contexts. For them, learning is a way to solve problems and achieve personal goals. Educators are therefore encouraged to demonstrate how each lesson or concept applies to real-world situations.
5. **Peer learning** – Adults often learn more effectively when interacting with peers of similar age and background. They have a strong need for social connection and acceptance. Even in the restrictive environment of a prison, it is advisable to use teaching methods that enable knowledge and experience sharing within the group. This helps create a supportive and open learning atmosphere.
6. **Expectation of respect** – The dynamic between educators and learners in adult education is fundamentally different from that in children's education. There is no strict hierarchy; mutual respect is crucial. Educators must value learners' skills, knowledge, and life experiences. It is essential to build a relationship based on trust and appreciation, where learners feel free to express their opinions and are listened to with attention and respect.



7. **Individual learning pace** – Every adult learns at their own pace and may require different amounts of time to absorb new information. Therefore, it is important to create a flexible learning environment that allows each individual to progress according to their personal rhythm and capabilities.

## 4 Didactic principles in the education of prisoners

The following didactic principles are particularly important in the education of prisoners:

1. **Individualization** - Taking into account different levels of prior knowledge, experiences and abilities, programs must be adapted to individual needs. Many prisoners have traumatic experiences with educational institutions, low literacy or diagnosed learning difficulties, which is why it is necessary to adapt the pace, content and methods of work.
2. **Active learning** - Instead of face-to-face teaching, learning through practical tasks, group work, simulations, workshops and projects is preferred. Active learning methods encourage inmates' engagement and motivation while also developing soft skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving.
3. **Content relevance** - Teaching contents must have a clear practical value. Prisoners respond better to topics they can directly apply - whether it's basic literacy, job skills, financial literacy, parenting or managing emotions.
4. **A safe and supportive environment** – Reciprocal support, empathy and respect help build trust. In such an environment, prisoners are more willing to open up, participate and take responsibility for their education.

## The role of the teacher and the andragogic approach

Teachers in prison education must possess competences for teaching adults and psychosocial competences. They often function as mentors, advisors, and even emotional support. The teacher does not only impart knowledge, but actively participates in the development of the student's personality.

The application of an adult education approach - where adults are taught while respecting their experience, independence and needs - is crucial in the education of prisoners. This means that the teacher must be able to recognize and use the personal stories and life experiences of prisoners as a starting point for learning.

One of the successful examples is the Norwegian prison system, in which education is treated as a basic human right, and the prison school functions as part of the state education system. Teachers are regularly trained to work with this specific population, and the focus is on empowering individuals through education.

## Didactic tools and methods



Given the limitations of the prison system (e.g. limited access to the Internet, lack of modern aids), didactic resources are often reduced to basic forms - printed materials, blackboards, workbooks. However, in many European countries, specialized digital platforms for learning in prison are being introduced, which do not allow access to the Internet, but offer interactive content.

Work methods include: discussions, text analysis, case studies, practical tasks, independent work and simulations of everyday life situations. In group workshops, prisoners learn how to resolve conflicts, communicate non-violently and express emotions. Special attention is paid to functional literacy and the education of adults with a low level of education.

## **Challenges and recommendations**

The biggest challenges in the didactic organization of prisoner education are:

- lack of professional staff,
- poor technical equipment,
- insufficient coordination between the educational and prison systems,
- and low motivation of the prisoners themselves.

That is why it is necessary:

- To continuously train teachers to work in prison conditions,
- To ensure access to modern educational materials,
- To introduce advisory work and individual educational plans,
- and link educational programs with post-penal support and the labor market.

## **The role of emotions in the education of prisoners**

In modern approaches to the education of prisoners, the importance of emotions is increasingly recognized as a key factor in the process of learning and rehabilitation. Emotions not only shape the way prisoners approach educational content, but also deeply affect their motivation, ability to change and establish a new, positive self-image. Ignoring the emotional aspects of learning in the prison environment leads to limited results, while their conscious inclusion can contribute to the true transformation of the individual.

The prison environment is by its very nature restrictive and emotionally demanding. Prisoners often carry strong emotional burdens – guilt, shame, anger, sadness, a sense of injustice, and even complete apathy. These emotions can represent serious obstacles to inclusion in the educational process. In this sense, it is necessary for teachers and educators in prisons to develop an awareness of the emotional state of their students and to understand how emotions affect learning.

Positive emotions, such as a sense of accomplishment, hope, and confidence, have been proven to increase motivation to learn. When inmates believe they can succeed, they are





more willing to engage in the process, take responsibility for their own learning, and persevere through challenges. Conversely, feelings of inferiority, fear of failure, and lack of faith in one's own abilities can lead to giving up. Therefore, it is important that prison educators are not only knowledge transferers, but also emotional supporters, helping prisoners develop internal motivation and resilience.

A key practical guideline in working with prisoners is to create an emotionally safe space for learning. This implies an atmosphere of respect, non-violent communication and empathy. The prison classroom must not be another place of condemnation, but a space where the prisoner feels he has the right to learn, make mistakes and grow. Teachers should clearly communicate high but achievable expectations, encourage attempts, and recognize progress, no matter how small.

Also, teachers should be trained to recognize and manage the emotional states of prisoners. This can be achieved through the introduction of elements of social-emotional learning into the teaching process. Activities that encourage self-reflection, expressing feelings through writing or art, working in a group and solving conflicts constructively can significantly contribute to the development of emotional literacy of prisoners.

Equally important is the strengthening of the student's identity. Prisoners often come with a sense of low self-esteem and experiences of failure in previous schooling. Education can help them build a new identity – to see themselves not just as "prisoners" or "offenders", but as students, workers, parents or citizens with a future. In this sense, teachers should encourage a positive self-concept by recognizing effort, appreciating personal stories and encouraging long-term goals.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that working with emotions must not be seen as an addition to education, but as an integral and indispensable part of it, especially in a prison context. Taking into account the specific life circumstances of prisoners and their emotional legacy, education must be holistic – one that teaches not only facts, but also life skills, self-reflection, compassion and responsibility.

By including emotions in the educational process of prisoners, we not only increase the effectiveness of education, but also contribute to a longer-term goal - resocialization and reduction of recidivism. A prisoner who learns to understand himself, to manage his emotions and to believe in his abilities, has a better chance of leading a productive and lawful life after leaving prison. It is a benefit not only for him, but also for the whole society.

## **Contact with family and education of prisoners**

In the process of resocialization of prisoners, education occupies a central place as a means of personal transformation and preparation for life after prison. However, the importance of one key factor that can significantly influence the success of the educational process is often overlooked - and that is contact with the family. The family, as the basic unit of society,





has a huge potential to provide the prisoner with emotional support, motivation and a sense of belonging, which directly contributes to his education and overall rehabilitation.

Family contact is an important source of emotional support and stability for prisoners. The prison environment, characterized by isolation, institutional routine and emotional pressure, often negatively affects the mental health and motivation of prisoners. In such a context, every message, visit or phone conversation with family members can have a huge positive impact on the psychological state of the individual. A person who knows that he is loved and supported outside the prison walls is more open to learning and accepts change as possible and achievable.

Along with emotional stability, family bonding plays an important role in strengthening motivation for education. Prisoners who are in contact with children, partners or parents often express a greater willingness to educate themselves in order to prove to their peers that they are capable of change. Education then becomes more than personal development – it becomes a tool for restoring family relationships, for showing responsibility and for building a positive self-image in the eyes of loved ones. This emotional component of education, fueled by family ties, has a strong potential to strengthen internal motivation and persistence in learning.

Furthermore, contact with the family contributes to reducing the feeling of isolation and preserving the social identity of the prisoner. Maintaining relations with the outside world helps the prisoner not to lose the sense of belonging to society, which is an important prerequisite for successful reintegration. A person who feels like part of a family is more likely to want to engage in society in a constructive way, and education is one of the main means of making that transition.

In addition to providing emotional and motivational support, the family can also be an active partner in the resocialization process. In many cases, family members encourage prisoners to get involved in educational programs, support them in their studies and plan together for the future after leaving prison. Such cooperation increases the chances of successful application of what has been learned in real life and strengthens the prisoner's responsibility towards his own goals and towards his fellowmen. The family, when constructively involved, can become an ally in the process of change, not just a passive observer.

In light of the above, the question arises: how to enable and encourage this kind of family involvement in the prison educational process? First of all, it is necessary for prison institutions to provide more flexible visiting regimes for prisoners participating in education, including the so-called educational family visits. Also, it is useful to involve family members in the inmates' educational goals - through joint projects, exchanging letters about topics from school or planning future educational and professional steps. Organizing workshops for families can help them better understand how to support the inmate in learning and empowerment.



Additionally, phone and video contact should be facilitated and encouraged, especially for prisoners who have family far away. For parents among prisoners, parenting skills programs that connect educational content with the daily challenges of parenthood are especially valuable, thereby motivating them to actively participate in education.

Finally, it is important to point out that family and education together form a strong foundation for successful resocialization. A prisoner who has family support and uses education as a tool for personal development has a significantly better chance of leading a productive and lawful life after release. Contact with the family not only provides emotional support, but also gives meaning to the educational effort, connecting the prisoner with real life and people he cares about.

In conclusion, the strength of family relationships should not be neglected in the education of prisoners. On the contrary, contact with the family should be understood as a strategic resource that can significantly contribute to the success of educational and resocialization programs. By investing in preserving and strengthening those bonds, society not only helps inmates to be educated, but also to return as useful and responsible members of the community.

## **Concluding remarks**

The importance of education for every person is indisputable, especially in the current social circumstances in which education as a lifelong process has long been talked about and written about. However, education alone will not save the world. It is necessary to improve all the overall conditions of prison life, to increase the degree of respect for prisoners and their guaranteed rights, to train prison staff from all sectors. Only one aspect of the prison system is access to quality educational activities.

Access to education allows prisoners to acquire basic knowledge, complete primary or secondary school, and even enroll in vocational training or higher education programs. In this way, their social exclusion is reduced, and the chance of employment after leaving prison increases. Research shows that educated prisoners have a significantly lower recidivism rate, which is very significant both for the prisoners themselves and for the community itself. Education also has a strong psychological effect. It strengthens self-confidence, encourages responsibility and develops a sense of personal worth. In a prison environment, where motivation and meaning are often threatened, learning can become a source of hope and inner change. Through education, many prisoners get the opportunity for the first time to discover their potential and embark on a path of positive transformation.

Apart from the individual benefit, the education of prisoners has a wider social significance. An adequate process of resocialization, and providing support to prisoners from the moment they enter prison, and even after leaving prison, reduces the rate of recidivism and opens the opportunity for the individual to successfully integrate into his environment. By resocializing prisoners, we contribute to the community so that they feel safe and regain trust in



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individuals who have committed a criminal act. Education creates the possibility for a new beginning and builds the foundations for a fairer and safer society.



## Next steps and recommendation towards europe

### Next Steps: Building on FAIR's Legacy

As the FAIR project concludes, the partnership is already working to sustain its momentum and scale its impact through future initiatives.

Building on the foundations laid by the FAIR project, and the need for further cooperation, the project **"Restorative Families Behind Bars"** was born. This Erasmus+ project was submitted with a focus on developing community-based reintegration models through restorative justice. The project aims to support incarcerated individuals and their families by strengthening family ties, promoting inclusive education and raising public awareness of alternative justice practices. It will equip professionals, educators, social workers and justice facilitators with the necessary skills to effectively implement restorative justice programmes. By fostering transnational cooperation between organisations in Serbia, France, Italy and Spain, the project seeks to address systemic shortcomings in penal systems, reduce recidivism and advocate for more humane and socially sustainable approaches to justice across Europe.

Building on the experience of FAIR, our next steps will focus on:

- Supporting the **implementation of the business models and green practices** developed during FAIR, particularly in Madrid and Belgrade.
- Enhancing the **training of professionals** (educators, social workers, prison staff) in restorative justice and sustainable enterprise.
- Enhancing the **training for teachers/educators** to acquire knowledge and skills in the field of innovative methods of teaching prisoners.
- Strengthening **cross-border learning communities**, enabling peer support and the co-creation of solutions between prison and post-prison initiatives.
- Expanding **collaboration with local governments, prison authorities, and civil society** to test and adopt FAIR methodologies on a larger scale.

We will also continue updating the **online handbook and project resources**, ensuring they remain accessible, relevant, and open to contributions from other practitioners.

### Recommendations Towards Europe

FAIR has demonstrated that **reintegration, sustainability, and innovation are not only compatible, but essential, for a more inclusive and just European society**. Based on our experience, we offer the following recommendations for policy makers, institutions, and European stakeholders:

1. **Recognise and invest in social enterprises as a reintegration pathway**—particularly those embedded in prison contexts. These initiatives foster autonomy, dignity, and employability.



2. **Support restorative justice frameworks** as viable, humane alternatives to traditional punitive systems. They promote healing, reduce recidivism, and reinforce civic values.
3. **Improve the accessibility and quality of education** - education has multiple functions and is a powerful driver of personal transformation of convicted persons, as well as a powerful tool in the process of reintegration into society and gaining financial independence.
4. **Facilitate access to European funding for small grassroots organisations**, especially those working with marginalised or criminalised populations. Simplified procedures and capacity-building support are crucial.
5. **Promote intersectoral collaboration**, between justice, education, employment, and environment sectors, to address reintegration in a holistic and sustainable way.
6. **Incorporate sustainability into prison and reintegration strategies**, not only through green practices but by fostering long-term, socially responsible structures that benefit both individuals and communities.

One of the project's greatest values lies in the opportunity it creates for meaningful exchange and cooperation among four European countries. While the participating countries share many common challenges in working with incarcerated individuals and their families, they also face context-specific issues that require tailored approaches. Through this partnership, we are not only learning from one another but also developing solutions that are both locally relevant and internationally inspiring.

FAIR is not an end, but a beginning. We believe in a Europe where **no one is left behind**—not in prison, not after release. And we are committed to continuing this work with even greater ambition.



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- In **Madrid**: *Alcalá Meco Prison, Proyecto Hombre*, and the dedicated trainers and facilitators working in prison-based education and restorative justice
- In **Belgrade**: *POKRENI SE / Get Started, Faculty of Philosophy (University of Belgrade), Institute of criminological and sociological research* and community actors promoting reintegration and civic engagement

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